

front of looting and violence opened on the east side along the Chrysler Expressway and Kercheval and Pennsylvania Avenues.

Around midnight, the first woman victim of the riot, Mrs. Sheren George, was wounded fatally as she was shot through the chest while riding in an automobile in the riot area.\* By midnight the number of fires had increased to the extent that every piece of city fire equipment and that of 41 surrounding communities were committed to the inner city area.

To assure the effectiveness of the curfew earlier imposed by Mayor Cavanagh, Governor Romney declared a state of emergency in the cities of Detroit, Hamtramck, and Highland Park.

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\* Most of the descriptions in this chronology of the events surrounding the deaths of riot victims are derived from a Detroit Free Press article "The 43 Who Died," published September 3, 1967. The article, several pages long, was based on extensive interviews carried out by Free Press staff members. Commission staff interviews with some of those interviewed by the Free Press indicates that their investigation generally reflected a high level of objectivity and thoroughness.

MONDAY, JULY 24, 1967

Shortly After Midnight Monday: Walter Grzanka, a white man, was shot by an irate store manager as he climbed through the broken window of a looted grocery store. On Grzanka's person were seven cigars, four packages of pipe tobacco and nine pairs of shoe laces.

Through the night the wave of arson spread through the city resulting in scores of major multi-alarm fires. Governor Romney claimed that snipers firing at firemen and the axing of firehouses made the need for police protection of the firemen critical.

2:00 A.M., Monday: In an early morning meeting, Mayor Cavanagh, Police Commissioner Girardin, Governor Romney and Colonel Davids of the Michigan National Guard decided that the number of local forces available could not possibly contain the disorder which seemed likely to spread over the entire 139 square miles of the city. It was estimated that an additional 2,000 men would be required to augment the total strength of all local and state personnel. To be "on the safe

side," Governor Romney testified, it was decided to request 5,000 additional forces. Within half an hour, a verbal request was made the Attorney General for 5,000 federal troops. There is some controversy as to whether the Attorney General immediately pointed out the conditions under which federal forces could be committed. Governor Romney alleges that he and Mayor Cavanagh were assured by the Attorney General that the oral request was all that was necessary and that he would proceed to alert the Army officials. According to Cyrus Vance's account of the events of the disorder, the Attorney General immediately advised Secretary Resor of the situation and the necessity of beginning preparations for the commitment of federal troops.

At approximately this same time, a white man who had been with four other men on the roof of an apartment building attempting to check the spread of sparks from fires was killed. Although the original police report indicated that an appeal was made to the men to

halt as they came down a rear stairway, it was later acknowledged that the white men, Clifton Pryor, had been shot by Guardsmen who thought that he was a sniper. Although one of the men did have a shotgun with him as they came down the stairs, no attempt had been made to use it. There was little likelihood that Pryor was a sniper since there had been no sniping incidents on the all-white block on which he lived. (Shortly after Pryor's death the order was given that permission was to be obtained from General Moore before automatic weapons, such as machine guns, were to be fired by Guardsmen.)

Approximately 3:00 A.M., Monday: Mayor Cavanagh and Governor Romney held a press conference at this time at which they announced that 5,000 federal troops had been requested. Romney was quoted as saying: "We would rather be overcommitted."

Predawn, Monday Morning: As the morning wore on, fires continued to burn out of control. The first fireman, John Ashby, received fatal burns from a high voltage wire while fighting a fire in the riot area.

The mayor requested that all businesses voluntarily close on Monday.

5:00 A.M., Monday: The Attorney General contacted Generals Simmons and Moore of the Michigan National Guard and Inspector Gage of the Detroit Police Department to get their assessment of the situation. He then called Governor Romney at 5:15 a.m. to advise him that the consensus among these officials was that the situation could be handled locally. He also advised Governor Romney that a written request was necessary for the commitment of federal forces and, according to Governor Romney, reiterated that an indication had to be given that a state of insurrection existed.

