

Summary of the Report of Sgt. Arthur Howison,
10th Precinct Clean-up Squad, on raid at
9123 12th, 3:45 to 4:45 A.M., July 23, 1967

Proof

9123 12th is a commercial building on the west side of 12th, just north of Clairmount.

Immediately to the north is a fenced-in playground. Behind the building is an alley extending north from Clairmount and dead-ending at the playground fence.

There had been a previous raid on a blind pig at this location in which Sgt. Howison had participated. There had been complaints from neighbors about the operation of the current blind pig, and on the night of July 23 such a complaint was registered on the clean-up complaint book at the 10th Precinct Station. As a result, it was arranged that a policeman would go to the blind pig and purchase liquor after hours in order to provide evidence.

Police arrived on the scene at approximately 3:45 A.M., as the disguised policeman had already entered the blind pig and made his purchase. In the clean-up squad car was Sgt. Howison together with two other officers (one white, one Negro). Accompanying them was a marked, 3-man cruiser. A sergeant with 3 men on the beat happened to be in the immediate vicinity and accompanied them.

Sgt. Howison and his two clean-up squad men entered through the front door, and declared that all persons were under arrest. There were 83 persons in the blind pig, much more than the anticipated 35 to 40. As a result, Sgt. Howison radioed for 3 more patrol wagons, in addition to the one which was arriving just as the clean-up squad entered the blind pig.

Sgt. Howison made the decision both to enter and to take out the prisoners through the front door on 12th Street, for several reasons. First of all, he knew that the back door was a steel fire door and padlocked. Hence it would be extremely difficult to make entry from the rear. Second, the alley leading to the rear door dead-ended immediately north of 9123 12th, and therefore any patrol wagon in that alley could easily be cut off from the street by a vehicle parked at the mouth of the alley on Clairmount. Moreover, it would have been cumbersome and time-consuming to move each patrol wagon out of the alley and then back another in while loading prisoners.

While entering the building, Sgt. Howison noted relatively light street crowds, probably not more than a dozen persons at the corner of 12th and Clairmount.

There was a considerable delay following the initial arrest until the 3 extra patrol ~~cars~~ wagons arrived. Most precincts, ~~etc~~ when a request is made of them to provide a patrol wagon, have to take men off the street, and this takes time. This delay consumed 20 to 25 minutes, according to Sgt. Howison. During this time, he and his men were holding the 83 persons prisoner on the second floor of 9123 12th. (There was a front door at street level and another door at the head of the front stairway. From the second floor, there was an open stairway leading to the padlocked steel rear door.)

During the delay, a considerable crowd, apparently attracted by the scout car, gathered. It grew even larger as the wagons arrived. Such large crowds are apparently normal on 12th Street, even at such a late hour. The crowd was noisy, but not hostile at first. It grew more abusive as time went on and prisoners were loaded. Bottles and rocks were thrown. This was the first time that this had happened in Sgt. Howison's experience, although other officers have reported similar receptions. The back window of the police cruiser was knocked out by a bottle or rock.

Before the first wagon was loaded, Sgt. Howison reports that one of the prisoners said, "Nobody's going." However, one man did step forward, and the rest walked out docilely, as directed by police officers. As they walked between the building entrance and the door of the police wagon, the prisoners were shouting to the crowd, more jovially than belligerently, Sgt. Howison reports.

Howison and his men confiscated sample bottles, including the partially-drained bottle of beer purchased by the undercover police officer. They took this evidence with them as they departed at the same time as the last wagon, at some time between 4:30 and 4:45 A.M. Thus the whole episode took an hour or less.

Sgt. Howison emphatically reports that there was no case of any prisoner resisting arrest. There was no instance of any policeman taking any steps to subdue any of the prisoners. There was no treatment of any kind whatsoever that could possibly be called police brutality.

There were no writs served on the prisoners. The 3 men believed to be the owners or agents of the owners were held on charges on engaging in an illegal occupation. The remainder were classified as loiterers, and their records were checked to see if they should be held because of other violations. One man was held for violation of probation, and 7 or 8 persons (2 of them women) were held for ~~traffic~~ past due traffic violations. The other 71 or 72 prisoners were released without charges. About one-third of the prisoners were women; only two of these were held.

The state of the crowd as Sgt. Howison left 12th and Clairmount was abusive, loud, and hostile. Men were throwing pop bottles and rocks. About 20 to 25 per cent of the crowd were women, but these were quiet, and the men seemed to be responsible for all the commotion.

At about the time when the additional patrol wagons had arrived, Sgt. Howison had radioed for more assistance. As a result, about 8 or 9 other scout cars had arrived at the scene. Men from the scout cars were holding people off the pavement and away from the blind pig and the patrol wagons. These cars were left at the same as Howison departed. He had not seen any scuffling, nor had he noticed anything unusual enough to believe that anything further would come of this situation. At the station, Howison and his men were occupied with paper work for two hours and were away from police radios, and so had no knowledge of how the situation developed.