

For Immediate Release: 8/6/2020

Triad Abolition Project regarding Rally of Support for the Neville Family, and Civil Disobedience Arrests

Triad Abolition Project and Occupy WSNC are on day 23 of our occupation at Bailey Park. While none of our demands have been met, Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough and Chief Catrina Thompson have separately and inadequately addressed the media in regards to the death of John Neville and our civil disobedience. We will continue to pursue justice by way of transparency and accountability, and we will continue to experience joy and community while doing so.

Rally of Support for the Neville Family

On day 22 of Occupy the Block #OccupyWSNC, demonstrators gathered at Bailey Park at 10am.

At 3pm, approximately 300 occupiers, supporters, and the Neville Family gathered on the sidewalk outside the Forsyth County Courthouse for the Rally of Support for the Neville Family. Activists spoke of love for the Neville family and called for transparency and accountability from our officials. Sean Neville offered words of thanks for the movement. Meanwhile, officers lined the windows at the entrance of the courthouse. Bike cops stalked the gathering, following the group even as they marched and threatened participants if they stepped off the sidewalk. Two Sheriff's paddy wagons were stationed along the march route and a group of motorcycle cops waited in a parking lot across the street from the courthouse. Officers also stationed themselves on upper levels of a nearby parking garage, watching the remaining occupiers as the group was at the courthouse & the following march around the jail.

In the [evening](#), dinner was shared at Bailey Park. A vigil began at 9pm, which included a libation, collective singing by the participants, three speakers, dance, and spoken word by Brienne Neville and Tre Stubbs, two of John Neville's children. The three speakers included Reverend Willard Bass, Terrance Hawkins of the Drum Major's Alliance, and Bushi Yamato. The night closed with Jelina Sheppard singing Amazing Grace, the song that Natasha Martin has cited as heard at the end of the video footage in which incarcerated brothers, sisters, and siblings sang as John Neville left the County Jail. There were about 200 attendees to the vigil.

WSPD Chief Catrina Thompson's Conflicting Narrative on Civil Disobedience Arrests

On August 3, WSPD Chief Catrina Thompson stated in an [interview with WXII](#) that:

Chief Thompson said with safety a priority, protesters were warned, given citations, and then charged after disobeying the law by walking in the street. Protesters want those charges dropped.

"If we are really saying that this is what we believe in as protesters and we know the rules from day one and we make the conscious decision to be civilly disobedient, which clearly that has been done and they have admitted that they were acts of civil disobedient, then you hold your charge," Thompson said. "When Rosa Parks made the decision not to give up her seat knowing what the law was at the time, she got arrested. She went to jail, she didn't ask anybody to drop her charges. Paid her fine and then she went on. That's what leadership is."

Chief Catrina Thompson does well to remember Rosa Parks' heroism. In referencing Rosa Parks, she also acknowledges the parallelism of our cause and fight against systemic and structural violence toward Black bodies. What we hope that the Chief, as a Black woman, will come to understand about both Rosa Parks' ultimatum (not decision) and our fight is that we will continue to demand change even, and especially, when the "rules" are unjust. Indeed were it not for strong and justice-minded, transgressory women like Rosa Parks who refused to just "go on," as the Chief would have us do, Chief Catrina Thompson would not have the position and authority that she has today. In Chief Thompson's own words, "I have experienced racism and injustice, but in our world we are taught that this is the expectation and you have to learn how to live with it." Like Rosa Parks, we strive for a world where racism and injustice are not regarded as the norm and expectation. We refuse to live with it, and we will not allow others like John Neville to die for it.

On August 4, YES! Weekly reported an [interview with the Neville Family](#), in which it was stated:

Kris said that the 55 protest-related arrests in July show the persistence of people fighting for change in Forsyth County and that the fight needs to be fought.

"I appreciate that people put themselves on the line like that—to possibly be arrested and be charged with something on behalf of fighting for policy change and justice," Kris said.

"Civil disobedience is what has caused change throughout history—no one has ever followed the rules and gotten change. You change policy by putting yourself in a situation that makes the justice system notice you."

