

Students Protest Arrest of WSU Student

Fifth Estate Collective

1967

An incident involving a Wayne State student and the University's Security Police touched off a controversy when the student, MacArthur Binion, described his treatment as "outrageous."

On April 6 Binion was approached, in the Wayne library, by a uniformed Security officer who demanded identification from him. Binion said he refused to do so since the officer gave no reason for his request. The officer attempted to forcibly remove Binion from the building, but the student pulled away and went to a reading area and began studying.

The officer re-appeared and Binion again refused to give the officer any information without an explanation. Binion and other students report continued harassment by the Security officers and he felt he was within his rights in refusing the officer's request.

The officer then attempted to take him outside by force; a scuffle ensued and finally two other policemen came to their fellow officer's aid. Binion was wrestled to the ground, handcuffed, and informed THEN that he was under arrest for snatching a purse.

When the officers took Binion to the 13th Police Precinct they were informed that they had the wrong man and he was released. The prosecutor said the charges against Binion were "ridiculous."

Binion, some of his friends, and the WSU chapter of Students for a Democratic Society decided that while the above incident was deplorable, in itself it was not an isolated one. Large numbers of students had suffered harassment at the hands of the campus police; sometimes for no other reason than their manner of dress or their hair length.

A demonstration was called and on April 12th pickets appeared in front of the student center demanding that a student faculty review board be established to investigate complaints of police malpractice and that the university refuse to arm the campus police as they are planning. The group further demanded of the campus police that they apologize to Binion for the way he was treated and that in the future they treat all students with respect.

The picket line was well received by the students passing by and good TV coverage was obtained.

After picketing for an hour the group went to the Security Police headquarters and confronted the Director of Security, Don Stevens, with the group's demands. The Director expressed concern for police-student relations on the campus and said that he even favored a police review board under certain circumstances (unspecified). However, he refused to apologize for the Binion incident.

Several students later had a meeting with Wayne State President William Keast, who agreed to the formation of a Student-Faculty Council committee which would investigate the campus police structure and the need for a review board. He also said he would review the charges that the Security department was still keeping political files on students at variance with his instructions.

A spokesman for SDS said, "We are glad some action is beginning around our demands, but we have no intention of letting them die in some bureaucratic committee that will meet next January and never make a report. We want action, now."

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