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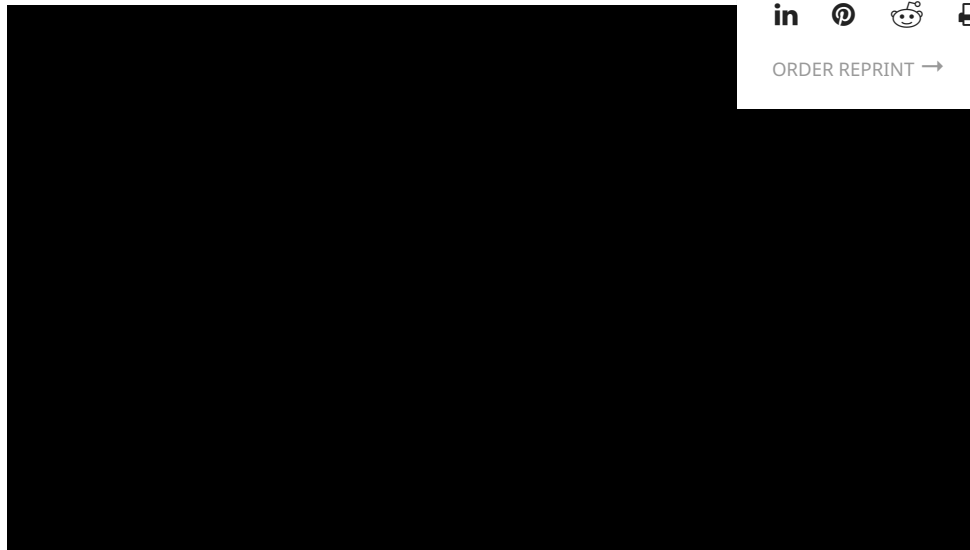
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HOMEPAGE

**Charlotte protests spike, CMPD arrests demonstrators uptown in second night of unrest**BY [LAUREN LINDSTROM](#), [FRED CLASEN-KELLY](#), AND [ANNIE MA](#)

MAY 30, 2020 08:34 PM, UPDATED MAY 31, 2020 01:50 PM

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Take a sneak peek at Discovery Place and the Charlotte Museum of History as they prepare to reopen to the public following the pandemic on Sept. 19, 2020. BY JOSHUA KOMER

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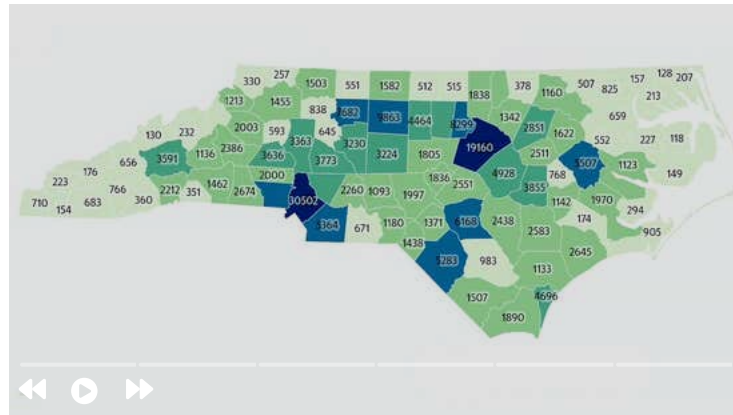
Demonstrators expressing outrage over the death of a Minneapolis man in police custody protested in Charlotte for a second night, including blocking traffic for a time on I-277 uptown, police said Saturday night.

Tensions spiked after demonstrators arrived at CMPD headquarters. Police arrested the first of several protesters for possessing a concealed firearm, the department

tweeted around 9:30 p.m.

In all, police said at least 30 people were arrested on charges ranging from illegal possession of a gun to assaulting a government official. Among the 30 were at least two teens, police said.

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— CMPD News (@CMPD) [May 31, 2020](#)

Journalists on scene reported repeated loud flash bangs and that police released tear gas or pepper spray to scatter crowds that advanced toward officers as they removed the person.

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Protesters went nose-to-nose with police in riot gear, taunting them and calling them names. Others threw items at officers.

Around 10 p.m. officers using bullhorns gave an order to disperse, which few in the crowd appeared to immediately heed.

At the Federal Reserve Bank building on Trade Street, demonstrators took down the American flag and hung it up again upside down.

Shortly before 11 p.m. the Charlotte Area Transit System tweeted the uptown transit center had temporarily closed, and riders could board buses at other uptown stops.

Live video showed firefighters rescuing a person who had fallen through a grate. The injured person was taken by to Carolinas Medical Center, according to Medic.

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Police reported two officers were hospitalized during the protests with minor injuries, including one who was hit in the face with an explosive device. CMPD Chief Kerr Putney addressed the injuries [in a tweet early Sunday](#).

