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NC police seek investigation into release of beating video

ASHEVILLE (AP) - The police chief and the prosecutor in a North Carolina city say they want to know who turned over video of white officer beating a black man to a newspaper, along with a memo about the case.

Asheville police Chief Tammy Hooper tells the Asheville Citizen-Times that the release of the memo and the video was illegal and an investigation is necessary to determine the source of the leak.

"It is unlawful for us to do that. So that points to another type of investigation that would have to go on around that," she said.

Body camera footage is not public record. The footage and the memo were given to the Citizen-Times.

District Attorney Todd Williams also criticized the release of the information and supported an investigation.

"The extrajudicial release of evidence in this case prior to the completion of the investigation, such as the body cam video, risks compromising a potential future prosecution of involved officers and may require its own independent investigation," Williams said in a news release.

Hooper on March 1 issued an apology to Johnnie Jermaine Rush, who is shown in the video being pinned on the ground and beaten by an officer after being stopped for jaywalking in August.

City officials and community leaders, who first learned of the Aug. 24 incident through the Citizen-Times story, said they were outraged at the beating and that police had not notified them about it or the ongoing police investigation into the actions of the officer, Chris Hickman.

Hickman is a decorated 10-year department veteran who was transferred from the patrol division to detective in 2014, the same year he received an medal of honor. On Jan. 14, 2017, he was transferred back to patrol.

He resigned Jan. 5, 2018. He didn't respond to repeated emails and phone calls from the newspaper, the Citizen-Times reported.

City Council member Sheneika Smith said state law about who can see body camera video is too restrictive. Leaders of local governments need to see the videos when there are allegations of excessive force and possible litigation, Smith added.

"When things get out of hand, who's gonna protect our citizens? At the end of the day that's the real focus," she said.

Dewana Little, appointed by City Council to lead the formation of a human relations commission, said review could be done by committees that focus on equity issues and police relations.

"There are all these hurdles to viewing the footage," Little said. "What is the point if we can't hold them accountable for things on the body cams?"

It's not clear if the investigation has started.

In lieu of White House visit, Warriors take kids to museum

WASHINGTON (AP) - With an offer to visit the White House as NBA champions rejected and rescinded, Kevin Durant and the Golden State Warriors instead spent their day off in the nation's capital touring the National Museum of African American History and Culture with local students.

In town ahead of their game against the Washington Wizards on Wednesday night, Warriors players, coaches and front office executives met with students from Durant's hometown of Seat Pleasant, Maryland, which is 8 miles from the White House. Traditionally, the reigning champs will be feted by the president when they play at Washington.

The Warriors didn't want to wade into much political talk at their pregame shootaround Wednesday, a day after they went to the museum.

Did they miss the pomp and circumstance of the customary White House visit?

"No," Durant said. "Not at all."
His teammate David West simply shook his head when asked the same question. Coach Steve Kerr? "You're not going to get me to go down that path, sorry," was his reply.

The Warriors spent Tuesday at the museum with 40 students from Seat Pleasant and 10 more from the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, which helps children who have lost loved ones that served in the military. The private museum tour lasted three hours.

"The kids - their smiles lit up the room," Kerr said. "Our guys understand how much of an impact they can make on these kids. It's a reminder of how powerful sports can be and how transformative sports can be for change."



ose Tomas, the senior vice president of global human resources and the executive vice president for Lockheed Martin (Ret.) (left) and Linda Gooden from the General Motors Board of Directors (right) present Alicia Boler Davis, the executive vice president global manufacturing for General Motors with the 2018 Black Engineer of the Year Award. (General Motors)

Alicia Boler Davis Honored with 2018 Black Engineer of the Year Award

By Freddie Allen (NNPA Newswire Contributor)

The US Black Engineer & Information Technology (USBE&IT) magazine recently celebrated the history-making career of Alicia Boler Davis, the executive vice president of global manufacturing for General Motors, by honoring her with the 2018 Black Engineer of the Year Award, during the BEYA gala in Washington, D.C. Boler Davis is the sixth woman to receive the award.

USBE&IT magazine recognizes, Boler Davis "as a global ambassador of goodwill for underrepresented minorities in science and technology, and for women in STEM," a press release about the award said.

USBE&IT magazine is published by the Career Communications Group, Inc., which was founded over 30 years ago to promote significant achievement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics professional careers, according to the group's website.

