

Event 2469: Elmer Dixon (Black Panther Party, Seattle Chapter)

Transcript of testimony at a public hearing of the Seattle City Council's Public Safety & Health Committee

August 20, 1974

ELMER DIXON:

My name is Elmer Dixon, I am a member the Black Panther Party, Washington State chapter address is 169 19th Avenue. I want to speak in support of a citizen's review board on behalf of the Black Panther Party on behalf of a lot of black people in the black community who have felt the brunt of police brutality. I don't think it's necessary for me to respond to quite a few attacks that have been leveled at progressive people that are trying to seek change in government and in a city in a world that is desperate to change and needs change very badly. I think that if we look at in the streets, if we look at the very fact that complaints are being registered, very fact that people are up here testifying that there is a problem, and that there is something wrong with things not being dealt with correctly by the present, internal investigations committee. I do support and favor, an internal investigation committee that is made up of people from cross sections of black communities, brown communities, white community, red community, the gay community, etc. to review police complaints on the part of citizens, because of the very fact that we have seen that it is impossible for corrupt politicians to look over issues of corrupt, more corrupt politicians. Speaking in terms of internal investigations committee, trying to decide whether or not the fellow parties have done wrong, the situation outside of the police department. There has been very clear evidence that bipartisan law has been applied when a police complaint has been registered, and people try to administer the law properly. I suggest that laws in this country, the laws of this land, did not serve adequately the needs of the people. Because of the crime rate is so high, I suggest also, the government bodies in the high parts of the government are also not serving the needs and the rights of the people because there's so much turmoil in this country, and also further submit that a police internal investigations division in the city of Seattle cannot and will not serve the interests of the people because it has to serve the interests of the fellow partners. I submit further, that we not only need a Citizens Review Board to investigate activities of the police department. But we also need people's governing review board to investigate the activities of this government.

[applause from audience]

Coming from a personal standpoint, on the issue of people who support a citizen's review board, I'm not shocked, but I'm disappointed in fact that certain elements have come forward to attack the fellow human beings who're trying to seek some type of positive change. I find it very difficult to understand a man attacking the person who has had a job, tried to work to support his family and try to earn wages to get through school, to try to obtain a better job, who has been laid off or fired from his job because of conditions would not allow the job to continue, who has been put on unemployment roles, and in order to at least try and feed his family one meal a day has had to go on food stamps. I find this hard to believe that human beings will attack other human beings are trying to eat and survive high cost of food here today. And I think that the City Council here, people in the audience, whether they're for or against the Citizens Review Board, to try to sit down and be more a little bit more human, and try to

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understand each other's problems rather than attacking people. But I'm sure there's a lot of change that can be accomplished. We sit down and realize that we all have certain human needs. We all have certain human ideals and certain human goals. And they're very much basically the same. That is we want to live a very, the most comfortable, peaceful life that we can. And I submit that by attacking one another, and defending the defenders of wrong, and defending the defenders of brutality and oppression, we're not going to get anywhere and we should stand together as a people and try to solve these problems together. Thank you.