According to a 5:45 a.m. report to the FBI, the police had indicated that the disorder was not under control and that looting and sporadic sniping continued

as extensive fires burned out of control on the east and west sides.

Early Morning, Monday: By 6:45 a.m. as city, state and National Guard officials met to discuss the advisability of proclaiming a state of insurrection, the first plans were activated to provide emergency food and shelter for displaced victims of the riots.

Between the hours of 7:00 and 8:00 a.m., Fred Williams, a 49-year old Negro was apparently electrocuted when he stumbled onto a live electric powerline that had fallen during a fire reportedly started by a molotov cocktail thrown the previous evening. The fire had been put out by firemen but it rekindled later Sunday evening. As Williams was attempting to retrieve some clothing which he had carried to the safety of his neighbor's yard, he apparently came in contact with the live wire. National Guardsmen found him dead, face down in the wet alley near his house, his entire face and the front of his body charred.

9:00 A.M., Monday: At the Recorder's Court the entire panel of 13 judges met, suspended the regular criminal docket and arranged to work around the clock in six-hour shifts. George Crockett, a Negro judge on the Recorder's Court told an interviewer that the judges who had not been on duty Sunday were given an informal briefing by the Executive Judge of the Court, Judge Brennan, regarding a policy of setting high bonds (\$5,000 to \$15,000 and in particular cases more) which had been followed the day before as a means of keeping the arrestees off of the streets. Judge Crockett said that he viewed the policy as arbitrary and informal in that no vote was taken nor was any agreement sought or made among the judges at the meeting.

At a 9:15 a.m. meeting of Governor Romney, General Simmons, Colonel Davids, Mayor Cavanagh, Police Commissioner Girardin, Superintendent Rucier, Superintendent Nichols, an assessment was made of the manpower requirements necessary to control the situation. It was unanimously agreed that federal troops were needed. According to the reports of an early morning press

conference (9:30 a.m.) Mayor Cavanagh reported that "at no time was an order issued that police were not to use the weapons that were available to them." He commented that policemen would have to use professional individual judgment about the extent of force necessary to control each incident.

Shortly thereafter (at 9:45 a.m.), an unlicensed private watchman shot Herman Ector. The police initially listed Ector as a looter. Further investigation of the shooting led to a murder charge against the private guard, but it was later dismissed. Witnesses alleged that as Ector passed the store being guarded and objected to the way in which the watchman, Waverly Soloman was treating suspected looters Soloman followed Ector and his companion past the store. An argument ensued during which Ector was struck with the butt of Soloman's carbine and then shot. He died when he reached the hospital.

10:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M., Monday: At 10:00, the previously scheduled meeting of community leaders and interested



citizens was held at Reverend Audrey's church on Dexter Avenue, in the heart of the riot area. One observer who attended the meeting said that the looting and burning continued on Dexter as the meeting was being held. He said that as he arrived at the church, the market across the streets was being looted and several arrests were being made. The meeting produced recommendations that the mayor form peace patrols, use citizens to try to control the situation and a forceful crackdown be made by the police.

As the meeting was being held, Governor Romney sent a telegram to President Johnson stating "there is reasonable doubt that we can suppress the existing looting, arson and sniping without the assistance of federal troops" and requesting the "immediate employment of federal troops into Michigan." Within the hour the President replied that federal troops were being dispatched and that Cyrus Vance would confer with Romney to decide what assistance was necessary.

Throughout the morning and afternoon, looting and burning continued and became more widespread as the death toll continued to mount. At noon, Daniel Jennings, a Negro and the father of 14 children, was shot on his way home from a union hiring hall. According to the Detroit Free Press, he and two other men had been standing outside of a drugstore when someone smashed the front door window. The storeowner fired one shot after allegedly shouting a warning. Jennings was struck and was declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

In a separate incident in a different part of the city, Robert Beal and Joseph Chandler were killed. Allegedly Beal was shot while attempting to loot a store. According to a newspaper account, Beal had been discovered by police and ordered to come out of the store, when he made a sudden movement toward the patrolman and was shot in the abdomen. Although the reports of the patrolman and the Homocide Bureau differ as to the circumstances of Beal's death, no evidence of criminal intent could be found in the action of the patrolman.

