

City of Detroit

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

JEROME P. CAVANAGH
Mayor

P/S
complaints ✓

FROM: Robert P. Roselle
TO: Mayor Jerome P. Cavanagh
DATE: July 17, 1968
RE: Complaint of Police brutality against Wally Triplet

Conrad Mallett is in Chicago today on City business. He asked me to relay the following information to you.

Yesterday afternoon, Tuesday - July 16, Conrad began to receive calls protesting the beating and arrest of Wally Triplet. Mr. Triplet is a former professional football player. He has been an instructor in the Detroit public high schools for the last couple of years. Senator Young, Congressman Diggs, Congressman Conyers, Councilman Hood, have all phoned protesting the Police action. Conrad inquired through the Commissioner's office that if in fact Mr. Triplet had been arrested and if force had been used. He was told that Mr. Triplet was in custody in the 7th Precinct and that handcuffs had been placed on him during the arrest as a precautionary measure because of his size. Conrad spoke to Inspector Odson T. Tetreault, commander of the 7th Precinct, who said that force had not been used in making the arrest of Mr. Triplet. A few minutes later the Inspector called back to say he was transferring the prisoner to Receiving Hospital because the man complained his wrists had been injured by the handcuffs. Inspector Heffernan had been informed of the incident and he had two detectives interview Mr. Triplet at Receiving Hospital. Mr. Triplet has been released on bond and will appear in the early session of Recorder's Court on the charge of disturbing the peace. Conrad talked to Commissioner Girardin and Superintendent Nichols. The policemen involved in the incident have been ordered to report to headquarters this morning to make statements.

The description of the incident according to Mr. Triplet is as follows:

At approximately noon yesterday, Mr. Triplet's car stalled on East Grand Boulevard at Jefferson. He was unable to get the car

started. There is a bus stop at that location and the auto was to some degree interfering with bus traffic. Two patrolmen in a Scout Car arrived at the scene and inquired of Mr. Triplet, who was seated in his auto, as to why he was blocking the bus stop. Mr. Triplet explained that his car was disabled, that he was unacquainted with the neighborhood and did not know where to obtain assistance from a tow truck. The uniformed officers appeared to be satisfied with his explanation. At that point, two plainclothesmen arrived at the scene and held a conference with the uniformed officers. One officer returned to Mr. Triplet's car and stated that if he didn't move the car they would issue him a traffic violation. Mr. Triplet said he would move the car as soon as possible but if they needed to issue a violation, he understood. There was a male passenger in the car with Mr. Triplet. He is also employed by the Board of Education as a locker room attendant. The Police officer ordered Mr. Triplet out of the car. Mr. Triplet refused. He said he would accept the traffic ticket and he would move his car but that he was not required to step out of his automobile. The Police officer struck Mr. Triplet by reaching through the auto window. Apparently Mr. Triplet did leave the car because a fight took place on the sidewalk with the Police officers using blackjacks to subdue Mr. Triplet.

According to Conrad, Mr. Triplet is a well-known and popular citizen of Detroit. Conrad is concerned that this incident be promptly investigated and appropriate action taken. He believes the Michigan Chronicle will exploit this incident in connection with the Stop and Frisk ordinance.

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