

Thoughts on Ferguson...

By Edén Hemmingson
Alcester-Hudson High School

Vermillion, South Dakota is about 558 miles from Ferguson, Missouri--that's about eight hours in a car.

This travelling distance is not far from our little Midwestern state, even though what's happening in Missouri seems almost foreign.

In August an unarmed, African-American teenager was shot and killed by a Ferguson police officer.

The media bias and rumors have been fluffing up everyone's opinions since the shooting, but here are some of the facts that have been substantiated on both sides, and the verdict--resulting in freedom for the officer-- that has caused a once peaceful protest to become a violent riot.

On Aug. 9, Officer Darren Wilson, 28 (6'4") was going about his daily routine in Ferguson.

He was patrolling his usual streets, about to go to lunch, when he noticed two men (Mike Brown, 18, (6'4") and Dorian Johnson, 22 (5'7")) walking down the middle of the street that day.

Wilson slowed down to ask them to use the sidewalk. With some explicit words

exchanged, Brown and Johnson refused to use the sidewalk. Officer Wilson then maneuvered his patrol car to block their path until the back-up he called arrived.

Wilson claims that as he tried to get out of his car, Brown shoved the door back at him to trap him in his patrol car.

This is where it gets sticky.

Four eyewitnesses claim that officer Wilson was trying to pull Brown into the car using lots of force. Wilson refuted this saying Brown was forcing himself into the car reaching in to harm the officer.

Wilson told the St. Louis Police Department detective that he was punched 10 times by Brown, however, in his testimony he said he was punched only twice by Brown.

As police officers, they have many different modes to lower an escalated situation.

Lethal weapons are always supposed to be the last resort; police have batons, mace, and tasers to use first.

Since the guns are supposed to be the last option, they usually have one or two straps keeping

the gun secure in the holster.

In Wilson's testimony, he admits to not wearing his taser because it's "not the most comfortable" and "bulky."

He then claimed in an interview with GMA's George Stephanopoulos, that his mace was out of reach during his struggle with Brown, and that there wasn't enough room in his patrol car to get his baton out.

Wilson said his only resort was his firearm.

He said the first couple of times he shot, Brown had his hand covering the gun and pushing it so the gun pointed away, and the shots didn't hit anyone.

This is when Brown took off running and, as he ran, Wilson got out of his patrol car and chased and shot.

Brown was 50 yards from the officer's SUV when a shot finally hit him. He was shot a total of six times, twice in the head.

This is where opinions about the facts start to vary.

"Police officers are not trained to fire one bullet and then wait and see what happens," said USD student and mom, Shaleen Allen, "Especially in a situation where they feel they are protecting their lives. I feel

bad that Mike Brown died, but from what I understand with the information given, it was a justified shooting by a police officer."

In the interview with Stephanopoulos, Wilson describes Brown as a "Hulk Hogan-type" with a "demon look" in his eyes--referring to the height and size of Brown--and said that this factor made Wilson fear for his life when he considered the power Brown might have over Wilson.

"In any altercation so many factors are at play, but ultimately it's the responsibility of the person with more power to keep a level-headed sense of rationality. As the authority figure with a gun, the greater responsibility to keep peace fell on Wilson," said Alcester-Hudson High School English teacher Marissa Kleinhans, "So no, six shots into an unarmed man are not justified."

On Nov. 24 the grand jury decided against indictment for Wilson.

Ferguson's police force had already been preparing for the worst from protesters by calling in more soldiers from the National Guard and making sure they had enough chemical weapons and firearms to protect the city.

The grand jury's decision definitely fueled the fiery

hearts of protesters who--as the PD prepared for--transitioned from peaceful protesting into violent riots as they started burning buildings, police cars, and the American flag.

"Violence is rarely necessary, but is the rioting understandable? Yes," said Kleinhans. "It seems there's been a disproportionate public disgust at the post-announcement destruction-- much of the response was extreme, yes, but so too was the militarization of the police in the lead-up to the announcement, and of course the shooting itself. It's just easier for us to point to the literal broken glass and say 'wrong' than grapple with the complexity of our broken system."

Protesters have been tear gassed several times a day during the riots, but they continue to protest every day. The riots have not only taken over Ferguson, but several other major cities in the U.S.

"The violence is ridiculous! I feel bad for the store and property owners who have been hurt throughout the rioting," said Allen.

Continue reading Hemmingson's article in Friday's edition of the Plain Talk - 12/05/2014.

1101 Announcements - Events

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL
Highway 12 Newcastle, NE. Worship: 7:00 p.m. Saturday. Pastor Gary Kimm. Come join us!

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

816 E Clark Street, Vermillion. Join us for Worship
Saturday evening: 5:30PM and Sunday morning: 10:00AM
Sunday mornings: 9:00AM --Coffee fellowship, Adult Choir, Sunday School
Radio broadcast: Sunday morning at 10AM on KVTK Radio, AM 1570

Holy Communion celebrated each Saturday evening and the 1st and 3rd and 5th Sundays each month.

Pastor Robert D Hansen
Facebook: Trinity Lutheran - Vermillion, SD
www.trinityvermillion.org

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

"The Uncommon Denomination." Services are the first and third Sunday of each month at 7 p.m. in the basement of the United Church of Christ, 226 E. Main. Child care services and refreshments provided. All welcome. For more information
www.unitarianvermillion.blogspot.com

Have a Great Day

CHAMBER CHAT

Vermillion Area Chamber of Commerce & Development Company
116 Market Street, Suite 103
Vermillion, SD 57069
(605) 624-5571
vcdc@vermillionchamber.com
www.vermillionchamber.com

Chamber Business:

• A Holiday Gift from the Chamber Members to the Community: The VCDC is conducting a Vermillion Bucks sale. We are offering \$10,000 in Vermillion Bucks available for purchase in \$100 bundles of \$20 denominations at the discounted rate of \$85 per bundle. They can be purchased at the VCDC office at 116 Market Street. Limited to 2 bundles per family..

