

NEWS

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THE STATE OF MICHIGAN
CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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IMMEDIATE -- POLICE CASES

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Detroit, April 27--The Michigan Civil Rights Commission today closed three cases in which satisfactory adjustments have been reached with the Detroit Police Department and approved a memorandum of agreement on handling other police cases.

Substance of:

In the cases closed, the claimants Barbara Jackson, Clarence Bagley, and Cordell Henry had charged that they had suffered physical and other forms of mistreatment by Police because they are Negroes.

In each of these cases, the Civil Rights Commission conducted an investigation, Burton I. Gordin, Executive Director said, and determined that there was sufficient grounds to issue complaints against the offending officers and the Police Department. In each of the cases, the Police Department has concluded an investigation and has taken disciplinary action and other corrective steps.

"The reason given by the Police Department was the the officers had violated the police manual, rather than finding as the commission investigation showed that there was sufficient cause to believe that the civil rights of these individuals had been violated because of their race," Gordin said. "However, the important thing is that the Detroit Police Department took disciplinary and remedial action in these cases following the complaints of the citizens."

The Commission closed the cases subject to settlement with claimants for verified and reasonable out-of-pocket monetary losses suffered by them, in the event that they file claims with the city against the Police Department.

In each of the cases, officers involved were given written reprimands and were transferred. The claimants have been notified of this disciplinary action.



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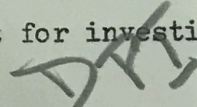
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Mr. Henry, who is 16 years old, alleged that he was apprehended by police officers during an altercation with a white man who he said had struck him with a car. The officers, he said, forcibly searched him on the street, struck him in the stomach, and took him to the precinct station in a police car. the precinct station, he alleged the officers failed to consider his complaint against the white man and the arresting officers.

Mr. Bagley claimed that he and his wife were arrested and taken to the police station in separate cars. Enroute, he said that one of the officers used racially insulting language and that he was beaten by the two officers in the car. He was hospitalized for four days.

The Commission investigations revealed evidence to substantiate the allegations of each of the claimants that they were mistreated because of their race.

"While the Commission is not necessarily satisfied that the action in these cases is commensurate with the gravity of the offenses," Mr. Gordin said, "it is persuaded that the Police Department has recognized the importance of resolving these claims and has taken realistic measures to remedy the injustices suffered by these citizens."

The Police Department also informed the Commission that it has taken several other actions. These include the elimination of arrest for investigation. These investigation arrests averaged 1200 to 1500 a month. 

Other actions include a rule that all citizens coming in contact with Police officers are to be addressed by their last names and appropriate title-- Mr., Mrs., or Miss.

The Police Department also reported the assigning of additional men to the Citizens Complaint Bureau and the scheduling of additional hours of instruction on human relations in the Police Academy program.

The memorandum of agreement, approved by the Commission and signed by Police Commissioner Ray Girardin and Mr. Gordin covers a basic set of investigative procedures to be applied in the processing of claims filed with the Michigan Civil Rights Commission against the Detroit Police Department.

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In the agreement, arrangements are made between the Civil Rights Commission and the Citizen Complaint Bureau for the exchange of witnesses' statements and other records relative to investigations following the filing of complaints, for the taking of statements from police officers by the staff of the Civil Rights Commission, joint investigation where practical, and other procedural steps. All of the 17 steps are designed to "provide an effective working relationship between the Detroit Police Department and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission toward their common goals of just and effective law enforcement and the protection of the civil rights of our citizens," the agreement reads.

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