

STRESS AND TRIAL IN THE STREETS OF DETROIT

"If they mean to have a war, let it begin here!"

A collective effort coordinated by

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A virtual state of war exists in the City of Detroit. The fight is over narcotics and the part the Police Department plays in the narcotics underworld. It is a large role; corruption is so widespread that the heroin market in at least one precinct is controlled by police officers for their personal mercenary profit.

Dope wars are common in Detroit. There are savage encounters at dope houses as rival gangs rob each other. These regularly result in multiple deaths. They call Detroit 'Murder City' for a very good reason. Yet this war is unique. The police department is one belligerent. The other side is a vigilante group dedicated to community service. The group takes it upon itself to apply direct pressure upon heroin dealers to curtail their activities. The members of the Detroit cadre, Haywood Brown, Mark Bethune and John Percy Boyd, learned the truth about police complicity in narcotics in the course of their work. Their discovery had them marked for death. On December 14, 1972 their car was motion to the side of the road by an unmarked police car bearing four plainclothes police STRESS officers. While the officers were emerging from their vehicle the vigilantes opened fire upon them with high-powered handguns and an M-1. The barrage left sixteen slugs in the body of the police vehicle and wounded all four officers, two critically. The police unit could not manage a shot until the vigilantes were speeding off in their car.

Immediately following and for several days thereafter the police department retaliated by placing sections of the Black Ghetto under undeclared martial law. Hundres of flak-jacketed patrolmen armed with 12-gauge automatic shotguns swarmed through cordoned-off neighborhoods in waves forcing their way into citizens' homes in a series of early-morning raids in a futile attempt to find the three Black men. Martial law held forth; search warrants had not been obtained for any of the homes under the dragnet. The civil rights of literally thousands of Detroit citizens were abrogated as doors were kicked down, and sleeping homeowners roused from their beds to be threatened with drawn guns and verbal abuse. One man was killed in his own living room as he stood protecting his home with a shotgun while police forced their way inside.

Police Commissioner John F. Nichols explained in a news conference on December 7, 1972 the raids he ordered were done on the basis of a "consent search". This procedure implies a citizen's admitting police officers into their homes of his own free will. That officers approached dwellings with guns drawn suggests that citizens who admitted them did so in a position of legal duress, to say the least. What the raids most resembled was a search-and-destroy mission on a hamlet in the Nam, with Brown, Boyd and Bethune as Victor Charlie. But like Vietnamese villagers the Ghetto divulged none of its secrets; the vigilante warriors still breathed their freedom despite the brutal efficiency of the police blitzkrieg.

In an exclusive interview with the South End, Wayne State's student newspaper on January 10, 1973, John Clore step brother to John Boyd told how police had broken the door of his mother's home off its hinges, ransacked the house and arrested John, his sister Melba and his girl friend on December 5. Clore was detained on a charge of attempted murder for twenty-four hours but the women were released after questioning.

Prior to his release, Clore stated, the Police "Took me down to the lieutenant's office. He surprised me when he told me that he knew that my brother John and Hayward were all engaged in an active struggle to force the dope pusher out of the community."

The official police department account of the skirmish made no mention of any of this. In fact, Inspector James Bannon, commander of STRESS said on December 5, 1972 that the shooting was "not connected with any Black Militant organization."

The press statement given over the incident by Commissioner Nichols implied that the vigilantes were hit men working for a heroin gangster: The three men were to have left a dwelling on Strathmoor in Detroit's west side 10th precinct accompanied by two women. The women drove off in a Cadillac and the trio followed driving a white VW. The police vehicle having staked out the Strathmoor address as a heroin den gave chase and moved in on the Volkswagen.

"It's our theory," stated Nichols, "that the shooting was narcotics oriented and came from the gun car protecting the other vehicle with narcotics aboard."

Nichols accused the three of another murder a week earlier on November 29 in the ghetto suburb of Highland Park, adjacent to the 10th precinct, and tied the two incidents to "a local drug war."

Homocide Sgt. Charles Haper of Highland Park stated in a Detroit News interview that, "I don't know where the Detroit Police got their drug war theory. The Highland Park murder was not connected with drugs in any way. It just looks like a robbery-thrned-murder. Our investigation tends to give credence to the idea that these guys are not drug users. When we searched Bethune's room we found all sorts of literature that indicated he was against drugs and felt that drugs were ripping off the Black community."

