

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 1967

Shortly After Midnight, Wednesday: Sometime late Tuesday night or early Wednesday, according to the Police Commissioner's Administrative Assistant, Hubert Locke, there was a marked breakdown in discipline among front-line enforcement personnel. The loss of control at the command level was attributed by Dr. Locke to (1) the general fatigue that had set in among the troops, and (2) the increasing number of reports of violence directed at police and firemen by the rioters. Illustrative of this observation, perhaps, is the fact that police and Guard forces reportedly killed nine persons, including three at the Algiers Motel, between the hours of 9:45 P.M. on Tuesday and 4:00 A.M., Wednesday.

Dr. Locke also said that at about the mid-point of the riot week, the policemen on the street discontinued wearing their badges and tape was applied over the license plates and identifying number of scout cars. Dr. Locke believes that the desire for anonymity was the principal reason for the obliteration of all identifying insignia.

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1:00 A.M., Wednesday: Between the late hours of Tuesday and early morning, Wednesday, there was, according to FBI reports, an appreciable decline in the number of lootings and burnings. However, reports of sniper activity had increased, and officers at the 10th Precinct station house reported that it was under fire for the second time since the beginning of the riot.

At about this hour, Mrs. Helen Hall, who was in Detroit on business, was killed by a rifle slug as she stood looking out a fourth floor window of the Harlan House Motel. Official reports attributed the death to sniper fire. The Free Press concurred in the reported opinion of Henry Heading, chief of the criminal division of the county prosecutor's office. He believes a Guardsman shot Mrs. Hall.

1:50 A.M., Wednesday: The FBI was advised that, as of this time, the number of persons injured included 100 prisoners, 47 Detroit policeman, 4 State policeman, 13 Guardsmen, 29 firemen and 76 civilians. Fire Chief Quinlan said that 1,110 fires had been reported since the beginning of the disorder.

Over 4,000 persons had been taken into custody up to this time.

2:00 A.M., Wednesday: At about this hour, three Negro teenagers were shot to death in the annex of the Algiers Motel. A Detroit policeman has been indicted for first-degree murder in the death of one youth. Two policemen and a private guard have been charged with conspiracy. The homicide charges against another patrolman were dismissed at a preliminary examination for lack of evidence.

A pathologist hired by the Free Press said that each victim had been shot more than once from a range of fifteen feet or less by 12-gauge double O buckshot. Two of them were shot while lying or kneeling.

3:00 A.M., Wednesday: The police department reported that 94 persons were arrested between the hours of midnight and 3:00 A.M. Wednesday. In comparison, 598 arrests had been made during the same period on Monday, July 24th, and 126 during the first three hours of Tuesday.

In the early morning darkness of this day, three white youths went out sight-seeing in violation of the curfew.

The official report claims that the young men drove through a blockade and the Guard troops opened fire. The youths said that there was no blockade in sight and no command to halt was given. At any rate, no weapons were found in the car. A short time later, Sgt. Post was found lying on the ground dying.

The men said they were turned over the Detroit police, who took them to the 10th Precinct. One of the men said that they were taken into an interrogation room and then beaten with blackjacks. The youth said, "They hit us with their fists and with blackjacks on the head. They didn't ask us any questions. They just started on us for no reason." Records at Detroit General Hospital show the three were treated at 7:00 A.M., five hours after they had been taken into custody. One man was treated for a broken jaw and all three received stitches for cuts about the head and face. According to the Free Press, none of the boys was injured in the roadblock shooting. There is no other apparent explanation for their injuries than the beating.

4:15 A.M., Wednesday: The police department advised that at this time there were no reports of lootings or burnings.

There were a few incidents of sniping reported, but firemen were no longer experiencing difficulty fighting fires.

6:00 A.M., Wednesday: The FBI was advised by the police that the disturbance areas in Detroit were quiet. The Fire Department said that there had been a substantial decrease in fires during the last twelve hours, and at this time, there were no fires out of control.

7:00 A.M., Wednesday: In view of the decline in fire activity, Chief Quinlan ordered six-hour relief periods for all fire personnel. Detroit firemen had been on around-the-clock duty since 4:30 P.M., Sunday, July 23.

8:30 A.M., Wednesday: Governor Romney extended the hours during which gasoline could be sold to 5:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. The mayor urged workers to return to their jobs. Mr. Vance, General Throckmorton, Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanagh all agreed that the troops on the streets were now adequate to suppress the disorder.

