



# The Observer



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## Sparks Fly Over Police Tactics

Ruth Louisell

Tuesday morning, July 2, Mrs. Augustine Wright, Charter College secretary, was stopped by a member of Oakland's Public Safety Department on her way to work. The charge was speeding, but the surrounding issues became much more complicated. The actual serving of a ticket did not take place for about 10 minutes due to the fact that Officer Daniel Aldrich had neglected to inform Mrs. Wright of the reason she had been stopped until that time. Due to the delicate nature of their ensuing conversation, it was later decided that the case needed airing.

A committee consisting of Harvey Smith (Math Department), Manuel Pierson (Upward Bound), Charles Akers (History Department), Keith Jenkins, and Annabeth Grey (students), was quietly appointed by the Chancellor to review the incident and make recommendations and proposals to him. Further, the officer involved in the incident was taken off the campus patrol and temporarily placed on duty at Meadowbrook by the Chancellor. Immediately following the incident, Director of the Public Safety Department, Tom Strong, voided the ticket given to Mrs. Wright by Officer Aldrich on the grounds that Aldrich had made a procedural mistake in giving her the ticket.

The committee was scheduled to meet Friday to hear Mrs. Wright and Officer Aldrich. The purpose was to determine the



nature of the incident: was it, or was it not a racist incident? The major controversy involved came to be in determining who had interjected the element of racism into the conversation: Mrs. Wright, or Officer Aldrich?

### Private Meeting Becomes Public

Friday afternoon, a strangely insistent group of students and professors gathered outside of the Meadow Brook room in the Oakland Center. Upon requesting to be admitted to the hearing, the assembled body was told by Mr. Smith, the committee chairman, "it would be preferable not to have all of you here because of this sort of incident." Tension was high among the students due to a certain law recently passed by the Board of Trustees concerning an individual's right to assemble on a college campus. After thirty minutes of deliberation by the committee,

the assembled community members (35 students, 6 faculty members), were allowed to enter the room -- on the condition that they would behave themselves. The hearing proceeded without disturbance.

Mrs. Wright and Officer Aldrich were both called to give their accounts of the Tuesday morning in question. As there were no witnesses to the incident, Charter College Dean Sheldon Appleton and Tom Strong were called as character witnesses after both Mrs. Wright and Officer Aldrich gave their versions of what had happened Tuesday morning.

The committee has met in private several times to work out proposals to be submitted to the Chancellor on the basis of the information obtained last Friday. They expected to have them handed into Varner in finalized form early next week.



## Policy on Draft Resisters Still in Question at O.U.

Ruth Louisell

The National Student Association announced recently that over 40 universities have adopted policies permitting readmission of draft resisters to their universities. These universities responded to a letter from NSA President Edward Schwartz, who requested that the schools publicly adopt the policy of readmitting draft resisters, a policy first adopted by Yale University.

Dean of Students, Thomas Dutton was approached this week concerning the same issue as it would pertain to Oakland's admission policies. At this time no formal policy has been stated concerning the readmitting of an Oakland student who might have served a jail term for refusing to serve in the Armed Forces. According to present readmittance policies, such a student would be allowed to continue his studies at Oakland if his grade point was adequate, and if he was psychologically fit to pursue studies in the Oakland community.

Last April, a formal proposal was submitted by Frank Richter to the Steering committee of the Senate concerning this same issue. The proposal stated that no Oakland student who has resisted the draft or served a jail sentence for such an act, shall be refused readmission to Oakland University if he meets the normal standards for readmission. This proposal has not been acted upon as yet, due to the fact that the Senate has adjourned for the summer. Dean Dutton, however, feels that the Senate will surely act upon it this fall.

### MSU President Hannah is Cleared

On July 2, Atty. Gen. Frank Kelley issued a report clearing Michigan State University President John Hannah of any conflict of interest involving land transactions near the MSU campus, according to an article printed in the Michigan Daily on July 3.

Hannah's business dealings,

particularly the sale of a farm adjacent to MSU for more than \$1 million, were the subject of the report by the Attorney General. The Michigan Constitution prohibits a state officer from entering into any contract with the state "which shall cause a substantial conflict of interest".

## Transcript on Committee Hearing

### INTERVIEW WITH MRS. WRIGHT

**Mrs. Wright:** "On Tuesday morning ... as I entered the campus, I made a left turn in front of the library to go to Vandenberg and as I got to the exit going off-campus, there was a person driving I think it was a red Pontiac coming out the wrong way, so I had to stop and wait for this person to get in front of me before proceeding to the stop sign by Wilson Hall. This person turned right.

