

Police Probing Charges Of Brutality At Clash Rock Concert

By Mark Platte

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The Atlanta Police Department is investigating charges of police brutality by the American Civil Liberties Union after an altercation between police and concert fans of The Clash rock group outside the Fox Theatre on June 2.

ACLU executive director Gene Guerrero met with Acting Public Safety Commissioner George Napper and Atlanta police officials familiar with the case Friday to discuss the complaints of some of the concert fans.

"We've had about 10 complaints, from those arrested to those who walked outside the Fox and found themselves looking into the barrel of a police shotgun," Guerrero said. The ACLU director said he is looking for more eyewitnesses from among the 2,000 people who attended the concert. Ten people were arrested during the altercation.

Guerrero said he is hopeful that disciplinary action will be

taken against some or all of the five police officers at the scene of the fighting. "We think that, based on the interviews we've taken, there was a great deal of misconduct on the part of the police officers," he said.

Regarding Friday's meeting, Napper said, "They (the ACLU) have voiced their concerns, and we continue to place a premium of importance to all parties concerned: first to those who were engaged in activities after the concert; secondly to those who may have been falsely accused."

Napper said there will be a "thorough investigation," but Guerrero said police internal investigations in the past have never resulted in appropriate action being taken. "We're submitting to the mayor a number of instances where internal affairs has not properly investigated counts of abuse. The problem is that in Atlanta, the internal affairs department is not aggressive when it comes to investigation."

Guerrero said former City Councilman James W. Bond took an informal survey in 1975 and 1978 of criminal lawyers

and people in various community organizations, asking what they thought of the Atlanta Police Department's internal affairs progress. "The results were that there was a great dissatisfaction with internal affairs," Guerrero said. "Even in 1978, when people thought the police department as a whole had gotten better, people still were not pleased with internal affairs."

Many of those arrested had their cases bound over to state court after a municipal court hearing Thursday in which those arrested testified to violence not only by police but by anti-communist demonstrators who stood outside the Fox Theatre with signs and American flags. The Clash is a leftist rock group which criticizes American foreign and domestic policy.

