

making waves

McKinney pool party draws national attention

How did national media portray McKinney in the eyes of people who live here?
What did they get right and wrong?



“BLACK OR WHITE, IT DIDN'T MATTER.”

-DANIEL CZUWALA, 11

“I was on Facebook a few days after it happened and there was a comment saying how the police did the right thing and other people saying he was wrong. People from out of state had opinions but they didn't know what really happened.”

-SERINA DAVIS, 9

“There were a lot of different stories, but the media made McKinney seem like it was a bad place just because of the actions of one person.”

-ANDREW WHITLOCK, 10



“I BELIEVE THE MEDIA WAS RIGHT. IT WAS ABOUT RACE.”

-JADE HOLLINS, 11



“They got the situation a little bit right but what they were saying about McKinney wasn't right at all. They were saying a bunch of this stuff has already been happening, but that isn't true. It was just that one incident.”

-JASON ADDINGTON, 9

“I don't like the way the media portrayed it. They jumped to the automatic assumption that the issue was only based on race. I feel the media wasn't making the assertion just because of the video.”

-SYDNEY TURNBOW, 12



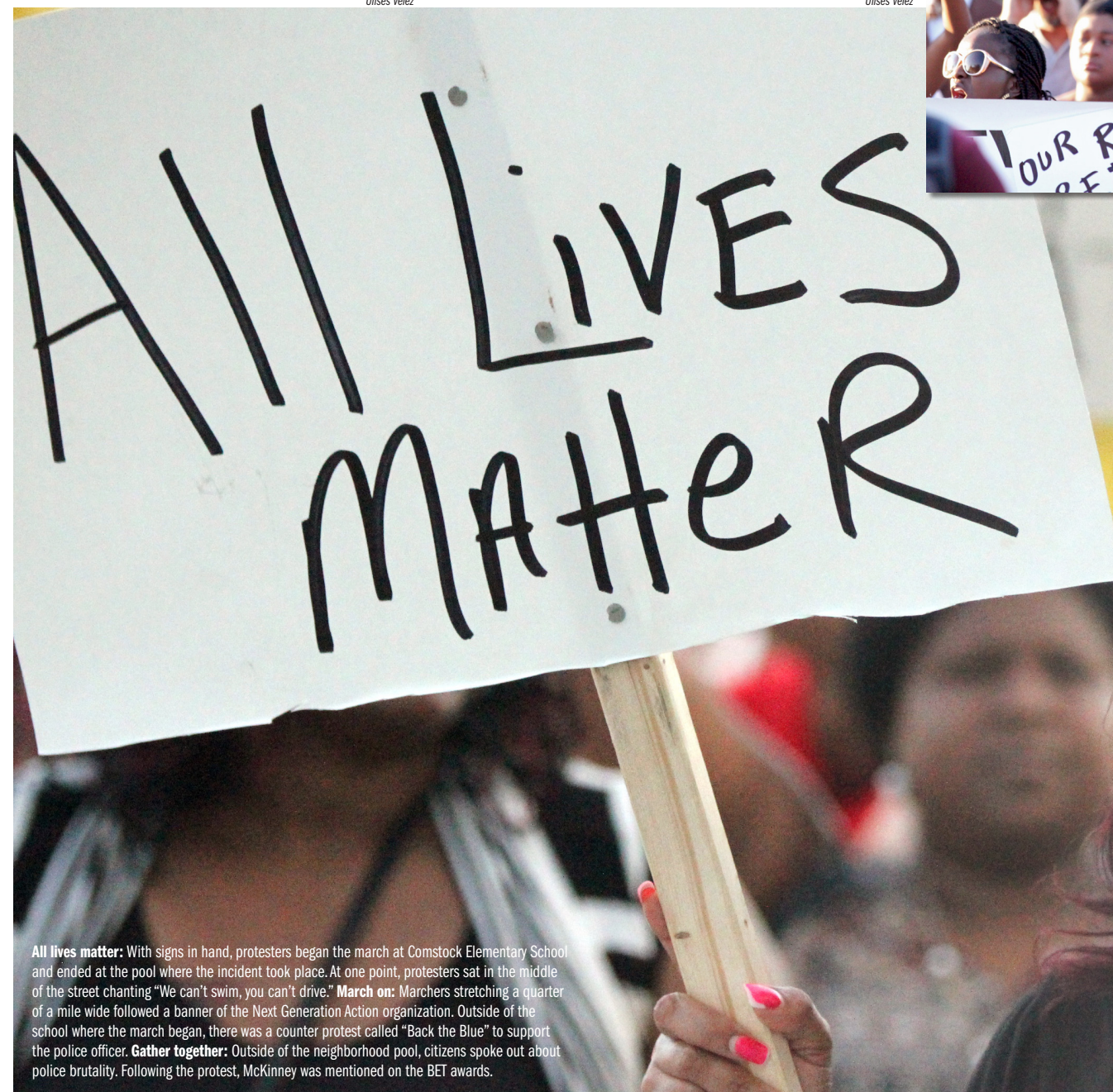
Ulises Velez



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All lives matter: With signs in hand, protesters began the march at Comstock Elementary School and ended at the pool where the incident took place. At one point, protesters sat in the middle of the street chanting “We can't swim, you can't drive.” **March on:** Marchers stretching a quarter of a mile wide followed a banner of the Next Generation Action organization. Outside of the school where the march began, there was a counter protest called “Back the Blue” to support the police officer. **Gather together:** Outside of the neighborhood pool, citizens spoke out about police brutality. Following the protest, McKinney was mentioned on the BET awards.

Ulises Velez

Streets lined with protesters chanting and holding signs, reporters everywhere, it looked like a scene straight from Ferguson or Baltimore, but this wasn't either of those places, this was in McKinney, Texas “the #1 place to live in America.”

These people were protesting what they claimed to be police brutality after a YouTube video surfaced showing officers responding to a call at a pool party Friday, June 5. One officer dragged Dajerria Becton to the ground and put his knee in the bikini-clad sophomore's back.

“There at least had to be around 50 people if not more at the pool party,” sophomore and pool party attendee Georgianna Roeder said. “I found out about it through Twitter. The party wasn't out of control but the parents were.”

Neighbors called the cops after a fight between a resident and teenager. “This one lady was complaining to the security guards and started saying racial slurs and got into a fight with my friend,” Roeder said. “She told her to ‘go back to section 8.’”

