AFRO photog tells how he was arrested

by Ben Phillips

My assignment was to assist present photographers on the scene at 25th St. school headquarters Monday for the 3 p.m. board meeting. I was covering the outside perimeter of the board where there was a crowd of supporters for Dr. Patterson awaiting, to enter the room.

They were denied entrance. Most of the room was filled with press, staff and a few spectators.

At one point, three young ladies left to make room for Dr. Harold Carter, pastor of New Shiloh Baptist Church; the Rev. A. C. Vaughn of Grace Baptist Church and the Rev. Arthur J. Payne, veteran civil rights leader and minister of Enon Baptist Church.

Security guards at the school refused to let them in, saying fire rules were being violated and the room was overcrowded.

* * *

The board began its sessions even as distinguished members of the clergy and other citizens lined the walls of the room or were denied admission., even though there were vacant seats.

The ministers refused to yield their standing positions as the meeting opened with Board President Norman Ramsey asking his fellow commissioners, 'does someone have a resolution to offer'?

Commissioners W. Eugene Scott was quick to respond with the resolution calling for Superintendent Patterson's firing.

It was at this point that James M. Griffin, a former school commissioner, stood and walked to the front of the room protesting 'this meeting is out of order, this meeting is out of order...

As he sought to continue his pleading that the public had been denied entrance, there was a second by Commissioner Grover L. McCrae Security guards, one white, one black, grabbed Mr. Griffin and yanked him from the board room.

When they opened the door, the crowd outside pushed its way in.

* * *

I followed the officers and Mr. Griffin, thinking they were only going to escort him outside. Instead, they started into another room and I followed, snapping away at my camera. It was then, I heard them tell Mr. Griffin you are under arrest.'

I followed them into the room to see exactly what was going to be done and to get pictures.

Instead of closing the door, the security guards tried to push me and and my camera out of the room. I continued to take pictures.

When they couldn't close the door,

When they coulln't close the door, (they were too busy reaching for my camera), one of them grabbed me and said, "Well, you are under arrest too."

I was taken into custody, and handcuffed and taken to a paddy wagon.

* * *

They drove the paddy wagon in the alley behind the school office building across the street, adjacent to a parking lot. They escorted Mr. griffin and me out in as fast a style pattern as they could, and were beginning to take the usual procedure of frisking us when one of the officers said, "They are coming, come on let's put them in there."

We were hastily put in the wagon and driven to Northern police station where we were booked and processed.

Mr. Griffin was charged with disorderly conduct, which is 125 A of the Baltimore School System, and I was charged with disorderly conduct and interference with security guards.

* * *

I was put in the Northern District cell which is an experience of its own.

The cell was painted green all over. Grafetti decorated the wall. It was very dingy one stool, no seat cover, a low basin and a flat wooden bench with no mattress and no covers is all it contained.

It was blocked off from the other cells by a sheet of steel with bars in the front.

* * *

After about a half hour, I was taken to be fingerprinted, pictures taken and information was taken for pretrial release.

I was notified at that time that the court commissioner would be in within another hour, afterwhich I was given permission to make a call.

While calling my office, I was told the court commissioner was waiting. I went before the court commissioner who turned out to be Mr. Ackerman.

He told me that I was going to be released on my own recognizance and he didn't see probable case for my arrest in the first place and therefore my trial date would be tomorrow morning, Tuesday at 9 with recommendation that there was improper cause for arrest by security guards.

I was then released.

Then I went to the hospital which is another thing. I don't want you to think that is was brutality. They are two separate things.

I received a concussion of the skull the day before while photographing graduates of Lake Clifton High School.

Q — How do you feel about this experience?

Such an experience because that is nothing anyone should have to feel. It's a very funny, peculiar awesome feeling to be locked up and to realize "Hey, I can't leave."

It's a funny feeling when you can't understand what you have done wrong. What you are supposed to be violating a law and are held in the lowest type of esteem..

It is a very humiliating experience to be booked and fingerprinted, knowing that a record is being made of you which will go with you for the rest of your life.

There is one thing you new understand.

Namely this is what happened for so many years to our parents, grandparents and great grands who were black to get us where we are today.

It almost makes your stomach sick to think there are some black people living today who are willing to sell us down the river after all the sacrifices that have been made by generations before us,

ONLY BLACK — Mrs. Vera H. Ranson graduated from the Maryland Institute of Art, cum laude. She was the only black graduate to receive a Bachelor's degree from the Interior Design Department. She is the wife of William H. Ranson, Jr. They live in Randallstown and have three children, Kevin, 15, Keith, 13 and Kyle, 9. In last week's issue, Mrs. Ranson was innorrectly identified. The AFRO regrets the error.

Funds for alcoholics cut

The Public Inebriation Program (PIP) of Baltimore previously funded by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) closed its doors May 31 because funds were cut.

