The Case of Mike Brown.. #MikeBrown #Ferguson

August 18, 2014 By Rae Lewis-Thornton

I have to admit, when I first saw the picture of Michael Brown laying in the middle of a Ferguson street, my first reaction was, 'Here we go again." Then my impulse was to say, "But what about black on black crime?" and I said as much in a Facebook post that I have since deleted. I'm the first to admit when I am wrong no matter the context. For sure my frustration with Chicago's violence is not an excuse for insensitivity of anyone's death, no matter the circumstance.

Then I turned to Twitter and everything changed. The tweets on Michael Brown's death and the police standoff was all consuming. I got sucked into the hashtags #Ferguson and #MikeBrown. Black Twitter had taken up the case of Mike Brown and was demanding justice. The images coming out of Ferguson from tweets were powerful. The "RT" re-tweets were massive and have been non-stop since Mike's death. Mainstream media are now admitting that Twitter broke the real story and brought worldwide attention to the murder of this young man. Can you image Palestinians tweeting residents of Ferguson on how to handle tear gas? Twitter has that power.

To catch you up to date based on the information that I have today. An 18 year old, unarmed young man by the name of Michael Brown was shot by police officer Darren Wilson, who has been a member of the mostly white (50 of 53) police department of Ferguson for 4 years.

Michael and his friend Dorian Johnson where walking down the middle of the street when Officer Wilson asked the boys to get out of the middle of the street. According to Dorian, they had a few words, Officer Wilson pulled off, then backed up. After trying unsuccessfully to pull Mike Brown into the car through the window, Officer Wilson then got out of the car and started shooting. They started running after the first shot. Two additional eye witness confirms the story of Dorain that Mike Brown, eventually stopped put his hands in the air and Officer Wilson continued to shoot. A preliminary autopsy was released today, indicating that there were at least 6 shots to the front of the body with 2 being to the head.

Tensions rose to an all time high after the police let Mike Brown's body lay in the streets for 4 hours and a good portion of that Mike seemed to have been uncovered. His mother, father and family looked on in horror.

Tensions rose and eventually led to a stand off with black members of the community and the Ferguson police draped in military gear before any outside intervention. There was a standoff for four days that erupted into a riot, tear gas, rubber bullets and arrest. The press had given Michael Brown's death almost no coverage until two reporters were arrested. Most of the news was coming from Twitter. In fact, through Twitter news outlets learned of the journalist arrest.

Ferguson is in turmoil and adding to the fuel was the police departments handling of the case. In addition to the blatant disregard for the protesters, it took nearly a week to disclose the name of the officer and then from a Freedom of Information request.

Wilson's name but not his picture was released on Friday in the back drop of information about Mike Brown that had no bearing on his murder. This created even more tension on the ground in Ferguson and Twitter exploded dissecting Chief's Thomas Jackson statement and calling out the hypocrisy, forcing him to have another press conference that afternoon clarifying the press conference that morning.

All eyes are on Ferguson as the protest and clashes with law enforcement continues. As I write this blog post, the National Guard is rolling into Ferguson to restore order, peace on the other hand, can only be restored when the murderer of Michael Brown is brought to justice.

Me, well I have lots more to say about my life and HIV/AIDS for sure, but right now I have lots to say about the micro topics surrounding the death of Mike Brown and the situation in Ferguson. More blog posts are forthcoming. On Friday I wanted to tweet my usual #FuckinFriday hashtag focusing on HIV prevention, but was virtually paralyzed. What could I say to young people about safe sex in a society where their life is not valued and right wing, racist trolls are seeking out the hashtag #Ferguson and tweeting that Mike was just another koon?

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