

Demonstrators gather, protest shooting death

By Rebecca Brite

Protesting Wednesday night's fatal shooting of a 26-year-old Lincoln man, a group of about 70 persons gathered at 13th and O streets Thursday afternoon, carrying signs and circulating informal petitions.

At sundown the group, joined late in the afternoon by State Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha and Lincoln City Councilman John Robinson, moved to a vacant lot at 22nd and Vine streets. The demonstrators dispersed at 7:30 p.m.

The crowd of protesters, predominantly black, included about 15 UNL students. Another demonstration at 13th and O was planned for Friday morning, a student said, to "keep people's minds on what's happened." Police said no trouble resulted from Thursday's protest.

The gathering was prompted by the death of Arvid Sherdell Lewis, who was shot with a shotgun at about 10 p.m. Wednesday by Lancaster County deputy sheriff Rodney Loos.

Loos and 11 other law enforcement officers, including Lincoln policemen and state patrolmen, had been attempting to serve a search warrant at Lewis's home, 2284 Potter St.

Press conference

Participants in Thursday's protest said people from UNL and the Lincoln black community began collecting at a vacant lot in the Clinton neighborhood, near Lewis's home, after attending a morning press conference with Lancaster County Atty. Ron Lahners.

The Lincoln Journal reported Lahners ended the press conference shortly after noon because the crowd had become "a bit rowdy." Lahners could not be reached by the Daily Nebraskan for comment.

According to the Journal, Lahners said a U.S. Justice Dept. investigation has been requested. Loos has been placed on "inactive status."

Fear and anger

Fear and anger were the emotions expressed by most of the protest participants, who carried signs reading, "Police or killers?" "Why was Sherdell Lewis shot? (sic)" and "A man's home is his castle—for Lewis, it was his grave."

"Who's going to be next?" one petition carrier asked. "I'm afraid it might be me, or one of my seven brothers."

"We all knew Sherdell," said a UNL student whose sign read, "Neutralize the man (lawmen)—he killed our brother."

"Good friend"

"The police killed a good friend of ours. That's why we're here," called one sign-carrier to passersby. Many persons stopped to listen; others asked reporters and photographers what was happening.

About 150 signatures had been collected by 4:30, according to a check of petitioners, who were spread out along O Street from 13th to 12th streets and on 13th from O to N.

Chambers, who said he came to Lincoln because "a friend came and got me," said he hoped to see Nebraska State Patrol reports of the shooting. The reports were to

