

NADINE BROWN COMMENTS

The Incredible Detroit Police Dept.

By NADINE BROWN

It is incredible that the Detroit Police Dept. would hang a veil of suspicion over the police officers who aided in the safe surrender of a man who was wanted in connection with the shooting of four STRESS officers, rather than laud them for what they did.

The two Black and one white officers, Patrolmen Bernard Taylor, Terrell and Glenn Kenny, were not involved in a conspiratorial plot to get Ivan O. Williams, the wanted suspect, out of town or across

the border, as anyone would have assumed from the reaction of the Police Dept. Williams was taken to Judge Samuel Gardner's office, then to the judge's chambers and delivered safely to police headquarters.

But those officers, all from the 13th precinct, are now reportedly under investigation by the Police Dept.'s Internal Security section for harboring a fugitive, along with their commanding officer, Inspector Frank Blount.

Police Commissioner John

Nichols, who certainly ought to know of some of the behind the scenes activities of certain policemen, should have recommended that the three officers who aided in the safe surrender of Williams, as well as Judge Gardner, be given citations for their actions.

This should have been his and other ranking officers' reaction, particularly in view of the fact that they reportedly knew of the plan to effectuate a surrender by Williams. According to the principal in the case, they were told of the plan.

As disgusting as it is, it is a fact of life that police brutality does exist in this city. The Police Dept. knows it and we know it. And Ivan Orlando Williams is not the first person who was afraid to walk into a police station alone and give himself up. So it is not at all surprising that he would want to place himself in the hands of people he could trust to protect him from what he believed would be a frightful experience.

There have been other such cases where citizens' outside

the Police Dept. were relied on to play the role of protector to persons who were wanted by the police, in some instances just for questioning. Many people in this community know full well some of the methods used by certain police officers to extract information, and they are not pleased by any stretch of the imagination.

The statement made by the Guardians of Michigan president, Tom Moss, that the word is out in (police) precincts to "kill on sight" the

men wanted in the STRESS shootings has been affirmed by other police officers.

Many, many persons in the Black community are asking a lot of questions about those shootings, the Police Dept.'s versions of them and the conflicting reports. There is growing consensus that some hidden factors are involved and that certain police officers would prefer that John Percy Boyd, Hayward Brown, Mark Bethune and all other so-called accomplices be brought in dead rather than alive. And

when higher-ups try them in the newspapers without trial call them mad dogs and bastards, as Nichols has, it crystallizes this belief.

This fear is even more rampant as the community learns about more and more murder reports belatedly, such as the case of David Leon Anderson, a Detroit Institute of Technology student who was found dead on the far northwest section on Jan. 1. But the community is just now

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Her son knew the gravity of his condition and that he may

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finding out about such incidents. Anderson reportedly had expressed his fear of being killed by police because he looked so much like John Boyd. To our knowledge, this was not reported in any publication.

Naturally we do not know who killed Anderson, but if he resembled Boyd, it is easy to assume the worst, particularly in view of the permissiveness on the part of the higher-ups in the police ranks who have allowed their officers to run rampant over the community, and then tell complaining citizens that they must understand what the police are up against. Now every time some Black person is found dead, people say fearfully, "wonder who is next".

When a policeman is killed, the Police Dept. goes berserk, but when a citizen is killed by police it is justifiable regardless of the circumstances. No one wants a crime-ridden city, therefore it stands to reason that people want a Police Dept. But they want police they can respect and who will respect them and their civil liberties. People also know that the job of an honest police officer is not an easy one. But the policeman is not God. The life of a citizen is just as important as that of a police officer or anyone else.

Whether or not a person is guilty or innocent of an alleged crime, he or she has the right to trial. Policemen should not have the authority to take a life at will, and we are sure that the honest cop would not do such a thing.

Commissioner Nichols should be grateful that he has officers in his department like the three whom Williams demonstrated his confidence in. It is the officer whom the people trust that Nichols should encourage, because it is that calibre of cop who can create an atmosphere of good police-community relations.

If the wave of police terror continues, while the rip-off artists and dope dealers have a field day, what chance does the citizen have when the officers people trust are being hamstrung?

Perhaps, we should look seriously at a suggestion of the Guardians that the Wayne County Sheriff's Dept should conduct an investigation of Detroit police, and, we might add, the U. S. Justice Dept also.