

OCT 31 1961

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October 17, 1961

Detroit Police Department
1300 Beaubien
Detroit 26, Michigan

Attention: Commissioner Herbert W. Hart

Re: Willie Tyner
2950 Buchanan
Detroit, Michigan

Gentlemen:

Be advised that this office represents Mr. Willie Tyner of the above address, who is age 32, married and with child, and is a resident of the City of Detroit and an employee of the Scott Valve Manufacturing Company in said city and State of Michigan.

This letter is written for the purpose of informing you of a great injustice suffered by Mr. Tyner and his family through improper actions by city officials and in particular, the Detroit Police Department.

Mr. Tyner has been a resident of the City of Detroit since July of 1956 and is a Mason and presently attends the Adjulin Baptist Church and the True Love Baptist Church, and his child of the age of 10 years, being Willie Tyner, Jr., attends the Chaney Public School here in this city. Mr. Tyner has been married since June of 1950.

On April 29, 1961 at or about the hour of 6:30 p.m., Mr. Tyner was in his home sleeping on the front room couch when his wife heard loud knocking at the door, and when she opened the door she was confronted by four (4) police officers in uniform who asked her if this was the Tyner residence and upon her affirmative answer pushed their way into the home of the Tyners, went over to the couch and abruptly and with force awakened Mr. Tyner and immediately started interrogating him as to his whereabouts this day. It should be noted that the police officers drove up in two (2) separate cars, two (2) in each automobile.

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Mr. Tyner explained to these officers where he had been all day, and they asked him if he had a pistol and he informed them that he did not, but he had a Winchester rifle. While he was still being interrogated, two (2) of the officers took his wife into their kitchen, closed the door and questioned her, and searched the home of the parties thoroughly, including the refrigerator, cabinets, closets, living room, bedrooms, bathroom; and when they were through searching the premises, they went out to the automobile of Mr. Tyner and searched that thoroughly also, after they had taken his keys to his car to open the glove compartment and trunk.

The particular officers in question being Sergeant Theodore Hart, Patrolman Robert Lessnau, Patrolman Robert Hayes and Patrolman Richard Bylicki did not have a search warrant in their possession or in the opinion of the writer, probable cause to search said premises.

After the home and car were searched, they strongly requested that Mr. Tyner lay out all his identification cards on the table and they proceeded to look through same, and then told him to get up off the couch, put his hat and coat on and leave with them, leaving behind his identification cards. Upon Mr. Tyner indicating that he would not leave his identification cards, they told Mr. Tyner to stand up, put his hands behind his back, whereupon they put handcuffs on him so tightly that they left an impression in his wrists, and then pushed him out of the house with his hands handcuffed behind him and into a squad car.

It should be noted that at no time did Mr. and Mrs. Tyner or the child give the police any trouble, backtalk or struggle in any way, but did on many occasions ask of the police officers to inform them why their premises was being searched and why Mr. Tyner was being dragged away by the police, and also if they did have a search warrant. Each time the officers refused to answer these questions and would give no explanation whatsoever. Mrs. Tyner, on one occasion, asked the police officers what they wanted with her husband, whereupon she was told that he was connected with a murder that occurred recently at that time.

It should be noted that during all these proceedings, Mr. Tyner's wife and 10 year old son were present, and that when they pushed Mr. Tyner out of his house with his hands handcuffed behind him, quite a number of the neighbors were out watching this episode, which of course was most embarrassing to the Tyner family and which actions by the police officers will leave a lasting impression on the 10 year old son of Mr. Tyner.

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Upon pushing Mr. Tyner into the squad car, another officer sat in the back seat with him and he was taken to the Vernor police station, and that one of police officers brought Mr. Tyner's car to the station for no apparent reason.

Upon arriving at the Vernor police station, the police officers took him into a room by himself and a plainclothesman started interrogating him, and when he was through, another officer took Mr. Tyner in the back room and put him in the line-up, and when he was through with that he was released to go home. It should be further noted that Mr. Tyner was not booked on suspicion of any crime nor fingerprinted.

We are advising you of this situation because of the injustice and denial of legal rights perpetrated upon the Tyner family and to inform you that the proper legal proceedings will be taken in furtherance of any and all legal rights our clients may have.

Very truly yours,

SMALL & SMALL

By: STUART E. SMALL
Stuart E. Small

SES:adv

cc: Mayor Louis G. Miriani
Harold Norris, Chairman, Metropolitan
Association of Civil Liberties Union
N.A.A.C.P.