On December 22 the story broke in the Detroit Free Press that a secret investigation team formed by Commissioner Nichols had developed evidence implicating "about 25 officers" in a widescale corruption scandal.

The Free Press quoted its source: "On Dec. 8 in a dawn raid at the 10th precinct the investigation teams seized heroin and other drugs allegedly obtained illegally by precinct narcotics officers."

Commissioner Nichols, when asked to comment confirmed the raid but minimized its results saying that "Only one officer was suspended as a results of the raid" and that the incident "involved only a small amount of evidence." Nichols called the raid "an inventory of the property room of the Precinct station."

"Inventory" or not the investigation had taken the pains to obtain a search warrant for the raid, according to the Free Press source.

Commissioner Nichols was again made out to be a bald-faced liar by one of his subordinates. The Free Press source alleged that the investigation implicated "narcotics and vice officers and some supervisory personnel" in:

- **Robbing dope houses for narcotics and money.

- **Keeping for their personal use money, jewelery and other goods confiscated in the course of such a raid.

- **Giving narcotics to informants.

- **Dealing themselves in narcots.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," the Free Press source added.

The heinous and sinister nature of the pirate police force preying on the thieves which sold heroin, and thus kept the chains of enslavement fast, to the Black Community; extracting revenue and booty by a systematic program of terror and threat of arrest. How could a heroin network whose personnel numbered maybe 5 or 6 seriously working people (as opposed to merely junkies) hope to combat a police mob of 25 officers driving radio dispatched vehicles with access to the full retaliatory force of the entire department? The heroin underworld had been torn by constant internal warfare prior to two years ago when John F. Nichols became Commissioner. Thus disorganized it was a simple matter for police to move in, knock over small operators and keep them on a string; in the past two years there simply are no large operators to give trouble.

Things have not always been so bucolic. Before 1967 when the Mafia still controlled the deal in Detroit a man named Henry Marzet reigned as the Black Cape of the Mob's Board of Directors in charge of the narcotics underworld. His word, enforced by the Mob was law. Before 1967 when a grand jury implicated at least a hundred upper echelon police officials in a corruption scandal the police were happily accepting bribes from the likes of Gust Colicacides and Vito Giacalone. The officers were paid to look the other way while some of the richest gambling action...and the dirtiest loansharking operations were taking place not one block south of police headquarters in Detroit's Greektown quarter.

After 1967 the corruption scandal and the Rebellion reduces Mafia influence in the Inner City Marzett inherited the narcotics franchise. Marzett, a lifer gangster, began notwithstanding to see a gradual decline in his authority as freelance hustlers began importing quantities imported from New York in kilogram and under amounts. This activity gradually began to wear at the edges of the heroin empire Marzett controlled. The killing started. Gangsters eager to defy Marzett's authority and assert their own control of the multimillion dollar market began killing each other like rabid wolves. This started a trend of death that has put Detroit at the top of the list for murder per capita than any other peacetime city in the world.

In 1969 the Nixon Administration's so-called "Operation Intercept" sealed off the borders to marijuana traffic from Mexico. Detroit was a dry city; there was, for a period of seven months, no grass to be had anywhere for love nor money. During that same seven month period heroin began to glut the community. Quality heroin became available at street prices to compensate for the scarcity of marijuana. The addiction rate soared; the heroin market flush from its temporary take over of the marijuana trade brought hard narcotics into the lives of people who otherwise would not have given it a second thought. In the Ghetto students and young Black men and women due to take their proper productive place within society became hooked on heroin in ever increasing numbers, creating a future market that could be relied upon.

This expanded heroin market raised the stakes to inhuman levels in the chase for the astronomically increasing heroin dollar. The milieu of the Detroit Black hustler has always been that of a starving pool of sharks but during the heroin boom unrestrained mass murder became the modus operandi for hustlers of hard narcotics. By 1971, the peak year for heroin-related deaths, over 100 out of the 690 logged that year by Detroit were directly relatable to the narcotics hustle. Innocent people who had done nothing but be in the wrong place at the wrong time were slaughtered like sheep in dope house robberies. In one robbery of a dope den seven people were found face down, hogtied, slain by a bullet in the back of the head. This new hustle of dope house robberies developed advocates. Some hustlers specializing in this area counted in some cases as many as twenty kills. The indiscriminate savagery of these individuals ushered in a reign of terror that made even prohibition gangland slayings seem almost tame by comparison. The equivalent of one St. Valentine's Day Massacre per month were going down in 1970 and 1971 in Detroit. People were being taken off in public as they stood drinking at the bar of their favorite club. One such deceased, a student at Wayne State University, was studying in the school library when a gunman casually approached him in broad daylight and emptied a .38 into him. Eye witnesses report that the gunman laughed as he fled to his escape.

