

# Jailed Residents Describe Experiences

anon.

1967

Sunday night a bunch of us were over at a friend's house. We didn't have room to stay there so we thought we'd try to make it back to another guy's apartment. We were almost home when five cop cars pulled up with guns sticking out of all the windows and stopped us.

We were in two cars. The cops that came over to our car stuck shot guns in our faces and made us get out. They handcuffed our hands behind our backs. The handcuffs were fastened very tightly just at the wrist joint so that today, Thursday, our hands are still numb.

They lined us up against the brick wall of a house and started questioning us, searching us and banging our heads against the wall. There were three of us, two white guys and one black guy. They found some empty cartridges in the black guy's pocket that he had picked up off the street—because he had the cartridges they thought he must have a gun, too.

They searched the car and couldn't find one. One cop stuck the barrel of his shotgun in the guy's throat, cocked it, and told him if he didn't tell where the gun was hidden they were going to kill him. At the same time they were kicking him and hitting him across the head and back with black jacks.

Meanwhile they were working us over. They lifted our hands up behind our backs as far as they could with the handcuffs and said "Come on you dirty cock suckers, where the hell are you hiding that gun." They kicked us in the ass and the balls and screamed "Where are the guns, you dirty cock suckers?"

Later my friend who was in the other car told me they stopped his car, cocked a pistol and stuck it in his mouth, and told him to get out of the car. Another one grabbed his hands and handcuffed him. He threw him to the ground and five cops started stomping on him.

He tried to bury his face in the street and they just about peeled the back of his head with their boots. They put him in the back seat of the cop car with two of his friends and told them to put their heads between their knees. While they were driving one cop sitting in the front seat beat them on the backs of their heads with a flashlight yelling at them, "Try to lick your dick."

We were put into a different cop car, one of a whole caravan going to the Vernor precinct station. On the way they wanted to stop and pick up looters but were afraid of getting shot.

In the car they repeatedly hit us on the head, the back of the neck and ribs with a black jack and jabbed us in the ribs with a shotgun. They were screaming that they were going to put us into a cell with a bunch of black guys and tell them we were setting fire to black people's homes and let them work us over.

At the station they photographed us and took information. They let us keep our wallets except one guy who reached to take his wallet back was hit with the butt of a pistol and never got his wallet back.

They lined us up and marched us down the hall to a cell. The black guy had been separated from us. As they shoved us into the cell one cop stood and hit us in the face with his fist. They locked six of us in one cell about eight feet long, six and a half feet high and five feet wide. It had a sink, a toilet that kept overflowing, and a bench running along one wall.

Every once in a while they would bring in more prisoners. Almost all of them were brought in for curfew violations and almost all of them had been beaten. People in some cells had no toilets or drinking water. Sometimes police would take them out of the block to get a drink or use a toilet and sometimes they just told them to get fucked.

Monday night they opened up the cells because they were so crowded and let people roam around in the cell block. I talked to one guy who had been picked up Saturday night on a drunk charge and still hadn't had anything to eat.

Tuesday night they brought fifteen sandwiches on a tray to the cell block. The block was made with twenty-four cells, each for one person and there were now over one hundred people in the block. Those near the door grabbed the food and the cops told us they would be back in a while with more.

People formed a line in front of the window and waited for hours until some of them started fainting. For a while the cops refused to do anything about them. People started screaming and making a lot of noise until finally the cops came and moved them somewhere else.

Then a turnkey came to the door and said "Ten of you come with me." He took us to the bullpen which is a fairly small room with a sink, a toilet and a bench. There were thirty three of us. Two turnkeys agreed to buy candy bars for us but one took a commission.

I talked to one of the black guys with us in the bullpen. He said "We were in the Packer store on Trumbull and Grand River. Man, there was everybody in there, hillbillies and soul brothers and everybody just takin' all the shit they could get there 'hands on and everybody was saying 'this mother fuckin' Packer store done robbed everybody for so long we just gonna clean the store out.

"People was pushin' away whole grocery carts full of food and then this one cop car drives their cop car sittin' out on the street. Man, people inside just kept right on lootin'. They started throwin' cans at them cops."

When I asked him why he thought people were rioting he said, "Man, peoples is workin' their ass off on their jobs and ain't makin' shit. And if they bought the house they're livin' in with their life savings the taxes is so high. And then they want to tear it down for some expressway or university or some thing. People is tired of bein screwed over by everything. Seems a lotta white people don't like it neither."



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