

African American Hip Hop Photographer Beaten by Toronto Police

Written by Robert ID3083

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Mr. Tonye Allen is an African American hip hop photographer whose work has appeared in many hip hop related publications as L.A. Weekly, The Village Voice, Rolling Stone, Vibe Magazine, and The Source among other. An avid traveler, he has never experienced anything like his current incident. In his 45 years, he has never once been arrested but his recent visit to Toronto, Canada, with his fiancée, Ann Brown, has shed light again in the hip hop community on the police brutality which, according to the numbers, is becoming rampant in Toronto; and now American tourists seem to also be at risk as in the case of African American hip hop photographer Mr. Tonye Allen.

On October 16, about approximately 1:40 pm in front of the Econolodge Hotel (335 Jarvis Street) in downtown Toronto, Tonye Allen and his fiancée, Ann Brown, having just checked out of the hotel, were at the curb attempting to hail a cab. While in the process, a police car from the 51st Division pulled over at started asking questions of the two. When they answered, the officer said he didn't like their attitude, especially after they sought to find out why they were being questioned. Enraged the officer, jumped out of the car, grabbed Mr. Allen and called for backup. When backup came, there was no questioning. They immediately all descended upon Mr. Allen pepper sprayed him, knocked him to the floor, hit and kicked him. Someone on the street was videotaping the incident as onlookers were appalled. The person videotaping was told he too would be arrested. They also told Ms. Brown she was going to be arrested for disturbing the peace when she sought to see what was happening to Mr. Allen and when she went to seek help from bystanders. She was pushed, grabbed by the throat and also subdued by another police officer. The police refused to tell her or Mr. Allen the arrest charges. They refused to tell Ms. Brown their names or badge numbers. They refused to tell Ms. Brown what division they were taking Mr. Allen to. One of the witnesses on the street told her what division the police were from.

After arriving at the police station Ms. Brown spoke with a Det. Moyer who informed her: "We get all kinds of crap from the public everyday and we don't have to take it," he told her. When she said they within their rights to question the officer as to his reason for singling them out, and that we were in a free country, Det. Moyer said, "This (Canada) is not a free country."

Mr. Allen and Ms. Brown are both African American. According to a former officer, the problem of police brutality has gotten worse in Toronto. Sgt. Jim Cassells told CBC News. "police brass have covered up, refused to investigate or buried cases of alleged police brutality, public

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complaints and internal corruption for years." (<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2006/05/05/toronto-police-misconduct.html>)

Racial profiling in the city has also become a problem, according to recent studies by the University of Toronto. "I wholeheartedly believe we were victims of racial profiling and Mr. Allen a victim of Toronto police brutality. We were in front of a hotel, with several large bags as well as our pet in a pet travel bag. We were not suspicious. There was no other reason to question us other than we were black," says Ms. Brown, a respected freelance journalist. "As such, I am reaching out to the local community activists. I will also contact the NAACP and Jesse Jackson's Operation Push to encourage a boycott of the City of Toronto by African American tourists and conventioners." Ms. Brown has written several glowing articles about Toronto and was in fact working on another piece during this visit.

Ms. Brown, Mr. Tonye Allen fiancée, is a freelance writer whose work as appeared in Black Enterprise Magazine, Essence Magazine, Upscale Magazine, Playboy Magazine, The Source , and various other publications.

Companies Mr. Tonye Allen has worked with as a photographer: Sony Music, PolyGram Records, Def Jam Record, Columbia Music, Interscope, and Virgin Records. Mr. Tonye Allen is 45 years old and was born in NYC. He has NEVER been arrested and has NO criminal history. He also has NO history of drug and alcohol abuse.

A list of Mr. Tonye Allen injuries are stated as: Head abrasions and bruises, Ear abrasion and bruises, Possible concussion, Right eye: deep cut on eye lid, Black left eye, Damaged left eye, loss of sight (previous 20-20+ vision), Left ear loss of hearing, Lip bruised, Dislocated jaw, Abrasions/bruises on right cheek, Right and left shoulders contusions and bruises, Left wrist: deep cuts, ligature marks, nerve damage, Right wrist: cuts, ligature marks, nerve damage, Left and right hands: abrasions, nerve damage, Right ring finger dislocated, Bruised ribs, Abrasions on torso, Bruised thoracic vertebrae, Left and right knees abrasions and bruises. (This is not a full medical assessment). Mr. Tonye Allens' Crime - Visiting Toronto; and they say hip hop is 'gangsta'. Seems that hip hop culture, in all areas, should avoid these places, such as Canada, with such a track record of hate toward any people.