The coalition of Alcoholism's Concerned Citizens held a demonstration June 9 to demand the reopening of PIP. The protest started at Dr. Neil Solomon's office, but whether or not this has anything to do with his recent troubles is not known.

* * *

Demonstrators handed out literature urging passers-by to lend their support in the court rooms, write their legislators and sign petitions because this situation will affect every citizen.

Alcoholism is the nation's No. 1 health problem, therefore, protests emphasized diminished services will mean more overcrowded emergency rooms, increased homicides, suicides and acts of violence, because some 100,000 alcoholics will go untreated.

The PIP staff is attempting to secure state funding, but the outlook is not hopeful.

Edgecombe Elementary fete

This time of year schools everywhere honor outstanding scholars and those who have given service beyond the call of duty during the year.

Edgecombe Circle Elementary School No. 62 held its Third Annual Awards Program June 11.

Certificates for excellence and service in attendance, music, safety, Junior Aid, Newcombe and bowling were awarded 90 students.

Thomas Stephens, program co-ordinator and special education teacher said, they are trying to teach citizenship and though every student does not do well academically, each can be recognized for something else he does well.

* * *

Mrs. Barbara Chapman, music teacher, made the comment that P.S. 62 has such a hardworking and excellent orchestra she would have liked to award each student.

"Youth Shaping America" was the topic of the guest speaker, Miss Cynthia Grandison. The AFRO's summer city desk intern emphasized the importance of doing a job well and keeping a good attendance record.

* * *

Exactly 21 pupils had perfect attendance for the entire school year.

"I enjoy working with children, so I volunteer to work in school," replied Mrs. Ruby Harris, a devoted parent who was awarded for her services as library aide and four-year bowling instructor.

She agreed that more parents should get involved with school activities. Mr. Stephens said without Mrs. Harris help he would not have been able to continue supervising the extra-curricular bowling.

"A teacher has too many students," continued Mrs. Harris, "to pay attention to one particular child, so by having a parent volunteer, a parent can carry on with a group while the teacher has the others."

Twelve-year-old Jerome Guest, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Guest Sr., was awarded 1st prize in Newcombe which is similar to volleyball.

Ellis Harcum, 10, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Harcum Sr., was also recognized for excellence. Both students also served as safety patrols.

Marriage Licenses

THOMAS-BOSTICK — Clifford V., 20, 2805 Harlem; Helena A., 19.

LEWIS-MANNS — Aaron M., 24, 5000 Conant Valley; Patricia A., 29.

YOUNG-PARRISH — Carroll S., 24, 304 N. Athol; Gaynell, 22, 109 Avondale

DAVIS-MITCHELL — Sylvester C., 28, 2101 E. Lafayette; Jacqueline, 28, 1822 N. Caroline.

LONG-SIMMS — Alfred S., 20, 1107 N. Carey; Ellen J., 16, 4215 Belview.

CARTER-WILLIAMS — Carnell A., 22, 3028 Mondawmin; Marlene J., 20, 3608 Reisterstown.

BLODSINGER-BRANDT — George E., 28, 2513 Sidney; Loretta I. 21, 2236 Cedley.

JAMES-HOLIDAY — Alexander, 70 407 Lyndhurst; Mattie L., 64.

1,150 pints of blood donated

Twelve Baltimore City Public High Schools donated 1,150 pints of blood to the Red Cross Blood Assurance Program during the 1974-75 school year.

"The response of the Baltimore schools was one of the best in the nation," said David Jones, assistant director of Blood Donor Resources and Development.

Those involved in the program were: Baltimore City College, 20 pints; Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, 308 pints; Carver Vocational-Technical High School, 83 pints; Eastern High School, 30 pints; Edmondson High School, 83 pints; Forest Park High School, 45 pints; Jane Adams Vocational High School, 6 pints; Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High School, 112 pints; Northern High School, 101 pints; Northwestern High School, 83 pints; Patterson Park High School, 152 pints; and Western High School, 127 pints.

Douglass attacks Pressman aduit failure

Del. John W. Douglass, candidate for City Comptroller has charged that the City Comptroller Pressman's failure to obey city charter provisions and state laws regarding auditing of financial reports could cost the city $200 million in state aid and grants.

Douglass noted that Art. 19, Sect. 38, of Md. Law gives the state comptroller the authority to withhold all state aid and grants to subdivisions not submitting those reports or using the uniform system of reporting.

Since only the city Comptroller through his audit of the City report can certify that the city uses the uniform system of accounts as required by Art, 19, Sect. 36 Pressman's failure to file those reports jeopardizes all state aid to Baltimore.

Douglass noted that the city comptroller just completed the 1974 report almost two years too late, and the 1974 report is almost one year overdue. "What makes the situation particularly hazardous for the city," Douglass believes "if a long pattern of violation and abuse of State Law. The 1972 report, for example while almost two years too late failed to certify that the city's report conformed to the uniform system of accounts."

The legislative auditor, Douglass said, has reported this pattern of violations and abuse of state law to the state comptroller.

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