



Recent police misconduct in St. Paul and Minneapolis have raised alarm

March 26, 2021 - by Mel Reeves



March 25

St. Paul press conference on March 25 for 11-yr-old who was allegedly choked by police.

Incidents strike some as provocation

Two separate events involving police misconduct and unnecessary force in Minneapolis and St. Paul on March 24 have raised questions in the community. The incidents have left many wondering why, in this racially charged environment—heightened by the ongoing Derek Chauvin murder trial, and the perception by many in the Black community that he will get away with killing George Floyd—is law enforcement continuing to operate with impunity.

The timing of the actions has led some to suspect that these are provocations and that the officers may purposely be attempting to provoke young people into returning violence for violence.

“The police are trying to get us to do something so they will have an excuse to shoot us. Yeah, I think it’s a provocation; I think they are trying to set us up to do something stupid. They keep pushing us,” said Cameron Clark, cousin of Jamar Clark who was killed by Minneapolis police officers Mark Ringgenberg and Dustin Schwarze in November of 2015.

“What happened here surrounding George Floyd kicked off a movement against police violence. And yet our legislature refuses to make any changes; our city refuses to make any changes that would rein these police in,” said Michelle Gross of Communities United Against Police Brutality at a press conference called by several anti-police violence organizations denouncing police misconduct last Wednesday.

“We’re talking about young people here. Government should be investing in the youth’s well-being and should not take actions that criminalize or traumatize,” said Hennepin County Commissioner, District 2, Irene Fernando.

In Minneapolis, Robbinsdale and New Hope police said they followed a suspected carjacker, who had attacked an elderly couple earlier, into the 3300 block of Knox Avenue in North Minneapolis. Once there, they called Minneapolis police for backup. A Minneapolis police K-9 unit apprehended one suspect who was reportedly bitten by the canine.

[In a Facebook video](#), bystanders who arrived on the scene insisted that the police have the wrong juvenile in custody and screamed for the police to wait for his mother who was reportedly en route. The crowd also voiced concerns about the police attempting to place the youth in a police car, pointing out that he could not sit because of the dog bite.

At some point, the police decided to walk with the suspect to another block, possibly to get away from the crowd. But the crowd insisted it had a democratic right to walk in the street and attempted to follow.

Suddenly, the person filming captured a few Minneapolis police detaining a young Black man. While two policemen were holding him, another cop with a balding head can be seen throwing a haymaker punch with the full weight of his body behind the blow. While the defenseless youth is down and on the ground and showing no resistance, the officer continued to punch him in the head.

The officer doing the punching has been identified by activists as Minneapolis police officer William Gregory who has six complaints on his record and no reprimands.

Incidentally, the sergeant on the scene was one of the officers holding the youth down and he never intervened or tried to get his fellow officer to stop striking the youth.

Adding even more tension to an already tense scene—as police took the youth they attacked in custody—eight Hennepin County Sheriff deputies arrived and walked among the crowd of youth dressed in SWAT gear carrying assault rifles.

A young person identifying himself as Jalyn who was at the scene on Wednesday said, “The video speaks for itself. He asked out loud, “If we already hurting, why still hurt us?!”



King Demetrius Pendleton

Activist Touissant-Morrison at the press conference in Minneapolis.

“Yesterday there was not one police officer willing to be a human to those children,” said Toussaint Morrison, an anti-police violence activist who repeated his statement for effect. Morrison

challenged Minneapolis police Chief Medaria Arradondo.

“This would never happen in White communities. Nobody can imagine a blond-haired, blue-eyed boy from Edina or Hopkins being punched even as he lay on the ground,” said activist Elizer Darris. “We demand immediate termination of all the officers responsible.”

During the press conference, activists identified the officers who were on the scene:

- Brian Slote, Robbinsdale police officer who killed Brian Andren on January 8, 2021. He was sued for excessive force in 2013. The video showed him shoving a juvenile.
- Nicholas Englund, Minneapolis police. He has 17 complaints; one resulting in a 40-hour suspension.
- Richard Knoche, Minneapolis police. He has 10 complaints; one resulting in a letter of reprimand.
- Michael Nelson, Minneapolis police. He has 10 complaints.
- Michael **Meath**, Minneapolis police. He has six complaints resulting in one letter of reprimand.

Other officers on the scene include Minneapolis policemen Yusuf Hassan, John Syaath, Ricky Plunkett, Rashad Powell, and an unidentified female officer from the Robbinsdale police.

In his press conference addressing the events of Wednesday, Chief Arradondo said that his department was looking into the arrests. He addressed the community about the incident and he and Minneapolis city officials said an investigation is underway. “Allow us the time for us to conduct a thorough investigation,” said Arradondo.

In St. Paul

“There is no way that anybody’s child should be treated like this,” said Rayisha Knight at a press conference in St. Paul denouncing the police mistreatment of her 11-year-old son. “Somebody has to be held accountable for this. Nobody’s child should have to go through this. The cops have to be punished. This is not justice they can punish us but they cannot punish their own.”

According to the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office, Knight’s 18-year-old-son Jovan had a warrant for his arrest involving an alleged burglary. The sheriff’s office said it knew where to find him because he was on house arrest.

The mother agreed that police knew where to find him and said she did not understand the need for the no-knock warrant that the police used. She said that police knocked, but before she could respond, they entered the house and pushed past her. She said that even though they had already taken her 18-year-old son into custody, one of the deputies grabbed her 11-year-old son Desmond by the neck and began choking him, even lifting his feet off the ground.

The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office reported that it reviewed the officer's body cam and released a statement saying, "the body-worn camera footage does not show any Ramsey County deputies engaging in the conduct that was reported on social media."

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James March 28, 2021 at 1:02 am

Until the investigation is completed, to label any police action as misconduct is premature at best. From what I have read about the young carjacker that got punched, I can't feel sorry for him.

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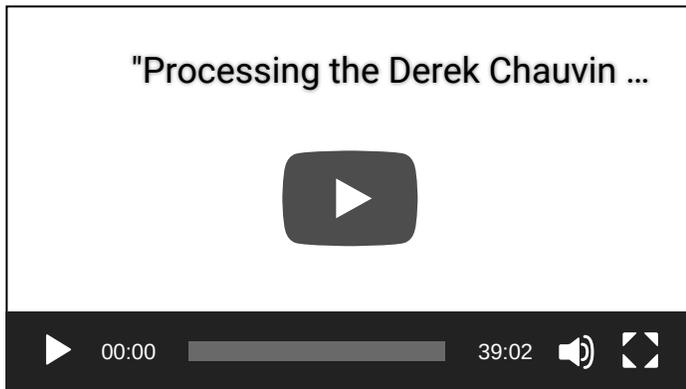


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