

9150 North Kilbourn Avenue

Skokie, Illinois-60076

July 19, 1967

Dr. Herman Bloch

Skokie Human Relations Commission

Village Hall

5127 Oakton Street

My dear Dr. Bloch:

I wish to protest the harassment of my sons by the police of Skokie. Tonight, July 19, at approximately 8:30 p.m. a police officer in car 23 came to my door to report that he had stopped my 13 year old thinking that he was riding a stolen bicycle. The officer was courteous when speaking to me, but my son reported after he had left that the officer had cursed him when he initially stopped him.

During a discussion of this incident with my fifteen year old son and the thirteen year old, the older one related that he had been stopped many times while walking home from the home of a friend in the neighborhood between 10-10:30 p.m. He also stated that his friend has been stopped many times while walking home from school during the winter.

I find it very significant that these three residents of Skokie happen to be Negro youths.

It is immaterial that my 13 year old's bicycle was stolen from our garage by white youths several weeks ago, and except for coincidence and Officer Young it would never have been found, for the thieves were white and were able to get into and out of the neighborhood without being noticed.

It is also immaterial that during our first year in this neighborhood our older son was falsely accused by a white girl, and we were the only parents who were called on by the police while parents of several white youths who may have been involved were allowed to sleep peacefully through the night. Apparently the incident was a figment of the girl's fantasy, but we were singled out because our boy is Negro.

It is also immaterial that our thirteen year old has been under the care of a psychiatrist for seven months because of severe withdrawn tendencies, partially activated by his feelings of isolation in a white world. His doctor has finally persuaded him to get out and mingle with people and now he is frightened by this police action. He told the officer that he thought the car horn blowing behind him was some kids trying to scare him as usual. I hope all the work the doctor and we have attempted is not negated by tonight's experience.

Our moving into this area was with high hopes that an attempt to live in a manner befitting our backgrounds, education, and aspirations might be successful despite visual differences. It appears that this was wistful thinking. Our sons have suffered much more than they have gained since living here. Our sons are of the greatest importance to us. They have been very carefully reared. They are often described as being perfect gentlemen. That means absolutely nothing in this world if their skin happens to be dark.

If Negroes such as the Fortunes are so humiliated because of the color of their skins you may be assured that the lower class Negroes who participate in a Watts and Newark riot are much less prone to "civilized" thought and action than we. Speaking as a mother whose first

instinct is to protect her young I empathize completely with my black brothers.

More of you must learn that every Negro boy is not running from the police. My son was not aware that the policeman was following him. He was headed west into Skokie on Grove. He continued west into Skokie. If he had been an Evanston Negro stealing a bicycle, he would have acted differently.

When my husband returns from his Army Reserve training this weekend we will seriously discuss the possibility of moving back to Chicago or into Evanston. Our sons will continue to be Negroes and if we continue living here it is possible that a Skokie policeman may decide to shoot at a "six-foot Negro teen ager found walking (heaven forbid jogging or running) in a Skokie neighborhood after dark".

Very truly yours,

Duendoline J. Fortune

Mrs. F.C. Fortune

cc: Mayor Smith and Dr. Bloch
Chief of Police