

1110 Cleveland Avenue
Montgomery 8, Alabama
December 22, 1955

National News Editor
TIME Magazine
TIME & LIFE Building
9 Rockefeller Plaza
New York 20, New York

Subject: Bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Sir:

I am writing this letter to you, because I have long been impressed with the fair and unbiased treatment you give in your news stories. (I am a regular cover-to-cover TIME reader.) I have been particularly impressed with the bold and courageous way in which you have handled the extremely touchy subject of race relations.

There is a story in the making here in Montgomery, Alabama, that may be just as explosive as the Till case, before it is over and done. I am referring to the protest which the Negroes (and many whites) of Montgomery are making against the local bus company. Undoubtedly you have received some reports about this over the AP and UP wires.

What you may not know is that only part of the story is actually reaching the public through the normal channels of communication. The local newspapers have consistently printed one-sided stories about the developments in this protest. They have at times (purposely, or otherwise) omitted pertinent facts that would have put a much more favorable light on what the Negroes are asking for.

In addition, all of the "law-enforcement" agencies in the city and county have been doing everything possible to break the back of our campaign. Laws that have rarely been enforced are now being pulled out of the books and being used against the Negroes (but, we hear, not against the whites). For example, hundreds of people double-park on the downtown streets while waiting for parking places or while waiting for a passenger to get out, do some quick shopping and return. Recently, however, many people have been charged and fined for blocking traffic, if they happened to be picking up or letting out Negroes.

I am a white Lutheran minister, serving a Negro congregation. I cannot even give my own members a ride in my car without fear of being stopped by the police and accused of running a taxi. On last Monday Sheriff Butler himself watched me put several Negroes in my car, while parked in a legal parking zone. Then he stopped me, accused me of running a taxi, took me in for questioning, searched my car (without showing me a warrant or indicating that he had one), and finally released me. The same thing is being done over and over in this city every day.

If you want a good look at the way a one-race press and a one-race police force band together to discredit fifty thousand people who are tired of being treated like animals on the city busses, and who are registering their feelings by refraining from riding those busses, then I urge you to send a reporter to Montgomery as soon as possible.

There are many more discriminatory factors that have been introduced into this whole picture, in some cases by rather high officials. But the worst factor of all is that it has become almost impossible to tell our story to the people of the city without having it distorted and turned against us.

For further information, you may contact:

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Pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Phone 3-3970

Attorney Fred Gray, 2307 W. Jeff Davis Street, Phone 2-0625
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Rev. Robert Graetz, 1110 Cleveland Avenue, Phone 4-6456
Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church

I respectfully request that the contents of this letter be kept confidential until such time as they have been verified by you. Please advise me as to your reaction to my request that you have ^{the} story covered by your own staff member.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Graetz

Copies: Dr. King
Atty. Gray
Rev. Hughes