The Case of Marcus Jack

Blood still stains the concrete at the base of the chain link fence where Marcus Jack went down.

The bloodstains are faded now, not like they were when Jack's cocaine took pictures two days after he was arrested. After all, it has been several weeks since Jack was arrested and the Lafayette police officers were let into jail only after a several-hour detain to the emergency room to have his head sewn up. Several very serious charges are lodged against him—possession of cocaine, unauthorized entry of an inhabited dwelling, resisting arrest, and four counts of battery on a police officer.

Meanwhile, an internal affairs investigation of the officers' actions by the Police Department is nearing completion. For that reason, Police Chief Gary Copes says he is unable to say much about it. In fact, nothing was released by the Police Department until late last week when members of the news media began asking questions about the incident.

The Jack case has also disturbed black officers in the Police Department. The Magnolia State Peace Officers Association, an organization predominantly made up of white officers, has retained prominent black attorney Sylvia Coo, who says she has been meeting with officials in the Police Department and at City Hall. Jack is black. Three of the four police officers involved are white.

Coo, who did not disclose the specific concerns of the association but said the Jack case was only one of the issues involved. "Hopefully, we'll be able to resolve what we need to resolve," she told The Times.

"He was knocked out," says Lorena Jack, Marcus' mother. "I don't know how many stitches he had in his head. When he went to the jail, his head was all wrapped up."

Marcus Jack is no angel. He was on probation for a 1990 conviction of distribution of cocaine. He was quite drunk at the time of the incident, even though it was 8:30 in the morning. He was in Azalea Park, a poor, predominantly black neighborhood off Walker Road in which drug dealing has become so entrenched that residents are planning a march against it this Saturday.

According to initial incident reports released to The Times under the provision that the Lafayette Parish Correctional Center about 2:30 that afternoon, where he remains on $31,000 bond. The local probation office has also placed him on house arrest. The four officers involved, Dwwayne Regan, Rickey Carroll, Barbara Griffin (who is black) and Philip Burns, did not receive medical treatment.

Assistant District Attorney Keith Stites says he has accepted the charges, meaning the criminal case will be pursued. Asked how much cocaine was involved, Stites says only that it was enough to justify the possession charge. (Moore, however, claims that no drugs were found on Marcus Jack.)

Chief Cope says he cannot comment on the specifics of the internal affairs investigation because it is ongoing. He hopes it will be complete this week. Asked why the incident did not become public for a month, Cope says, "I initiated the investigation myself. The individual involved did not make a complaint."

Copes says he ordered the internal affairs investigation shortly after he heard about the incident.

The family says that when they went to the Police Department themselves to file a complaint against the officers, they initially were turned down and had to go back a second time before they were allowed to file it.

Lorena Jack has not seen her son since he was arrested. "I just don't like to go to jail. I have high blood pressure," she says. Instead, she talks whenever he is allowed to use a phone.

"I just want justice to be done," she says.

By Jane Nicholes

The Injury of a Drug

The suspect during his arrest has led to a police internal affairs investigation.

Lorena Jack (Above) says her son was beaten by police officers in this spot in Azalea Park. Debra Moore, (Left), a relative, took pictures of the bloodstains two days after the incident.

Marcus sometimes stayed. When Jack spotted the police, he went into the house. An officer came in behind him, and someone else in the house asked what was going on. Jack, says Moore, said he was getting out of there because he was on probation and wanted nothing to do with a police incident. As he exited the house, the officer hit him in the back of the head, and Jack took off.

Jack ended up cornered nearby in a small hole where two chain-link fences come together at a cul-de-sac. A woman in a house very close to the cul-de-sac heard the noise, locked out her window and saw the three white officers with Jack. "She seen he was down on the ground and the officers were kicking him," says Moore. The woman began banging on the window and hollering, and the officers stopped.

Marcus Jack was treated for two large lacerations on his head at UMC. A relative who lived in Azalea Park was allowed to ride with him in the ambulance, and when Lorena Jack sent her oldest son to the hospital to check on him, he was not allowed to see Marcus, according to the family.

The medical report obtained by the family notes he was heavily intoxicated, and describes him as being cooperative, cooperative, defiant, and aggressive. They don't deny he was very drunk.

"More reason why they didn't have to beat him like they did," says Moore. "They could have just pushed him down with one finger."

Jack was booked into the Lafayette Parish Correctional Center about 2:30 that afternoon, where he remains on $31,000 bond. The local probation office has also placed him on house arrest. The four officers involved, Dwwayne Regan, Rickey Carroll, Barbara Griffin (who is black) and Philip Burns, did not receive medical treatment.

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