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Arizona Association of Black Journalists

www.azabj.org

ArizonaAssocblackjournalists@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arizona Association of Black Journalists response to incident of Phoenix PD detaining Wall Street Journal reporter.

January 6, 2023, Phoenix, AZ - The Arizona Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists has requested a meeting with Phoenix Police Chief Michael Sullivan to discuss the reported outrageous treatment of an African American reporter, who was handcuffed and put into a police cruiser, despite the available facts showing no evidence that he committed a crime of any sort.

If this can happen to one journalist, it could happen to any of us; and this is completely unacceptable.

Wall Street Journal reporter Dion Rabouin was conducting person-on-the-street interviews near a Phoenix bank in November when he was confronted by an officer, Caleb Zimmerman, who accused him of trespassing.

Rabouin has said he was being compliant and even offered to move and do his interviews elsewhere, but Zimmerman, Rabouin said, wouldn't allow him to go, nor would the officer try to confirm his identity.

These are allegations of flagrant First Amendment rights violations, and the local chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists condemns any such abuse of authority.

NABJ-Arizona is calling for an apology among other as-to-be determined steps that seek to make it clear that this sort of behavior won't go unchecked.

We also applaud Wall Street Journal editor-in-chief Matt Murray for defending Rabouin and calling for a swift investigation, which Phoenix Police have promised through their Professional Standards Bureau in a recently released statement.

We also would like the opportunity to see Zimmerman's body camera footage, and to hear from Zimmerman, himself, about why he took such action.

We understand that police work is demanding and often dangerous, but we stand in solidarity against abuses of authority and force. If the investigation concludes that this was a violation of his rights, it would be yet another example of misconduct by a department that is under federal investigation for widespread problems.

Arizona Association of Black Journalists

Advocacy Committee