“We are going to establish order after our officers have been assaulted. We have not been aggressive. We are responding to aggression,” Putney said.

Around 1:30 a.m., a small group of protesters lit a trash can on fire at the intersection of 4th and Church Streets, CMPD said in a tweet.

Things have moved to outside CMPD headquarters. Chants of “say his name” and “hands up, don’t shoot” [pic.twitter.com/vwMPjVpib1](https://pic.twitter.com/vwMPjVpib1)

— Annie Ma (@anniema15) [May 31, 2020](#)

Demonstrators had marched through uptown Charlotte largely unimpeded for much of the early evening, as police followed on bicycles.

They held signs decrying George Floyd’s death in Minneapolis police custody and chanting phrases like “Hands up, don’t shoot!” and “I can’t breathe,” which Floyd can be heard on video pleading to the officer who kneeled on his neck before he died.

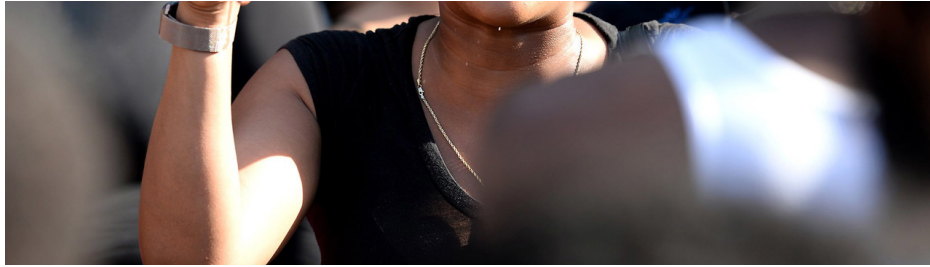
The march at one point passed the Mecklenburg County jail, where demonstrators chanted Floyd’s name. One speaker stood in the middle of the crowd urged them to take action.

“You gotta do something, you’re going to do something or die,” he said. “It’s got to be action.”

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police officers responded to protesters “attempting to block” the Fourth Street ramp to I-277, the police department tweeted shortly after 8 p.m.

Blocked motorists got out of their vehicles to record the activity, and some joined in the chanting. Several demonstrators surrounded a police vehicle on the highway.





Photos from a second night of protests in Charlotte, N.C. Saturday, May 30, 2020 following the death of George Floyd. BY JEFF SINER AND JOSH KOMER

Charlotte and Mecklenburg officials [announced a state of emergency](#) in anticipation of more demonstrations Saturday night. The declaration did not impose a curfew, but would allow Charlotte-Mecklenburg to access resources from the state, Mayor Vi Lyles said.

Saturday afternoon demonstrations brought largely peaceful crowds, who gathered and marched throughout uptown.

Alpha Arnett, an associate minister at Greater Mt. Sinai Baptist Church, said Saturday afternoon that he was encouraged that one protest, which began at Marshall Park before moving to CMPD headquarters, was organized by white women.

"I am hopeful that this is not just an emotional response ... and hoping that others are committed to recognizing that black lives matter and doing our best to deal with systemic racism at its core," he said.

Arnett said he doesn't support the destruction that occurred on Beatties Ford Road on Friday.

"But at the same time, the kind of frustration that can lead to that, I have a real sensitivity to that," he said. It doesn't excuse it but it certainly does explain it."

Arnett was referring to crowds that, by police estimates, grew to 250 who gathered first in front of the CMPD substation on Beatties Ford on Friday evening. There they met police in protective gear.

Some threw water bottles and other items at police, and damaged police vehicles. Police deployed pepper spray, tear gas or some other substance that witnesses said burned their eyes.

Three officers sustained minor injuries Friday, according to CMPD.

Protests later moved north on Beatties Ford, where CMPD reported people broke into a Food Lion there and stole merchandise. Police reported Saturday that 15 people had been arrested Friday night, including City Council member Braxton Winston.

*Staff writer Danielle Chemtob contributed to this report.*

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CMPD officers arrest a female protester along E. Trade Street in Charlotte, NC on Saturday, May 30, 2020. The protesters are protesting the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN on Monday, May 25, 2020. JEFF SINER JSINER@CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM

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Annie Ma covers education for the Charlotte Observer. She previously worked for the San Francisco Chronicle, Chalkbeat New York, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the Oregonian. She grew up in Florida and graduated from Dartmouth College.



LAUREN LINDSTROM



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Lauren Lindstrom is a reporter for the Charlotte Observer covering affordable housing. She previously covered health for The Blade in Toledo, Ohio, where she wrote about the state's opioid crisis and childhood lead poisoning. Lauren is a Wisconsin native, a Northwestern University graduate and a 2019 Report for America corps member.

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