

Two cities, one call for justice: fury

Hauled away: a protester being arrested outside St Louis city hall



Daniel Bates
LETTER FROM...



FERGUSON

IT'S BEEN heartbreak and enraging to see the way the aftermath of Michael Brown's shooting by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, has been handled. Politicians and police have seemed more concerned with petty feuds and

Authorities are accused of petty feuds and buck-passing in Ferguson

passing the buck than doing the right thing. The Ferguson police department took four days to even issue a press release and nearly two months to apologise to Mr Brown's family.

Officer Darren Wilson was allowed to wash the blood off his hands after the August 9 killing of the unarmed black teenager and, incredibly, processed some of the evidence himself. Officer Wilson told US media that he had a "clean conscience".

The grand jury process should have taken weeks but took three months at the behest of St Louis County prosecutor Bob McCulloch, whose father was a police officer killed in the line of duty.

Mr Brown's family found out there was a verdict on social media, not through the prosecutor's office. When the announcement was made it was 8pm on Monday, meaning it was already dark. Two months of planning for peace went up in flames that burned at least a dozen businesses.

I watched as the 18-year-old's mother, Lesley McSpadden, collapsed in tears outside the Ferguson police station as she shouted: "It's wrong."

Thirty minutes later, protesters poured lighter fuel on a police SUV and

set it ablaze in front of me as they cheered: "F*** the police." Officers in riot gear fired tear gas into the crowd who ran up the street smashing every pane of glass they could find – three youths next to me threw a postbox through an optician's window.

By the end of the night dozens of stores had been ransacked or vandalised and an entire city block was in ruins, resembling a war zone. One resident said it looked like "Fergusonstan". The final insult was that the National Guard had been deployed but were not out in force until it was too late because Missouri governor Jay Nixon had failed to give the order.

Black residents in Ferguson were left wondering if he let their city burn to teach them a lesson.

Until the grand jury evidence was released it seemed like Brown's shooting was an egregious case of injustice. But now things are not so clear.

Many witnesses contradicted each other, especially on the key claim that the teenagers had his hands up in surrender when he was shot.

The reality is that we will never know exactly what went wrong the day that Michael Brown was killed. But what has happened since just isn't right.

Governor rejects call for new jury over Michael Brown killing

Michael Howie

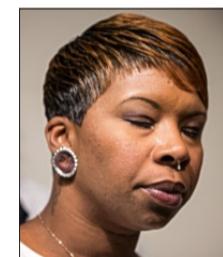
THE governor of Missouri has rejected calls for a new grand jury to decide whether to charge a white police officer for killing a black teenager, local media reported today.

Mass protests broke out in St Louis and other cities across America over the ruling not to charge Officer Darren Wilson for the killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown.

Mr Brown's family said they were "crushed" by the ruling.

Only a handful of protesters remained last night in the suburb of Ferguson, where the teenager was shot, amid heavy snowfall on the eve of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Earlier yesterday, 200 protesters gathered outside St Louis City Hall, holding a mock trial of Mr Wilson. Some of them tried to storm the hall,



"Crushed":
Michael
Brown's
mother
Lesley
McSpadden

but were later dispersed by riot police, with at least two people arrested.

The St Louis Post reported a spokesman for State Governor Jay Nixon saying he would not entertain the idea of bringing in a special prosecutor to present the case to a new grand jury.

Mr Nixon earlier said the "ramped up presence" of National Guard troops in St Louis – whose numbers rose from 700 to 2,200 on Tuesday night – had been "helpful".

That's not
for dinner
is it, dad?

BARACK OBAMA is joined by his daughters Sasha, left, and Malia as he spares a turkey in an annual Thanksgiving tradition. The bird, Cheese, will join fellow pardoned turkey Mac to live out its days on a farm in northern Virginia.



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