

Justice Sought for Black Woman Beaten by CHP

By Kenneth D. Miller
Special to the NNPA
from the *Los Angeles Sentinel*

More than 23-years after the videotape release of White uniformed LAPD officers beating unarmed Black motorist Rodney King in 1991 (which sparked the civil unrest in Los Angeles and throughout the country in 1992), the savage beating of 51-year old African American woman Marlene Pinnock by a yet to be named White California Highway Patrol officer on the Santa Monica Freeway on July 1 was captured by cell phone video.

A community is outraged, civil rights and community leaders are planning a protest and the victim's attorney is demanding justice. Pinnock has since been hospitalized and the CHP officer has been placed on paid administrative leave as the organization

the shoulder of the freeway.

Two days following the attack, the CHP issued the following statement: "The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is aware of the video and we are looking into the incident. As a matter of policy, every time there is a use of force by our officers, there is a review conducted to determine whether the use of force was appropriate. That will be done in this case, however, since there is an ongoing investigation, it would be premature to comment on this specific video segment without reviewing the entire incident."

The video starts with the officer attempting to detain Pinnock. She manages to get a few steps away from him before he forces her to the ground. The officer then briefly struggles with her before repeatedly punching her in the face.

"After the officer spotted the barefoot woman walking along the shoulder and stepping into lanes of the 10 Freeway near the La Brea Avenue exit, he approached the woman, who became 'physically combative,'" the CHP said in a statement. The video then shows the officer pull her to the side of the highway as he begins to brutally beat her.

After a few moments, a plainclothes officer arrives at the scene and assists the CHP officer in restraining Pinnock in handcuffs.

On July 4, Chris O'Quinn, Assistant Chief of the CHP Southern Division, assured news outlets the incident would be thoroughly reviewed.



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investigates possible excessive use of force.

The video of the beating has since gone viral on YouTube and viewed by nearly a quarter of a million people just as of Monday July 7. The video, captured by a driver passing by, shows an officer punching Pinnock while on the ground more than eleven times in the face while she lies helpless on

"We're looking at every possibility, every fact, every circumstance that have contributed to this situation, and we're going to try to come to a just conclusion," said Assistant Chief O'Quinn at a news conference on Friday.

Pinnock's family has retained African American attorney Caree Harper, a former police officer dedicated to pursuing justice, according to her website. Her site lauds her federal and state jury trial experience, and states she has helped many victims of civil rights violations.

Harper is asking that the two officers

involved in the incident be punished. "She's not just some animal," attorney Harper said, "She has an aunt, a sister, a brother, a father and a great-grandchild."

Prominent Northern California based civil rights attorney John Burriss has also joined the legal team representing Pinnock.

California Attorney General Kamala Harris declined to comment on the matter as of press time.

The Sentinel reached out to a number of additional elected officials who were not available for comment.

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WE NEED YOUR HELP!

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The Oregon Black Pioneers are currently planning their next exhibit, **A Community On The Move**, opening at the Oregon Historical Society in February 2015. The exhibit will focus on the experiences of African Americans from WWII until the early 1960s.

- Did you work at the Kaiser shipyards?
- Do you remember the Albina community of the 1940s and 50s?
- Did you live in Vanport?
- Did you experience the flood?
- Were you or your family displaced by urban renewal plans during this period?
- Were you involved in city planning efforts?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

If you have photographs, artifacts or memories to share, please contact us before July 31. Gwen Carr, gweccar@comcast.net or 503-949-5142.

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