The situation was at a crisis level. Henry Marzett, dying at the age of 45 of a kidney disease, asserted his authority one final time and ordered the deaths of the dozen or so ripoff specialists responsible for most of the dope house murders. When these wolves were finally put away the situation began to stabilize. Ordering these executions was Marzett's last significant act as Black Cape. He retired to his plantation in Haiti and in a few months died of his disease.

Marzett's death in 1971 along with the deaths of those he ordered executed left a power vacuum in the narcotics underworld. It is approximately at this point that STRESS, the Police Department's secret weapon began to appear on the scene and the Department began to make serious incursions into the heroin trade.

What is STRESS? STRESS is an elite corps of combat-ready plainclothes police operatives who patrol Detroit's streets ostensibly as a deterrent to criminal assaults on the street. STRESS operatives employ the Decoy method to entrap citizens in to commission of crime; the operative poses as a drunk, an elderly person or some other type of easy prey for muggings hoping to attract a robbery attempt. STRESS is expected to use force in making an arrest; part of their function is psychological.

STRESS operatives carry the .357 magnum, a pistol three-quarters the length of your thigh with the firepower and range of a 30.06 rifle. STRESS operatives are .007; they enjoy the license to kill. They have exercised this license 18 times in the past two years of their existence. Their victims have included a 14 year old boy who allegedly pulled a knife on an operative. The youth died of gunshot wounds inflicted in the back. One STRESS operative, already has four kills to his credit. His name is Virgil Starkey.

One of Starkey's kills was Henry Henderson, an off-duty Wayne County Sheriff's Deputy on March 9, 1972. Henderson fell before Starkey's magnum in a fire fight between Starkey's STRESS unit and a group of off-duty Sheriff's Deputies relaxing in one Deputy's Rochester Street apartment in the 10th Precinct area. STRESS officers cruising the neighborhood reportedly observed a man with a crown firearm enter the apartment building. The STRESS team followed, charging into the apartment with their weapons drawn and were fired upon by the Deputies inside. STRESS returned fire. When the smoke cleared Starkey had counted his kill; Henderson was DOA with multiple gunshot wounds. Deputy James Jenkins apparently tried to surrender by waving his badge at the attacking STRESS crew. He was shot three times. After the firing ceased and the apartment was overrun by officers called in from the 10th Precinct, Starkey, so say the Sheriff's Deputies who made it out alive, went berserk, beating and kicking the captured Deputies.

Starkey, James R. Harris and Ronald Martin, the STRESS team involved in the shootout, were found to be not guilty on charges of murder in Recorder's Court on August 10, 1972. Ironically, on August 8 the cause of Officer Robert Paille, one of the policemen involved in the Algiers Motel Incident during the Rebellion, was thrown out of court by Recorder's Court Judge George Ryan. The case was dropped because Paille's confession, taken by his immediate superior, Lt. Gerald Hallmark, was found to be in violation of Paille's civil rights. Judge Ryan employed a little-used legal loophole in his judgment called the Garrity Rule which defines the conditions which constitute illegal coercion in extracting a confession of wrongdoing from a police officer.

The Rochester Street shootout solidified STRESS's image as a neo-gestapo secret organization of supermen with official sanction to act as a law unto itself. STRESS, the secret weapon, became the Police Department tactical spearhead along with planclothes narcotics units in the Department's all-out attempt to full control of the heroin market.

The death of Marzett left the narcotics underworld in a state of flux, without a center. The power vacuum left the infrastructure of influence and command among narcotics gangsters in a disorganized and fragmentary state. Before new alliances could be forged the police moved in with a systematic program of Shakedown and intimidation and filled the interstices of power left vacant by Marzett. STRESS and narcotics operatives working afterhours began charting the clandestine movements of narcotics hustlers making their business runs and identifying addresses where dope deals were being transacted. Operatives thereafter began busting up these dope dens, stealing drugs and money from the owners and robbing guests of what valuables they had with them. Much to the astonished relief of these individuals the police let them live and, what is more, allowed them to continue their operation.

