

“WVON’S FASCINATING PEOPLE OF 2015” TRANSCRIPT

WRITTEN BY DOMETI PONGO (DOMETIPONGO.COM)

AIR DATE: 01/01/2016 | WVON.COM



[REJOIN]

WELCOME BACK TO WVON’S LIST OF 2015’S MOST FASCINATING PEOPLE. I’M CLIFF KELLEY. I TALKED ABOUT THE FIRST LADY OF TENNIS SERENA WILLIAMS, OUR PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, AND THE NINE VICTIMS OF THE CHARLESTON MASSACRE. AS WE WIND DOWN, WE’VE GOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE THAT HAD THEIR FINGERS ON THE NATION’S PULSE. LAST YEAR, THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT AND PROTESTERS NATIONWIDE TOOK THE CROWN FOR 2014’S MOST FASCINATING PEOPLE. THIS YEAR, THEY PROVED THEY HAD BOTH RESOLVE AND STAYING POWER. THE MOVEMENT THAT STARTED ONLINE SPILLED ONTO PICKET LINES. AND MAKE NO MISTAKE - BLACK LIVES MATTER WERE NOT THE ONLY GROUP ORGANIZING. THIS YEAR, RIGHT HERE IN CHICAGO, SEVERAL ACTIVIST GROUPS CAME TOGETHER TO MAKE A GRAND STAND AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY. MILLENNIALS STEPPED UP IN A MAJOR WAY. THEY SHUT DOWN THE BIGGEST RETAIL EVENT OF THE FOURTH QUARTER...BLACK FRIDAY. GROUPS LIKE ASSATA’S DAUGHTERS, THE BLACK YOUTH PROJECT 100, WE CHARGE GENOCIDE, RAINBOW PUSH, MEMBERS OF THE NATION OF ISLAM AND COUNTLESS OTHERS MARCHED BY THE HUNDREDS – IF NOT THOUSANDS - DOWN MICHIGAN AVENUE. THEY SHUT DOWN TRAFFIC IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE. THEY BLOCKED SHOPPERS FROM SPENDING A DIME ON THE MAG MILE. THEY WERE DEMANDING JUSTICE FOR THE YOUNG MAN WHO’LL RECEIVE OUR CROWN JEWEL.

THE NUMBER 1 SPOT THIS YEAR GOES TO 17-YEAR-OLD LAQUAN MCDONALD. A GRISLY VIDEO SHOWED LAQUAN TAKING HIS LAST BREATH AS CHICAGO COP JASON VAN DYKE PUMPED 16 BULLETS INTO HIS LIFELESS BODY. THAT FATEFUL MOMENT WOULD CHANGE CHICAGO FOREVER.

[PROTESTERS YELL “16 SHOTS”]

THE SHOOTING HAPPENED LAST YEAR. BUT THE FALLOUT STARTED A FEW MONTHS AGO. AFTER DEMANDS FROM ACTIVISTS AND JOURNALISTS, A JUDGE FORCED THE CITY TO RELEASE THE VIDEO OF THE GRUESOME SHOOTING. ACTIVIST WILLIAM CALLOWAY AND JOURNALIST BRANDON SMITH WERE AMONG THE MANY PEOPLE THAT FOUGHT TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN. BRANDON SMITH’S FOIA REQUEST WAS GRANTED...

[AUDIO]

THE VIDEO WAS SO BAD, CITY HALL TRIED AT EVERY TURN TO BLOCK ITS RELEASE. CHICAGO EVEN SETTLED WITH MCDONALD'S FAMILY FOR FIVE MILLION DOLLARS BEFORE THEY EVEN FILED A LAWSUIT! WHEN THE VIDEO HIT THE NET, PROTESTERS TOOK TO THE STREETS TO VOICE THEIR FRUSTRATION WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM.

