

Ferguson police chief remains after Justice Department's scathing report

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ferguson (Missouri) Police Chief Tom Jackson was still on the job Friday, March 6, two days after a government report blasted his beleaguered department for years of racial profiling, and Mayor James Knowles III refused to speculate about the chief's future, saying his role was not to "just chop heads."

Meanwhile, three Ferguson employees implicated in racist emails exposed by that report are now gone from their jobs, the mayor said. One was identified as a city court clerk.

Calls for Jackson's removal were renewed again last week after the Justice Department cleared Darren Wilson, a white male who is the former Ferguson officer who shot and killed black 18-year-old unarmed Michael Brown. It cleared Wilson of federal civil rights charges previously against him. A second report released simultaneously found patterns of racial profiling, bigotry and profit-driven law enforcement and court practices in the St. Louis suburb that have come to represent the tension between minorities and American police nationwide.

Attorney General Eric Holder told reporters Friday that the federal government will "use all the power that we have to change the situation" in Ferguson, including possibly dismantling the police force.

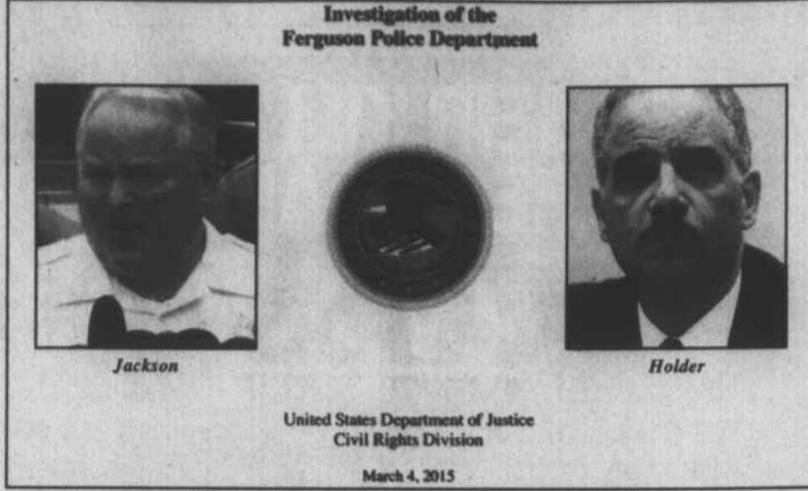
The Justice Department has released its investigation of the Ferguson Police Department, concluding that city law enforcement practices are discriminatory and unconstitutional and calling for sweeping changes. Here are some of the highlights of the report:

THE BASIC FINDING: The police and municipal courts in Ferguson have been treating blacks unfairly, violating the law and the U.S. Constitution. Police use force too often.

HOW THE INVESTIGATION WAS DONE: Representatives of the Justice Department interviewed city and court officials, police officers and citizens. Police records were reviewed, along with court and police data. Justice Department representatives rode along with police officers and observed court sessions.

AMONG THE EVIDENCE AGAINST POLICE:

*From 2012 to 2014, 93 percent of all arrests and 85 percent of all vehicle stops



A November 2008 email said President Obama would not be president for long because "what black man holds a steady job for four years?"

-Racist joke sent in email

involved black people, who constitute two-thirds of the population.

*Blacks were more than twice as likely as whites to be searched during vehicle stops, yet contraband was found 26 percent less often on them than on white drivers.

*From 2011 to 2013, blacks were charged with 95 percent of cases involving "manner of walking in roadway" and with 94 percent of "failure to comply."

*Almost 90 percent of documented force used by officers was used against blacks.

*Police make many arrests for talking back to officers, recording police activities and engaging in lawful protest.

AMONG THE EVIDENCE AGAINST THE CITY COURTS:

*Blacks are 68 percent less likely than others to win dismissal of their cases.

*Blacks represent 92 percent of cases where an arrest warrant was issued in 2013.

*The court often imposes large bail amounts that do not seem justified by public-safety concerns.

*City officials often fix tickets for themselves and their friends.

ALLEGATIONS OF BAD POLICING:

*As a result of a single illegal parking violation in 2007, a black woman spent six days in jail, paid \$550 in fines and still

owed \$541 as of December.

