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JOHN BLANDING/GLOBE STAFF

Protesters and police met in Dewey Square.

By Nestor Ramos and Travis Andersen

GLOBE STAFF NOVEMBER 26, 2014

Hundreds of protesters flooded the city's streets Tuesday night, marching from Roxbury to Back Bay and beyond, raising their voices and their hands in grief and frustration over a grand jury's decision to not charge a Missouri police officer in the fatal shooting of an unarmed black teenager.

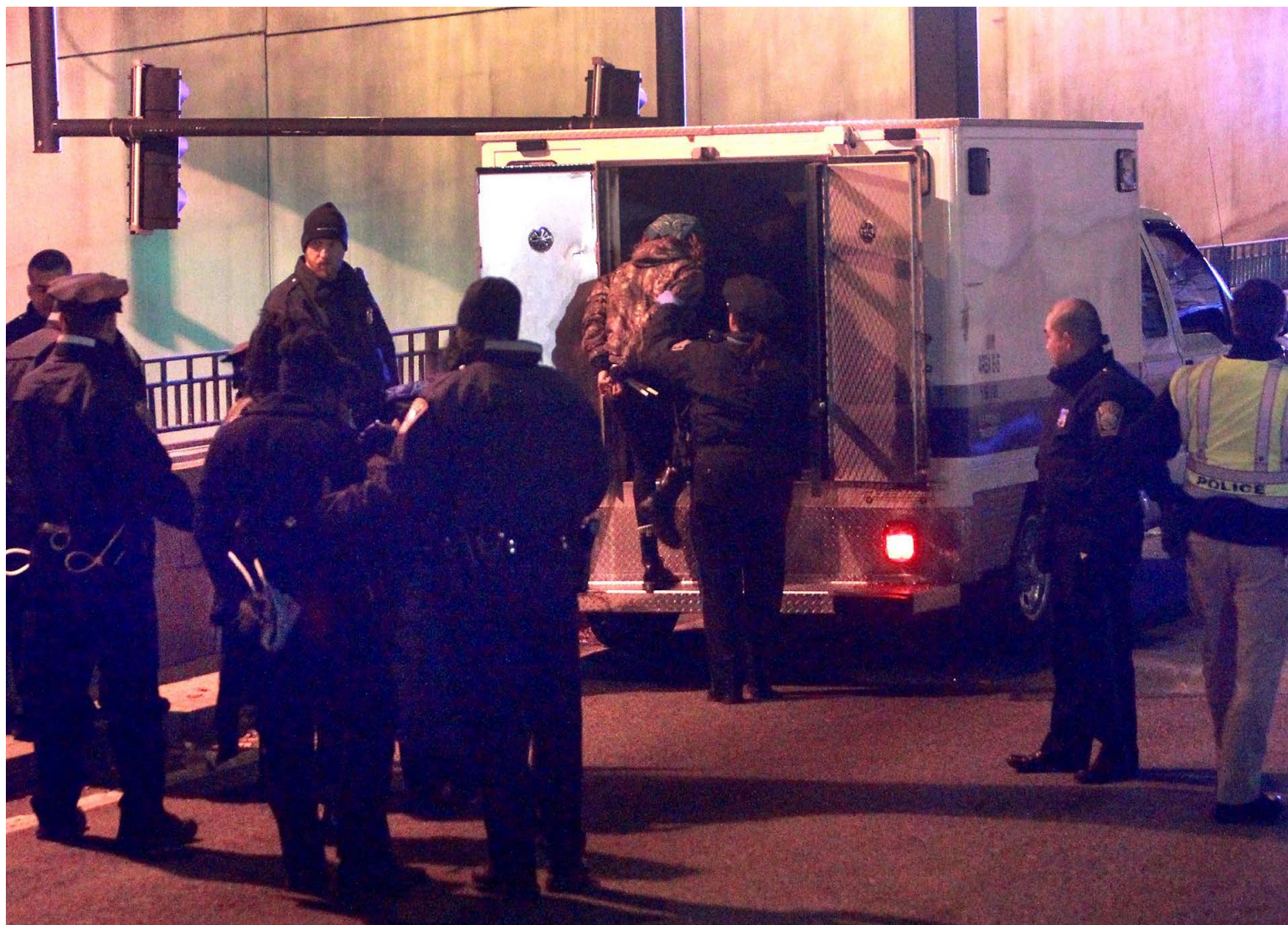
An estimated 1,400 protesters marched from Dudley Square to the South Bay House of Correction, then onto the Massachusetts Avenue Connector near Interstate 93 before being blocked by a police line. City and police spokesmen described the protest as largely peaceful, though protesters at times pushed in unison against the

police line.

They spread across Boston, through Back Bay and the Financial District, meeting police again in Dewey Square outside South Station late Tuesday night. An altercation between protesters and police there resulted in about a dozen protesters placed in restraints.

