

MINNEAPOLIS

# Police transfer black cops amid cries of racism

Minneapolis police leaders are transferring two black officers to the homicide unit after outcry over the demotion of a black detective.

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As the Minneapolis Police Department said Friday it was transferring two black officers into the homicide unit, black community, religious and educational leaders continued to bash the police administration for its record on diversity and how it treats officers of color.

And the criticisms have become downright nasty. But it appeared late Friday that the most recent incident, involving the transfer of well-respected black homicide detective Charlie Adams, might be under reconsideration.

At a news conference at the Minneapolis Urban League, activists Spike Moss and Ron Edwards used a racial epithet to describe how the department dealt with Adams, who was removed from the homicide unit for alleged insubordination. The Rev. Jerry McAfee went so far as to say the department needs to be placed under federal receivership because it can no longer manage itself.

Edwards hinted that a major announcement on what he called the department's ongoing rights violations of black officers will be made Monday. He wouldn't be specific because it would compromise traditional legal protocol, but he indicated "things are moving toward a significant confrontation."

Adams was transferred to a less prominent unit Wednesday after a series of insubordination incidents, the "last straw" coming when the detective contradicted his supervisor in a recent Star Tribune article, said Chief Tim Dolan. But Edwards and others cited the chief's demotion of three other high-ranking black officers during his first year in the position.

It appears Dolan may be bending to some of the public backlash generated by Adams' transfer.

He said Friday that there is still much discussion around the move. He had an unscheduled meeting with Council Member Ralph Remington, who has publicly questioned the decision.

"I told him my problem is why was such drastic action taken?" Remington said of their brief discussion. "Yet, after it was over, I came away with the feeling that there might be a window [for Adams' possible return to the homicide unit]."

Given the hostility, such a return would likely take a lot of intermediaries inside and outside of City Hall.

"I don't know what it would take to get it done," Remington added. "The bottom line is I would like to see Charlie Adams back in the homicide unit. As a city we cannot afford to lose him."

Adams is scheduled to start his reassignment next week.

At Friday's news conference, Moss said Adams, who grew up on the city's North Side, is a hero in the community. His transfer takes down a bridge of trust that was being built with the department, Moss said.



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Portrait of Minneapolis police officer Charlie Adams. After seven years of being Mayor Sharon Sayles

Edwards referred to three other high ranking black officers who have been demoted by Dolan during his first year as chief. One of those officers was replaced by another black officer.

"All these moves smell like racism to the highest degree," McAfee said.

Dolan confirmed that officer Chris Gaiters and Sgt. Chris Granger, who are black, will be transferred to the homicide unit this weekend. He called both men "top performers."

Dolan said it's hard to challenge his record on diversity when he's only been in office for a year. He had to demote one of the officers for disciplinary reasons, and "I'm not going to lower the bar because the officer is a certain color," he said.

He defended the other moves as the right of any chief when they take the position. He added that the department overall is as diverse as it's been.

Obie Kipper Jr., a longtime educator, said Adams and Lee Edwards, a former inspector of the Fourth Precinct, gave the black community stronger voices in the department leadership. The officers were "educators themselves" and they earned their positions in the department, he said.

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