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NEWS

Concealed weapon a can opener

by [Cydney Gillis \(/users/cgillis\)](/users/cgillis) | July 1st, 2009

Question the police. Go to jail -- especially if you're black. That's what friends and supporters of Central District activist Omari Tahir-Garre happened June 23 at 23rd and Union as police officers were detaining several young men at a bus stop. Whatever he said led officers to arrest for harassment, obstructing an officer and carrying a concealed weapon

By June 24, in his arraignment at Seattle Municipal Court, the only charge left was the concealed weapon -- a development that led Judge Edsc Charles to let out a surprised "oh" when handed the amended charging papers. When the 62-year-old Tahir-Garrett, who is representing himself insisted on being told what the concealed weapon was, the prosecutor told him it was a "knife"--the tiny blade, he explained to the judge,

military-issue P38 can opener he carries around in his pocket.

He also told her it would be ridiculous to hold him on bail when the police captured and took him away for no reason -- an example of the racism and colonialism that are still alive and well today. "I suffer from post-traumatic enslavement," Tahir-Garrett told the judge.

Judge Charles' gavel -- and a decision to release him without bail -- came down before he had even finished speaking, raising a round of applause from the 10 supporters who'd gathered to watch the proceedings. Tahir-Garrett is due in court again July 27 at 1:30 p.m.