



**FROM THE DESK OF:  
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WMATA Office of Inspector General  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
600 5th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

This letter is to inform the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority of a complaint being brought on officers for civil rights violations in regards to the complainant, Jerome Vorus (self). I a photographer in the Washington, DC area and was stopped and detained for photography by WMATA Metro Transit Officers.

Date of incident: November 23, 2010

Time of Incident: Between 1945hrs and 2100hrs Eastern Standard Time

Place of Incident: Vicinity of Pendleton and Royal Streets, Alexandria, VA.

Circumstances: On November 23, 2010, I, Jerome Vorus was walking in Alexandria, VA. Noticing the WMATA Metro transit yard, I proceeded to take photographs of the terminal facility from the public sidewalk. I was stopped immediately and asked by a WMATA Transit Officer, later identified as T.R. Dyke (badge no. 503) why I was taking photos of the busses and the transit facility. I notified the officer that I was a photographer taking a couple of night photos for a current, ongoing project.

Officer Dyke began to enlist personal information from me, at which time I asked "am I being detained or am I free to go" I was later informed by officer Dyke that I was being detained, after the more than nine times I asked "am I being detained or am I free to go". When I asked the officer why I was being detained, he stated, "because I need to identify you; you are videoing and taking pictures". I asked officer Dyke was taking pictures unlawful; his explanation was "it is when you are taking pictures in front of the (Metro) complex."

When supervisors arrived to the scene, the actions of officer Dyke were supported by Lieutenant Earl P. Brown. The supervisor supported my detainment of photography because I was "taking pictures of buses".

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I feel that the actions of WMATA Officer Dyke and supervisors were a clear and flagrant violation, and disregard of my First Amendment rights, supported under the United States Constitution. I am still trying to fathom how while on a public sidewalk I could be stopped, detained, and publicly humiliated for taking pictures, which is well within my rights. I was made to feel like a criminal, with multiple officers surrounding me, as passing pedestrians pass me while my information was, what I think ran through NCIC.

I hope that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority implements training of its officers about detaining a person without reasonable suspicion that they have committed, is committing, or is about to commit a crime.

Police may briefly detain a person if they have reasonable suspicion that the person has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a crime. Photography is not a crime; it is a First Amendment right. US Courts have ruled that photography itself is not a basis for detainment.

As it stands, I do not have a problem with an officer from any agency inquiring about my actions as a photographer, the key word is inquire. Detention opens a door for new problems.

Respectfully,

Jerome Vorus, Jr