

# Police Vamp on Bikers Clubhouse

Fifth Estate Collective

1970

Nearly a dozen members of the Blue Flu smashed their way into a private party during a cowardly attack on the Highwaymen Motorcycle Club of Detroit.

The blitzkrieg-like attack was carried out in the early hours of Sunday morning Jan. 11, by police assigned to the Western District Morality Squad. This catchy title is a Spreen-style cover for the old-fashioned Vice Squad. The herd operates out of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Northwest) Precinct pig pen.

The police claimed that the bikers were running a blind pig, an illegal drinking spot.

What they were running was a simple party and pool tournament in the storefront clubhouse at 6618 Michigan near Martin.

The pigs destroyed the interior of the club and carted off the jukebox, all the soft-drinks and beer they could carry and \$30 ripped off from inside the coin-operated pool table.

Gene Bell, president of the Highwaymen, explained that a sneaky cop identified himself to Bell as a Branded member. After lying his way in, he announced the raid and let his cohorts in through the rear door.

The pigs lined the people in the club up against the wall and ransacked the club. They cut up the covering on the pool table, broke all the pool cues, stuffed the pool balls down the toilet, overturned and ripped furniture and, Bell says, ripped down and stamped on a large American flag hanging on a wall.

When Bell asked to rescue the flag, a pig sneered: "Don't worry buddy, we'll take care of it."

They arrested 16 persons and beat a member of the Branded Motorcycle Club, who they knocked to the floor with broken pool cues.

Bell and the president of the Branded are being charged with engaging in an illegal occupation. The others were originally charged with loitering, but the charges were dropped the next morning.

Also, a man, who was not a member of either club, was charged with carrying a concealed weapon—a Luger. Another, charged with the same offense, is the bouncer at the Red Umbrella bar and was carrying the bar's Saturday night receipts.

Bell feels that he and the Branded president didn't have their charges dismissed because the pigs needed a justification for their raid.

All were snatched up in waiting paddy wagons and carried off to the nearby 6<sup>th</sup> (McGraw) Precinct, where they were held until 11:00 Sunday morning.

Their Recorder's Court arraignment, scheduled for the following morning, was then postponed.

Bell explained the store-front is leased by a private hunting club, and the Highwaymen and five other motorcycle clubs were invited to hold a pool tournament there.

"It's winter, you know, and we're indoors, and we were playing pool," he said. The clubs paid \$30 each to buy beer and wine for the affair.

Bell said he was singled out for arrest because he heads the Highwaymen, one of the oldest and best-established clubs in the area.

“We’ve been trying to stop all this gang stuff lately, and this is the kind of harassment we get. It’s discrimination,” he said.

Bell, still angry about the flag, walked from Recorder’s Court after his arraignment to the FBI offices in the Federal Building. “I asked that the police be charged with desecrating the American flag,” he said. The FBI said that they would investigate.

This malicious attack on the Highwaymen and the Branded is strikingly similar to the recent raids on the Black Panther Party offices in several cities.

What becomes crystal clear is that the police of America no longer discriminate between bikers, striking workers, freeks, blacks or anti-war demonstrators. If you in any way challenge the priorities of this system you fall subject to the armed might of the State. The problem remains of defending ourselves.

# **fifth Estate**

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