

Protests erupt after Minneapolis police shoot unarmed man, “execution style”

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17 November 2015

Protesters gathered outside of the Minneapolis police precinct and a north Minneapolis neighborhood Monday night after unarmed 24-year-old Jamar Clark was shot by the police. According to dozens of witnesses, Clark was handcuffed and laying on the ground when two police officers pinned him down and fired a round into his head early Sunday morning.

The police responded to a report of an assault and said Clark was interrupting the efforts of paramedics to treat the victim of the assault. Police Chief Janeé Harteau denied that Clark was handcuffed when they shot him. The officers were not wearing body cameras when they shot Clark.

Immediately after Clark was shot, residents of the neighborhood gathered as 20 more squad cars arrived and blocked the area off, using mace and pointing guns at residents. Over 150 protesters demonstrated around the North Minneapolis police precinct and have set up an encampment outside, declaring that they will not leave until the police release a video of the shooting along with the name of the officer who fired the round to the public.

On Monday evening, protesters blocked a section of highway for two hours, followed by several arrests.

Though the shooting was not fatal, Clark’s family members told the media that a Hennepin County Medical Center physician had declared their relative “brain-dead.” James Hill, Clark’s father, told the media, “We are just waiting to pull the plug.”

According to Hill, Clark “wasn’t a bad kid.” He told reporters, “The police don’t care, the mayor don’t care, the police [chief] don’t care because they’re going to cover up for each other. My son’s got to get a stand somewhere, and I’m here to give him a stand.”

Betty Smith, a neighbor whose 24-year-old son was shot by the police in 2008, expressed her sympathy for

Clark’s family. “That is the worst call you can possibly get, that your child is murdered.”

Smith demanded that the police officers involved are prosecuted for shooting both her son and Clark. “The police need to be held accountable for murdering our children. None of our children deserve to be shot and killed and talked about like they’re some kind of animals.”

A video recorded by one of the witnesses shows the aftermath of the shooting, as neighbors shouted at the police, declaring that the police had shot Clark without any reason and that the actions of the police will cause riots.

The North zone of Minneapolis is heavily impoverished. A 2011 survey showed that in the whole city of Minneapolis, one in four residents (25 percent) live in poverty, with an even higher rate for black workers at 50 percent. According to a 2011 study by Wilder Research, a group based in Minnesota, the North zone has a poverty rate of one in three residents (33 percent).

This year, police in the US have already killed more than 1,000 people, with an average of 3–4 per day. The daily killings target workers of all races. In Louisiana, two police officers shot and killed a six-year-old autistic white boy and injured his unarmed father on November 3.

On Monday, Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges announced that the city was requesting a federal investigation of the incident, which would be aimed at diffusing popular outrage. In previous incidents of police murder, such investigations have routinely resulted in exoneration for the police.

The officers involved have been put on paid administrative leave.



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