

Larry Turks' Family, Protestors Call For New Investigation

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nization and spokesman for several others involved in the protest.

"We're out here to expose the Dellwood Community, and the broader community, to Dellwood police's heinous behavior to Larry Wayne Turks, as well as to remind people about Ellen Reasonover," Baruti said. "We want to know what really happened to Larry."

Reasonover is serving a life sentence in prison for the murder of a Dellwood gas station attendant. She said she is innocent.

"April 4 is a day earmarked to protest injustice everywhere and to promote a greater awareness to monitor the activity of police behavior directed toward our people, such as Garland Carter and Gregory Bell (Carter was shot in the back and killed by St. Louis police more than two years ago. Bell was beaten viciously in his own home when St. Louis police mistook him for a burglar). As a community we can never rest. We will get to the truth."

Dellwood Chief of Police Col. Dan Chapman, along with a police lieutenant and a nearly two-foot high stack of files on the Turks' case, met with a small group of protesters in the city council chambers. He said he welcomed the protest and a chance to tell his side; and he understood their "concerns."

During a tour of the jail, Chapman explained Turks had been left alone in his cell for only "a minute or two" when a nearby officer heard sounds of a struggle coming from the cell and through a closed metal door. Upon investigation the officer found a yellow blanket of foam and plastic twisted around the cell door and around Turks' neck, Chapman said, making it difficult to rescue him immediately. Red Cross volunteers in a class upstairs administered CPR on Turks in an attempt to save him.

"He received very good medical attention," the chief said, noting they asked the St. Louis County Prosecutor's Office and the St. Louis County Police Department to inves-

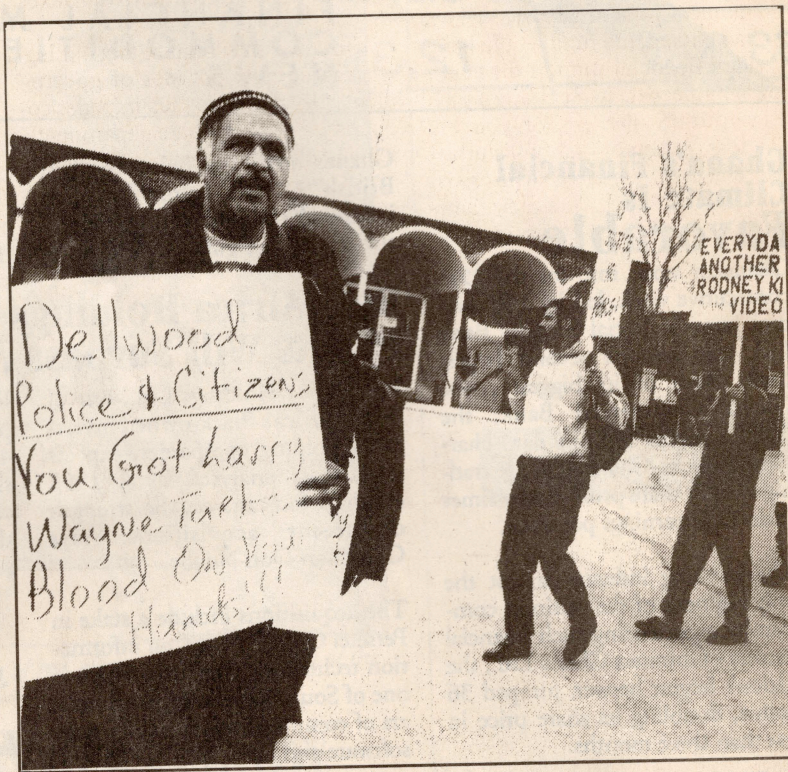


Photo by Bob Wilson

Protesters Zaki Baruti (left) and Tim Kaminski (with megaphone) were among some 40 picketers outside the Dellwood Police on Saturday. They are challenging reports that a black man hung himself in the jail last fall.

tigate the case.

"We wanted an outside investigation," Chapman said. Investigations by the U.S. Justice Department and the county's medical examiner yielded reports backing the police version of what happened.

"This was a very unfortunate situation, not only for the family but for the police involved," Chapman said. "I really feel like it was an accident. He was mentally unstable." By that he meant Turks, with a protracted history of family feuding, had a habit of doing something to evoke the sympathy of the family, which almost always took him back, Chapman said.

Speaking to Sandra Turks, he reminded her of the various incidents they have had to intervene on her behalf, and that his department has "gone out of our way to help you. It has nothing to do with race. I under-

stand that concern."

She agreed her husband had been "kind of physical." Later, she told a reporter why she still had love for Turks.

"We were married 22 years," she said. "Larry didn't always have these problems. But that doesn't mean Larry deserved that. I took Larry back every time. I'm not giving up. I'm going to fight. I'm not satisfied in my heart. This is for Larry."

A member of the Greater Rising Star Church, called Sandra Turks, "Sister Turks" and took her turn on the picket line. "I don't think it was suicide," said Connie McMiller, who brought her 12-year-old son to the informational picket. "I think it was wrongdoing."

As a result of the incident blankets are no longer issued to prisoners, the chief said.