

# Some Hard-Eyed Cops

## Hard-Core Criminals

As what has been described as "the most intensive manhunt in this city's recent history" continues, we believe some factors of that manhunt that have not been mentioned by the news media merit discussion.

The Free Press noted that hundreds of "bitter, hard-eyed policemen" attended the Dec. 30 funeral services for Patrolman Robert Bradford, whose death at an early age was a particularly vicious and senseless killing.

Anyone who has lost a "brother" in combat can understand the feelings of those bitter police officers. However, there is no question but that in their efforts to apprehend the men responsible for Bradford's death, many policemen have not only been "overzealous" — they have thrown aside the police manual and the Constitution.

Like it or not, the fact is there is no statute that grants any law enforcement officer the privilege of ignoring Constitutional guarantees because a policeman has been killed. But that is precisely what has and is being done in this city right now.

The dreaded writs of assistance which allowed British customs inspectors to enter and search the homes of colonials whenever they chose to were ruled illegal in 1765. Yet, on numerous occasions since this bizarre chain of events began unfolding with the shooting of four STRESS officers on Dec. 4, the homes of many innocent people have been literally invaded

by police officers who "assumed" the right to do so -- without search warrants.

As for the "bitter, hard-eyed" policemen at Bradford's funeral. The Chronicle was there, as we were at Sgt. Gerald Riley's and Patrolman Gil Stocker's earlier in 1972, and at several police funerals the year before, including those for Patrolmen Fred Hunter and Alonzo Marshall. Black officers who died doing their duty

There is, however, another side of the coin. One of Bradford's pall bearers was a STRESS officer who was involved in at least eight slayings during the early months of the STRESS operation, all of which were ruled "justifiable," some of which were highly questionable

If police officers -- highly trained professionals -- can lose their cool and run roughshod over innocent citizens in their efforts to apprehend police killers, then what is to be expected of the friends and relatives of those who fell to STRESS gunfire before STRESS tactics were modified?

Our point is simply this: Policemen do not operate in a vacuum. The recently-heralded reductions in crime, except homicides, required the cooperation of citizens. And that cooperation depends on the citizenry's faith in and trust of the men who carry the shield and gun of the law enforcement agencies.

We do not condone violence in any form, committed by anyone. But we believe that those "hard-eyed" police officers should try walking in some other shoes -- the shoes of Cynthia Scott's friends and family, of the three young men murdered at the Algiers motel, of the 15-year-old who "menaced" a STRESS officer with a stick and died as the result, of the young man, already shot five times, who was shot one more time by a STRESS officer who testified that his victim "ran at me at full speed and caused me to believe that the knife he brandished placed my life in danger."

We believe the men who allegedly committed the recent shootings and murder should be caught and brought to trial. We do not believe that any police officer, hard-eyed or otherwise, should even consider what a number of policemen have told relatives of the wanted men: "When we find them -- they're dead!"

And we believe that those who are calling out loud and clear for vengeance now should also do so in those instances when police officers are wrong. Wrong is wrong, crime is crime and the law is the law.

We do not condone murder, nor do we sympathize with police officers who break the law and violate the Constitution while supposedly enforcing the law.

And we know that those charged with the recent shootings and murder will have been tried, convicted and imprisoned long before the Citizens Complaint Bureau completes its investigation of the large number of complaints by citizens who were wronged by overzealous policemen, complaints which are almost always stamped "not sustained."

The police and the city is a continuing drama. If there is to be peace and tranquility in this city, there must be mutual trust and respect between policemen and citizens. It is a two-way street -- and both sides must play by the rules. -- BILL BLACK.