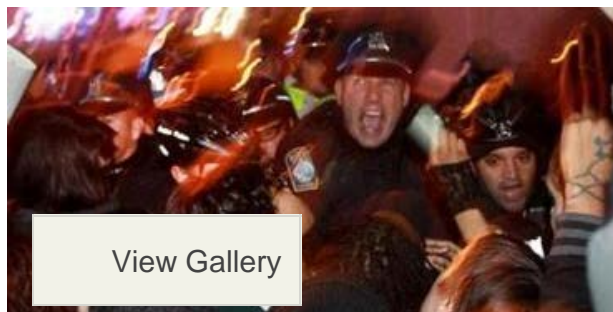
Boston's demonstration was one of many around the country Tuesday, as thousands in New York, Seattle, Washington, D.C., and other cities protested the St. Louis County grand jury's decision 24 hours earlier not to indict Officer Darren Wilson in the fatal shooting of unarmed Ferguson, Mo., teen Michael Brown.

"The voice that you hear is valid. The passion that you hear tonight is valid," said Boston Councilor Tito Jackson, who marched with the protesters. "We need to make sure that the life of a young man on Blue Hill Avenue has the same value as the life of a young person on Commonwealth Avenue."



JOHN BLANDING/GLOBE STAFF

Forty-five people were arrested.



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Photos: Protesters march in Boston

Demonstrators marched in Boston in reaction to the Ferguson grand jury decision.

Across Boston, a sense of resigned anger

Forty-five people were arrested, according to Boston police. Superintendent in Chief William Gross, who spoke shortly after midnight, said the protesters had not been violent.

“I’m very proud of the young people here,” Gross said. “Do you see any cars burning? Do you see any broken windows? No.”

The crowd was dispersing by about 12:30 a.m. Gross said he had no plans to break up the protest during the night if it continued.

“I’m the chief of police. I wholeheartedly support their right to protest, their First Amendment rights,” he said, adding later: “Imagine, from South Bay to here, and there are no cars burning, no businesses looted. This is great.”

Throughout the night, a sense that Boston must find an opportunity to grow stronger from the Ferguson tragedy rang through the protests and an emotional community meeting, held at a Roxbury church Tuesday evening. The protest began gathering momentum outside a nearby police station even before the meeting at the church wound down.

The rally in Roxbury, including a candle lighting and 4½ minutes of silence for Brown, was organized by Black Lives Matter Boston, a grass-roots advocacy group that formed after Brown was killed.

“The state has sanctioned violence against black people,” Daunasia Yancey, lead organizer of Black Lives Matter Boston, told the crowd. “We can choose to be complicit in the system. Or we can choose to make a difference.”

Then they were off: With a profane antipolice anthem ringing from a truck’s speakers, protesters marched to South Bay House of Correction in solidarity with inmates there. At South Bay, inmates banged on windows in response as the crowd cheered, banged drums, and shut down the busy Massachusetts Avenue Connector under the watchful eye of Boston police officers.

Some drivers blocked by protesters pulled over and joined the march, said protester Samaria Johnson, 32, of Roxbury.

“I’m really surprised to see the level of diversity out here: black, white, gay, straight, Indian, Somalian,” she said.

More than 100 State Police, Boston police, and Transit Police officers — some clad in helmets and protective gear — met the marchers there, in what a State Police spokesman said was an effort to keep them off the interstate.

Protesters chanted “hands up, don’t shoot” — a rallying cry in the wake of Brown’s death.

“There are a lot of things messed up with the system,” said Fatuma Mohamed, 19, a student from South Boston High School. She said she went to the march and rally “to stand in solidarity with the people of Ferguson.”

The people of Boston face many of the same issues, said many who packed the pews at Twelfth Baptist Church in Roxbury earlier Tuesday night. But the ensuing conversation, some said, could leave Boston stronger.

“Sometimes that conversation won’t make us feel comfortable because there are some uncomfortable issues that we have to talk about,” said the Rev. Jeffrey Brown, speaking at an emotional forum at Twelfth Baptist, where Martin Luther King Jr. once preached.

“You don’t have to say ‘amen,’ ” Brown said. “I know I’m right.”