"As I passed the parking lot, there was a policeman sitting there in the exit where he could drive out. When I passed him he drove out behind me. I stopped at the stop sign and then drove on across and went on my way on around to Vandenberg, got out of the car and started to walk toward the building. Just as I got out of the parking lot, the policeman drove into the parking lot and called me. The first time he called me I didn't realize he was talking to me; the second time that he said "young lady, stop", I turned around and asked if he was speaking to me and he said yes. He said wait just a moment, I want to see your driver's license and registration.

"He started to walk toward me. I thought he suspected I had parked in the wrong place, and I said I work here, I am an employee, and I do have a driver's license, and I didn't steal my car -- I said it

as a joke, but he didn't take it as a teasing remark at all. He asked for my driver's license and I gave it to him. He asked for my registration and I couldn't find it right then -- I started to go through the things in my purse. I realized that I didn't have it in my purse ... and I remembered that I had loaned my car to someone about a week before and had left the registration in the glove compartment. I walked over to the car, and as I started to reach to push the button the the glove compartment, he rushed over to me, and it frightened me because I knew that he was upset with me from the beginning."

**Mr. Smith:** "His demeanor was not polite?"

**Mrs. Wright:** "No. His demeanor was not polite from the beginning. He was not polite."

**Smith:** "Can you be a little more specific about than?"

**Wright:** "I can't remember the exact conversation we had ... he wouldn't take the driver's license out of my hand. I was a few feet from him when he asked for the driver's license. I took them out and held them open in my hand, and he said 'bring them to me'. I didn't walk toward him. I said 'here they are if you want to see them'. He finally made

(Continued on Page Three)



# THE OBSERVER

"The opinions expressed in these columns are the opinions of the authors. They probably do not represent the attitude of the administration, faculty, or other students."



There are several points which need to be made concerning the incident reviewed by a faculty-student committee set up by Chancellor Varner last week. The first of these is the fact that the run-in between Mrs. Wright and the Public Safety Dept. is not an isolated incident. Many other such incidents have been reported, but with no accompanying public furor. The reason this particular incident caused a row is because it involved a V.I.P. on campus rather than a student only statistically relevant to the administering of the university.

A second related point is that the attitude of the officer in question in this specific incident -- that of racism -- is almost incidental to the total problem facing the campus in relation to the police. For many students it is assumed that the campus cops are racists. Or at least it appears, according to other incidents on the campus, that the element of racism is consistent with what seems to be the whole frame of reference which the university police (as well as most others) hold to. The police have acted arbitrarily and in an intimidating manner in more than one case. It just so happens that in this case one of the cops expressed his viewpoint in racist terms.

Suspending or relocating Officer Aldrich will do nothing to solve the problem of police-community relations on campus. For, as some students and some faculty have been saying all along, there is no need for a "police" force on campus to begin with. A "Public Safety Dept." could be useful. That is not what we have at present. We have a **police force**: the cops are here, as they see it, not to provide services useful to the community, but to keep the members of the university in line (witness the recent letters to the editor in the Observer).

Such incidents will continue to occur as long as we have men operating as a police force on campus in the traditional sense of the word. What happened last Tuesday was not the officer's fault as much as it was the fault of the men who conceived the Public Safety Dept. in the first place. Officer Aldrich was, after all, only acting like a cop.

### OPEN MEETINGS FROM NOW ON

Another issue which involves the position of the student within the university came (inadvertently) to a head at Friday's meeting as well: whether the university should be conducting closed hearings on matters which directly pertain to the interest of the student body as a whole. The issue was catalyzed by the rude and somewhat high-handed manner of the chairman of the committee, Harvey Smith. Giving the impression that he felt students had no right to "interfere" in his meeting, Smith exemplified the gap between many professors and their students.

Though Smith felt they would disrupt the meeting, the students (and 5 faculty) managed to argue their way in and viewed the proceedings with no ill effects. Afterward, they were commended by Smith for their reputable behavior.

Such pats on the back students do not need. Many of them have already accepted the fact that they are reasonable people, capable of directing their own lives. That students are such people needs to become an accepted fact: all meetings, discussions, etc. which directly involve their interests should be open to all students.

