

DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM
Sixth Precinct

March 18, 1966

To: Lieutenant In Charge

Subject: INVESTIGATION OF ALPHONSE COPELAND M/N, OF 5958 15TH ST.

On March 8, 1966 at approximately 2:55 P.M., while assigned to Sgt. and in company with Patrolman J.D. Washington, Badge # 2422, and cruising in the vicinity of Maplewood and Grand River, we observed a M/N, wearing a Tan sweater, and brown pants, leave the apartment bldg. at 4849 Maplewood carrying articles of men's clothing over his arm, plus a blue/grey camera case.

Due to heavy traffic conditions at this time, This writer and above partner were unable to stop the car and talk to the man at this location. We circled the block and returned to observe above man enter a Maroon 1964 Buick (66) Mich. Lic. GP 1695, which pulled away from curb and proceeded W. on Maplewood: (Car had been parked across from above apartment.) The car then went W. on Maplewood to Beechwood, then south on Beechwood to Spokane, where Driver made left-turn and proceeded E. on Spokane. We stopped the car and occupants at Spokane just E. of Beechwood.

My Partner, (Above) approached the car, and asked above man for I.D. which was produced. I, Patr. John Ronan left the Sgt. car and stood near above car, so as to hear and see what was ascertained from our investigation, and to be close to my partner in case my help was necessary. Above man was fairly co-operative, but kept on insisting that he held a position with the Post Office and that we would be reported for stopping him.

At this time my partner asked Mr. Copeland who owned the articles of men's clothing, I.D. as 2 mens suits, and the camera case, which Mr. Copeland stated to contain a camera, to which Mr. Copeland replied, that he was the owner of all of the articles.

It was explained to Mr. Copeland that there had been numerous complaints of B & E, both of businesses and Dwellings in the area where he had been observed leaving the apartment house carrying the articles, and that this was the reason for his being investigated.

Mr. Copeland at this time asked for and was given the number of the Sgt. car, plus the names and badge numbers of both officers.

Other than a Mich. Op. Lic. and a Car registration, Mr. Copeland's property was not handled, nor was his person or car searched, by either Patr. Washington, or Patr. Ronan (This Writer)

Patrolman

John P. Ronan
Badge # 1500 Sixth Precinct

DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

SIXTH PRECINCT

Date ~~March 18, 1966~~

To: Lieutenant in Charge

Subject: LETTER OF COMPLAINANT AGAINST PATROLMAN J.D. WASHINGTON, BADGE #2422 SIXTH PRECINCT, REGARDING: 1. SEARCHING COMPLAINANT'S, ALPHONSE COPELAND, 5958 - 15th, CAR WITHOUT A SEARCH WARRANT AND VIOLATING HIS RIGHTS WITHOUT DUE CAUSE. DISTRICT INSPECTOR - WEST SIDE - FILE #226.

1. Mr. Alphonse Copeland, 5958 - 15th, Detroit, Michigan, complains that he was stopped without cause and that a search of his auto was made by Patrolman J.D. Washington, badge #2422, without a search warrant, thereby violating his rights without due cause or reason.

1. This writer was assigned the above letter of complaint to investigate.

On March 15, 1966, this writer, spoke with Patrolman J.D. Washington and questioned him regarding the incident mentioned in Mr. Copeland's letter of complaint. Patrolman Washington informed this writer that he and his partner, Patrolman John Ronan, badge #1500, were on patrol when they observed a negro male leave the apartment building at 4849 Maplewood with men's clothing over his arm and a camera case under his arm. There having been a rash of B&E's of dwellings and apartments within the scout car area patrolled by Patrolmen Washington and Ronan they felt it necessary to stop and investigate this man. They were unable to stop and turn around immediately; they circled the block and observed the man had entered a car. The officers were able to stop the car on Spokane East of Beechwood. Patrolman Washington stated to this writer that he approached the car and requested the registration for the auto and operator's license from the occupant. The occupant produced a certificate of registration for the car, 1964 Buick coach, Michigan 1966 license CP 1695, and a card from the U.S. Post Office. Patrolman Washington stated he again requested the occupant's operator's license and at this time the occupant produced an operator's license which identified the occupant as: Alphonse Copeland, 5958 - 15th, Detroit, Michigan. Patrolman Washington stated to this writer that he asked Mr. Copeland if this was the correct address on his operator's license and was informed that it was. Mr. Copeland was asked by Patrolman Washington if he was the owner of the clothing and camera case which was lying on the right front seat of the car. Mr. Copeland stated he was the owner and that the case contained a camera. Patrolman Washington informed Mr. Copeland that there had been numerous B&E's of dwellings and apartments in that area and that was their reason for stopping and questioning him. At this time Mr. Copeland asked for and was given the scout car number, badge numbers and names of the two officers. Noting that Mr. Copeland was becoming hostile in his questions and speech, the officers entered their scout car and drove off. Patrolmen Washington and Ronan state that neither entered or searched any part of the complainant's auto or his person.

