

City of Detroit

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: Marks

DATE August 25, 1966

FROM: Bush

SUBJECT: Investigation of alleged name calling by a police officer on Kercheval

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION:

It appears that there was name calling by police officers on two occasions during the course of the Kercheval disturbance:

1. An officer in a station wagon scout car facing east said, "Nigger, move on" on Thursday, August 11, between 8:15 and 8:30 p.m. at Kercheval and Parkview. This is attested to by Al Dunmore of the Michigan Chronicle.
2. An officer in a TMU car going west on Kercheval at about 10 p.m. on Friday, August 12, said something to a group in front of 9211 Kercheval that the several witnesses heard differently. Two witnesses claim that the officer said, "Nigger", two others said they thought it was "Nigger" but didn't hear it distinctly and couldn't swear to it. Another witness said he heard the officer say, "white power". The members of the "peace patrol" went out on the street at about 8:45 p.m. and returned at a little after 11 p.m., which would place the time of the incident at about 10 p.m.

RECOMMENDATION:

Commissioner Girardin should be informed of the results of our investigation. I suspect that he will be able to pin-point the precise car involved in the Thursday night incident because it was the station wagon that moved seven youths off the corner of Kercheval and Parkview at about 8:15. He will be able to determine the guilty officer in Friday night's incident by determining which TMU cars were going west on Kercheval at about 10 p.m.

WITNESSES INTERVIEWED:

1. On Friday, August 12, Al Harrison told Bush when he brought in Mr. Alston to the Fifth Precinct to make a complaint on another matter that police officers were calling people "nigger" on Kercheval. Bush was unable to get any details at that time. Mr. Alston said nothing about it.
2. In the meeting of the "peace patrol" on Friday, August 12, Jim Hanna reported that police officers shouted "nigger" to people standing in front of the ACME office. It was this report that John Milhone used in his Free Press story.
3. Jim Hanna told Bush that he did not hear it distinctly, although, the officer could have said "nigger". It happened about 10 p.m., and the officer was in the second or third car of a TMU squadron of six going west. He said that Congressman Diggs,

Mr. Alston, Rev. Cranshaw and Rev. Benton were all present.

4. Rev. Cranshaw said that he did not hear it as he was standing a little ways away but that a white minister told him that police had said, "Let's go 'nigger', let's gett off the street." and that an ACME member said this proved their case. He said that Charles Morgan and several others from the "peace patrol" were there but that Congressman Diggs was not.

5. Mr. Alston said that at about 8 p.m. the TMU cars were passing and that the officer in the right front seat of the fourth or fifth car said, "You bunch of 'niggers". Congressman Diggs was there and heard it. He said that the incident occurred about five minutes before Councilman Hood, Senator Young and Mr. Marks arrived.

6. Mr. Marks said that he arrived between 9:30 and 10:00 and that Congressman Diggs did not mention the incident.

7. Charles Morgan said that he was not in front of the ACME office at the time but that he heard reports of a racial slur by police officers.

8. Rev. Benton said that at about 11:30 Congressman Diggs, Senator Young, Councilman Hood, Mr. Marks, himself, and some members of ACME were standing in front of the ACME office when an officer in the second car of six TMU cars going west said something to the group. He couldn't make out what the officer said, but others in the group claimed that the officer said "nigger". He was talking to Al Harrison at the time, and Harrison said, "see that".

9. Rev. Scott, East Grand Boulevard Methodist, said that he was across the street at the time and did not hear what was said. There were six TMU cars going west and Senator Young and Congressman Diggs were in front of the ACME office. Several of the ACME members started shouting as the police went by.

10. Senator Young said that he arrived at 11 p.m. and was told about the incident which must have occurred at about 10 o'clock. He said that Al Dunmore claims to have heard it.

11. Al Dunmore, Editor of the Michigan Chronicle, states that on Thursday, August 11, between 8:15 and 8:30 p.m. he overheard an officer in a station wagon scout car say "nigger, move on" to a group of seven youths standing in front of the cleaners on the south side of Kercheval at Parkview. Mr. Dunmore said that the scout car was facing east and that he felt sure they would've noted that they dispersed a group of youths at this time and place. He said his car was headed west and that he was prevented from getting the scout car's number because a procession of TMU cars going west and someone engaging him in conversation prevented his making a "U-turn".

12. Congressman Diggs said that he was in front of the ACME office after 10 o'clock when an officer in one of the front cars of six TMU cars going west said something to the group. "It happened fast, but it sounded like the officer said 'white power'". Congressman Diggs said that the officer may have said something else but that he did not hear it as he was talking to people on the street. He said that there was no one there at that time other than members of ACME to his knowledge.

JB:jah