

DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Administration Division
INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Citizen Complaint Bureau

Date July 15, 1968

To: **Commanding Officer, Citizen Complaint Bureau**

Subject: **CITIZEN COMPLAINT BUREAU INVESTIGATION AND FINAL REPORT OF COBO HALL INCIDENT. INVESTIGATED BY DETECTIVES EARL GRAY AND RICHARD RIDLING, PATROLMEN SALVATORE PALAZZOLO AND REGINALD TURNER. CCB #68-83**

INCIDENT:

The "Cobo Hall" incident with which we are dealing developed Monday evening May 13th, 1968 during the culminating rally of the "Poor Peoples March", at approximately 8:24 P.M. The melee occurred on the east side of Cobo Hall in front of the doorways leading to the lobby adjacent to hall B. The majority of marchers were attending a rally at the rear of the Veteran's Memorial Building. However, several hundred or possibly over a thousand participants were meandering between the river front rally and Cobo Hall "B" where some were being fed and assigned accommodations. Adding to the heavy activity was the Shriner's dinner, which was also being accommodated in hall "C" at Cobo Hall. Many police officers who had escorted the march were on the scene including the mounted division, stationary traffic, motor division, T.M.U. and others. Figuring prominently in the march and rally were Father Groppi and his "Milwaukee Commandos".

At approximately 8:20 P.M. controversy developed between the department and some of the participants over the stalled communication car of the marchers, which was parked in the driveway in front of the doors leading to hall B. Marchers surrounded the car; a few climbed atop. It appeared to some that trouble was imminent. The mounted division advanced to disperse the crowd and protect the officers at the car. Chaos abounded. People were injured, debris and table legs were hurled at the horses and mounts. People attempted to flee into Cobo Hall; many were prevented entry by a cordon of foot patrolmen stationed across the doorways.

As a result; several persons claimed injury and many witnesses including two men from the U.S. Department of Justice allege police mishandling, especially regarding the use of horses. Several private photographers were on the scene taking pictures and subsequently an Ad-Hoc group presented the Mayor's Office with a list of grievances and demands.