Once the police arrived, [now former] officer Eric Casebolt ordered the group of girls to go to the other side of the street.

“Dajerria was standing and the officer already told her to leave her spot,” Roeder said. “When I walked over to her she was complaining and bad-mouthing the cops. She had started to say something and I covered her mouth and I started to walk away with her.”

She never thought she would witness what happened next.

“As we were walking away the cop stopped us and was like ‘I already told you to leave and then he pulled his gun out,’” Roeder said. “We both looked at him, and he started to put his gun away and then turned it towards somebody else. Then he grabbed Dajerria and flung her to the ground.”

Roeder was speechless as she watched a police officer pin her friend to the ground.

“I was thinking ‘should I help her?’ I couldn't just stand there watching her get beaten by a cop,” Roeder said. “But then I also had to think if I place my hands on him I could go to jail for touching an officer.”

Roeder wasn't in fear for her life, but in fear for those of her friends.

“Honestly I thought he was going to shoot because he pulled out his gun for no reason on multiple people,” Roeder said. “That cop was the only one cussing and pulling his gun out.”

She and others pulled out their phones and recorded the incident.

“People need to know what their rights are,” Roeder said. “Yes, we have the right to video record things, but the officer told us we were interfering, and he threatened to take me and other people to jail that had their phones out just because we were video taping it.”

Roeder has a partial video but the only full video is from Brandon Brooks. “He (the officer) only said things to people who were taller than him and could possibly pose a threat,” Roeder said. “He only told the black kids to stop recording it.”

Looking back, she wonders if the officer had taken different actions, could this national attention have been avoided.

“I think if the cops had threatened to take us to jail, people would've backed off,” Roeder said. “He could've just threatened to pepper spray us, and people would've listened.”

Protesters who organized a city rally marched from a Frisco elementary school to the scene had their own concerns.

“I wasn't really expecting a lot of people to show up I was surprised at the outcome,” junior Ameenah McKnight said. “There were about 800 people. One guy even flew all the way from New York to come and protest.”

People of all races marched the streets of McKinney.

“It was powerful to see all of those people coming together,” McKnight said. “It was a really peaceful thing. No one really got in any arguments. Everyone just chanted and marched. We made a statement and showed McKinney that people can come together.”

by Nicole Stuessy