Announcements:

• Veteran Holiday Relief Drive: Contribute an American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) "Buddy Basket" (filled with household items), a single household or hygiene item, winter apparel, shopping gift cards, or monetary donation

through Jan. 10, 2015. Drop-Off locations: The Broadcaster/Plain Talk 201 W. Cherry St. or Main Street Center 320 West Main St. through Jan. 10, 2015. Monetary Donations can be mailed to ATTN: VETS RELIEF DRIVE: American Legion Auxiliary Unit #1 c/o Marie Anne Ben 16 East Bloomingdale Street Vermillion.

• Mentors needed - Nine youth in Vermillion, and one in Elk Point are seeking mentors. A wide range in ages, contact jgillerrsd60@yahoo.com or call John at 605-421-5050.

• The Clay-Union Foundation had a significant drop in donations this year. Now is the time to gain a year end tax deduction. Donations may be mailed to P.O. Box 665, Elk Point, SD 57025

FRIDAY, DEC. 5
• State Oral Interp at Huron, Friday & Saturday, Dec. 5-6

• 2 p.m. — Ladies Hospital Auxiliary meeting, Sanford Vermillion Board room
• 6:30 p.m. — 6th Annual Parade Of Lights, Downtown Vermillion.

Following the parade, Santa and Mrs. Claus will light the community Christmas Tree at Ratings Platz on the corner of Market and Main Streets. After the tree lighting, children and parents are invited to the Edith B. Siegrist Public Library for Stockings for Soldiers.

• 4:30-7:30 p.m — Clay County Historical Society Tour of Homes. Tickets available at Austin-Whittemore House, Nook 'n Cranny & Vermillion Beauty Shop. Reception following at the Austin-Whittemore House, 15 Austin Street. A limited number of rides are available with Vermillion Public Transit. Call 624-8266 to reserve a ride.

•Chris Jackson Benefit - Following parade of lights, Pi Beta Phi and Sigma Alpha Epsilon invite you to the Pi Phi house at 118 N. Plum Street for cookies and hot chocolate. Freewill donations will be accepted.

• 7 p.m. — USD Mens Basketball vs Youngstown State, at the DakotaDome
• 7 p.m. — Dance Inferno Recital at

Vermillion High School

• 7:30 p.m. — USD Symphony Orchestras Concert, AalFs Auditorium located in Slagle Hall.

SATURDAY, DEC. 6
• 3 p.m. — Dance Inferno Recital at Vermillion High School.

• 12:30-2:30 p.m. — Free pictures with Santa at HyVee by Peterman Photography. Call 605-624-5571 for details.

• 9 a.m. — Overeaters Anonymous, Newman Center-USD Campus, 320 E. Cherry.

• 10 a.m.-1 p.m. — Vermillion Area Farmers Market Holiday & Winter Market, Clay County Extension/4-H Bldg., 515 High Street. For more information, call 605-659-3399 or e-mail VAFarmersMarket@gmail.com

• 2 p.m. — USD Women's Basketball vs. Cal State Fullerton, at the DakotaDome

• 8 p.m. — "A Poker Alice Christmas" Gayville Hall, Gayville. For ticket information, call 605-267-2859.

SUNDAY, DEC. 7
• 1-4:30 p.m. — W.H. Over Museum Christmas Festival. Contact 677-5228

for information.

• 3 p.m. — USD Dept. of Music Holiday Concert, AalFs Auditorium located in Slagle Hall.

MONDAY, DEC. 8
• 7:30 p.m. — Vermillion HS Holiday Concert

• 7:30 p.m. — Al-anon meeting at St. Pauls Episcopal Church, call 624-9764 for information.

• 7:30 p.m. — Ethan Conrad Senior Tuba Recital, Colton Recital Hall, Warren M. Lee Center for Fine Arts

TUESDAY, DEC. 9
• 12-1 p.m. — Vermillion Rotary Club meeting featuring David Owen: Pre-Legislative Update from SD Chamber, Al Neuharth Media Center conference room. For more information, visit www.vermillionrotaryclub.org


THURSDAY, DEC. 11
• Vermillion Lions Club Holiday Social, Thurs., Dec. 11, Howlers Bar & Grill. Details to be announced soon.


• PRAIRIE BUD AND PRAIRIE PASQUE REVIEWS Come join the fun at the Vermillion Public Library from 3:30-

4:30p.m., Thurs., Dec. 11- book trailers, popcorn, and more! K-5th grade can get a preview of this year's Prairie Bud and Prairie Pasque Nominees. South Dakota Children's Book Awards are divided into Prairie Bud, K-2nd grades, and Prairie Pasque, 3-5th grades.

The annual South Dakota Children's Book Awards nominations provide a list of books that is fitting for both instructional and recreational reading.

Connections can be made between the Common Core State Standards for ELA and Literacy across all content areas as well as reading for enjoyment. Students are encouraged to read at least five books from the list of nominees and vote for their favorite book from those titles. The books receiving the most votes from the students win the awards. A committee of educators and librarians select the books nominated for the awards. Each child can vote only once. Deadline for voting is March 31, 2015. Winners will be announced in April during National Library Week.





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