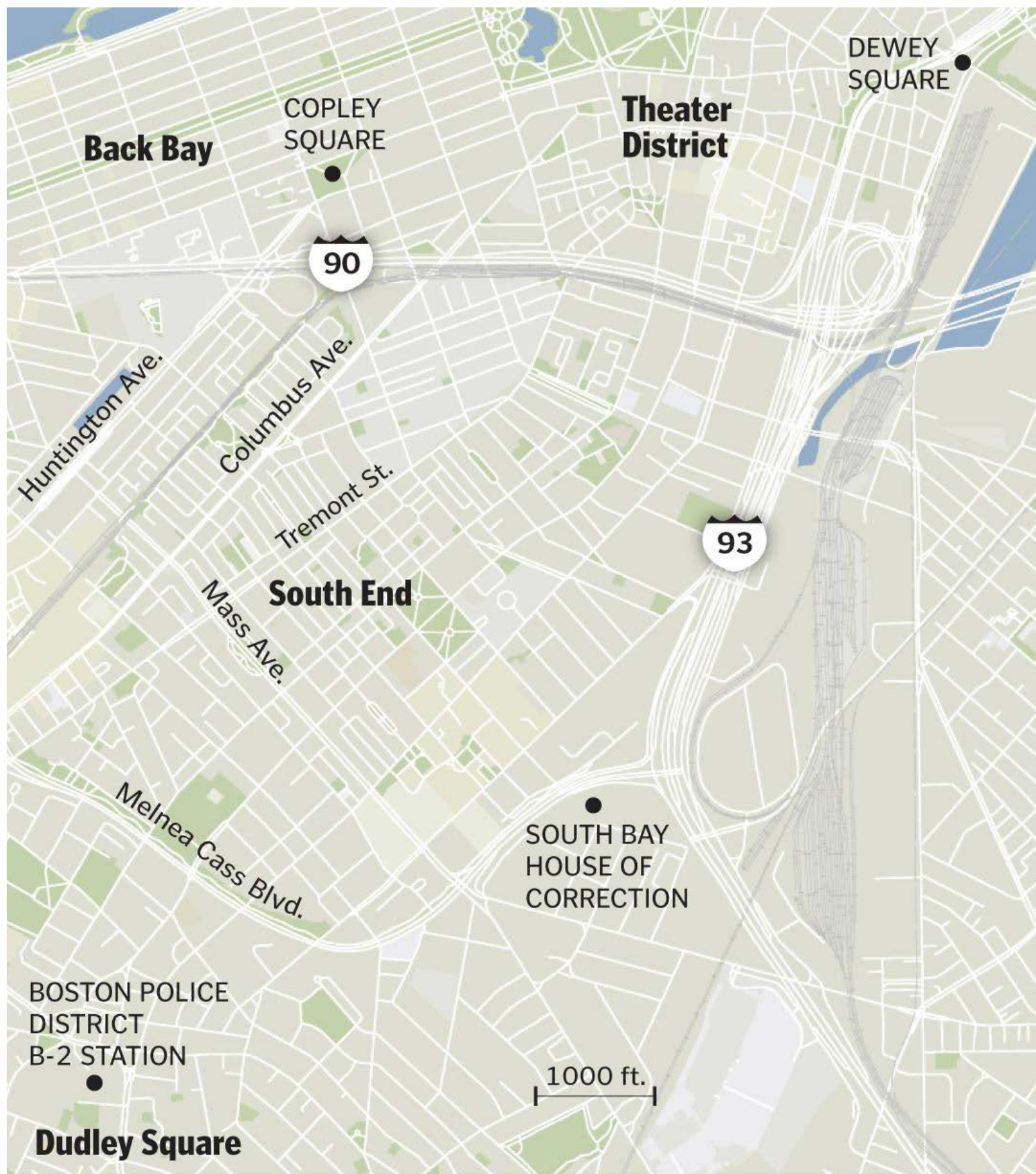
At the forum, Mayor Martin J. Walsh and Governor-elect Charlie Baker delivered brief addresses before ceding the microphone to others in the crowd.

Residents at the meeting urged better training for city police officers in community matters, the resumption of a civilian review board to oversee complaints against police, a conversation on race, and something as personal and basic as returning to the roots of the Bible.

“What we need to do is clean house. Any good cop is all about expelling the bad cops. So let’s pull up the weed by the roots,” said Jamarhl Crawford, who runs the Blackstonian online community newspaper and drew the loudest applause.

Jumaane Kendrick, 28, of Roxbury, urged Bostonians to get involved to lift the downtrodden from hopelessness. He said he had been in gangs when he was younger, afraid to share with his parents the dangers of the streets.

But he was able to get out of it through the persistence of others who stood by him.



SOURCE: Google maps

JAMES ABUNDIS/GLOBE STAFF

On Tuesday, he urged others to do the same in their communities.

As dozens watched on a video feed downstairs, Walsh and Baker said they came to the meeting to listen, learn, and comfort those still raging.

“One thing missing from Ferguson is the opportunity for people to grieve,” Walsh said. “I want to ensure the people of Boston feel safe and secure, and that we are respectful in addressing our feelings.”

He acknowledged that Boston is not immune from the seemingly intractable problems that afflict towns like Ferguson — racial disparities in education, income, and much more; distrust of police. Boston, he said, cannot change the rest of the country — but it can do better.

“Let’s be leaders,” Walsh said.

In Dewey Square, Latoya Sanderson, a Dorchester native who now lives in California but is home for Thanksgiving, said she had participated in a protest in Ferguson during a cross-country car ride in August but did not expect to see anything of this scale in her hometown.

“No black child should die,” she said. “I just want to hear police answer that one question that we’ve been asking since August.”

She said she believed the protest would send a message to city officials.

“They are going to look back on this night and say we can never let this happen again in Boston,” she said. “I think the city is going to be talking.”



JOSH REYNOLDS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Supreme Richardson, an official with the Boston NAACP, spoke with protesters.

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Meghan Irons of the Globe Staff and Globe correspondents Jeremy C. Fox and Matt Rocheleau contributed to this report. Travis Andersen can be reached at tandersen@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@TAGlobe](https://twitter.com/TAGlobe). Nestor Ramos can be reached at nestor.ramos@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@NestorARamos](https://twitter.com/NestorARamos).



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