

Black sorority members performing community service are questioned by police

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Highway sign designating Sigma Gamma Rho cleanup area (Photo: Twitter)

At the end of a week that has been eventful for Black people taking part in “controversial” activities ranging from napping to walking outside of their Airbnb guest home while melanated comes another case out of Harrisburg, Penn. Members of Sigma Gamma Rho sorority were performing community service by cleaning up the area around the 13th Street exit of Highway 83 in Harrisburg when a state trooper pulled up behind the group of young women and asked them if they were fighting, Facebook user **Shawna Naomi** of Hershey, PA, posted on Saturday. The post has since been deleted.

“I’ve never seen anyone out here cleaning and I’m responding to a call,” the trooper said, according to the post.

Naomi and the other sorority members explained who they are and that they'd just finished cleaning up needles, bottles, diapers and other trash, according to the post. The trooper asked for their identification and schools to which they responded with information about their professions and other details, Naomi posted.

The trooper then ran their identification through his system and handed their cards back, Naomi posted. It was only then that he commended the young women for their "great work."

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No one could be reached at Pennsylvania State Police headquarters in Harrisburg on Saturday. A message was left on the voice mail of the agency's public information office. That call was not immediately returned on Saturday afternoon.

Naomi did not immediately return a request sent through Facebook for further comment.

She ended the post by saying she and her sorors were made to feel like criminals.

"We are on the side of the road with your car behind ours with your lights flashing, drawing attention to us in a negative way and all we were trying to to (was) serve the community," she wrote, adding the situation made her eyes well up. "I just had to walk away. At that point the trooper couldn't and didn't say anything."

Social media reacts

In sending out a tweet of the screenshot, writer Britni Danielle posted, "Add 'performing community service while Black' to the list of things that make you suspicious."

Another Twitter user, @ShoStanback, wrote: "Angry doesn't begin to describe how I feel right now. I'm so glad they weren't hurt or further harassed, but this has to stop! You want us to do good things in the community, but you harass us while we're doing it."