Police attack on unarmed woman in Ypsilanti, Michigan sparks three days of protests

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Several hundred workers and youth gathered in Washtenaw County, Michigan for a third consecutive day on Thursday to protest a brutal police attack on an unarmed woman that occurred in the early morning hours of Tuesday.

Sha'Teina Grady El, described by local television news as employed at Ford Motor Company, and her husband Daniyal Grady El, who works at an eye center, were accosted while outside the home of their daughter, Jacquisy Diggins, at about 1:30 a.m. on Tuesday. Police had formed a perimeter around Diggins' home ostensibly to investigate a "potential shooting." The Grady Els, who live in the same neighborhood, had gathered outside to film the police.

In cell phone video footage captured by neighbor Tovah Taylor, a Washtenaw County sheriff's deputy can be seen punching Sha'Teina Grady El at least three times to the head. Daniyal Grady El was hit with a police taser. The video has been taken down from several news outlets but remains posted on local station WXYZ's site as of this writing.

Both Grady Els are described as immigrants from Africa.

They were arrested Tuesday morning but while Daniyal was released later that day, Sha'Teina was moved to a jail in neighboring Wayne County for an outstanding warrant there. Wayne County, where Detroit is located, is the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic in Michigan and has 20,000 cases and 2,400 fatalities.

On Tuesday afternoon, protestors gathered outside a Washtenaw County Sheriff's building in neighboring Ann Arbor before entering. Inside, County Sheriff Jerry Clayton had to admit to protestors that the video was "disturbing" and would require investigation. The sheriff who attacked Ms. Grady El has been placed on paid administrative leave but not publicly identified.

The protests have grown in scope each day, with Thursday's event estimated at 300 people, about double the turnout from Wednesday. As it moved through the area, it forced the closure of traffic at the normally busy US-23/Washtenaw Avenue interchange, a primary route for those commuting to work at the University of Michigan and other Ann Arbor employers. Organizers have indicated that a protest scheduled for Friday will take place outside the Wayne County jail where Sha'Teina Grady El is being held.

Diggins told the media that her mother "was arrested for no reason. She was beaten for no reason." She added, "I want my parents out [of jail] today. They did nothing wrong. They need to be out."

To add insult to injury and flying in the face of the video evidence made public, the County Sheriff's office has stated that the Grady Els may be charged with assaulting the police officers who attacked them.

Family members have established a GoFundMe page to cover legal and medical bills. As of Thursday night, the campaign had raised more than $11,800.

The protests coincide with a growing wave of anger at police murders around the country. Minneapolis has seen demonstrations against the brutal asphyxiation of George Floyd on Monday by a cop who kneeled on his neck for seven minutes while he was handcuffed and forced to the pavement. Anger has also boiled over regarding the case of Ahmaud Arbery, killed outside Brunswick, Georgia on February 23, by a retired policeman, his son, and a neighbor while the victim was jogging. The district attorney initially recommended that no arrests be made. Not until this month, after a video of the killing was posted online, were the three suspects arrested.

As summer approaches, a combustible mix of social

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anger is being produced by continuing police murders, mass unemployment, planned cuts in social spending and the other ramifications of the ongoing COVID-19 disaster, in which the working class is being forced to pay the price for government and corporate indifference and inaction.

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