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Some protest on streets, others on social media

By Jesse J. Holland

WASHINGTON (AP) - While marchers took to the streets to protest the lack of charges against white police officers in the deaths of two unarmed black men, many more turned to social media to voice their objections to the grand jury decisions from their computers and mobile devices.

Two of the most-discussed social media conversations on Dec. 4 questioned the fairness of policing in the United States: (hash)Crimingwhilewhite: self-reported tales of white people committing crimes while police look the other way and (hash)AliveWhileBlack, corresponding stories of harsh treatment of black people by police and authorities. Topsy, a site that offers Twitter analytics, logged more than 300,000 uses of (hash)Crimingwhilewhite in the past day, while (hash)Alivewhileblack had hit almost 65,000.

Other trending terms included (hash)EricGarner and (hash)ICantBreathe, references to victim Eric Garner and the last words he uttered as a New York police wrestled him to the ground. Celebrities, like hip hop mogul Diddy, took to Instagram to express fear and disgust.

"When I see a cop car, I don't feel safe as a black man. When I see a cop car, I get scared. My kids get scared," Diddy said in a video posted to his account.

A grand jury's decision Dec. 3 not to bring charges against Officer Daniel Pantaleo, who held Garner to the ground, triggered protests around the country that resulted in dozens of arrests. Twitter and other forms of social media quickly became a complement to the protests, particularly among people who shared the protesters' sentiments but couldn't join them for various reasons, said Meredith Clark, professor at Frank W. & Sue Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas in Denton.

"They're using Twitter as a tool to provide support and to lend their voice to these protests when being there physically is not an option," Clark said. Social media also provides a forum to express honest thoughts about American life, and "advance conversations in ways we haven't seen before."

Garner, 43, died July 17 after scuffling with officers who tried to arrest him for selling untaxed cigarettes. The last moments of his life were caught on video that showed Pantaleo holding the unarmed Garner around the neck as Garner repeatedly gasped, "I can't breathe."

On Dec. 3, Staten Island District Attorney Daniel Donovan said the grand jury found "no reasonable cause" to charge Pantaleo. That followed an announcement in Missouri last week that a grand jury decided not to indict police officer Darren Wilson for the fatal Aug. 9 shooting of unarmed Michael Brown, 18, in Ferguson. Brown was black; the officer who killed him is white.

Some who engaged in protests over Garner's and Brown's deaths worried that venting from the safe confines of the Internet, or what some are calling "armchair activism," takes away the incentive for direct action. Amanda Seales, 33, a black marcher who took part in protests in New York City on Wednesday night (Dec. 3), said more activists needed to get off social media and into the streets. "For black people, this isn't new," Seales said.

But Kelly Garrett, professor at the School of Communication at the Ohio State University, said social media actually has the potential to get more people physically

involved in movements.

"Yes, there are some people who will stay home because they have said their part," Garrett said. "But there are also some people who, ... having said something and been part of a larger dialogue, they realize, 'Hey, you know what, I actually need to do this.'"

Associated Press writer Jacob Pearson contributed to this report.



The King Center, in partnership with The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, The Carter Center, The National Center for Civil and Human Rights, and the Yunus Creative Lab, will present two days of events from Dec. 9-10, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

North Carolina NAACP Calls On Elected Leaders to Support Recommended Reforms in Law Enforcement Practices

In honor of the last day of the NAACP's Journey for Justice -- the seven-day march from Ferguson to Jefferson City, Missouri -- the North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP and local branches are sending and delivering letters to local, state, and national elected leaders on Friday, December 5th, asking them to support a list of recommended reforms in law enforcement practices. The NC NAACP and branches across the state are demanding that these legislators set aside time on their agendas specifically to address these reforms. In light of the recent



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grand jury decisions not to indict the police officers who killed unarmed African American men, the NC NAACP is calling for 8 changes that will aim to reverse the trend of mistrust among people of color of the law enforcement officials who are



SPAULDING

Spaulding backs police camera requirement in NC

(AP) - A Democratic candidate for North Carolina governor in 2016 wants current Republican Gov. Pat McCrory to join him in pushing for state legislation requiring local police to wear video cameras on the job.

Durham attorney Ken Spaulding wrote to McCrory this week in light of the fatal police shooting of an unarmed teenager in Ferguson, Missouri. A grand jury declined last week to indict the officer involved.

Spaulding called equipping officers with cameras "a balanced and objective approach" to determine what really happens during similar incidents and would generate mutual respect between police and the public.

Spaulding says federal grants and other money could help defray costs.

Spaulding announced last year he was seeking the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. Attorney General Roy Cooper is planning a similar run.

Obama: Racism, bias in US will take time to tackle

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Barack Obama is prescribing time and vigilance to tackle problems as entrenched in American society as racism and bias.

He also is urging patience, saying progress usually comes in small steps.

In an interview with BET (Black Entertainment Television), a cable television channel, the president described his conversation with a group of young civil rights activists, including a leader of protests in Ferguson, Missouri, he hosted last week in the White House. Racial tensions have been heightened by the failure of grand juries in Missouri and New York to indict white police officers involved in the killings of unarmed black men.

Obama said he told them that "this is something that is deeply rooted in our society, it's deeply rooted in our history."

America has made gains, he said, and that "gives us hope" of making more progress.

"We can't equate what is happening now to what was happening 50 years ago," Obama said, "and if you talk to your parents, grandparents, uncles, they'll tell you that things are better, not good in some places, but better."

Obama said he is advising young people to be persistent because "typically progress is in steps, it's in increments."

In dealing with something "as deeply rooted as racism or bias in any society, you've got to have vigilance but you have to recognize that it's going to take some time and you just have to be steady so that you don't give up when you don't get all the way there," Obama said.

31 arrested in police protests in Durham

(AP) - Authorities say 31 protesters in Durham were arrested after they stopped traffic and didn't follow orders during mostly peaceful demonstrations over police killings of unarmed black men.

Police spokeswoman Kammie Michael says six protesters were arrested Friday night outside the Durham Performing Arts Center when they refused an order to keep moving, disrupting people coming out of a show by comedian John Oliver. About 25 more protesters were arrested several blocks away.

Michael says more than 100 protesters also marched to the Durham Freeway, shutting down traffic for about 30 minutes.

Durham Police Chief Jose Lopez says no one was injured, but the windows were shattered on a police car.

The protesters were angry over grand juries not indicting police officers in deaths in Ferguson, Missouri, and New York.