



KYM L. WORTHY
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

COUNTY OF WAYNE
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

WAYNE COUNTY CRIMINAL
JUSTICE CENTER
5301 RUSSELL STREET, STE. 200
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48211

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Contact: Maria Miller
Wayne County Prosecutor's Office
Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Director of Communications
(313) 224-5817
(313) 213-0457
mmiller@waynecountymi.gov

For Immediate Release

No Charges to Issue in Wayne State University May 2024 Protests

On May 30, 2024, there was a protest on the Wayne State University campus by Students for Justice on Palestine. On that date five people were placed under arrest and later released. The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office received five warrant requests for alleged incidents stemming from the protest from the Wayne State Police in July 2024. The evidence included body worn camera footage from seven officers that was reviewed in conjunction with police reports.

Incident One – May 30, 2024, at 6:30 a.m. on Third Avenue Near Atchison Hall

A 22-year-old female student protester was on the WSU campus with a bull horn on Third Avenue turning into the campus. It is alleged that a WSU officer focused on the woman because she had a bullhorn. He grabbed her from behind and she continued to walk with the crowd for approximately five seconds as the officer continued to hold on to her bag/jacket. It is alleged that other officers aided in taking her down to the ground. The female did not attempt to flee and was placed under arrest for trespass.

While this was happening a 53-year-old female yelled, "That's my daughter!" When the first officer grabbed her child, she in turn grabbed onto her. She was also issued a ticket for trespass. A 19-year-old female student protester was holding on to the 53-year-old mother as the police were trying to arrest her. She was placed under arrest, and in the process of being taken down to the ground her hijab came off. She was also issued a ticket for trespass.

The incident happened near the place the protesters had been advised they were allowed to protest. This was on WSU property, but in the middle of a publicly accessible sidewalk/driveway in the area of Atchison Hall and the College of Engineering. The 22-year-old protester was singled out because she had a bullhorn, exercising her First Amendment right to free speech, not because of an alleged trespass.

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All three women were arrested for trespass in this incident. It is difficult to determine how publicly accessible sidewalks and streets are public or private. They are all in a sense publicly owned and in an urban center. A review of the facts and evidence including body worn camera (BWC) footage, supports that there is insufficient evidence to prove that the three women committed the crime of trespass. As a result, no charges will issue.

Incident Two – May 30, 2024, at 8:15 a.m. – Merrick Street and Third Avenue

WSU Police alleged that a 20-year-old female cursed at officers and was walking with a crowd and filming the police with her phone. It is alleged that she hit one officer's shield while gesturing with her arm and was placed under arrest. A review of all of the BWC footage and reports shows her gesturing with her arm, but she does not hit or touch his shield. The officer pulled the woman behind the police line and arrested her for assault. The facts in this case are insufficient to prove that any crime occurred toward the officer, as a result, no charges will issue.

As police were attempting to pull the 20-year-old woman behind the police line a 24-year-old male protester came to her aide and pulled on her. He was pushed to the ground by another officer and stiffened his arms refusing to be handcuffed. He was placed under arrest for resisting and obstructing an officer. The facts show that the 24-year-old man assisted a woman who was being arrested that did not commit a crime. When he was placed under arrest for helping her his only action was to stiffen his arms, there is insufficient evidence to charge him under these facts.

There were several other protesters that were ticketed. Their tickets will be dismissed.

“The right to peacefully protest and demonstrate is deeply woven into the American fabric. The WCPO has thoroughly studied and examined these cases, and we have determined that they do not rise of the level of criminal behavior. We will not be charging any of these criminal case requests that have been presented to us. We will also be asking that the tickets issued to some of the protesters be dismissed. I want to make it exceedingly clear that this office will not ever tolerate protesters that engage in behavior that is not peaceful or turns violent in any way. But that is not present in these cases.”

*WCPO does not release the names people who are not charged with a crime.

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