

STATE OF MICHIGAN



WILLIAM G. MILLIKEN, Governor

CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

1000 CADILLAC SQUARE BUILDING, DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226

TELEPHONE: 222-1810

July 3, 1969

Mr. Johannes F. Spreen
Commissioner of Police
Detroit Police Department
1300 Beaubien
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Commissioner Spreen:

On a number of occasions in the last year, I have written you and telephoned your office suggesting that we meet to discuss problems of concern to your Department, this Commission and the community. Specifically, I have suggested that we meet to discuss the relationship between our two agencies, the status of citizen complaints against the Detroit Police Department filed with this Commission, the contents and operation of a written agreement between your Department and this Commission, as well as the need to specify lines of communication and liaison in times of civil disorder.

So far you have not responded to these repeated suggestions for such a meeting or meetings.

I am once again suggesting a meeting at the earliest opportunity not only to discuss the subjects outlined above, but more urgently, to try to help resolve the pending federal court suit ("Patrolmen Daniel F. Browne, et al ... -vs- Michigan Civil Rights Commission, and its Commissioners, Johannes F. Spreen, Commr. Detroit Police Department, et al..."-Suit #32063). Counsel for the Civil Rights Commission, Assistant Attorney General William F. Bledsoe, and counsel for the plaintiffs and the Detroit Police Officers Association, Mr. Walter Nussbaum, have met on a number of occasions and have also recently met with Mr. William P. Doran, counsel to the Detroit Police Department, to discuss a possible settlement of this suit. I am informed by Mr. Bledsoe that there is a possibility of agreement among the three attorneys, but that settlement of the suit is dependent upon the involvement of your office, and discussion and agreement between your office and mine.



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Mr. Johannes F. Spreen

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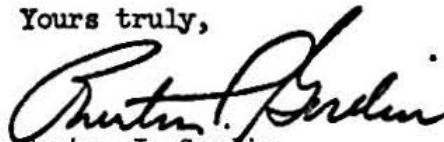
Of equal, if not greater urgency, is the need to resolve a growing number of complaints filed with this agency by individual citizens alleging violations of their civil rights by members of the Detroit Police Department. Currently there are 96 cases which have been investigated by our Commission, as well as the Police Department's Citizen's Complaint Bureau, and which are awaiting action by your office. A majority of these cases have been pending action for more than a year.

You have made it clear to the public that you are deeply concerned about the status of relations between the Police Department and the community. I think you will agree that a vital ingredient to the maintenance of constructive police-community relations is the expeditious and equitable resolution of citizen complaints. I, frankly, am at a loss to understand your inattention to this issue.

Our Commission will continue to carry out its constitutional mandate in matters brought before it concerning the Detroit Police Department, but I venture to presume that -- at least from your point of view -- those matters could be more expeditiously resolved were you to be directly informed and responsive.

I sincerely hope that I will hear from you promptly.

Yours truly,



Burton I. Gorain
Executive Director

BIG:mlj

bcc: *The Commission*
Wm. Pledge
Walter Greene
Tom Peluso
Janet Cooper