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On March 17, 1966, after contacting Mr. Copeland by telephone at which time a meeting was arranged with him to be held at the Office of the Guard, United States Post Office, W. Fort and Trumbull, his place of employment. This writer met with Mr. Copeland at the above location at 2:00 P.M., March 17, 1966.

Mr. Copeland, when questioned regarding his specific complaint, stated that he had no complaint against Patrolman John Ronan or the Detroit Police Department, that his complaint was against Patrolman Washington and the only complaint he had against that officer was that he searched his car and clothing in the car without a search warrant and by so doing violated his, Mr. Copeland's, rights as a citizen in his private auto upon a public street. Further, that Patrolman Washington stopped and searched his auto without any reasonable cause for such an act.

This writer informed Mr. Copeland that approximately 150 B&E of dwelling have occurred in the Sixth Precinct since January 1, 1966 and a good ^{64%} of these have been in the two scout car areas where he was stopped and questioned. It was explained to him that the officers observed him leaving the apartment building with clothing and a camera case and being fully aware of the numerous B&E's of dwellings and apartments in that area they felt they had sufficient cause to stop and investigate the complainant. Mr. Copeland did not agree that this was cause for stopping and searching his auto. In fact he stated that there could be no reason for an officer stopping and searching his car unless the officer had full knowledge that a crime had been committed by the driver of that car and that the stolen property was in the car.

Mr. Copeland stated that Patrolman Washington searched the clothing in his car, under the front seat of the car, and opened the camera case during his search. When asked if he denied permission to search his car he stated he did not; neither did he give permission.

This writer asked Mr. Copeland what action he would like to have taken on his complaint to fully satisfy him and he replied that all he wanted was a personal apology from Patrolman Washington - nothing more. When questioned as to whether or not he had any further complaint against either officer in regard to their language, conduct toward him, etc., he stated that he had no complaint other than the search of his car by Patrolman Washington. He was informed that his complaint and wishes would be included in this writer's report to the Commanding Officer of the Sixth Precinct.

This writer, after questioning both Patrolmen Washington and Ronan and the complainant, believes the officers were correct in their investigation of Mr. Copeland, that they had reason for stopping and questioning him, and that their conduct was proper toward Mr. Copeland. They both state that they did not search Mr. Copeland's car or his person. Mr. Copeland states that his only complaint against the officer, Patrolman Washington, was the searching of his auto and clothing without a search warrant. Further, that only an apology from Patrolman Washington will

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satisfy him.

This writer can find no fault in the actions of either officers. It is recommended that no apology be forthcoming from Patrolman Washington as there is no reason or action, on the part of the officer toward Mr. Copeland, to warrant such an apology. Further, it is recommended that no further action be taken against the officers.

The incident which Mr. Copeland's letter of complaint refers to occurred on March 8, 1966 at 2:53 P.M., on Spokane East of Beechwood, scout car 6-4 area.

EW:sk

Sergeant

Euclid Weddle

EUCLID WEDDLE, #8-145
Sixth Precinct.

FIRST ENDORSEMENT:

March 23rd, 1966

TO: District Inspector, Western District
Patrolmen Washington and Ronan, being mindful of the many Breakings and enterings of Dwellings in Scout 6-4 territory, were alert to observe for circumstances which may lead to the arrest of perpetrators of the burglaries. They also had information that a male burglar in Scout 6-5 territory had used a 1962 or 1963 brown Buick on another date. When they saw a lone male leaving the apartment building, 4849 Maplewood, carrying a case and several mens' suits, complete with hangers, and a minute later enter a maroon 1964 Buick, they decided to investigate this person. The person turned out to be Alphonse Copeland 39/n 5958 15th. He wouldn't say why he was in 4849 Maplewood, stated the articles were his, and demanded the officers names, addresses, and telephone numbers, as well as the Scout Car number, car code number, and the officer's badge numbers.

Patr. Washington says he asked for the man's car registration and driver's license, asked about the articles in the car, and informed Mr. Copeland of the reason for the stop. He said he did not enter the car and handle the suits or the case. Because of Mr. Copeland's manner, Patr. Washington decided to leave any further investigation in the hands of detectives and he later submitted a report to the detectives describing this event.

Patr. Ronan says he was the driver of Scout 6-4. When he saw Mr. Copeland get out of the Buick and reach into his pocket, he got out of the police car and stood nearby just to be "handy". Mr. Copeland was getting out a small folder containing some identification. Patr. Ronan says he did not see his partner handle any of the articles in Mr. Copeland's car. He said Mr. Copeland asked for the officer's home addresses and phone numbers as well as names, badge, car code, and Scout car numbers.

Mr. Copeland was interviewed by this writer on March 21st, 1966, and stated that his main objection in this incident was the handling or search of the items he had carried to the car. He insists Patr. Washington handled his belongings and persists in his demand that Patr. Washington make a personal apology to him. He feels he was "injured" by this investigation. He was informed that the officers had knowledge of many burglaries in their territory occurring during the day and evening hours since January 1st, 1966. Five of the burglaries happened on Maplewood within a block or two of where he was seen coming out

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