

# Demonstrators rally against police brutality

JANUARY 20, 1998

More than 200 people of all ages, races and backgrounds marched almost two miles in the streets of downtown Minneapolis Monday afternoon to protest police brutality.

The rally began just after 2 p.m. on the mall in front of the Hennepin County Government Center. After a brief statement from organizers, the procession set out for St. Michael's Church in South Minneapolis.

More than 15 people from the University, including members of the Progressive Student Organization, the University Young Women and University faculty joined the protest.

Onlookers honked and waved as protesters' cries of "If we don't get no justice, they don't get no peace," and "The people, united, will never be defeated," echoed off the downtown buildings.

The protesters were calling for terroristic threat charges against 15-year-old Lawrence Miles Jr. and assault charges against 37-year-old Andre Madison to be dropped.

The People for Justice for Lawrence Miles Jr. and Andre Madison, the event sponsor, claim that the two black males are victims of racially motivated police brutality.

Professor of Political Science August Nimtz Jr., who participated in the rally, said a victory for Miles would be an important step toward healing the problem of police brutality.

"Everything we know about this indicates that it was indeed a cover-up,"

Nimtz said of the case against Miles.

Miles sustained injuries from a shotgun blast in August when Minneapolis Police officer Charles Storlie saw the youth run away with a toy pistol.

Storlie then shot him in the back.

Police claim Miles pointed the gun at officers; some witnesses say Miles never pointed the toy gun at anyone.

The Minneapolis Police Department and Hennepin County District Attorney's office found no wrongdoing on the part of Storlie. Miles was charged with making terroristic threats. He will stand trial Jan. 26.

Madison was visiting at a friend's apartment in north Minneapolis last July when police raided the building looking for drugs. No drugs were found, but more than 500 shots were fired in the botched campaign, two of which hit Madison in the neck and arm.

Police claim Madison threatened them with a shotgun, an assertion Madison disputes. He is currently serving a 36-month sentence for assaulting a police officer.

Protesters claim these incidents are not isolated, but are indicative of an atmosphere of racism and police brutality plaguing not only Minneapolis, but the entire nation.

Nimtz said the group marched on Martin Luther King Jr. Day not to celebrate the gains of the struggle, but to continue it.

"We consciously decided to use the day itself to press forward the way Dr. King would have — to make it real," he said.

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