

More than one thousand protest police killing in Baltimore, Maryland

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Protests in Baltimore, Maryland that began Monday following news of the death of Freddie Gray at the hands of police continued over the course of Tuesday afternoon and into the evening. At times during the protest, the crowd is estimated to have reached between one and two thousand people, with hundreds staying late into the evening.

Also on Tuesday, the Justice Department announced that it would begin their own civil rights investigation into the death of Gray.

Marches were conducted in the neighborhoods surrounding the site where Gray was beaten and arrested, with pickets later centered in front of the Baltimore police station. Despite the peaceful character of the protests, one protester was arrested for crossing the barricades set up by police in front of their station. Gray's parents participated in the marches, and at one point his mother collapsed as she was overcome with grief.

Tuesday's protests came hours after the release of the names of the six officers involved in the arrest and subsequent death of Gray: Lt. Brian Rice, Sgt. Alicia White, and Officers Caesar Goodson, William Porter, Edward Nero and Garrett Miller. All six officers have been suspended with pay during the investigation into Gray's death.

Chanting "Hell no, we won't go!" and "No justice! No peace!" the protesters demanded that all six officers responsible for the death of Gray be arrested and charged with first degree murder. Protests are scheduled to continue in the coming days, with plans to occupy City Hall starting on Thursday until protesters' demands are met.

The circumstances of Gray's arrest, subsequent injuries and death remain murky, due to an intentional cover up by local authorities. So far, police have only

released a brief timeline of events, claiming that the altercation began when Gray ran away after making eye contact with one officer.

Officers then chased and tackled Gray, and claim that they found a switchblade in his pocket, which prompted them to arrest him. The Gray family's attorney, William Murphy, asserts that Gray was carrying a "pocket knife of legal size." Numerous witnesses to the arrest claim that Gray was beaten prior to his arrest, and that officers violently contorted his body.

Video footage of Gray's arrest shows police dragging him into the back of a police van, clearly unable to use his legs and screaming in pain, prompting one bystander to shout, "His legs are broken!"

After initially being driven back and forth across Baltimore, Gray was finally taken to the police station roughly half an hour after his initial arrest, despite pleading for medical assistance multiple times during this prolonged car ride.

After arriving at the police station, an ambulance finally took him to the hospital, where Gray slipped into a coma less than half an hour later, before dying last Sunday. The police have yet to release an official autopsy, but Gray's family plans to conduct an independent autopsy once Baltimore police return Gray's body to them. The family's attorney has publicly stated that he died from three fractured vertebrae in his neck that severed 80 percent of his spinal cord below the neck, that he suffered a crushed voice box, and that he was in perfect health before police chased and ultimately arrested him.

Speaking on CNN, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, a Democrat, admitted that while he was in police custody, Gray "requested medical attention" between one to three times, which was in turn "not requested for him" by police. Rawlings-Blake

also admitted that the officers involved have yet to be comprehensively interviewed about what took place before, during and after Gray's arrest. She defended this obscene situation by saying that “because of our Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights, we have yet to fully engage those officers, and we will get to the bottom of it.”

One of the people who recorded the widely-viewed footage of the police arresting Gray claims that he began filming immediately after he witnessed police using excessive force against Gray. Speaking anonymously, he told CNN that “they had Freddie Gray up into what I would like to call a pretzel type of move, where they had the heels of his feet to his back, and then he was still in handcuffs, and they had his knee to the back of his neck.”

Protester Harold Perry, 73, told a local news station that the arrest took place near his home, and that he heard Gray scream "You're hurting me! Get your knee off my back." He also heard Gray tell police "I'm an asthmatic."



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