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Cavanagh 273-4
[Signature]

City of Detroit

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE ✓

DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48231

RAY GIRARDIN
Commissioner

August 26, 1966

APPROPRIATE FOR THE
COLLECTIONS OF
THE ARCHIVES OF LABOR HISTORY
AND URBAN AFFAIRS
AND CITY ARCHIVES
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
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Hon. Jerome P. Cavanagh
Mayor of the City of Detroit
City-County Building
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Mayor Cavanagh:

In response to your request concerning contingency planning for major disorders by the Detroit Police Department, the following information is forwarded.

Believing that a modern police department, in order to be responsive to the needs of the community in fulfillment of its mission of public safety, must adopt a policy of flexibility, the Detroit Police Department is currently employing two approaches to this end.

We pursue, with increasing vigor, activities in the field of community relations in order to maintain an atmosphere in which police and citizen problems may be openly discussed. Our department, from the level of the Commissioner through the precinct command structure, maintains an "open door" policy for the resolution of any conflict that might occur between the department and the citizenry. A recently expanded Citizens Complaint Bureau, reporting directly to the Office of the Commissioner and operating in offices disassociated from other police functions, maintains liaison with both the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, at state level, and the City's Commission on Community Relations, at local level, in efforts to

resolve by dialogue complaints of any nature involving the field of civil rights or human relations.

This department has a policy of integration in both its uniform and detective divisions and maintains intensive efforts in the recruitment of police officers from the minority groups. Our Public Relations program encompasses requirements that each precinct commander schedule monthly, or bi-monthly, meetings attended by representatives of religious, educational, social action and business leaders at which local problems are discussed. These steps, we believe, serve a two-fold purpose of bringing the community into closer relationship with the Police Department and aiding in the resolution of possible areas of friction and conflicts.

In addition, we have made Human Relations Training an important part of our Police Academy curriculum. The present curriculum includes a total of 50 hours in the area. We also have held a special in-service training course on the subject in cooperation with the Mayor's Committee for Total Action Against Poverty and the Detroit Commission on Community Relations. Officers who work in areas heavily populated by minority and low income groups were given the course. More than 1800 officers attended. The sessions were intended to provide them with insights into police-community relations that will help them be more effective in their day-to-day work.

We are, however, well aware of the pitfalls of attempting to solve a problem so fraught with uncertainty by a single approach. We have, therefore, equally intensified our efforts

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to bring our department to a state of readiness sufficient to cope with major disorders should they arise. To this end a special planning staff was constituted in June of 1965 with a view of evaluating, expanding and modernizing existing plans, procedures and equipment. Our department at the time was operating with an extremely basic document which, in the planning staffs opinion, did not clearly define command or staff responsibility in sufficient detail to successfully cope with a major civil disorder situation. As a result, a Centralized Headquarters "Command and Staff" concept was developed to become operational upon department mobilization. The procedure further established requirements for submission, by precinct commanders, of local disorder plans for evaluation and reference.

A training manual was prepared and issued to command officers covering in detail the psychological effects of crowds, the tactics, concepts to be employed by the department and the requirement of intensive training of the individual officer so that he would be competent to perform under conditions of disorder. Training programs were implemented in each of our several precincts to insure that should difficulty come that our officers, at all echelons, would perform in a professional and impartial manner.

It is to the credit of the department that when the situation finally culminated in the Kercheval incident that the conduct of our officers on the street was outstanding. Throughout the entire operation our officers maintained the highest

standard for police professionalism in refusing to be taunted or baited into hasty action and withstanding with admirable courage the bottles, bricks, stones and insults that were hurled at them by groups of unruly citizens. It was conduct such as this, we believe, that showed beyond doubt to the community that the Detroit Police Department was capable of professional conduct, impartial and ready for any eventuality.

This summer, as in every summer, was marked with a circulation of rumors of impending riots and disorder. The most likely area seemed to be the 12th Street section, far removed from where the disorder actually began. Each of these rumors were methodically checked out by our Detective Bureau with a view of ascertaining the source and attempting to allay further spreads of such rumors. The activities of known racist groups capable of inciting or abetting violence was kept under surveillance through police department personnel and clandestine informants. This activity also proved extremely valuable in the Kercheval area.