After the initial show-of-force police units, not necessarily STRESS, but in many cases uniformed patrolmen came by at intervals for the rakeoff, to keep tabs on the operation and to deliver news of drugs for private sale by the officers which had been confiscated in other raids upon the hustling community. Whenever a quality shipment of drugs entered the community the police would hear of it through their intelligence network of street junkies who the police bribe with drugs in exchange for information. Police then would move in on the dealer and confiscate his supply and resell in the above manner to other dealers.

In this manner the Department quickly gained control of the narcotics market to manipulate at will and to earn a mercenary profit for individual officers. This process, apparently instituted as a pilot program in the 10th Precinct where 12th Street runs through and where the Rebellion of 1967 began, has been designed as a general Departmental strategy, and is not the work of free-lance officers making a little extra on the job.

Why is this so? The insidious and sinister techniques employed by the Detroit Police to wrap up the Deal in the 10th Precinct are a small-scale replica of tactics and policies utilized by the United States Military Command in Southeast Asia. The thieu Regime, for instance, will be kept in place after the Truce by secret police under Palace command which are roughly analagous to STRESS in form and function. These police will, by systematic procedures of terror and intimidation, coerce Vietnamese citizens into compliance with the Thieu regime.

As well, the Pentagon intends similar programs for Saigon itself involving the use of Special Forces "Snake Eater" outfits to enforce the U. S. presence in that city after the truce. These units, to be commanded by an elite corps of recent West Point graduates, according to an AP dispatch last January (), will thereby attempt to consolidate, assert and accumulate control of that city's streets. (Journal of Concerned Asian Scholars).

That the CIA has, since 1963, controlled the production, marketing and exporting of raw opium in Southeast Asia for the internal profit of the U.S. is a well-documented fact. In May, 1971 Ramparts Magazine published an expose of these undercover activities in an historic article entitled "The New Opium War." The article alleges, "While the President is declaring war on narcotics and on crime in the streets he is widening the war in Laos, whose principle product is opium and which has now become the funnel for nearly half the world's supply of the narcotic, for which the U.S. is the chief consumer."

The article goes on to describe the "Fertile Triangle," an area comering "northwester Burma, northern Thailand and Laos" and the three major distributive networks, all of which are controlled by western Imperialist forces:

"...opium from Burma and northern Thailand moves into Bangkok, then to Singapore and Hong Kong, then via military aircraft, either directly or through Taiwan, to the United States. The second route is from Burma or Laos to Saigon or to ocean drops in the Gulf of Saim; then it goes through Hong Kong and Singapore to the West Coast. A final route runs directly from outposts held by Nationalist Chinese troops in Thailand to Taiwan and then to the U.S. by a variety of means."

Throughout IndoChina the U.S. is buying the support of political tied to the U.S. not so much out of political conviction but bought by U.S. guaranteed economic controls over opium traffic.

In Laos, the Meo hill tribespeople are the main growers of opium, which is their only cash crop. Ramparts explains the relationship:

The major source of the opium in Laos has always been the Meo growers, who were selected by the CIA as its counter-insurgency bulwark against the Pathet Lao guerrillas. The Meo's mountain bastion is Long Cheng, a secret base 80 miles northeast of Vientiane, built by the CIA during the 1962 Geneva Accords period...

The secrecy surrounding Long Cheng has hidden the trade from reporters. But security has not been complete: Carl Strock reported in the January 30 Far Eastern Economic Review: "Over the years eight journalists, including myself, have slipped into Long Cheng and have seen American crews loading T-428 bombers while armed CIA agents chatted with uniformed Thai soldiers and piles of raw opium stood for sale in the market (a kilo for \$52).

Ramparts goes on to explain how the Corsican Mafia had trouble transporting opium from Laos when the Civil war intensified after 1963 and that Royal Lao Air Force filled the void. They used "helicopters and planes donated by the U.S. not only for fighting the Pathet Lao but also for flying opium out..."

The Ramparts article explains as well the rule of Madame Nhu and Nguyen Cao Ky in opium traffic, as well as that of General Rathkone and the "China Lobby" and Air America, which is controlled by the CIA and was founded by General Claire Chennault, the husband of Madam Anna Chennault of the China Lobby, a ground which has advocated an aggressive strategy in Asia and which did much to promote Nixon's rise to power.

After the Ramparts article the government repudiated the claims asserted and said that only a trickle of heroin produced in Southeast Asia found its way into the U.S. But disclosures of massive heroin addiction among G.I.'s in Vietnam, the knowledge that key government documents about this addiction had been suppressed in the past, and the independent observations and disclosures of many foreign correspondants in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia finally forced the government to come out with a revised report. This new report was published in the Sunday New York Times, August 20, 1972 and partially confirms the claims of Ramparts. The report shows that the major output of opium is found, in the following geographic areas listed in terms of output: Burma, Thailand, Pakistan, Laos, India and Afghanistan, followed by Turkey and Mexico.

