

Masked gunmen open fire, wound five at Black Lives Matter protest in Minneapolis

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25 November 2015

Minneapolis police announced Tuesday night that they had detained four individuals connected to the shooting of five Black Lives Matter protesters the previous night. The gunmen opened fire at activists protesting the November 15 shooting of unarmed 24-year old Jamar Clark by Minneapolis police, wounding five. None of the injuries were fatal.

Police reported Tuesday that two individuals; a 23-year old white male and a 32-year old Hispanic male, were apprehended in connection to the shootings, but their names were not made public. Two other white males, aged 21 and the other 26, turned themselves in during the day, though one was later released.

According to witnesses, a group of masked men approached the demonstrations attempting to start fights with protesters before opening fire on a section of the demonstrators as they left.

“These four white guys walked up ... They had masks and they had a briefcase. I thought they were there to donate [something],” said Carrie Brown, a protester who had witnessed the attack, to the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune*.

Activists from Black Lives Matter Minneapolis released a statement on social media accusing the assailants of being white supremacists.

Miski Noor, a media liaison for Black Lives Matter, told the *New York Times* that the masked group had been appearing at the protests since last Friday, seeking to provoke protesters and videotaping the event.

On Tuesday, protesters rallied in downtown Minneapolis in response to the shooting. They have been holding vigils outside of the Minneapolis Fourth Precinct police station since Clark encountered officers Mark Ringgenberg and Dustin Schwarze on November 15. At the time of Clark’s shooting, the young man was allegedly interfering with a paramedic team attempting

to treat an individual whom Clark had been in a dispute with. Witnesses say that Clark was handcuffed when officers shot him. He died several days later.

Authorities have been hesitant to label the attacks on the Black Lives Matter demonstrators a hate crime. “I know there’s a lot of speculation as to who these people were,” said US Representative Keith Ellison, an African-American whose district includes most of Minneapolis. “And they well could have been, I’m not trying to say they weren’t white supremacists. But I just haven’t been able to piece together enough information to say with any real clarity.”

Police presence in the area was immediately augmented in the area following the attacks. FBI spokesman Kyle A. Loven released a statement declaring that the FBI was monitoring the situation and would decide “as to whether or not any further federal action is necessary.”

Similarly, officials have seized upon the Monday shootings to bolster the image of the police in the wake of the outrage over Jamar Clark’s killing. Hailing the apprehension of the two suspects, Minneapolis Police Chief Janeé Harteau released a statement declaring local law enforcement to be “true professionals” who had “worked nonstop through the night to bring justice in last night’s shooting.”

Immediately prior to the shooting, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton, a Democrat, called for a federal investigation into the killing of Clark.



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