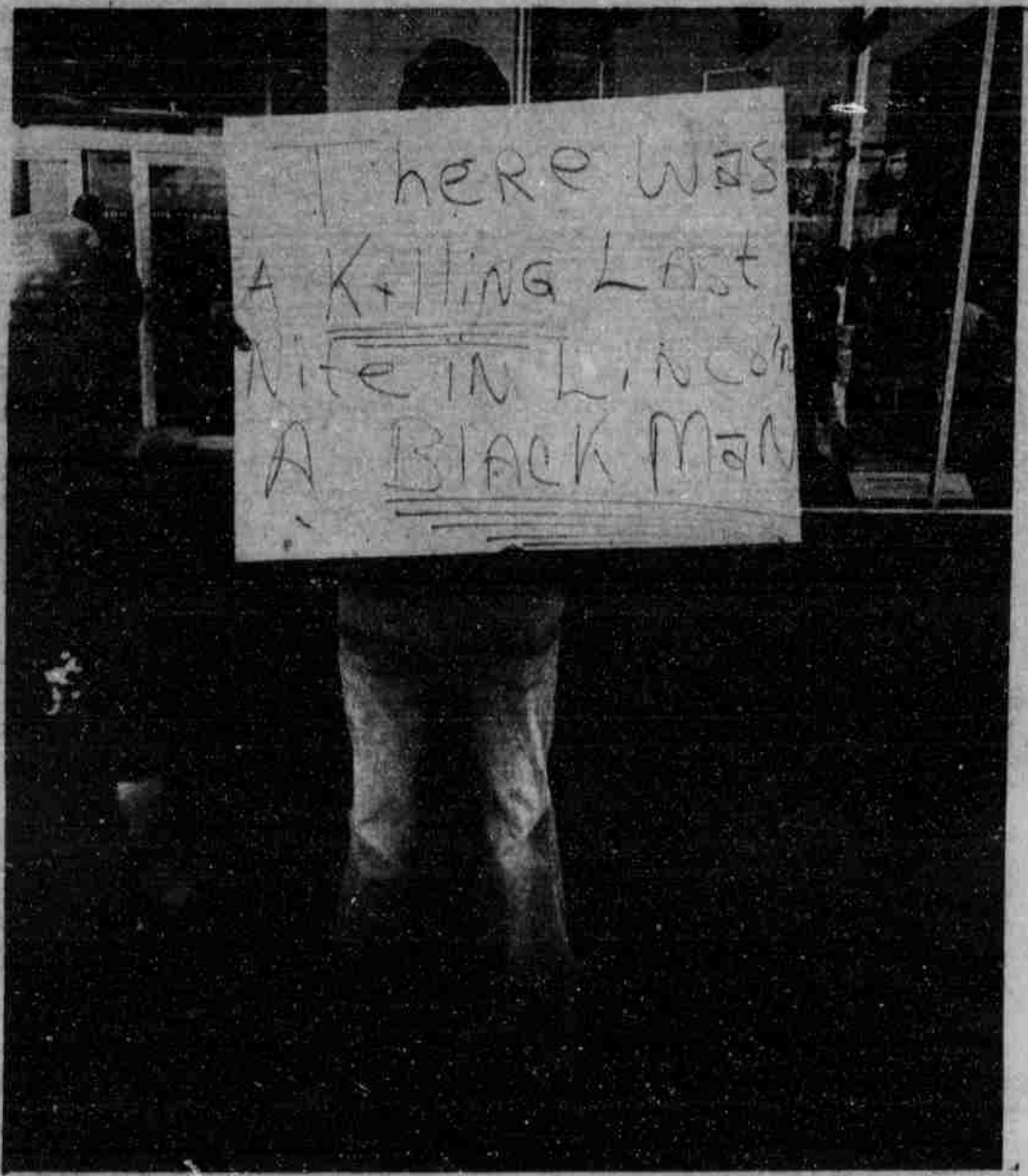


Photo by Ted Kirk

Demonstrators carried signs in downtown Lincoln Thursday afternoon to protest the shooting death of Sherdell Lewis.

be given to Nebraska Atty. Gen. Paul Douglas Friday morning, Chambers said.

State agency

"I want to know why the State Patrol was there," he said. "It's a state agency, and I'm interested in what state agencies do." Chambers said he would also try to find out what the search warrant the officers were attempting to serve was for.

"Lincoln is approaching the situation Omaha has now, where police shoot just anyone. But at least here, the mayor doesn't issue an immediate statement

implying approval of what happened, and here it is the county attorney, not a disgruntled citizen, who requests a federal investigation."

Chambers indicated pessimism, however, about how fair the Justice Dept. probe would be, saying federal investigators "generally manage to effect a coverup."

Lewis was the second black man shot in Lincoln by law-enforcement officers this year. Elijah Childers Jr., 39, was shot at his home by Lincoln policeman Feb. 1.

NU collective bargaining

Court hears testimony

By Randy Blauvelt

The Nebraska Court of Industrial Relations Thursday heard eight UNL professors and two representatives of the NU systems office give testimony concerning collective bargaining for UNL faculty members.

The testimony centered on a bargaining unit proposed by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and whether it was appropriate.

Patrick Healey, lawyer for AAUP, called the eight professors to testify that UNL is an autonomous part of the University of Nebraska system and should have a separate bargaining unit.

Bruce Wright, lawyer for the NU Board of Regents, contended that if collective bargaining is established, "UNL should not be set apart separately."

Election possible

If the court decides the unit is suitable when it reconvenes Friday, Judge Benjamin Wall can call for an election to determine who will be the bargaining agent. UNL faculty members could vote to have AAUP or another union represent them, or vote not to be represented at all.

Wallace Peterson, UNL economics professor and department chairman, said setting up collective bargaining with only one agent for the whole university system would be "a disaster."

"It would be a chaotic condition, it would disrupt long-established practices," he said. "The diversity (between the campuses) should be preserved."

Academic freedom and tenure

Peterson defined the practices as academic freedom and the granting of tenure. He also testified that the differences between the campuses in matters of hiring, accreditation and research capabilities would be "in jeopardy" if a single bargaining agent was elected for UNL, the Uni-

versity of Nebraska at Omaha and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC).

Don Haack, UNL engineering mechanics professor, testified that UNL, because of its size, would dominate the bargaining process if there was only one agent for the three campuses.

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Weather

Friday: Sunny and warmer, temperatures in the mid-70s. Southerly winds ranging from 10 to 20 mph.

Friday night: Partly cloudy, lows in the mid-40s.

Saturday: Partly cloudy, with temperatures ranging from 70 to 75.



Photo by Steve Goarner

The pain and emotion of a sudden disaster are shown on the face of this man after an explosion at a Lincoln grain elevator late Thursday afternoon. Six men were injured in the explosion in the Far-Mar-Co Inc. elevator, 24th and Fair streets. Two severely burned victims were flown by helicopter to the St. Elizabeth Community Health Center burn center. See story and photos on page 7.