Boler Davis began her GM career in 1994 as a manufacturing engineer at the Midsize/Luxury Car Division in Warren, Mich. She has held many positions of increasing responsibility in manufacturing, engineering and product development, according to her biography.

Boler Davis was the first African American woman to serve as the plant manager at a GM vehicle manufacturing plant at the Lansing, Mich., Consolidated Operations and Arlington Assembly in Texas. She also simultaneously served in roles as plant manager of the Michigan Orion Assembly and Pontiac Stamping facilities and vehicle chief engineer, and vehicle line director for North America Small Cars, "positions she held until January 2012," according to the press release about the award.

The press release also noted that, in February 2012, Boler Davis was appointed U.S. vice president of Customer Experience. Later that year, her role was expanded to vice president of Global Quality and U.S. Customer Experience.

"Under her leadership, GM improved vehicle quality and redefined customer care and its interaction with customers through social media channels and Customer Engagement Centers," the press release said. "More recently, Boler Davis was senior vice president, Global Connected Customer Experience where she led the company's

Gun Safety Is about Freedom

By Derrick Johnson (President and CEO, NAACP)

Fear at school was something the Little Rock Nine knew all too well. Facing vitriol, racism, and merciless violence, the Little Rock Nine were escorted, for their own safety, by federal troops to their high school classes. For those brave students selected to make the promises of the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision a reality, fear and terror were a normal part of the school-day routine.

Decades later, fear and terror still exist in our children's classrooms. Due to the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the politicians that support them, meaningful discourse on the issue of gun control is nearly impossible, and in that silence, school shootings from Sandy Hook to Parkland keep the classroom a battleground, not a place of learning.

Some African American communities know all too well the potential danger associated with everyday activities, as gun violence spills into our communities from various angles. Yet, for the most part, schools have remained safe places for our young people.

Given the disproportionate damage gun violence is having on our communities, the NAACP has advocated for sane, sensible laws, to help eliminate or at least to decrease the damage and death caused by gun violence. Requiring universal background checks on all gun sales and transfers, banning military-style, semi-automatic assault guns, enacting tough, new criminal penalties for straw purchasers and gun traffickers, and allowing the Center for Disease Control to research gun violence as a major public health issue are just a few of the reasonable steps lawmakers could take to stem the tide of gun related deaths in neighborhoods across the nation.

Poll: Nearly 6 in 10 Americans say Trump a racist

By Emily Swanson And Russell Contreras

WASHINGTON (AP) - Large numbers of Americans say they think President Donald Trump's policies have made things worse for African-Americans, Hispanics and Muslims. And more than half say the president himself is a racist.

A new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that 57 percent of Americans think Trump's policies have been bad for Muslims, and 56 percent think they've been bad for Hispanics. Forty-seven percent, including three-quarters of blacks, think they've been bad for African-Americans.

Fifty-seven percent of all adults say they think Trump is a racist. The poll finds that 85 percent of Democrats consider Trump racist, but just 21 percent of Republicans agree.

Trump has rejected accusations of racism, telling reporters at one point, "I am the least racist person you have ever interviewed."

Marion Barry statue to pay tribute to a flawed DC icon

By Ashraf Khalil WASHINGTON (AP) - For many Americans, Marion Barry was something of a punchline. The late Washington mayor was largely known around the country for having been caught on video smoking crack cocaine in a 1990 FBI sting.

But inside the District of Columbia, Barry's legacy is far more complicated and emotional. The man who dominated a generation of Washington politics is adored by many as a champion of civil rights and advocate for the city's downtrodden.

These complexities will be on display this weekend when a bronze statue of Barry, who died in 2014, will be unveiled outside the Washington City Council building. The 8-foot statue by sculptor Steven Weitzman will loom over Pennsylvania Avenue just blocks from the White House.

The move to honor Barry in such a way may seem mystifying to non-Washingtonians. But among Barry's supporters, the statue is an appropriate tribute to a legitimate DC icon - a man so popular and influential that he walked out of federal prison and immediately began winning elections again with one of the most improbable comebacks in American political history.

"He was a living legend," said City Councilman Trayon White, during an appearance March 1 on an influential local radio show hosted by Koko Nnamdi. "Marion Barry was an integral part of getting DC where it is today... To honor a man like that who touched so many people - it's right for the city."

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