Brienne called the people who were arrested from the #OccupyWSNC group "the most selfless group of individuals" she has met.

"When I asked the group, 'how many of you had been arrested,' and 90% of them raised their hands—and the ones who didn't said, 'we are next,' I can't help but to appreciate that," she said. "And it was a diverse group—you had Black, white and Hispanic people out there saying, 'we will do whatever it takes to get these reforms made.' While, of course, you never want to see someone get arrested for something like that, especially being peaceful in the middle of the street in front of other families, we as a family do appreciate the sacrifice made by others."

FCSO Use-of-Force Policy Updates

On Day 23, Triad Abolition Project was approached to comment on the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office Use-of-Force policy changes made in response to George Floyd and John Neville.

Updates to the FCSO Use-of-Force policy were last updated on July 9th, which Triad Abolition Project previously wrote about in the [news release](#) that was shared with media and on the TAP website on July 26, 2020. Our statement on the FCSO Use-of-Force policy remains the same: policy has not addressed the banning of the prone restraint, nor has it addressed immediately notifying the public of officer-related deaths, nor has Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough responded to any of TAP's questions asking for transparency and accountability for John Neville's murder via serious bodily injury sustained in FCDC custody. Furthermore, the July 9, 2020 updates to the FCSO Use-of-Force policy are not framed as in response to the deaths of George Floyd and John Neville. TAP also shared today that we do not find the implementation of the [Guardian RFID](#) system acceptable as a form of solution for jail deaths because it would mean more surveillance, thus expanded policing and increased funds. Indeed, Guardian RFID technology would not have prevented FSCO's killing of John Neville nor would it have prevented officers from using specific maneuvers and techniques of hostility, extreme force and violence, such as the hogtie and prone restraint.

In our Press Release on 8/3, we stated that the *Winston-Salem Journal* reported on July 17th that Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough and FCSO, starting on August 1st, would implement [medical training for 50 detention officers](#), including members of the jail's special response team. As of August 3rd, the Public Affairs Office of FCSO has stated that this training has "no confirmed date" and that it is in collaboration with Forsyth County Emergency Management, a branch of the City of Winston-Salem. On the [Emergency Management website](#), it is defined as "Emergency Management is the combined efforts of local, state, and federal governments to protect the citizens from the effects of disasters, both natural and man made," which does not include medical emergency response-specific terminology.

Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough's Announcement to Name Cellblock After John Neville

On August 4th, Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough said in a [press conference](#) that he plans on renaming the cellblock where John Neville was seriously injured by detention officers and a Wellpath nurse after John Neville. Triad Abolition Project finds this to be heinous and terrorizing for the incarcerated brothers, sisters, and siblings in the County jail. Furthermore, that an institution who alleges to "enhance the quality of life and sense of community in Forsyth County by providing effective criminal justice services that are guided by integrity and compassion" would support and promote naming a cell block in memory of an inmate in whose death it is directly complicit is shameful and indicative of a lack of the same compassion the FSCO claims to espouse.

Day 24 Collaborative Programming at Occupy the Block

On Day 24, Friday, 8/7, Occupy the Block will host "Breaking Down Systems of Inequality in Winston-Salem," which will include: Action for Equity and Triad Restorative Justice on the Education System, Hate Out of Winston on the Judicial System, Prisoner Outreach Initiative on the Carceral System, and Housing Justice Now on Tenants' Rights. The event will begin at 6:30pm, and dinner will be provided by Delicious by Shereen at 6pm.

Our Demands

Organizers intend to maintain the occupation until our demands are met. Those demands are as follows:

1. Respond to all questions posed by TAP and UC (outlined below).
2. Ban the use of the prone restraint (hogtie) on ANY civilian, incarcerated or not, sick or not). Make relevant policy changes in the FCDC around protocol for inmates in medical distress.
3. Notify the public of any death involving an officer or deputy immediately. Make relevant policy changes around transparency and accountability in deaths of citizens in custody of the county (including in FCDC and other guardianship situations).
4. Dismiss all charges against arrested peaceful protesters.

For further information, please see @TriadAbolitionProject on Instagram. All press release documents can be found at www.triadabolitionproject.org.

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