*In 2013, police on their way to arrest someone at an apartment building instead arrested without justification a black man parked outside, handcuffed him and kept him in a patrol car while they ran his record. Faced with a complaint later, a police sergeant described the detention as "minimal" and said the car was air conditioned.

*In 2012, an officer stopped to question a 32-year-old black man sitting in his car with windows that may have been more deeply tinted than allowed under the city code. The officer went on without cause to call the man a pedophile, order him out of his car for a pat-down and ask to search the car. When the man refused, the officer reportedly pointed a gun at his head and arrested him.

*Police broke up a lawful protest on the six-month anniversary of Michael Brown's death by shouting, "Everybody here's going to jail." Two people were arrested simply for recording the police action. Four others were arrested. It appears police were upset about insults written in chalk on the department parking lot and on a police vehicle.

KEY QUOTES:

"*Partly as a consequence of City and FPD (Ferguson Police Department) priorities, many officers appear to see some res-

idents, especially those who live in Ferguson's predominantly African-American neighborhoods, less as constituents to be protected than as potential offenders and sources of revenue."

"*Minor offenses can generate crippling debts, result in jail time because of an inability to pay and result in the loss of a driver's license, employment or housing."

"*Ferguson's approach to law enforcement both reflects and reinforces racial bias, including stereotyping."

"*FDP officers frequently detain people without reasonable suspicion and arrest people without probable cause."

"*City, police and court officials for years have worked in concert to maximize revenue at every stage of the enforcement process."

"*Many officers are quick to escalate encounters with subjects they perceive to be disobeying their orders or resisting arrest."

"*FDP officers' use of canines to bite people is frequently unreasonable."

"*Officers often use force in response to behavior that may be annoying or distasteful but does not pose a threat."

RACIST JOKES:

*A November 2008 email said President Obama would not be president for long because "what black man holds a steady job for four years?"

*A May 2011 email said: "An African-American woman in New Orleans was admitted into the hospital for a pregnancy termination."

Two weeks later she received a check for \$5,000. She phoned the hospital to ask who it was from. The hospital said, "Crimestoppers."

RECOMMENDED CHANGES:

*Shift away from police practices aimed at raising revenue.

*Focus on public safety, rather than stopping people simply because police have authority to do so. End ticketing and arrest quotas.

*Move officers toward de-escalating confrontations.

*The police department should improve race and gender diversity in recruiting, hiring and promotion practices.

*Municipal code violations should result in jail in only the rarest circumstances. Arrest warrants should not be used to collect court fees.

NBTF

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She has also appeared on Broadway in "What the Wine Sellers Buy" and theatre stage in "Colored People Time," "My Sister, My Sister" and "Once in a Wife Time." Morgan will have a play on display for this year's festival. In addition to writing her personal memoir, "A Monkey On My Back," slated to be released on June 23, she has also written a one-woman play based on the book of the same title.

"We will be performing a full-run this season. Hopefully many of you will come out to join me on this captivating, hilarious, thought-provoking journey, which chronicles much of my tumultuous life which will hopefully inspire," Morgan said.

Williams has appeared on Broadway in "Your Arms Too Short to Box with God" and performances in "Selma," and "Spalding Gray: Stories Left to Tell." He was a regular dancer on "Soul Train" in the mid-1970s.

On television, the British-born actor has grabbed the heart of viewers on shows such as "Law & Order: SVU," "NYPD Blue," "E.R.," "Felicity" and the Debbie Allen directed television movie, "Stompin' at the Savoy." He has been in the films "Shadow Boxer," "Shortcuts," "Simone" and "Detour," along with co-directing the independent film "Manhattanites."

Both stars said that they are excited about chairing the event and look forward to what the festival has to offer.

"It's just an honor to

have been asked. It came out of the blue. I had heard about the festival a few years down the line, but I had never really known that much about it. To have been asked to come down and participate ... there's no greater honor," Williams said.

The announcement included a performance by Alyson Williams, a Harlem native and the first female R&B artist signed to Russell Simmon's Def Jam records. She was billed as the event's celebrity performance.

Along with performing, she is writing musical stage plays, books, and television treatments through her production company, AWP: A Woman's Prerogative.

Alyson Williams will perform a special tribute in honor of the late Dr. Maya Angelou at the 2015 National Black Theatre

Festival Opening Night Gala on Aug. 3, 2015.

