

2442 Lamothe
Detroit, Michigan 48206
February 3, 1964

Mr. Ray Girardin
Commissioner of Police
1300 Beaubien
Detroit 26, Michigan

Dear Commissioner Girardin:

The task of writing you to render a formal complaint against a police officer is indeed an unpleasant one. Nevertheless, in the interest of the welfare of this community, I feel it is my duty to inform you of the despicable manner in which an officer handled a minor incident which, after his inhuman touch, could have mushroomed into a small-scale riot.

The following incident occurred on January 27, 1964 at approximately 5:15 p.m.

I was sitting in my car waiting to enter the parking area reserved for customers behind the Kresge Department Store, 7350 Grand River. The parking spot I desired was being vacated by another shopper. I was not obstructing traffic as cars were moving freely down the same alley. Having driven to the same place many times before, I am aware of the fact that if you can't park without blocking traffic, you should move on.

Before I could enter the parking spot, my daughter who was sitting in the front seat beside me, informed me that an officer standing about 15 feet away must be yelling at us. I could not believe this to be true when I saw the officer because any person with vision could see my intentions. When I saw that there was no driver behind me, I knew that this officer must be talking to me.

With a hideous scowl on his face, he left his partner, who was also on foot, walked to my car and yelled, "I said, move on."

Not only was his disfigured face puzzling but his tone of voice was insulting, humiliating and inflammatory. He acted like he had suddenly lost his senses because I wanted to tell him of my intentions to park in the lot, the precise spot now being vacant.

At this point, he threatened to give me a ticket and arrest me. When I told him to do so if he could prove I was breaking the law, he made a hasty retreat and accused me of blocking traffic - an offense he created because he was standing in the alley in the lane the cars had been using for passing.

His tone of voice should not have been reserved for a dog. It was clearly evident that he considered me a person to whom you show no respect or consideration. His blatant, contemptible manner easily attracted passersby as a small crowd began to assemble.

Commissioner Girardin

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The climax to this whole revolting, disgusting affair came when, Officer Dale Adams, number 2900, yelled, "You don't have no rights. Why don't you go where you belong." I promptly informed him that I, too, am a law-abiding American citizen the same as he. I asked him the poignant question, "Now where do you belong?"

I am still wondering where someone like this does belong. I can readily see where a man with a combination of dignity, personal worth, and some degree of aggressiveness could easily be provoked by such behavior to beat an officer with his own weapons. Indeed, worse things have happened.

Even though Officer Adams' order was clearly unnecessary, unfair and inflammatory, he was still upheld by his fellow workers, Seargents Geloneck and Roberts, in the absence of Inspector Ray Glinski, at the McGraw Station.

I talked to both seargents, beginning about 5:45 p. m. the same day, regarding the cowardly, insulting, inhuman treatment of Officer Adams. You should have heard the naive, ludicrous, verbal distortions they engaged in.

Besides this, a third officer informed me that any complaint I would make would come right back here anyway. Any fool could see the implication. The next statement he should have made was, "So what's the use of complaining. You're lucky."

To imply such a thing promotes the sordid feeling already existing in the community that an officer can be 100% wrong and still be protected because of his status.

A number of people witnessed this incident and several organizations have a report on it. When one experiences this sort of humiliation, world problems become secondary.

After all, Commissioner, security begins at home. This whole business of democracy and respect for the dignity of the individual must become a living reality for all of us or no one is safe.

This letter is not an indictment against the many fine officers who uphold the principles of law enforcement in a manner befitting their public trust.

I wonder if Officer Dale Adams has ever heard of these things.

Very sincerely,

(Mrs.) Jacqueline Collins

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CC: Detroit Urban League
Detroit Branch of the NAACP
Episcopal Society of Christian and Racial Unity
Detroit Roundtable of Christians and Jews
Kresge Department Store - Public Relations