

DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Administration Division
INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM
Citizen Complaint Bureau

Date July 25, 1968

To: **Commissioner Johannes F. Spreen**

Subject: **CONCLUSION TO COBO HALL INCIDENT**

From the available information developed in this investigation, it is clearly evident this entire incident or series of incidents involves a great number of civilians and police officers. It abounds with charges and counter-charges, consistencies and inconsistencies; varied and complex to a degree affecting equitable culpability.

The majority of citizens volunteering information tend to indicate the police over-reacted to a difficult, unfortunate situation, despite the fact that several ranking police officials were present. The greatest criticism and most abrasive grievance seems to be; the sudden appearance and use of horses by the mounted division to disperse an unruly crowd, which to many, appeared to stampede and force the marchers into a cordon of baton wielding foot patrolmen. Hypothetically, had the horses not been on the scene, the most glaring phase of the incident would not have transpired.

Obviously, the entire incident was set in motion by a lack of communication and a misjudgment over a stalled sound car belonging to the marchers. The officers deemed most responsible for such incompatibility have been summoned before the police trial board for proper hearing and adjudication.

Whether the police handling of the overall incident was devoid of emotional error is not completely answered. Emotions were running high on both sides. There is evidence from many sources that police were taunted and harassed by participants during the entire march. There is also evidence that supervision, coordination and communication appeared lacking on both sides in several phases. Obviously this factor weighed heavily in the root causes of the problem.

The many complaints emanating from this incident are from unavailable persons, general in nature and lack necessary elements to clearly pinpoint individual culpability, such as the absence of coordinated supervision. However, as depicted in several photos taken by private photographers during the height of the tumult plus statements of witnesses, there definitely appears evidence of questionable activity by Patrolman John Kursteiner, #2670, of the Tactical Mobile Unit.

Inspector Carl Heffernan
Citizen Complaint Bureau

HJ:ygd