The action as it developed began, as is in the case of many such disturbances, with rather a routine arrest of some seven known police characters who had been creating a problem by loitering on the corners and interfering with pedestrian traffic and making taunting remarks to passerbys. The police cruiser, a four-man unit, attempted to move this group. Four of them complied with no difficulty while three remained. When the officers attempted to issue an Ordinance Violation for loitering, one of the men took up the cry that "we won't be

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moved, Whitey is going to kill us", and then shouted that this is the start of a riot beseeching the crowd to "help us, this is it".

The cruiser radioed for immediate help and several scout cars responded to the scene. As the officers tried to arrest the three a scuffle broke out which was reasonably quickly subdued and the three arrested individuals were removed from the scene.

The information concerning the incident was relayed through the command group to the Commissioner of Police. A reconnaissance unit in an unmarked vehicle from our Tactical Mobile Unit, a specially trained segment of the department for crime control and a secondary mission of mob control, was stoned as it entered the area. Sensing the gathering intensity of the action and realizing that many departments had failed to respond to such incidents with sufficient force to quell a disturbance, a limited departmental mobilization of force available on the street was ordered. The emergency Command Post at Headquarters was activated with the Commissioner arriving at 10:05 p.m., and the Command Post was fully functional at 10:30 p.m. The afternoon shift of the department was ordered held over and the midnight shift took to the streets with the afternoon crew remaining as a reserve force. The entire department was ordered to a 12-hour, two-shift operation. Segments of these reserves were rapidly moved to the 5th Precinct Station, the area of the disturbance, where a District Inspector assumed area command.

Riot equipment was dispatched to the area and sufficient forces were committed to take care of the many incidents of stoning of cars and limited window breakage that were occurring sporadically through the night. Augmented police task force units, composed of patrol wagons containing a squad of police, in company with two four-man police vehicles formed the major tactical disposition. These units were given an area of responsibility and the mobility and personnel complement enabled them to successfully deal with these disorders as they occurred.

The Tactical Mobile Unit, because of their superior communication capabilities, were utilized in six car patrols and operated generally in the same manner. Our Motor Commando Division, a specially trained unit for mob control, was activated, committed and then withdrawn to a reserve position in order to form the nucleus of a striking force should disorders occur in other sections of the city. Bars and liquor stores in the area were ordered closed in order to prevent liquor from becoming a major factor in furthering the violence. Belle Isle, an island park adjacent to the 5th Precinct, was similarly closed and cleared since this presented a potential for further difficulty. The activities during the night consisted of abortive attempts at fire bombing and minimal property damage.

A complete log was maintained by the Intelligence Section at Command Post Headquarters of all information relative to the disorder as it related to the Kercheval area and also any

similar type information in the entire city. These entries, incidentally, came in at the rate of about one every two minutes. Other than the initial arrests, which precipitated the disorder, no arrests were made during the night. This was in keeping with the principle of avoiding minor or petty arrests at the height of the difficulty in order to prevent the emergence of a martyr or mob hero. This policy naturally extended through minor offenses only and was not designed to prevent arrest for major crimes or criminal activity.

The activities of the Intelligence Unit provided information based on a surveillance of one of the more rabid organizations which resulted in the early apprehension of four known agitators and trouble makers.

These men were arrested in a vehicle after leaving their headquarters and a search of the vehicle disclosed large quantities of guns, ammunition, hatchets and other implements designed for assault. This arrest undoubtedly contributed much to regaining the stability of the situation in that it prevented some known agitators and quantities of armaments reaching the hands of potential rioters.

On the second day, early in the afternoon, a critique of the operation at both command and staff level was conducted by the Deputy Superintendent.

At this time minor changes in administrative functions and procedures were implemented and the plan of action for the ensuing night was formulated. Simultaneously neighborhood

leaders took to the field in an attempt to squelch the inevitable rumors which permeated the area. A youth recreation center in the area was activated and 20 additional people were assigned by the Community Relations Commission. Early in the evening a Press Release Center, operated by the Mayor's Press Secretary, was opened adjacent to the Command Post in order to provide quick, accurate information to the news media through a single office.

During the early hours of darkness on the second night violence again began to erupt in the same area. Small groups, trouble makers, roamed the area causing minor damage and isolated incidents of fire bombing.

A neighborhood meeting, conducted by local Negro residents under the auspicious of the Mayor's Commission on Community Relations, attended by some 150 residents of the area, crystallized support of the police in their activity in the area and severely criticized certain militant leaders who were then accusing the department of over-policing the troubled area. As an evidence of the citizens support of the department, several two-men "Peace Patrols" were formulated among this group who took to the field in efforts to act as a quieting factor on the more militant youths and to attempt to resolve the rumors that were prevelant.

