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Community leaders are calling on the St. Paul Police Department and its chief to harshly deal with an officer who is seen in a video kicking an unarmed man.

Pictured: Eric Hightower displays a bruised face, injuries he says he received at the hands of officers of the St. Paul Police Department.

In a video that appeared on the urban website, www.worldstarhiphop.com , and quickly went viral, St. Paul Police Officer Jesse Zilge is seen kicking a man who lay in the street, seemingly gasping and posing no visible threat to the officer. The man, Eric Hightower, 30, was spotted walking near Lewis Park in St. Paul when Zilge approached Hightower regarding an outstanding warrant. The incident occurred on Aug. 28. The video surfaced on the Web the next day.

The video begins with Hightower already on the ground and Zilge standing over him.

Approximately 75 seconds into the taping, Zilge turns to Hightower, who is gasping and spitting on the ground, and kicks Hightower in the chest. Following the kick, other officers arrived, picked Hightower off the ground and Zilge and another unidentified officer slammed Hightower on the hood of a squad car.

Hightower was arrested and charged with aggravated stalking and making terroristic threats against an ex-girlfriend, which was the reason for the stop.

"No individual deserves this type of treatment," said Bishop Divar Kemp, senior pastor of Life Changes Church.

"This can never, ever happen again."

Tyrone Terrill, chairman of the African-American Leadership Council said seeing the officer kick Hightower reminded him of darker days in our nation's history.

"What I saw was a harkening back to Alabama and 'Bull' Connor," said Terrill in reference to the Birmingham commissioner of public safety who would routinely use fire hoses and police dogs to attack African Americans during the 1960s. "You don't do that to a human being. Zilge kicked a young man for no reason."

Hightower's attorney, Seamus Mahoney, said his client suffered a bruised chest from being kicked and chemical burns to the face as a result of being pepper-sprayed. He said Hightower alleged he was also hit while handcuffed in the squad car and Mahoney is requesting the St. Paul police turn over any video it may have of the incident.

"Mr. Hightower is scared," said Mahoney. "He doesn't want to be in the neighborhood. It's a shame to be there and be beaten like a dog and you have to lay there and take it. (Hightower) is lucky he didn't get his teeth kicked in."

Mahoney said his client is pursuing a civil suit against Zilge and the department.

Jeffry Martin, president of the St. Paul branch of the NAACP, said incidents such as this are more common than many would think and had it not been for the videotaping of this incident, nothing would be being done about the abuse of police authority.

"[The filming] is a rare occurrence that someone had enough forethought to film and get this viral as quickly as possible," said Martin. He said that the person who took the video "is a very courageous person. Were it not for that person we would never know of Eric Hightower."

Pictured:: Eric Hightower (far left) stands alongside the Rev. Melvin Miller, St. Paul NAACP President, Jeffry Martin, Tyrone Terrill, chair of the African-American Leadership Council, the Rev. Darryl Spence and Bishop Divar Kemp as Hightower's attorney, Seamus Mahoney addresses the media during a recent press conference regarding the videotaped kicking of Hightower by a St. Paul police officer.

Insight News was able to locate the person who filmed the alleged brutality and spoke with that person under the condition of anonymity.

"I'm scared the St. Paul Police are going to do something to me," said the individual who filmed the nearly five minutes of footage. "Police surrounded the park and I got out of there as fast as I could."

The person who shot the footage with a cellular phone said a call was immediately placed to local ABC television affiliate, KSTP-TV. The individual said a representative of the station declined to view the footage, so the individual decided to post the footage on the internet.

St. Paul Police Public Information Officer, Howie Padilla, said St. Paul Police Chief Tom Smith called for an immediate internal investigation into the incident. Padilla said Zilge was immediately placed on paid administrative leave, pending the outcome of the investigation.

"The chief has said right away that he wants to know everything that happened – from start to finish – with this entire incident," said Padilla. "Chief Smith is looking to get as many answers as he can."

As a result of the ongoing internal investigation, another officer, Matthew Gorans, has also been placed on administrative leave. It is not yet known why Gorans has been placed on leave.

Padilla said the investigation into the incident will be swift. "I don't envision this being an investigation that will take months to complete," said Padilla. "The chief is taking this very seriously."

Martin said he has been in contact with Chief Smith regarding the incident and believes the chief is sincere in his efforts to thoroughly investigate the incident.