

Suddenly he's a suspect, and helpless

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Suddenly he's a suspect, and helpless

IT WAS A BITTERLY cold night last Feb. 22, and Terrence Gliosci was scraping the frost off the back window of his white 1962 Cadillac when a squad car pulled up and a spotlight was thrown on him.

Gliosci, 34, of 439 Geneva St., Bellwood, had just locked the gates of the soft drink warehouse he manages at 4433 W. Ohio St. His car was sitting just outside, and one of his employes was waiting in it to get a ride home.

"I assumed the police car was checking to see that everything was okay," Gliosci said, "and I waved to him in acknowledgment."

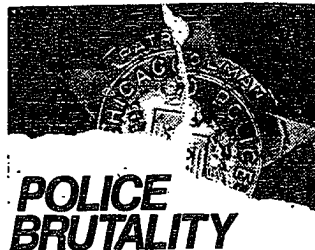
He continued to scrape his window and, seconds later, an unmarked car screeched around the corner, skidded behind Gliosci's auto, and slammed into the gatepost.

A man in civilian clothes jumped out, leaped over the hood of his car, and pointed a revolver at Gliosci. Moments later, Gliosci was spread-eagled over the trunk of his own car and the man was ripping open the back of his head with the revolver.

Chicago policemen have strict procedures to follow when arresting a suspect. The procedures are designed to protect both the policemen and the citizen involved. Most of the policemen are professionals of the highest caliber, but some operate heedless of procedure and innocent people and their reputations are injured. In the last five months, Tribune reporters have talked to hundreds of alleged victims of such abuse, to supporting witnesses, and to policemen. They have searched thru documents and arranged for dozens of polygraph tests. This is the fifth in a series of reports compiled by reporter Emmett

THE MAN WITH the revolver was a policeman, and Gliosci was the unwitting suspect in a police dragnet.

A policeman had been shot that night. The prime suspects were three black men in a white 1972 Cadillac with the rear window shot out. Gliosci's 1962



George and the Pulitzer Prize-winning team of George Bliss, chief investigator, William Mullen, and Pamela Zekman.

Cadillac apparently was close enough to the description for the policemen searching for the gunmen, altho Gliosci is white and only he and one other man were with the car.

Gliosci got entangled in a web of suspicion. Perhaps the most frightening encounter a citizen can have with a

policeman is one in which he suddenly finds himself cast as a suspect in a crime he hasn't committed.

It is an unfortunate experience, but a fact of life, to which a good citizen has no real alternative other than enduring it until he can prove his innocence.

A five-month Tribune investigation of police brutality, however, found many instances of police abuse of innocent persons who were mistaken, briefly, for criminals.

REPORTERS TALKED to hundreds of alleged victims and witnesses to such acts, collected thousands of documents, and arranged polygraph tests wherever possible to substantiate their findings.

It became apparent that some policemen leap to conclusions and administer their own brand of street justice with the result that innocent people are hurt.

The Police Department has proved unwilling or unable to help the victim.

Gliosci never had time to get the

name of the man who pistol-whipped him or even a good look at him.

"When he jumped out of his car and pointed that gun at me, it looked like a cannon, and that's what I remember the most," he recalled.

He said when he first looked at the man in civilian clothing, and turned and saw the uniformed men getting out of the squad car, he thought he was stuck in the middle of somebody else's trouble.

"I thought I was going to be in the middle of a gunfight," he said.

HE DROPPED to the ground to get out of the line of fire, he said, and started creeping to the front of his car.

Everything was silent for a few tense moments. Gliosci said he looked up and saw the uniformed men walking toward him and heard the man in plain clothes shout:

"Hold it right there. Get them up where I can see them."

"By this time I figured out they were all police," Gliosci said.

The man in plain clothes jerked him up by his neck, he said, threw him across the trunk lid, pushed his face

into the car, and started pistol-whipping him.

By the time the policeman let him up, several squad cars had pulled up, and policemen were standing around with carbines and shotguns. They pulled the other man, Wally Nichols, of 44 N. Pine Av., out of Gliosci's car and frisked him.

It soon became clear to the police, Gliosci said, that they had made a mistake. The partner of the man in plain clothes angrily told Gliosci, "Next time, do as you're told, buddy."

The man who had pistol-whipped him explained they were looking for some men who had just shot a policeman, Gliosci said. The man said he was sorry he had roughed up Gliosci, that he had hurt his own hand while hitting him.

ALL OF THE policemen got back into their cars and left, he said, leaving him standing in the night with the back of his head bleeding.

Gliosci went to St. Anne's Hospital,

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Tribune Photo

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where he was stitched up, and then to the Fillmore Station to complain.

He said the watch commander told him, "You were harassed, and we can't have this on the police force." The commander made arrangements for him to file a complaint with the department's Internal Affairs Division, he said.

The IAD investigator showed him mug shots of plainclothes policemen, he said, but he couldn't identify them. The investigator later tried to locate recordings of all radio car calls in the district from that night, he said, but was unsuccessful.

After several weeks, the IAD dropped the investigation, but an investigator from the Human Relations Commission contacted him, Gliosci said. The commission investigator told him he would try to arrange a lineup of men who might have beaten him, but Gliosci never heard from him again, he said.

GLIOSCI HAS resigned himself to the belief that nothing will be done about the incident, but that doesn't cool his anger.

"The fact they took off, leaving me standing there bleeding, was very unprofessional," he said.

"I have cousins and friends who are policemen, and they told me not to let these guys get away with this. My wife still shudders when she thinks how the guy could just as easily have shot me as beat me."

Terrence Gliosci shows how policeman pointed gun.

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