

City of Detroit

HOUSING COMMISSION

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: James L. Trainor, Community Development Coordinator
Mayor's Office

FROM: Stan Lewin, Detroit Housing, Fitzgerald Program

DATE January 17, 1968

Subject: Suggestion Re: Police Procedures Resulting from Meeting in Fitzgerald Area at Infernoburger on January 10, 1968

It became evident during the discussion held in the Infernoburger on Wednesday, January 10, 1968 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. with Twelfth-Fourteenth Precinct Police Department representatives, members of the Infernos, parents and adults of the Fitzgerald Community Council and Fitzgerald area, community organization and institution representatives, concerned City of Detroit agencies and other interested parties, that in addition to the specific problems of harassment, "pat-down" (apparently an existing version of stop-and-frisk), improper language and racial epithets and repeated investigations experienced by the teens of the Fitzgerald area there were certain broad areas of Police Department procedure which could benefit from rethinking and change. For example:

1. Any individual teen or adult who is brought into a precinct for investigation of a crime and is found to have no involvement should be the recipient of a written acknowledgement from the Department recognizing the inconvenience caused, pointing out the reason for the inconvenience and stating clearly that the individual investigated was in no way involved with the crime under investigation. Letters of this kind could then be used to clear up difficulties created by such investigations with the individual's employer, school, home etc.

The letters could be prepared and mailed by civilian personnel after being signed by the Inspector in charge.

Although as far as I know no procedure of this kind has been followed in the past it would seem a small investment indeed in terms of benefits possible in this very sensitive area of police-community relations.

2. The rights of juveniles may be violated regularly if officers bringing teens and youngsters in for investigation fail to telephone or notify parents immediately to apprise them of the whereabouts of their youngster and the reason for his being there.

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3. The practice of photographing juveniles or even adults and then keeping the photo on file even though the individual is cleared of any involvement in a crime should be reexamined. The unauthorized photographing of juveniles under investigation is illegal. In the case of adults being investigated, photos taken of innocent individuals should be removed from the files and returned to the subject for disposal as he sees fit.
4. It seems to be the practice with teens and juveniles brought in to a precinct for investigation and cleared that the youngsters are then released to find their way home as best they can although they may have been transported to the precinct by police car. The practice described would seem to be an unwarranted imposition. If the Department is unable to return juveniles and teens to the location where they were originally picked up for investigation, then as a very minimum the City should supply bus tickets.
5. The practice of leaving a note at the home of a juvenile asking parents to appear with the juvenile at the precinct on the following day without explaining in detail the reasons for the appearance and the necessity for this visit which might well interrupt the youngster's schooling and the parent's employment seems somewhat high-handed. In addition it could easily result in a period of unnecessary worry and recrimination, possibly even unwarranted punishment. There should be a better way to carry out this part of police work.

The above are some of my thoughts on what developed during the meeting. On the basis of what was said in the discussion it would seem worthwhile to provide some additional training in police-community relation and the dignity of the individual for TMU personnel. It is my understanding that Inspector Werner of Twelfth Precinct has arranged for Patrolman Mackie Johnson and his partner to be reassigned to their previous activities in the Fitzgerald neighborhood. I am certain this will have a good effect in the community.



Stan Lewin

cc:

R. Rosenfeld
R.D. Knox