

D.C. Police Consulted INS During Disturbance;
Immigration Agency Was Asked for Information on Several People Arrested
in Mt. Pleasant

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Body

District officials said yesterday that in the middle of the Mount **Pleasant disturbances** this week, the **D.C. police** department **asked** the U.S. **Immigration** and Naturalization Service for **information** about **several** of the **people arrested**.

The administration of Mayor Marion Barry for years tried to distance itself from the INS to encourage illegal immigrants to use city services. **Police** have tried to persuade **people** cooperating with investigators that their **immigration** status is irrelevant. It is a sensitive issue because many Hispanic activists have lobbied the city not to work with the **immigration** service and not to limit city services to documented residents.

Suzanne Cepeda, executive director of the Council of Hispanic **Agencies** in the city, said the city made a mistake in summoning **immigration** service officials. "The presence of the INS always makes **people** very concerned," she said. "**People** will be afraid and frustrated to hear that. But if it is not continuing, that will diminish it."

Lt. Reginald Smith, a **police** spokesman, said yesterday that of the 230 **people arrested** this week in the street **disturbances** and subsequent curfews, 25 percent are Hispanic, and 16 percent are juveniles. The department did not provide a further breakdown.

The Washington Post examined a sample of **police arrest** logs filed at **police** facilities in the city and found that the percentage of blacks **arrested** from Sunday to Thursday increased each day as the percentage of Hispanics declined.

The Post survey, which included 105 of the 193 adults **arrested**, found that 53 percent are non-Hispanic blacks and 38 percent are Hispanic, mostly from El Salvador. Eight percent are non-Hispanic whites, and 1 percent are Asian.

Mount **Pleasant** and Adams-Morgan remained quiet yesterday, as **police** maintained a visible presence along the main streets. Lt. Smith said no new **arrests** were made in connection with the **disturbances**.

Mount **Pleasant** merchants announced plans for an outdoor party today for the customers they expect to return. The Mount **Pleasant** Business Association will have banners strung across the street that say "**Mt. Pleasant** Invincible" in both English and Spanish, and stores will sell posters and T-shirts bearing the same logo.

On Tuesday, the city's Civilian Review Complaint Board, which investigates complaints of **police** misconduct, will hold a forum for residents of Adams-Morgan and Mount **Pleasant** to discuss concerns regarding **police** conduct

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during the disturbances. The forum, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., will be at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, at 16th Street and Park Road NW.

Yesterday, city officials said that the immigration service had been asked by someone in the police department to help determine the community ties of a few people it had arrested, and to help explain the tactics that a few others used in spreading violence through the Northwest neighborhood.

Mayor Sharon Pratt Dixon has said repeatedly in recent days that the city did not ask the immigration service for assistance. On Wednesday, while speaking to Hispanic community leaders, the mayor said, "Under no circumstances has the government brought in the immigration bureau at all."

"There's no contradiction" between what city officials said earlier this week and what they said yesterday, said Vada Manager, Dixon's spokesman. "What the mayor has been addressing is that we had not asked anyone to come in and make arrests or be on the streets of Mount Pleasant . . . We just needed to have intelligence information on certain incidents, to see what kind of tactics we were dealing with. It was for that purpose only -- not to cart people across the border on the spot."

Duke Austin, an INS spokesman, said yesterday that the four representatives it sent one night this week to a police command center near the disturbances did not request a roster of those arrested.

Austin said police asked them to help check the backgrounds on less than a dozen people arrested. All those checked were properly documented, Austin said.

"We played a minor role there," he said. "Given the situation, there was a recognition that the INS could have inflamed the situation. We did not want to heat it.."

Manager said some people arrested had used violent tactics, such as setting fires, that "had not been seen in D.C." He added that the city asked the immigration service to check the backgrounds of some arrested people who seemed to be leaders in inciting crowds.

Smith said the immigration service was one of many agencies that briefly helped the department. "There wasn't any hounding, and they didn't play any enforcement role," Smith said.

The Post's survey of 105 adults arrested out of a total of 193 sketched the following picture: Forty-nine percent of those arrested are 18 to 22 years old, 33 percent are 23 to 30, and 18 percent are older than 30.

Seventy percent of the arrests were for curfew violations.

Sixty-three percent of those charged with breaking curfew are non-Hispanic blacks, and 22 percent are Hispanic. Eleven percent are non-Hispanic whites.

Two men charged early Tuesday with curfew violations were also charged with possession of marijuana. A third man, arrested early Wednesday, was charged with possession of cocaine.

One police captain who worked the streets every night this week described most of the curfew violators as "arrogant and defiant, or else curiosity seekers."

He said many non-Hispanics acted surprised that they too were subject to the curfew regulations.

The captain said police stopped all pedestrians and cyclists, arresting those who did not have identification or who were not on their way home or to work.

But others told a different story. Amilcar Blanco, 22, said he had just parked his car and was returning to his apartment on the 1300 block of Irving Street NW Tuesday night when several officers placed him under arrest.

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"I said, 'What's the charge?' and they said, 'Throwing rocks and bottles,' " Blanco said. "Then they searched me and found nothing, but they said, 'You're going in anyway.' " He ultimately was charged with curfew violation.

Blanco said he was in Mount Pleasant when trouble broke out Sunday night, but did not get involved in the melee.

He stayed in Monday night because of the curfew, and went out on Tuesday night to drop off a friend who was afraid to walk home. After his arrest, Blanco paid a \$ 50 fine instead of arguing the charge.

Staff writers Patrice Gaines-Carter and Keith Harriston and staff researcher Robert Thomason contributed to this report.

Graphic

PHOTO, POLICE ARREST A YOUNG MAN MONDAY NIGHT WHILE ONLOOKERS STAND BACK. POLICE SAID 230 PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE DISTURBANCES AND CURFEWS. LARRY MORRIS; CHART

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