9:15 A.M., Wednesday: The mayor said that his Summer Task Force was receiving the first complaints that merchants in the riot area were charging exorbitant prices.

During the morning, Judge George Crockett wrote a letter to Executive Judge Brennan, with copies circulated to the other eleven judges, denouncing the high bail policy. He called attention to the fact that the practice was violative of State and Federal Constitutional guarantees.

The practice of assessing high bonds compounded the problems arising from the enormous number of arrests. Detention facilities were swamped, and since the earliest arrestees were not released, no space opened up for later arrests. Mayor Cavanagh testified for the Commission that, "We were using those big buses as prisons, so to speak, to detain prisoners. They were living on them 24 hours a day, no toilet facilities or anything else, parked out in the street around the court."

11:00 A.M., Wednesday: Governor Romney made a public appeal to merchants to refrain from price gouging.

12:00 Noon, Wednesday: The police reported that 299 persons had been injured up to this hour. Of this number, the largest category (116) was persons in custody. Only 83 civilians not in custody were reported injured.

During Wednesday afternoon, Willie McDaniels, age 23, was fatally shot as a looter in a furniture store.

3:00 P.M., Wednesday: Police statistics indicate that only 23 persons were arrested during the preceding three hours. During the same period on Monday, 462 arrests were made and on Tuesday, 79.

4:30 P.M., Wednesday: The FBI was advised that sniper activity was continuing at this time in the adjoining 10th and 13th Precincts. The police command post at Herman Kiefer Hospital and the police and fire stations in 10th Precinct had been fired upon. Police personnel were told to leave the 10th Precinct area since heavy armored equipment was being moved in.

5:00 P.M., Wednesday: At this time, according to the Free Press, a 20-year old Negro, George Talbert, was fatally wounded by a National Guardsman as he walked down a west side street "unarmed and innocent." Why he was shot is a mystery. The circumstances render it highly unlikely that he could have been mistaken for a looter: he carried nothing with him and there are no stores in the area where he was shot. The curfew was not in effect, and he was unarmed. The Guard version is that Talbert was shot for refusing to heed a command to halt. None of the civilian witnesses believe the Guard story, the paper said. Julian Witherspoon,

an area chairman for the Mayor's Committee on Human Resources Development, told the Free Press that he was "an eye-witness to murder."

A reporter assigned to the area at the time said that several of the streets were being closed by the Guard. He said the technique of closing them consisted of "standing in the middle of the street, shouting obscenities at whomever they were trying to move. If they didn't instantly obey, they'd fire over the cars or over people's heads as they stood on their lawns." Mr. Witherspoon confirmed this. He said he saw two Guardsmen proceeding up the street, waving back cars that were trying to go east on 12th Street. When cars failed to stop, the Guardsmen squeezed off rounds over the cars from their M-1 rifles.

Witherspoon told the Free Press that he saw a man -- Talbert -- walking east. He said he was frightened for Talbert but had no chance to wave him back. A moment later, one of the Guardsmen raised his rifle, aimed directly at Talbert and shot. He died ten days later.

6:00 P.M., Wednesday: Governor Romney read a statement at this time reimposing the curfew. He also announced that race tracks and motion picture houses would remain closed. Restaurants could serve food, but no alcoholic beverages.



Gasoline stations were still limited to operation between 5:30 A.M. and 9:00 P.M. There was in addition a five gallon per sale limit and fuel had to be pumped directly into automobile gasoline tanks and not into separate containers.

According to Mr. Vance's report, the prosecutor's office decided at this time to resubmit individual files to the court for release of prisoners on their own recognizance who had no record of prior convictions.

Early Evening, Wednesday: This evening, the first steps were taken to mobilize local leadership for rebuilding the city. A list of those to be invited to attend a meeting at 3:00 p.m. the next day was prepared, and telegrams were sent out.