Mike Honey

# THE OBSERVER

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## OSCCR Not Radical

Dear Editor,  
I would like to object to the use of the word RADICAL in your headline on last week's article about the literature room of the Oakland Student Committee On Community Relations. This committee is in no way affiliated with any political ideology or organization as was implied by your headline.

The committee's aim is to better relations among all members of the community. While this idea could very well be radical, we prefer not to re-inforce that concept, but to make better relations among people the norm, rather than the deviation from it.

Sincerely,  
Jeremy Rose  
Oakland Student Committee  
on Community Relations



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## To The Editor Review Committee on Public Safety

Dear Sir,  
I have noted with interest that in the final paragraph of your editorial "Disarm the Cops" which appeared in the June 21 issue, you call for the formation of a Public Safety Review Board, to be instituted in the fall.

Since the fall of 1967, I have been a member of the Committee on Public Safety. Under the chairmanship of Professor Roger Marz, this committee -- consisting of faculty, students, and appropriate administrators -- conducted a review of the role of the Public Safety Department and suggested various changes in policy and procedures. Except for some matters in which our concerns overlapped those of the Parking Committee and the two committees disagreed, our suggestions were accepted and acted upon without undue delay.

We suggested that there should be some formal body to handle complaints about the department and agreed to act as such a review board. Notices of the existence and role of this "review board" were inserted in the Observer on three occasions. As a result, several cases were brought to Mr. Marz's attention. All but one of these was settled informally between the complainant and the department without recourse to the committee. In the one case which was heard, the committee found the complaint to be without foundation.

Although Mr. Marz is out of town during most of this summer, I believe that we could conduct a hearing if it should be necessary. Anyone desiring the hearing of a complaint against the Public Safety Department should contact me or Mr. Strong. My telephone number is 651-5763, and I will be at home for most of the summer.

I should like to add, in closing, that I am sure the committee, acting in its original capacity rather than as a review board, would be happy to consider any suggestions concerning policy and the role of the department upon resumption of regular meetings in September.

Harvey S. Smith

## Incident With the Police

Dear Sir,  
At approximately 7:30 pm, we were cruising down University Drive at forty mph, heading for Trumble Terrace. As we made a right turn at the gate, we noticed a county police car behind us. He motioned us to stop, and we did.

COP: "May I see your driver's license and registration." (I handed it to him.)

COP: Do you know that your right brake light does not work?

ME: Yes I'm aware of that, as a matter of fact I became aware of it 2 hours ago. . .

ME: (At the Sheriff's car.) Are you giving me a ticket for not having a brake light.

COP: Yes, I'm going to follow you to a gas station and see that you fix it.

ME: I'd rather take it to Rochester and fix it at my home.

COP: Then I'll follow you to Rochester and see that you fix it there. Either that or I'll have it towed away.

ME: After a pause of no more than two minutes, where both David Homberg, Colin Campbell and myself deliberated as to whether we wanted to go to the university or Rochester, the sheriff came back to my car. At that point, he said, "Forget it, I'm having the car towed away."

ME: (Back at the police car) I don't understand why you're towing it away.

COP: Because the car is unsafe to drive.

ME: Then why were you willing to let me drive it before.

COP: Don't get wise, we are towing it away. (At this point Colin and David, impatient, got out of my car and came to the police car.)

COLIN: (In a calm tone) What's your name and badge number?

COP: (Jumping out of his car) You son-of-a-\*\*\*, I'm going to knock you on your \*\*\*

At this point I have forgotten exactly what was said by whom but during the next two minutes the cop called us punks several times, jumped out of his car again, said he was tired of taking this "\*\*\*", said that he didn't care how we got back to Rochester, and then whistled for the O.U. cops to come over. They did and for five minutes we talked. An O.U. cop said one thing that stands out in my mind.

US: Aren't you here to help? He threatened us.

O.U. COP: We're not here to help you.

US: What are you here for then?

O.U. COP: "We're here to do the same thing he did." By this time the tow truck had arrived and we watched as my car was taken away. Then the cop came back and gave me my driver's license and registration. As a parting comment he said, "You guys have a lot to learn."

Bill Stanton  
Colin Campbell  
Dave Holmberg





**INTERVIEW (Continued from P. 1)**

a couple of steps toward me and took the driver's license from my hand."

