

PRESS & GUIDE

Attorney: Mentally disabled Dearborn man cried for mother during arrest

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Attorney Amir Makled, right, translates at a press conference Thursday for mentally disabled Dearborn resident Ali Beydoun, 28, who says he was assaulted by Dearborn police. Photo by Aysha Jamali

DEARBORN — A 28-year-old mentally disabled Dearborn man spoke at a press conference Thursday about Dearborn police's alleged assault on him.

Ali Beydoun said he was assaulted by Dearborn police while riding his bike on his way home from work in December.

The Michigan chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-MI) filed a civil rights complaint Thursday with the U.S. Department of Justice requesting an investigation into the incident that occurred just before 5 a.m. Dec. 7 near Gould Avenue and Chase Road in Dearborn.

Attorney Cyril Hall, whose law office is representing Beydoun, said Beydoun was leaving his job as a dishwasher at Mango Cafe, 14927 West Warren Ave., on his bicycle when he stopped to fix its chain. He was then stopped by a Dearborn police officer, who then called another officer for backup.

“There was no reasonable suspicion that he was engaged in criminal activity,” Hall said at the press conference in Dearborn.

That was when Beydoun, who speaks English as a second language, was asked to present identification by the officers and, when he did not immediately present it, was “manhandled” by an officer and kicked multiple times on the ground by another officer, according to CAIR-MI.

Attorney Amir Makled, who is representing Beydoun, said he will file a civil rights complaint in federal court later this week against the city of Dearborn, the officers involved and Police Chief Ronald Haddad on the grounds of unnecessary aggressive force, assault and battery and intentional infliction of distress.

Makled said eight officers were at the scene, all of whom were white.

“They tossed Mr. Beydoun into the back of the cop car handcuffed,” he said.

Beydoun said in Arabic, translated by Makled, that he thought he was going to be attacked by an object and getting put into the police car was when he was most scared.

Makled’s investigation into the matter lasted several months because all of the information was obtained via Freedom of Information Act requests through the Dearborn police department, he said. Through those requests, Makled obtained raw video footage of the incident from the police car’s dashboard camera. The Arab American News shared the video footage of the incident on its YouTube channel.

“The proof is in the pudding in that video,” said Dawud Walid, executive director of CAIR-MI. “The video doesn’t lie.”

In the video, Hall said, the officer pats down Beydoun and asks no preliminary questions, which he said itself is a violation of his rights because there was no basis for the pat-down. Hall described the incidents in the video as horrible.

“He’s crying: ‘I want my mother. I want my mother. I want my mother,’” Hall said.

Beydoun, who immigrated to the U.S. about six years ago, lives with his mother and is an aloof and timid person, Makled said. His family contacted Makled and Hall after learning Beydoun, who has not had any previous incidents with police, had been admitted to the hospital and arrested by police, he said.

Beydoun was taken to the hospital for his injuries, which included facial injuries, contusions and soreness and caused him to take time off of work, Hall said.

Dearborn police said in a statement that Beydoun was in a neighborhood that has experienced auto thefts and break-ins and it is common for criminals to use a bike when traveling to an area to steal cars. Police said its review of the incident showed officers followed proper procedures. The statement said the officers “acted and reported the incident appropriately and according to approved department protocols.”

The video showed the officers’ response to Beydoun after he resisted a pat down for weapons, the statement said. It also said that the reason Beydoun was stopped by police is not in the video.

“Mr. Beydoun was not dressed properly for the 20 degree weather that December morning. Despite riding his bicycle in the street, his bike did not have a light and he disregarded several stop signs,” it reads.

Hall said Beydoun was dressed no differently than the officers as seen in the video.

Walid said he is confident that the Department of Justice will investigate.