The NBTF, founded by the late Larry Leon Hamlin, was founded in 1989 in an effort to unite black theater companies while enabling black theatre professionals to express cultural value and perspectives dramatically and powerfully.

The six-day event, which will be held Aug. 3-8, is held biennially and attracts more than 65,000 people looking to attend more than 100 performances. A schedule of events can be found on the agency's website, www.NBTF.org in June.

Tickets range from \$17 to \$42 and can be purchased online, by mail and at the NBTF office. For more information, tickets or volunteer opportunities, contact NBTF at 336-723-2223.



"All My Children" co-stars Debbi Morgan and Darnell Williams speak at the announcement event.

A Marv-tastic evening: NBTF holds kick-off reception

BY CHANEL DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

It was fitting to host the National Black Theatre Festival's Kick-off Reception at Foreign Cars Italia in Greensboro on the afternoon of Monday, March 8 in light of diverse topics and international theatre groups that will descend on Winston-Salem the first week of August.

"It's an exhilarating and very exciting time. It's like an air of energy that's sweeping through right now, especially with the announcement of the co-chairs. It's a feeling of expectation," said Taylor Thierry, executive director for the North Carolina Black Repertory Company. "We are expecting greater sales, more people coming and companies coming from different countries. It's kind of a cross-cultural explosion."

The festival has been held biennially since 1989 and is the only national black theatre in the country offering six consecutive days of professional theatre, film, poetry, workshops, seminars and shopping, attracting theatre

patrons, professionals and scholars.

"It's really an opportunity to get their works broadcast to a very diverse audience. An audience that is historically known to have all types of taste," Thierry said. "Our taste ranges from the strict theatre-goers, to people who come for comedy, to people who come for the lighter type of productions or the one-woman shows. There's such a wide variety, I think that when folks see that there's an opportunity to bring their company here, they see the diversity, themselves and they see that black theatre is for everyone."

Attendees had the chance to join the NCBRC Guild and the Marvtastic Society, two organizations that help support and fund programs like the NBTF.

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, president of the NCBRC Board of Directors and executive producer for the NBTF, said that she's excited about the festival, its history and how it's maintained over the last 20 years. She is particularly excited about the agency's fundraising efforts this year.

Selma

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time of the march.

A veteran of that clash, U.S. Rep. John Lewis, who was severely beaten by police that day in 1965 and suffered a skull fracture, exhorted the crowd to press on with the work of racial justice.

"Get out there and push and pull until we redeem the soul of America," Lewis said. He was the youngest and is the last survivor of the Big Six civil rights activists, a group led by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. that

had the greatest impact on the movement.

Among those in attendance was Peggy Wallace Kennedy, daughter of the late George Wallace, the Alabama governor in 1965 who once vowed "segregation forever."

Selma's fire department estimated the crowd reached 40,000. Former President George W. Bush shared the platform. Republican congressional leaders were mostly absent but one, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, joined the walk.

The walk progressed under the bold letters on an arch, identifying the bridge

named after Pettus, a Confederate general in the Civil War, senator and reputed Ku Klux Klan leader.

Obama, his wife, Michelle, and their two daughters walked about a third of the way across, accompanied by Lewis, who has given fellow lawmakers countless tours of this scene. Bush, his wife, Laura, and scores of others came with them before a larger crowd followed.

Two years after King's historic "I have a dream" speech in Washington, D.C. the Bloody Sunday march became the first of three aiming to reach

Montgomery, Alabama, to demand an end to discrimination against black voters. Scenes of troopers beating

marchers on the bridge shocked the nation, emboldening leaders in Washington to pass the Voting Rights Act five months later.

"Our congressional delegation was very

diverse consisting of Democrats and Republicans who represent districts across America," Butterfield said. "We had a unique opportunity to witness recounts of decades of segregation and the denial of the right to vote."

"The Selma provides compelling reasons why a strong Voting Rights Act is absolutely critical to protecting Americans' right to vote."

"I call on my many Republican colleagues who made this journey to join the effort to amend the Voting Rights Act to comply with the United

States Supreme Court's decision by updating the coverage formula.

"It would be unforgivable for my Republican friends to have made this historic journey and then turn their backs on the need to protect the voting rights of African Americans and other racial minority groups."

On his way to Selma, Obama signed a law awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to participants of the trio of marches, the last of which brought protesters all the way to Montgomery.