**Smith:** He was slightly aggressive toward you then?  
**Wright:** "Yes."

\* \* \*

**Wright:** ...As I started to open the glove compartment to get the registration I didn't know what he thought but, he scared me half - - -. There was only two of us in the parking lot, and all I could think of is 'he's going to hurt me, and I'm innocent. Maybe he thought I was going to get something out of the glove compartment, but he didn't give me time to open it so see, he just rushed up to the car.

"I took the registration out and said 'here it is'. Again he wouldn't take it out of my hand. He went and got in his car, and said 'come and get in the car'. I refused. At that time I was so upset I started to cry, and I didn't want him to see me cry, so I started to walk to the back of his car, and he said, 'if you don't get in this car I'm gonna get a warrant for your arrest'. I said 'I'm sorry, I'm not gonna get in the car.'

"He said I'd get in the car or else. And I said 'well, I'm sorry', and left walking. I went into the building and called O'Bear's secretary. At that time I was crying and she asked why did he stop me. At that time I still didn't know why he stopped me. I stayed in the building for about 15 minutes. I hadn't gotten my driver's license back, so I went back out to see if he had put a ticket on my car or what had happened. And when I got out there he was still sitting, writing a ticket. When I got up to him I just stood there and it took him about another five minutes to finish writing his ticket. Then he got out of his car and said 'in case you were wondering why I stopped you, it was for going 35 in a 25 mile-an-hour zone.' I started to tell him that he was wrong, I told him he must have been looking for an excuse. I said I was not going that fast and 'why didn't you tell me that's what you stopped me for?' Both of us were arguing. And he said, 'lady, I can't understand what's the matter with you people. As it is you're treated better than anyone else'. We argued for a couple of minutes, and I walked away from him ..."

**Observer:** When questioned on what she meant by "arguing", Mrs. Wright said she told Officer Aldrich she couldn't appear in court on Monday morning, and that he responded by saying if she didn't a warrant would be issued for her arrest. When asked what she thought Aldrich meant by 'you people', she said she told him that "no matter how you put 'you people' into the computer, it comes out 'you niggers!'"

She continued: "... and that was exactly the expression on his face. We had stood there. I tried not to say anything to him two or three times; I'd just stand there and he would stare at me. A couple of times we just stood there in the parking lot staring at each other. There was no doubt about what he meant by 'you people'."

Asked if the officer told her why she was stopped, she said no. When asked the time of the occurrence she said around 8:20. She stated that she went back out to her car at 8:45. When questioned about the red Pontiac she alluded to, she stated that the driver of the other car was white, and that the officer could have seen the drivers of both cars.)

**INTERVIEW WITH OFFICER ALDRICH**

After explaining his procedure in following Mrs. Wright to Vandenberg, at which time he stated that the car's speed exceeded 40 m.p.h., Officer Aldrich described the situation in the parking lot as follows: "I stopped my car and started to get out. The driver of the vehicle got out, walked by my car, and I got out and said good morning, asked for the driver's license, and the registration of the vehicle. At which time I was told, 'I don't have to show you anything'. I then said 'may I see your operator's license and registration of the vehicle?' I was told no. I said all right then, if you don't want to show it to me, I'll just take you right to the Justice of the Peace now. At which time I got in a little bit of an argument with the driver."

**Smith:** "Did you make it clear to the driver what the offense was?"

**Aldrich:** "No she didn't give me the chance."

(At this point Mr. Pierson asked Mr. Aldrich about the long period of time before Mrs. Wright found out what she was being stopped for, and why he didn't tell her what the violation was sooner.)

**Aldrich:** "Well, one of the reasons was that she walked away from the car. She left, and I had the operator's license and registration and was waiting in the car."

(Discussion of the handing over of permits:)

**Aldrich:** "She took them out of her wallet and held them in front of me and said, 'here, you can see them'. I said 'may I please have them?' ... She was standing there in a defiant way, saying, 'there they are, you see them'. Finally she gave them to me. Then she went over to her car to get the registration. She got the registration, and she held that up in front of her once more, and she says 'there it is, you take it'. And I said, 'no, Mrs. Wright, I don't have to take it. You give it to me willingly, or I can just write you a violation and turn it over to the JP'. At that point she left and went into VB Hall. I sat down in the patrol car and got ready to write the violation."

"She returned to the car as I was finishing the violation. She came over to the car and asked me for her driver's license. I gave it to her, and she turned and walked away before I could tell her what the violation was or anything. I called out to her that I had given her a ticket for excessive speed, 35 in a 25 zone. She turned around and said to me, 'I won't pay it'. I said, 'I don't care if you pay or not, I'll just stick it on your car'."

