

Cops Cop

Fifth Estate Collective

1971

On a recent Monday evening, a Detroit Police Department patrol wagon, license number X25061, blocked the alley next to the Forest-Third Market, better known as Sharkey's, for well over an hour.

At five minutes past nine, two uniformed sergeants hurriedly made their way from the market to the illegally parked wagon. They backed onto Third and drove off, followed by a curious member of the community.

The police vehicle entered the Ford Freeway at the Trumbul entrance and the officers soon lost their pursuer by driving away at a high rate of speed. The wagon eventually ended up at the Schaefer Station in the Northwest section, where it is assigned.

This incident is one that occurs almost daily at Sharkey's. In fact, concerned residents in the area state that this has gone on for several years.

In January of 1970, a group of interested citizens took turns logging police activity at the market and the results proved to be very interesting. The three weeks of observations provided an extensive accumulation of license, car and badge numbers of the police traveling in and out of the store.

The watch indicated that almost every evening at least several Detroit Police cars (usually assigned to the Woodward Station) would park and at least one cop would go inside and usually disappear into the back room.

Often times the officers would reappear carrying packages or bags. Other times the officers would be observed going into the beer cooler, helping themselves to the liquid refreshments and leaving without paying.

After several community complaints, Inspector Frank Blount, Woodward Station commander, ordered his men to "stop hanging-out" at Sharkey's. However, another police-watch this January showed that the rank-and-file cop still prefers Sharkey's back room to doing his job.



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