

27-A

Cobo Hall #2

City of Detroit

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48231

JOHN S. GREEN
Commissioner

November 7, 1968

To The Honorable
The Common Council
City-County Building

Gentlemen:

Pursuant to your request of October 31, 1968, the following report is submitted concerning occurrences at Cobo Hall during the night of Tuesday, October 29, 1968, during the campaign rally for Wallace for President.

Our investigation disclosed that prior to the foregoing rally, on the basis of information received from governmental intelligence agencies that the life of George C. Wallace would be in peril at this rally, the police department organized a task force designed to protect Governor Wallace's life and to repel any attempt to disorganize or disrupt the rally.

The following uniformed police officers were assigned for security and crowd control activities and were assisted by twenty-five uniformed private guards hired by the sponsors of the rally:

PERSONNEL OF DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

- 1 District Inspector
- 4 Inspectors
- 5 Lieutenants
- 21 Sergeants
- 219 Patrolmen

PERSONNEL OF WAYNE COUNTY SHERIFF

- 1 Inspector
- 2 Sergeants
- 18 Officers

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Although the department has no official record of any civilians being injured or receiving hospitalization as a result of the confrontation at Cobo Hall, arising as a result of the problems at the rally, two police officers were injured and required medical assistance.

Because of the need for security, admission to this rally was limited to ticket holders. Unidentified persons, apparently Wallace supporters, were observed distributing these tickets to persons who appeared to be selected individuals in an effort to control the type of individual entering the arena; however, this system proved ineffective. A large group of people appeared and when they could not obtain tickets, they agitated the crowds and caused an unruly massing of people. This was particularly evident inside Cobo Hall at the doors leading to the arena. These people were carrying signs and posters condemning Wallace and were attempting to disrupt the rally and force their way inside. Officers were dispatched to the arena doors where they observed a mob of approximately seven hundred people yelling obscenities and attempting to force open the doors.

At approximately 8:30 p.m., when Governor Wallace arrived inside via the rear entrance, a decision was made by the Wallace staff to allow everyone to enter as they believed the seats on the floor level were occupied by pro-Wallace supporters, sufficient in number to provide adequate security to Wallace, and that the only seats remaining were the third level seats and occupants there would be unable to endanger the speaker.

It was obvious from the start that large groups of Anti-Wallace hecklers were in attendance and that this was a well-planned strategy inasmuch as these groups were seated in three sections of the arena, equally divided, numbering approximately four hundred to five hundred per group. These groups were equipped with anti-Wallace banners, Nazi-type flags, obscene posters, et cetera. Observed also being used by these groups was a spray-type can containing a clear-type substance which these people were spraying on pro-Wallace supporters. Also thrown by these groups were miscellaneous articles such as eggs, spit balls, sling shot pellets, and small pieces of wood.

Squads of officers were assigned to request spectators to be seated or leave the arena, and these officers were later assigned in other areas in an attempt to keep pro and anti-Wallace groups apart to prevent acts of violence. Also used for this assignment were officers from the Office of the Wayne County Sheriff.

At about 9:05 p.m., a disturbance erupted on the south side, second tier, of the arena, between hecklers and supporters. Private police rushed to the scene and quelled the affray. This disturbance consisted of chair throwing, fist fights, et cetera. At this time, one of our police officers was hit on the shoulder by a metal vent pipe thrown from a group of hecklers.

After Governor Wallace had concluded his speech and left the arena, our officers were deployed to assist in the clearing of the arena and crowds milling around the entrance which by this time had grown to approximately three thousand people. Groups of these people were making bonfires of posters and placards, and fights began to break out between various factions.

While engaged in attempting to persuade spectators to leave the area, one of our officers was sprayed in the face by an unknown chemical. This officer was conveyed to Receiving Hospital for treatment.

Squads of officers cleared the immediate area of Cobo Hall; however, when these groups of people reached the Pontchartrain Hotel, they obtained large rocks from planter boxes and started throwing them at the approaching officers. Also being thrown at this time were bottles and eggs, both from the direction of the hotel and from a group atop the Cobo Hall roof. Consistent organized squad action finally cleared the area of all people with no serious incidents reported to the police. Squad action was also necessary to clear demonstrators from Cobo Hall roof where spectators were being prevented from obtaining their cars and leaving.

The following arrests were made:

<u>NUMBER PERSONS INVOLVED</u>	<u>CHARGED WITH</u>
3	Inciting to riot
1	Resisting and obstructing police officer
1	Assault on police officer
2	Felonious assault
1	Interfering and obstructing a police officer

Very truly yours,

[Handwritten Signature]
Commissioner

JFS:ja
Enc.