

I just had a chance to read notes from Arkansas Times photographer Brian Chilson on what he observed Tuesday night following demonstrators whose curfew violation eventually led to 79 arrests.

It follows:

The first thing I noticed was that in addition to a large, but smaller crowd than usual, several of the organizers that have been to every protest were not in attendance. the rumor amongst some I asked was that they were not ok with breaking the curfew as it seemed inflammatory and there are trying to keep things non confrontational, They feel like they are unjustly being blamed for the destructive actions aof a small group.

The photos of two white people being detained is a curious event. Jordan saw some of that event as well. They were detained by police next to a building that had a large hole in the one of it's windows and there was a pile of bricks in the front of it. (you can see officers loading those bricks into police vehicles. the crowd that gathered around yelled at the two detainees and the gist of it was that they thought the two were trouble makers and were there to cause cause destruction and get the larger non violent group blamed.

the police allowed the two to leave after brief questioning causing the crowd to gather around the officers yelling "Why aren't you arresting them, you know what those bricks are for! We would get arrested!, You have the evidence right there!"

no answers were given.

As 8:00 came and went, the protesters began to dwindle and those remaining began to prepare themselves for the tear gas and onslaught by the riot police. some put on helmets, others reminded people that there was a medical tent for washing the teargas from your eyes or helping with minor injuries. and they waited, then, as if on cue the crowd formed lines and headed out on Capitol Ave as organizers yelled to the crowd to get on and stay on the sidewalks. there were too may left in the crowd I'd put at "over 100?" to keep them all on the sidewalks but repeated attempts and reminders were made. all along the way. once the Protest crossed 630 there seemed to be some disagreement about what the ultimate goal should be, but without saying the name they agreed on a destination saying, " you know who lives over here", and the protest turned left and crossed in front of Philander Smith and headed toward the Governor's mansion.

The police seemed the entire way to have been taken completely by surprise, squad cars darted around the group and followed but seemed to be trying to figure out where the group was headed, when the protest turned left at Philander it seemed they figured it out and you could hear multiple sirens heading toward the mansion area.

The half dozen State troopers in front of the mansion that greeted the group said little to nothing though at one point they asked the protesters to step back a few feet to give some separation, which the protesters did.

(I decided to leave after exhausting photo opportunities and there was clear disagreement about whether this had been a constructive idea, with some seeming to think it hadn't been enough. This has been a growing source of tension within the group) I left with another photographer and we made our way to Broadway and then to Capitol (we were parked just north of the Capitol near the LR9 Statues) there was a group of riot geared police along the way who seemed uninterested in us but when we got about a block from the Democratic Party building we heard a group ahead of us being warned via a megaphone not to take another step toward the Capitol, because they were in a restricted area and they need to turn around immediately. We had to walk over to 3rd and approach our cars from 3rd but were never directly confronted or challenged.