

Local Man Levels Charges Against Sheriff With FBI

FPMW 4-19-71

In a complaint filed this week with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the state Commission on Human Relations, a Frederick man alleges county sheriff Richard O. Baumgartner with: violating his civil rights, disrupting his home and creating a neighborhood disturbance.

—Sheriff Baumgartner, listed in fair condition at the Frederick Memorial Hospital Sunday, was unable to reply to the charges. The sheriff was rushed to the hospital early Friday morning complaining of stomach pains. He is not allowed visitors, according to hospital sources.

The charges were levelled by Robert H. Lee of 24 S. Bentz Street. According to a report in the Hagerstown Morning Herald, Lee charged that at 11:20 p.m. on Feb. 17 sheriff Baum-

gartner unlawfully entered and searched his residence without first obtaining a search warrant.

The sheriff was apparently searching for Reuben Tisdale, 16 year old black youth who had escaped from the county jail that night, Lee said. The jail is located on W. South St.

Lee, who lives with his parents in the predominantly Negro neighborhood, reportedly said the sheriff had about seven deputies surround the house and "trained flashlights, pistols and shotguns on the windows . . . and repeatedly pounded on the door."

The only persons present Lee said, in the home were Lee's sister and her two infant children. The sister shouted to the sheriff that Lee was not home and a neighbor, Caroline Hall, came out of her house and told the sheriff Lee was not home and to ask him to leave.

Lee was quoted as saying that the sheriff then "entered the front door and searched the front room of the downstairs." Lee said no reason for the search was given and not until after the sheriff left the house that a neighbor informed him of the jailbreak.

In addition to the illegal search charge, Lee requested investigation of charges that the sheriff disrupted his home and upset his sister and her children.

He further requested that local FBI agent Ronald Lichtinger not be permitted to conduct the investigation because, according to the report, Lee said Lichtinger has "also on at least one occasion, entered and searched a private residence without a search warrant."

Two FBI agents reportedly visited Lee on Thursday, had him read his statement under oath and told Lee that the charges would be lodged with the civil rights division of the FBI in Washington. A separate complaint was sent to Kiser Barnes, director of community relations for the state Commission on Human relations.