We feel that the emergence of this type of activity relates very favorably toward the police-community relations in the area and reflects the effectiveness of a joint professional police action, coupled with responsible citizens

activities in the curtailing of violence. The tactical concept developed, aided by a fortuitous rain, limited the activities of the trouble makers and the evening was passed without major incident. However, during the evening a total of 43 arrests were made on specific charges ranging from inciting the riot, conspiracy to disturbing the peace, carrying concealed weapons, malicious destruction of property, arson and attempted arson growing out of attempted fire bombings. The damage assessment listed 7 cars, 5 stores and a church with broken windows.

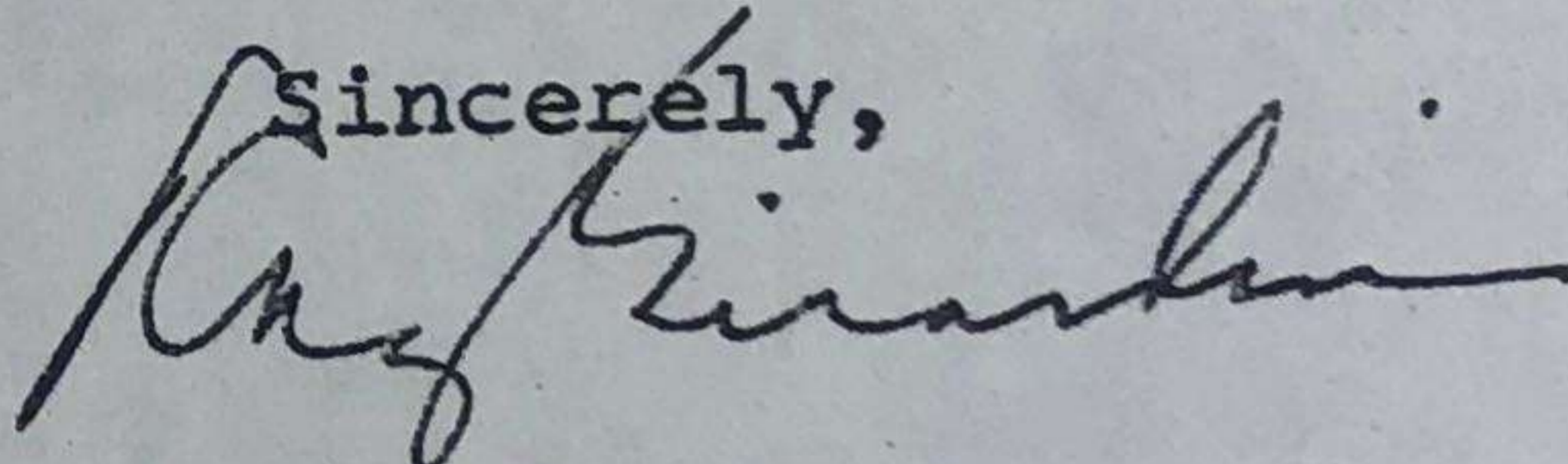
The third night of the disorder was passed in relative calm with a total of some 15 arrests, three minor fire bombings and a handfull of isolated incidents. Augmented patrols were still kept in the area although on the day shift the four-man patrol cars were gradually reduced to a two-man concept, and the Motor Commando Units and the Tactical Mobile Unit were removed to reserve positions from general patrol. Damage experienced during this period was negligible.

The augmented patrols were maintained during the hours of darkness on the fourth night of the disorder, primarily due to the fact that it was a weekend and it was believed strong police forces in the area would serve as a deterrent to either planned or spontaneous disorder activities. The following day a phase out activities began with a reduction in the scout car complement to two-men, and beginning with the 8:00 a.m. shift on Monday the entire operation was culminated. The Command post had been phased out at 3:00 a.m. on the same day and the department resumed its normal activities.

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The entire operation, as experienced by this department, seems to point up the effectiveness of cultivating and maintaining a close relationship between the citizens and the police of their area. The lack of response on the part of the great majority of citizens of the Kercheval area to the futile attempts of a few to embroil them in a holocaust is noteworthy. This, together with the immediate response of highly professionalized police officers aware of the volatility of such a situation in sufficient numbers to keep the situation in hand, seems to have been the key toward the resolution of the disorder without gun fire, a large casualty list, and a festering public opinion as its aftermath.

Sincerely,



Commissioner

RG:sd

cc: Mr. Harold Black
Community Development Coordinator