A summary prepared by Congressman John Conyers' Detroit office of about 200 complaints of enforcement personnel abuses during the riot indicates that the control forces were especially unrestrained against Negro citizens on Wednesday evening, the fourth night of the disorder. All the following examples, of course, reflect only the complainant's version of an incident:

At 6:00 P.M., Mr. Rubin Lacy was dozing on his front porch when he was awakened by private policemen and taken to the 10th Precinct stationhouse. He was there described as a sniper, and then severely beaten by Guardsmen using rifle butts. He was charged with assault but discharged the next day.

at 7:10 P.M., Mr. Wendell West said he and a friend were arrested and beaten by State Police. His friend has been missing ever since the riot.

at 7:45 P.M., Mr. John N. Berry and a friend were leaving a White Tower restaurant when police and Guard troops began firing upon them. Mr. Berry was hit twice, and the pair sought refuge on a nearby porch. There, police and soldiers pistol-whipped both of the men, despite Berry's wounds.

at 8:30 P.M., Mr. Eddie Young said that police broke into his apartment building. The apartments were ransacked, and he was beaten by police, suffering multiple bruises and broken teeth.

At 8:45 P.M., Mr. Eddie Paulding and Mr. Willie Jackson said that Paulding's house came under heavy fire from police for five minutes. The people were ordered out of the house, but as they emerged, Jackson and Paulding were both shot down.

Because no weapons were found, the men were released. According to Mr. Atchison, the troops were acting on a report of sniper activity, and had the right street number but the wrong street.

9:00 P.M., Wednesday: Police statistics indicated a slight increase in arrests during the three hour period ending at 9:00 P.M. Sixty-one persons had been taken into custody, compared to forty-four during the previous three hours. During the 6:00 - 9:00 P.M. period of the past three days, there were 275 arrests on Sunday, 257 on Monday, and 83 on Tuesday.

9:30 P.M., Wednesday: The thirty-fifth man to die in the Detroit riot was a 26-year old white man named Julian Lust. He was shot by police in a junk yard, where he was apparently trying to steal an automobile water pump. Police had been told that an armed Negro and a couple of other men had broken into the yard. Two patrolmen went to the front of the yard and one to the back. They saw Lust and ordered him to halt. The officers said that Lust made a move with his hand and then began to run. Two officers fired, and one bullet struck the man. The Free Press said, "A pool of blood was found later, within two feet of the

motor Lust had been workin on. If he ran, he did not run far." No Negroes and no weapons were found.

Sometime during the last hours of Wednesday, July 26, Mr. Albert Robinson, a 38-year old Negro factory worker, received the wounds that would make him the forty-first to die in the Detroit riot. The versions of the National Guard and civilian witnesses are irreconcilable.

National Guardsmen stated that they were under fire from snipers in Robinson's apartment building on the West Side. They said they returned the fire and that when police arrived, even more fire was directed at the building. The occupants were ordered out of the building, and in the melee that followed, the Guardsmen say Robinson was shot twice. He died ten days later.

Robinson's own story, according to his mother who spoke with him in the hospital, is that he was in the hall emptying trash when Guardsmen burst in the door and ordered everyone out. He said there was a volley of bullets and he got shot and stabbed.

When Robinson was wounded, he was, according to the initial police report quoted in the Free Press, ordered to lie in the alley behind the building. Here, according to the apartment manager, Robinson was kicked and bayoneted

by a Guard soldier. The manager, who is a Negro, reported that the trooper said, "Aren't you dead yet?", and bayoneted Robinson twice. Another witness, a white man named Charles Maleseve, swore that he saw the soldier take his rifle with bayonet fixed, and stick it on Robinson's body, saying, "Does that feel good? How does that feel?" Maleseve also said that after police departed for the hospital with Robinson, the Guardsman told him, "I stuck him five times, and I tried to rip him, but he wouldn't rip. So I just twisted it." This story has not been corroborated by other witnesses.

Police say that Robinson was not bayoneted, basing this claim on the affidavit of one of the examining physicians at Detroit General Hospital. The doctor swore that he knew of no bayonet wounds on Robinson's body, although, reportedly, he later told the Free Press that he could not be sure, since his sole concern at the time was the abdominal bullet wound. According to the county Medical Examiner, an autopsy showed five lacerations on Robinson's body, which, he said, were identified as operative or drainage incisions. In any event, no weapons were found in the apartment.

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11:30 P.M., Wednesday: The FBI was advised of a high incidence of sniper activity in the area of 12th Street and Grand River, where the riot began. Otherwise, there had been a marked decrease in other types of riot-related activity. The Fire Department reported that fire problems were diminishing.

12:00 Midnight, Wednesday: The Police reported that 425 persons had been arrested during the preceding 24 hours. This was a substantial decline from the 732 arrests on Tuesday, the 2,931 on Monday and the 1,129 on Sunday.