"She looked at me once more and -- I believe she said 'don't you touch the car'. I said 'all right, then, here'. She looked at me again and she says 'You and your white power'. And I says Mrs. Wright, 'you are treated as well or better than the rest of us here on campus'. And then she took the violation from my hand, turned around and walked away."

**Pierson:** "Any other exchange at that point?"

**Aldrich:** "I believe she said she wasn't going to pay the violation. I said, 'Mrs. Wright, I don't care if you pay it or not. It goes to the JP, it's out of my hands. If you don't pay it, there'll be a warrant issued for your arrest'. She walked a little ways, she turned around and she said, 'You'll be sorry'. I said 'I'm not worried', then she walked a little way and said, 'I'm going to make sure you're sorry for this.'"

**Mr. Akers:** "How long did she go into the building?"

**Aldrich:** "Couldn't have been for more than five minutes."

(Observer: In questioning concerning the exchange of the driver's license, Aldrich stated that she was not holding the license out to him but was holding it close to her; he also stated that he should have given her notice of what she was being stopped for earlier than he did -- "... but for some reason it just ticked me off that morning. I'll have to admit I did lose my temper".)

**Pierson:** "At one point you indicated that her attitude was defiant, that she lost her temper and you did too. Could you elaborate?"

**Aldrich:** "Well, the fact that she said she was not going to show me anything: I thought that indicated a defiant attitude; I didn't like her attitude at all. When she said 'take it', it just added fuel to the fire."

(Observer: Aldrich was questioned on his statement about "you people", and repeated what he had said before.)

**Pierson:** "When you said that, did you mean by 'you' Mrs. Wright as an individual, or Mrs. Wright as a representative of the black race?"

**Aldrich:** "To be honest, I meant her as a rep. of the negro race."

**Pierson:** "Was it your feeling that the black people are treated as something special on the campus?"

**Aldrich:** "No it was not."

(Observer: questioned about why he said "as well or better" again, he said that given the way she said 'you and your white power', he had every reason to believe that she was making a racial incident of it, even though she never specifically stated that she thought it was a racial incident. (according to Aldrich) (Why the emphasis then? "To assure her that I wasn't stopping her or harassing her just because of her color".)

(Observer: Pierson states that the "as well or better" statement indicates an attitude. Aldrich says he just wanted to be sure that she didn't think he was ticketing her just because of her color. "To be honest with you, I didn't even realize she was colored until she got out of her car".

Not even when she passed in her car you couldn't tell she was black? Answer: No.)

**Pierson:** "The attitude you presented us with here today, that "black people are treated as well or better" may we hear some more on that?"

**Aldrich:** Well, as I stated Mr. Pierson, we don't pick on them because of their color, or I think we're just as fair -- I say we, the Department, myself -- I have various friends around here, I don't know if any of them are in the group or not, colored, that I feel are just as good friends of mine as the other students.

**Mr. Akers:** Mr. Aldrich, I would like to raise a point, and I do so cautiously because I realize this is a dangerous question, because I want you to speak for the dept. What training do you as officers get in how to stop a person who has committed a violation?

**Aldrich:** As yet there has been no formal training because we're still in the process of trying to get the dept. set up.

(Observer: Akers raised some questions about the possible dangers of a police officer losing his temper while performing his duties.)

**Akers:** "One of the most relevant questions here is, who raised the element of racism in the first place?"

**Aldrich:** "... She said it first. She said, 'you and you're white power', and then I came back with the answer I gave."

**Akers:** "The element of racism was interjected by Mrs. Wright?"

**Aldrich:** "Yes sir, it was".

(Observer: At this point "character witnesses" Sheldon Appleton and Tom Strong were brought in. Their testimony is deleted.)

(Observer: In further questioning of the two "witnesses", they mostly affirmed what they said before. Mrs. Wright stated that her part of the "heated discussion" was in arguing about the ticket -- she said she accused Aldrich of looking for an excuse to give her a ticket. In Aldrich's statement, he commented that he considered himself a representative of the Dept. and the community as a whole. Pierson asked him, "does this mean then, by your statement about being treated as well or better, as the rest of us, that Mrs. Wright, by being black, is not (or is not considered) a member of the community? Is she seen as someone outside of the university community?" Aldrich replied No.)

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