

CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

J. Police-Community Relations

DATE August 23, 1972

TO: **Arthur Stine, Executive Assistant**

FROM: **Melvin E. Byrd, Director, Police-Community Relations**

SUBJECT: **Police-Community Relations Meeting at St. Rose Church**

As a result of information which you provided, I attended a police community relations meeting last evening, August 17th at St. Rose Church, 1634 Beniteau at Kercheval in Detroit. The meeting which was called by Father Michael Monley was attended by approximately 15 white and 35 black youths and adults. Also present were Bert Fossee of the Detroit Commission on Community Relations and James Leija, President of St. Rose Parish Council. The purpose of the meeting was to seek a solution and take some action against the Detroit police officers of the 15th Precinct (St. Jean and Jefferson Ave.) for slapping and beating (6) six black youths whom they arrested at 9:30 p.m., August 8th for shooting fire crackers.

According to various reports on the incident, the fire crackers went off shortly after the conclusion of a Parish Youth Council meeting held in the Parish Hall. The youths stated that a police car a half block away heard the fire crackers, responded and radioed for assistance, reporting that they were under gun fire. Four (4) additional police cars arrived and the white police officers forced six (6) black males and one black female to face a wall and raise their hands, after which they were frisked, including the female. One youth while raising both arms and trying to pocket and unopened bottle of rum, eventually dropped the bottle, after which an officer smashed the bottle on the ground, swung the youth around and hit him in the face with his gun. Three youths were taken into custody. The others were released on the spot. According to Ronnie Matthews and Rod Waller who were arrested, all the officers had drawn guns. They also reported being slapped while enroute to the station, and Ronnie alleges that patrolman Thomas Curley attempted to shut the car door on his foot. The youths and parents recognize that shooting fire crackers is illegal. However they object to the brutality which the youths were subjected to during and subsequent to their arrests. Prior to the fire cracker incident, 5th Precinct police arrested a 25 year old black man, Frank Hicks on E. Jefferson as he was entering his car. According to Mr. Hicks, the three white officers took his car keys and opened his trunk, looked through the car and frisked him. He reports that they beat him and kicked him prior to putting him in the car. Mr. Hicks didn't have a Michigan Drivers License. He had an Illinois license. He states that he has been in Michigan three weeks. While in the police car enroute to St. Rose hall to investigate the fire cracker incident, he was slapped in the face several times.

Mr. Hicks states that Ronnie Matthews was placed in the squad car with him and that he observed the officers beating and slapping Ronnie. All persons who were physically assaulted by the police name Patrolmen O'Brien and O'Malley as participants with Patrolmen Thomas Curley being the greatest offender.

Father Kosporek informed me that Inspector Grubb reluctantly advised him that Patrolman Curley was present in the 5th Precinct garage three weeks ago when two black officers had their guns taken and were beaten by other officers when the black officers interferred in the beating of a black father and son. The group after an extensive discussion agreed to file complaints with MCRC's East side office, Detroit Police Citizen Complaint Bureau, and to immediately seek a meeting with 5th Precinct Inspector Clifton Grubb.

MEB:pa

cc: Milton J. Robinson
Wilma H. Bledsoe
Don Bauder
James Hurst