

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Police Officer Who Shot Michael Brown Resigns

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FERGUSON, Mo. (AP) — The Ferguson police officer who fatally shot 18-year-old Michael Brown resigned Saturday, and protests intensified in the St. Louis suburb where violence erupted earlier this week when a grand jury decided not to indict him.

Darren Wilson, who had been on administrative leave since the Aug. 9 shooting, resigned effective immediately, according to his lawyer, Neil Bruntrager, who declined further comment. An attorney for Brown's family didn't immediately return messages seeking comment. More than 100 protesters gathered near police headquarters, where they were outnumbered by officers, following the news. At least one person was arrested after a brief standoff with officers, while others wearing white masks sat in a nearby street blocking traffic. Another protester burned an American flag.

But many seemed unfazed by the resignation. Several merely shrugged their shoulders when asked what they thought, while Rick Campbell flatly said he didn't care about the resignation, noting: "I've been protesting out here since August."

"We were not after Wilson's job," civil rights activist the Rev. Al Sharpton, who planned to preach Sunday at the St. Louis church where Brown's funeral was held, added later in a written statement. "We were after Michael Brown's justice."

Brown's parents were set to attend the Sunday service with Sharpton.



© St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney's Office/AP Photo This undated photo released by the St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney's office on Monday, Nov. 24, 2014, shows Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson during his medical examination...

Brown, who was black, was unarmed when Wilson, who is white, fatally shot him in the middle of a Ferguson street, where his body was left for several hours as police investigated and angry onlookers gathered.

Some witnesses have said Brown had his hands up when Wilson shot him. Wilson told the grand jury that he feared for his life when Brown hit him and reached for his gun.

Wilson, who had been with the Ferguson Police Department for less than three years, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch he decided to step down after the department told him it had received threats of violence if he remained on the force.

"I'm not willing to let someone else get hurt because of me," Wilson told the newspaper Saturday.

Ferguson officials planned to make a statement on Wilson's resignation Sunday, said Stephanie Karr, city attorney for Ferguson. Karr earlier this week said Wilson had been on paid leave pending the outcome of an internal police investigation.

The U.S. Justice Department also is conducting a civil rights investigation into the shooting and a separate investigation of police department practices.

Away from the protests Saturday night, resident Victoria Rutherford said she believed Wilson should have not only resigned, but been convicted of a crime.

"I'm upset. I have a 16-year-old son. It could've been him. I feel that he was absolutely in the wrong," she said.

Another resident, Reed Voorhees, said he hoped Wilson could find similar work "someplace where he would enjoy life, and move on with his life."

In the days after the shooting, tense and sometimes violent protests popped up in and around Ferguson, a predominantly black community patrolled by a mostly white police force. Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon called in the National Guard to help.

Then on Monday night — when prosecutors announced that a grand jury declined to indict Wilson — the St. Louis suburb of 20,000 residents was ravaged by looting and violence.

At least a dozen commercial buildings were destroyed in Ferguson and neighboring Dellwood, mostly along West Florissant Avenue, not far from where Brown was killed. By Tuesday, Nixon had sent more than 2,200 National Guard members to the Ferguson area to support local law enforcement.

Though protests calmed significantly, more than 100 people have been arrested since Monday, including 16 at a protest Friday night outside the Ferguson police station.

Demonstrations, which also have been held in other U.S. cities, are expected to continue, though a sense of normalcy — or at least a new normal — has begun to settle on the city.

Police earlier Saturday reopened several blocks of West Florissant that had been barricaded off since Tuesday. Although most store windows were still boarded up, many have been decorated or spray-painted with messages saying the stores are open and welcoming shoppers.

Some business owners spent an unseasonably warm day tidying up, hoping customers soon would return.

Tracy Ballard, 44, brought her 7-year-old daughter to a store on West Florissant to buy candy and soda, before a trip to the beautician up the street.

"I feel sad for the business owners," Ballard said. "It's really sad it had to come from this. We just wanted justice. If we'd have had justice, none of this would have happened."

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Associated Press writer Jim Salter contributed to this report from Ferguson, Missouri.

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