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Ferguson ruling raises riots across the nation

by Nora Crumley

On Nov. 19 the nation's eyes were on the St. Louis County Grand Jury, as they decided not to indict police officer Darren Wilson in the fatal shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown.

The grand jury, made up of nine white jurors and three black jurors, had been meeting on the case since Aug. 20.

The jury was assembled to determine if there was enough evidence to indict Wilson of criminal charges relating to the death of Brown. The grand jury listened to witness's testimonies and a statement from Wilson himself in order to decide if there was probable cause to justify an arrest and criminal charges.

The grand jury decision was based upon probable cause unlike beyond a reasonable doubt, which is the standard which applies in a criminal trial. Their verdict was reached months after Brown was initially shot and killed after an altercation between Brown and Wilson.

After the grand jury's decision was announced stating that no charges would be given to Wilson, protests broke in major cities throughout the country including Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and Seattle.

University and high school students expressed their disappointment with the grand jury's decision with moments of silence in honor of Brown.

Before the protest started, Ferguson prepared for the worst: schools closed, the national guard was called, and stores were boarded



Rioters in Ferguson, MO surround a police car in protest after the grand jury's final ruling on Nov. 19 | AP Images

up in anticipation of violence.

According to the New York Times, St. Louis County police chief Jon Belmar stated, "As soon as Mr. McCulloch [St. Louis County Prosecutor] announced the verdict, the officers started taking rocks and batteries."

Houses and cars throughout Ferguson were burned, stores were looted and gun shots could be heard ringing through the streets. Belmar said The New York Times article that no gun shots were shot from weapons belonging to Ferguson law enforcement.

"We are profoundly disappointed that the killer of our child will not face the consequences of his actions," said the Brown family in reaction to

the grand jury's decision. Despite this statement, they asked for peaceful protests to remember their son.

St. Louis County prosecutor Robert P. McCulloch retold the steps of the incident that were presented to the grand jury involving Brown and Wilson at the press conference announcing the grand jury's verdict.

McCulloch explained police officers do have a right to use lethal force if they truly believe their life is in critical danger. The grand jury's job is to determine if Wilson's life was in danger. Wilson's account of the altercation states that he feared for his life and told investigators that he was pinned in his vehicle and physically assaulted by Brown.

However, some witness

statements about the altercation are contradicting. One witness, according to the New York Times, was Michael T. Brady. Brady stated, "I can't say whether he was punching the officer or whatever. But something was going on in the window, and it didn't look right."

Another witness, Piaget Crenshaw, whose statement was published in the New York Times, said that Brown was "trying to flee." Another witness, Tiffany Mitchell, stated "Michael was pulling off and the cop was trying to pull him in."

Though Wilson was not charged by the grand jury, the family of Michael Brown is looking into other legal measures in order to hold Wilson responsible.

The family's lawyer, Benjamin Crump, stated to the New York Times "They didn't trust this prosecutor. They are going to try to see if they can do something to get some positive change of this because they understand this system needs to change."

Protests for Brown are popping up across the nation. President Obama took notice of the events happening at Ferguson making a public statement saying, "We have made enormous progress in race relations over the course of the past several decades. But what is also true is that there are still problems, and communities of color aren't just making these problems up."

However, the problems of mass protests is not only an issue in the Ferguson. Ever since the death of 44 year old Staten Islander Eric Garner, Americans have been outraged at the use of alleged excessive force by police.

Garner, who was approached by officer Justin Damico, exclaimed "Don't touch me." Soon thereafter officer Daniel Pantaleo got Garner in a choke hold and forced his head into the pavement as Garner repeatedly said "I can't breathe."

Eventually an ambulance arrived on the scene in which Garner suffered cardiac arrest on his way to Richmond University Medical Center. After a bystander's video of Garner's death surfaced, protests erupted around the country, including in downtown Chicago and NBA players like LeBron James wearing shirts that read "I can't breathe."

The referendum: plans quickly becoming reality



The final model of New Trier's Winnetka campus after the referendum is completed in 2017 | NT Website

by Charlie Clarke

With the passing of New Trier's referendum, the school is preparing to begin renovation this spring.

The \$89 Million project includes the reconstruction of New Trier's tech/arts building, music building, and cafeteria.

Additionally, New Trier will add 25 new academic classrooms and 3 new science labs.

By the expected end of the renovation in 2017, the school and all of its rooms will be equipped with new, energy-efficient heating and cooling systems.

The renovation process will begin with the tech/arts building this spring as students start to move out of their classes held in the "T" wing. New

Trier's Director of Communications, Nicole Dizon, spoke about the transition out of the old building to prepare for demolition. "The goal is to get some of the tech/art students moved out of their classrooms in the late spring, very temporarily, so the sight work can begin," she said. There is no exact date of the first classes moved.

The demolition will start this summer. Simultaneously, the construction crews will begin working on laying gravel and transporting the trailer classrooms for the new building.

The trailer classrooms will be outside of the building during the construction process.

During the 2015-2016 school year, the construction crews will be

remodeling the new, more modern tech/arts building featuring a rooftop garden with study and hangout spots.

"The beauty of this project is that while the building is under construction, there will be a large corridor connecting the old to the new, so the workers can work on the building without disrupting the students too much," mentioned Dizon.

During the summer of 2016 the largest part of the demolition will take place. It includes the destruction of the music wing of the school and the cafeteria, which has dated back over one hundred years to 1912.

"Like in the tech/arts demolition,

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New-look Names assembly debuts

by Emma Willcocks

Last Wednesday's Names Program at the Northfield Campus was altered from past years to not include the controversial "open mic" confession time.

The "open mic" portion of the program was a combination of relatable and emotional, with students speaking in front of fellow peers to talk about their own experiences as an ally, bully, target, or aggressor.

The old format of the program divided the freshman class into two groups participating on different days. For the first half of the day, Names leaders talked about bullying and its effects. They returned to the auditorium for a wrap up of the day after lunch. This year's program was cut in half, with no open mic time.

According to some faculty and program leaders, once the lessons of the day had worn off, students only remembered the "open mic" confessions, causing students who spoke to experience negative effects down the road. They also believed that some students weren't going up to share with the right intentions, and that some shared stories that weren't particularly relevant to the program.

However, without the "open mic" session, some freshmen thought the program lost some of its most interesting moments. "To be honest, I thought it was kind of boring," freshman Maggie Blommer

said.

One junior Names facilitator said, "People are split on whether "open mic" is a good idea. It can be a very liberating experience for someone to get up there and speak and let out something they were holding inside. However, there is also a risk factor and it is tricky to know just how much you should open up."

According to facilitators, people in previous years have strayed from the topic of bullying and talked about other emotional experiences. "The coordinators of Names want the assembly to stay focused on the topic of bullying because that's what the whole program is about," said the facilitator.

A different Names facilitator said, "I think the 'open mic' part of Names has been very eye opening for the people in the audience. It was just a space where freshmen can share moments where they've taken the roles of the ally, target, bystander, or aggressor."

"From what I saw today, the girls in the advisory I facilitated showed how meaningful it is to share those same stories to a smaller group and then have a chance to reflect on how to move forward," said a facilitator.

The facilitator is hopeful about the future of Names. "Overall, I believe the changes to Names will have a more powerful impact on the Class of 2018," said the facilitator.