

Protesting police-involved fatal shooting, more - Danville Register & Bee (VA) - April 9, 2018

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With signs that read "We want answers" and "Black Lives Matter," more than 100 mostly black protestors marched to city hall in the downtown Monday evening following the police-involved shooting of **Juan Markee Jones**, a 25-year-old black man.

"Somebody didn't need to sacrifice their life," the Rev. Alonzo Tate Jr. told the crowd.

At times, the protest grew tense, especially as Danville Police Department Chief Scott Booth stepped up in front of the Danville Municipal Building to address the crowd.

But his words were hard to hear, sometimes because people shouted over top of him, and other times because his voice did not carry over the crowd.

He did note that the names of the officers involved in the shooting would be announced in a few days — as part of a policy of naming officers involved in a shooting three days after the event, an apparent carryover from the administration of former Chief Phillip Broadfoot, who retired in January.

The protest, and the shooting, comes on the heels of other mass-protests against officer-involved shootings of black men nationwide.

At one point Monday evening, a handful of protestors standing atop city hall steps shouted in a singsong tone: "We want justice, we want peace!"

Protestors locked arms and prayed, while others live-streamed the event from their phones as close to a dozen Danville police officers watched over the crowd.

"It does not make sense," marcher Michelle Trent said about the shooting.

Trent asked the protestors to remain peaceful, and to take their concerns up at Danville City Council meetings. She also asked them to register to vote.

"Let them see," Trent said. "Let them hear your voice."

Fellow marcher Tae Holland asked the crowd to remember Jones' mother and to keep her in their thoughts.

"There's nothing she can do about none of this," he said.

Protestor Sarah Lipscomb told the crowd that their lives were important.

"You are kings and queens and you do matter," Lipscomb said.

Leading the group in prayer, Tate, who is the pastor at Immanuel Kingdom Praise and Worship Center, also asked for prayers to go out to the police department.

"God, the city of Danville needs you right now," Tate said.

Among the protestors approached for comment, several declined to speak to the Danville Register & Bee, while others said they showed up to show solidarity with the victim and the community.

"I just came to show my respect," said Danville resident Antionette Garland.

She added that "some of these kids need to get right with God," and said she needed to as well.

What happened to Jones on Sunday morning should not have happened, she said.

"He didn't deserve to be shot," Garland said.

Dominic Coleman, 27, said he was friends with Jones all his life.

"He was a good person," Coleman said, adding that he was fun to be around. "He was loyal. He didn't do nothing wrong."

"I want justice — not just for Danville, but everywhere," Coleman said.

He wondered aloud why the situation couldn't have turned out differently.

"Why did the officer choose the gun?" he said.

Danville resident Rickey Everett questioned the tactics of police.

"They're quick to shoot somebody with no gun," he said.

It is not known whether Jones had a weapon during the incident.

Theresa J. Carter, a member of Mothers Stronger Together, said she was at the event for social justice and wants the violence to stop.

"I don't like this," Carter said. "Not in my city. It's sad."

Elders in the community need to take the young people into the classroom and teach them who they are and where they came from, she said.

"I don't want them killing each other," Carter said.

Danville resident Latasha West said, "Our black men are dying amongst each other and from the

police, as well. We need to value our lives and value ourselves so they'll value us."

"I didn't know the young man [Jones], but it was a life, somebody's son," West said. "These kids ... what kind of life are they going to have if we don't stop this now?"

"[We're] beautiful black people," she said. "We need to realize that."

Fifty-seven-year-old Johnny B. Mayo, holding his 3-year-old grandson Kayden, said he came to support everyone.

"It's a sad situation," Mayo said.

He said he was happy to see so many young people and others gathered, but wished the reason was different.

"I just wish it could be on a more positive note," said Mayo, a member of Virginia Organizing. "I'm glad to see everyone is being peaceful and respectful."

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