

For Immediate Release: 7/25/2020

Winston-Salem Demonstrators Regarding **10 More Civil Disobedience Arrests and Our Demands**

On day 11 of #OccupyWSNC, demonstrators gathered at Bailey Park at 10am. A Legal Observer with the National Lawyers Guild visited the Occupy to share information on how to become a Legal Observer via a training on August 1st. The registration link is here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqEliAD1b4wRBWEkUu5InAzY03FqQMWROi78lc6qIDez7AJw/viewform>

At approximately 7 PM, demonstrators from #OccupyWSNC marched from Bailey Park to Fourth and Cherry Streets. Demonstrators marched around the four corners with signs and chants outlining our four demands. This demonstration took place in the middle of the new Streatery, in which Fourth Street was blocked off to traffic on either side of Cherry Street. Demonstrators repeatedly praised and thanked local business owners, and made clear to patrons that this action was in no way directed toward our local businesses or anyone enjoying the evening in the street– but was rather an action to raise awareness in our city and invite our local citizens to join us in asking these demands are met immediately. Many citizens joined in our demonstration, and many more people in Winston-Salem heard the name of John Neville today.

Four demonstrators stood along Cherry Street hand-in-hand, while WSPD officers looked on and eventually blocked and directed traffic. When they cleared all incoming traffic on Cherry Street, officers began arresting the demonstrators. Though traffic was being redirected, officers took the demonstrators nearly two blocks down Cherry Street, where they searched each demonstrator's belongings and their person (which they did not do with previous arrests), and loaded them into police vehicles. Two paddywagons were called in, and two of the first four demonstrators were loaded into the vans while the other two were taken to the FCDC. Ultimately a total of ten demonstrators were arrested for impeding traffic. The WSPD redirected traffic, and after arresting all demonstrators, continued to stand in and block traffic with their bodies, cars, and paddywagons.

As demonstrators waited for our comrades to be released at the magistrate's office, decorated vehicles drove by honking and cheering in solidarity. One comrade arrested the previous day was fully booked for reasons unknown. Another arrested comrade reported that an officer said to him that the protestors are wasting time and resources, and that the protest was ridiculous and preventing the WSPD from fighting real crime. The demonstrator, a former marine, expressed that he served for and believes in the constitution, including the right to protest our government.

Those previously arrested were given a \$1,000 secured bond, up \$750 from the previous day for those on their second arrest. Those arrested for the first time today received a \$500 unsecured bond, same as yesterday. Also the same as yesterday, one demonstrator was chosen to be fully booked into the jail as a form of intimidation. All demonstrators were released at approximately 11:20pm.

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.

Our Questions

Why are you covering up a murder?

We demand answers to all of the following questions: Was Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough at any time on the scene during the hogtying of Neville? Why has the hogtie remained an acceptable restraint in Forsyth County when it has been banned in the majority of police precincts across the country years ago? Have there been any changes in the medical provider since Neville's death? How many other deaths have occurred at the detention center since the death of Neville? Have there been changes to the handcuff policies of sick inmates? When was the last time the FCSO conducted an overall use of force training and handcuffing training for its deputies and detention officers? Were the detention officers that handcuffed Neville certified to handcuff him? Have there been any policy changes for how to handle handcuffs when the key breaks, for when bolt cutters are necessary? When did Sheriff Kimbrough and DA O'Neill become aware and view of the contents of the video footage, specifically viewing Mr. Neville being hogtied and calling out, "I can't breathe"?

Why was Guilford County never notified of John Neville's death? What would have happened had Guilford County ADA Spiker known that John Neville was resuscitated after losing his pulse in FCDC custody when she was asked to release his unsecured bond? Would these staff members have still been charged had SB 168 not been vetoed by Governor Cooper? Why were these staff members allowed to continue working with our incarcerated siblings for seven months after their involvement in a murder? Would the public have been notified of this murder had SB168 not been vetoed by Governor Cooper? Was the passing of SB168 intended to shield the murder that took place in the FCDC from the public? What involvement did Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough have in the proposal of SB 168 the night before news reports on the death of John Neville were to become publicly available?

Furthermore, according to the Grace, Tisdale, & Clifton website, "Mike and the firm Grace, Tisdale & Clifton are one of the two local firms who represent local law enforcement through the Police Benevolent Association." Michael Grace, the lawyer for the John Neville estate, has been representing the Sheriff's Department since Sheriff Shatzmen's tenure, and presented Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough to the court and to the public at his swearing in ceremony. What rules of professional conduct under the NC State Bar Rule 1.7 Conflict of Interest are implicated by Michael Grace representing both the estate and the Sheriff's Office?

Why are you, Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough and DA Jim O'Neill, covering up a murder?

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

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