As well as cutting of the flow of Marijuana traffic from Mexico the government's Project Intercept stopped the influx of heroin into the U.S. from Mexico, Turkey and France, thereby giving the CIA a virtual monopoly of the world heroin trade whose principle market is contained within the continental United States. During Project Intercept heroin, the flow of which is under the exclusive control of the U.S. Government Customs Department and the CIA, became abundant, finding its way into the Ghetto market which, because of the stoppage of the marijuana trade (handled by the Customs Department), flourished and expanded.

What might be the reason for this Nixon administration policy? Might it be for the sole purpose of the subjugation of Black people who in 1967 during the "Long Hot Summer" began a frightening offensive for their human rights in a series of nationwide armed Ghetto uprisings? Does Nixon want to stem the tide of Black revolutionary activity by drawing potential young revolutionaries into addiction?

The Detroit Police Department's narcotice policy is consistant with that of the Pentagon and the State Department of the United States of Nixland. It is not difficult to believe they are all consciously in league with each other to permit the implementation of a police state within the continental United States. The horrific brutality of a Southeast Asian stragegy that has brought the world to the brink of nuclear warfare for the past two Christmases is tactically expressed quite so callously in a domestic policy that features a genocidal suppression of racial minorities of color by supplying heroin to entire populations. Grace Slick wanted to dump acid into the White House punch? Nixon has dumped a junkie into every Black home in America. Mr. Nixon is the pusher. Mr. Kissinger is his Consigliore. Mayor Gribbs is the pusher. Commissioner Nichols, who in early February declared "war" on the activist Recorder's Court is the pusher. STRESS is the Gestapo.

On December 28 STRESS crossed the path of Boyd and Bethune once again. The STRESS operatives, responding to a tip staked out an address on Carlin in the 10th Precinct area. They observed the two vigilantes leave the rear of the house and cross an alley. The operatives gave chase around the block in their unmarked vehicle, coming to a halt before Boyd and Bethune as they emerged crossing the next street. The STRESS operatives sprang from their car with their weapons ready. Nevertheless Boyd and Bethune were first on the draw; the policemen fell before the blazing guns of the vigilantes as they approached. Boyd and Bethune stayed and continued to pump bullets into the fallen STRESS operatives. An eyewitness called it "an execution." For a second time Boyd and Bethune made good their escape, vanishing into the heartlands of the Ghetto.

STRESS Officer Robert Bradford died of his wounds enroute to the hospital.

STRESS Officer Robert Dooley was admitted to the hospital with critical wounds.

The incident marked the first time STRESS personnel had died in a fire fight and the second time they have been tactically defeated in live fire action. Chickens were finally coming home to roost.

Commissioner Nichols called Boyd and Bethune "Mad Dog Killers" in a heated statement to the press on December 29 and sent out his Department on "the most massive manhunt in recent history."

This second wave of early morning "consent searches" followed the procedural pattern of the first and continued unceasingly for the next week as squadrons of police ransacked the West Side for the vigilantes. All, however, to no avail: the iron curtain of secrecy inside the Ghetto held; Boyd and Bethune remained free! The People's Offensive remains alive.

Robert Bradford was buried on December 30. His funeral was attended by 2000 uniformed police officers from every suburb in the metropolitan area plus contingents from New York, Cleveland, Chicago and Toronto as well as at least a thousand civilians. The Detroit Brigade was smaller than what it would have been because of the many officers working on the manhunt. Nonetheless it was the largest police funeral ever held in the City of Detroit.

On New Year's Eve, while police were swarming all over the West Side the guns of the Ghetto erupted in the East Side's Mack and Kercheval Ghetto. At approximately 11:30 speradic gunfire started in the area which was the scene of the 1965 mini-riot held in sympathy with the Watts Rebellion and, as well, where in 1967 the 101st. Airborne Div. was deployed to combat sniperfire. By 11:45 the entire sector was filled with the sound of rifle and small amr fire and the air, lit by the eerie blue light of muzzle flash, was acrid with the smell of sulphur fumes. The barrage built to a crescendo at midnight but did not lift until fifteen minures after twelve.

The Year of the Ox was on!
