



The Desert Inn formerly the Algiers Motel.

Chapter 1

Bloody Beginnings

The history of Detroit mirrors the history of urban America. To understand STRESS one must understand the turbulent racial tensions that mark our past and mar our present.

During the last half century Detroiters have witnessed, participated in or been victims of major racial outbursts. Detroit was shaken by a race war in 1943. Forty three persons lost their lives in the 1967 Detroit rebellion, and countless others will live with the scars of that experience for years to come.

In 1925, Dr. Ossian Sweet and his family sought to integrate an all-white neighborhood at Charlevoix and Garland. The Sweet family was harassed and subjected to extreme racist pressure for days. As an unruly white mob was stoning his home, a shot fired from within the house killed one of the assailants in the mob. All 11 occupants of the house were held in jail for months without bail, on a charge of murder. Clarence Darrow successfully defended the Sweet family. The police had offered Dr. Sweet

and his family no protection from the harassment of the mob.

In 1972, nearly half a century later, the George Vaughn family sought to integrate an all-white neighborhood in northeast Detroit. Their house was firebombed, their daughter shot at, their son beaten, and the family was harassed by hate mail and false fire alarms. The Vaughn family received only abuse from the police as well, instead of protection or assistance.

In 1954 the United States Supreme Court said schools could not be legally segregated. In 1972 a Detroit Federal Court had no choice but to find Detroit's schools as segregated as those in the South.

In 1965 the Detroit Police Department established a Citizens Complaint Bureau. A study of cases charging brutality shows that such complaints doubled in each of the first three years the Bureau was in operation. Out of 186 such complaints, only nine were sustained in the investigations the police department con-