\*\*\*\*\*[PROTESTERS' COMMENTS]

THE DAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING, DEMONSTRATORS MARCHED THROUGH THE SOUTH LOOP. THE PROTESTS WERE LARGELY PEACEFUL ASIDE FROM A FEW SKIRMISHES WITH POLICE. TENSIONS WERE HIGH. BUT IT WAS THE BLACK FRIDAY PROTESTS THAT REALLY CAUGHT THE CITY'S ATTENTION.

[ACTUALITY]

CNN SENT FIELD REPORTERS TO CHICAGO TO COVER THE ACTION. CONGRESSMAN BOBBY RUSH WALKED ARM IN ARM WITH REVEREND JESSES JACKSON AND A NEW FACE, A YOUNG WOMAN BY THE NAME OF CHARLENE CARRUTHERS. HER DEMANDS WERE CLEAR.

[ACTUALITY]

CARRUTHERS IS THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR THE YOUNG ACTIVIST GROUP BYP 100.

SHE AND OTHERS WONDERED WHY IT TOOK STATES ATTORNEY ANITA ALVAREZ 400 DAYS TO BRING CHARGES ON JASON VAN DYKE.

[ACTUALITY]

THE PRESSURE WAS ON AS PROTESTERS CALLED FOR THE OUSTER OF RAHM EMANUEL, FORMER CPD TOP COP GARRY MCCARTHY AND STATES ATTORNEY ALVAREZ. WITH HIS BACK AGAINST THE WALL, THE MAYOR HAD TO ACT. MCCARTHY WAS FIRST ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK.

[ACTUALITY]

LAQUAN MCDONALD DIDN'T DIE IN VAIN. THE MAYOR SCRAMBLED TO IMPLEMENT REFORMS THAT WOULD CALM THE PEOPLE. NEW POLICIES WERE IMPLEMENTED LATE IN THE YEAR. CHICAGO COPS INVOLVED IN SHOOTINGS WILL NOW BE REMOVED FROM THE FIELD IMMEDIATELY. ALSO AS SOON AS COPS FIRE THEIR WEAPONS, THEY'LL BE PLACED ON ADMINISTRATIVE DUTY FOR AT LEAST 30 DAYS. THE MAYOR PUT TOGETHER AN INVESTIGATIVE TASK FORCE. THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT LAUNCHED A CPD INVESTIGATION.

[ACUTALITY]

ALL OF THESE CHANGES TOOK PLACE IN A MATTER OF WEEKS. PERHAPS THE MOST SHOCKING CHANGE WASN'T EVEN IN THE AREA OF POLICE REFORM. MED STUDENTS JOINED THE PROTESTS CALLING POLICE BRUTALITY A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE. IN LIGHT OF IT ALL, THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO FINALLY DECIDED TO BRING A TRAUMA CENTER TO THE CITY'S SOUTHSIDE. IT'S A MOVE THEY'VE RESISTED FOR DECADES. AS THE SAGA CONTINUES TO UNFOLD, ONE THING BECOMES CLEAR.

LAQUAN MCDONALD'S LIFE AND EVEN HIS UNTIMELY DEATH WERE NOT WITHOUT PURPOSE. HE WAS A TROUBLED KID. A WARD OF THE STATE. HE WAS TWICE REMOVED FROM HIS MOTHER'S CARE AND ALLEGEDLY SUFFERED ABUSE AT THE HANDS OF HER BOYFRIEND. THERE ARE CHAPTERS IN HIS SHORT LIFE THAT MAY NEVER FIND CLOSURE. STILL, HE MADE AN IMPACT ON THE NATION.

**LAQUAN'S LIFE MATTERED. AND THAT MUST REMAIN EVIDENT. NOW MORE THAN EVER.**

WE HOPED YOU ENJOYED OUR LIST OF THE 10 MOST FASCINATING PEOPLE OF 2015. WE'LL SEE YOU IN THE NEW YEAR. I'M CLIFF KELLEY, THANKS FOR LISTENING.