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violence is 'adding pain to our communities'



The protest passes 38th & Nobile in Robbinsdale where police murdered a man a week earlier.

An estimated crowd of 50 people gathered Jan. 13 at the Robbinsdale Pump N' Munch to protest the Jan. 8 shooting death of a Ramsey man by the Robbinsdale police department. The protest included speeches calling for an end to police brutality and a half-mile march from the gas station to the Robbinsdale Police Department, where a counter-protest was gathered of 2 people. The event was organized by Families Supporting Families Against Police Violence, United Against Police Brutality and Robbinsdale for Racial Justice and supported by **Justice Squad**.

The man killed in the incident, Brian Andren, was stopped at the gas station the morning of Jan. 8 because the vehicle he was driving was registered to an owner with an active felony warrant in South Dakota, according to the Robbinsdale Police Department.

Speakers at Jan. 13 protest against Robbinsdale shooting call for greater legislative effort

Andren fled from police in the vehicle and was pursued to the intersection of 38th and Noble avenues north, where he exited the vehicle and charged at officers with a knife. Officers shot at him after an unsuccessful attempt to use a stun gun. Andren died at the scene of multiple gunshot wounds, according to the medical examiner's report.

Eyewitness video shows Andren running in circles around several officers before several shots were fired within close range. Investigating agency the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension has identified 17-year Robbinsdale Sergeant Brian Sloat as the officer who fired his gun, and Officer John Tomczik as the officer who discharged his Taser. Tomczik has served less than two years in the police department.





Protest speaker Toshira Garraway Allen, whose fiancé was a victim of police violence over 10 years ago, said that law enforcement officers were “adding pain in our communities” when they decided the use of violence or firearms was necessary.

“If you are not in danger – if your life is not in imminent danger – you should not kill another human being,” Allen said.

According to Robbinsdale Police, officers discharged weapons because they did believe the suspect posed an imminent threat. The BCA has confirmed that the incident was

captured on body-worn and squad-car cameras. Sloat and Tomczik are currently on administrative leave.

Paul Johnson spoke to protesters about a 2018 mental health check that ended in a friend's death.

"In that three minutes and forty seconds, they disobeyed every policy regarding mental health calls," he said. The incident occurred before his community adopted a co-response team for mental health crises, and Johnson alleged that officers didn't follow best practices like leaving space and/or objects between the person in crisis and themselves."

"In other states, reform is being made, it's called police-induced jeopardy. Here, it's called 'Oops, you didn't do it right, take a couple days off, guys, paid,'" Johnson said.

Bills at the table

Speakers appeared to agree that legislation was key to preventing more deaths at the hands of police in Minnesota.

"There are bills on the table that get stuck in Senate," Allen said, and encouraged protesters to pressure Republican senators like Majority Leader Paul Gazelka and Sen. Warren Limmer to give legislation at the senate level more momentum.

Also present was Mohamed Ibrahim, deputy director of CAIR-MN. He told the crowd that CAIR-MN was focused on legislation expanding the statute of limitations and giving more power to community advisory boards that oversee department activity.

Ashley Quiñones also spoke at the rally. Her husband, Brian Quiñones, was killed by Edina and Richfield police in 2019. She expressed her frustration that Minnesota was "not progressing" at the policy level, despite community pressure and being in the spotlight for high-profile incidents like the killings of George Floyd and Philando Castile.

"I've been to 20 states in the last few months, and we are the only ones that are just not progressing," she said.

Family of Tamir

< Rice holds 'Rally for Justice' in downtown Cleveland

Journey to Justice >

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