The circumstances of Joseph Chandler's death are no clearer. According to the Detroit Free Press, Chandler went out to get his wife a pack of cigarettes. Forty-five minutes later he was dead. Allegedly he had been looting a market about a block and a half from his home when officers yelled for him to stop. When he ran, the officers chased him down the street, through an alley and over two fences firing as they ran. After dropping his loot, Chandler scaled the fence and officers gave up the chase believing that they had missed. They had not missed. Chandler had been shot more than once. A policeman found him later lying under an automobile. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

Afternoon, Monday: In midafternoon, Herman Canty was killed when he failed to heed police commands to halt. According to witnesses, Canty had boldly backed up a green delivery van to the side door of a large supermarket in broad daylight. He and two other men and a woman were loading merchandise into the van when they were surprised by police and Guardsmen. Allegedly

an order to halt was given and shots were then fired. The truck, with Canty at the wheel, sped down the driveway and across Grand Avenue, jumping two medians and finally coming to rest against a tree. Canty was slumped dead over the wheel with a bullet in his neck. A rumor that Canty had been shot while driving through the riot area soon spread throughout the community. Shortly thereafter, the market was burned down.

4:00 P.M.-6:00 P.M., Monday: By late afternoon as federal troops began to arrive at Selfridge Air Force Base outside Detroit, fires were continuing to spread at the rate of 10 to 12 per hour.

At about the same time, a volley of shotgun bullets aimed at a suspected looter also struck two innocent women. As two police officers entered an A&P Market through a window, they discovered two men fleeing toward the rear of the store. The two men were reported to have refused to halt and shots were fired. One officer

said that he saw a shiny object in the hand of Alred Peachlum which looked like a weapon. Peachlum was struck in the chest by pellets from the shot. The shiny object was later identified as a package of beef wrapped in tinfoil. The prosecutor ruled that the death was justifiable homicide.

Shortly thereafter, Alphonso Smith, a 35-year old Negro waiter, was also killed, though the circumstances of his death are unclear. According to a preliminary police report, he was one of several Negroes who was seen by police entering a store. As the officer entered the building, two shots were fired, one of which struck Smith. A follow-up investigation by detectives of the Homicide Bureau gave a slightly different version. It stated that when the looters were discovered they were ordered to halt. Allegedly Smith threw a can at one of the officers. A warning shot was fired from a machine gun into the ceiling. A second officer startled by the shot slipped on debris and his privately-owned revolver discharged a shot which struck Smith in the neck.

The other looters who were involved in the incident denied to Free Press reporters that an order to halt was given or that the police officer slipped. They claim that the police jumped out of the car and shot through the window before they were even close to the store.

The prosecutor's office ruled that the shooting was accidental and without criminality even though according to the Detroit Free Press, the participant-witnesses were not questioned.

As these events were taking place, Cyrus Vance and General Throckmorton arrived at the Detroit Police Headquarters and held a meeting with top police and Guard officials. Mayor Cavanagh reported that between 800 and 900 police officers were on the street and that between 2,000 and 3,000 Army National Guard troops were available for deployment on Detroit streets. Although Governor Romney indicated that over 730 state policemen were available in Detroit, he assured Mr. Vance that he was not prepared to state that a condition of insurrection existed. He did feel, however, "that there was reasonable doubt" as to whether the situation could be controlled by the state and local enforcement agencies.

While federal, state and local officials discussed the necessity of committing federal troops, the riot claimed another victim. Nathaniel Edmonds was slain by a white man, Richard Shugar, after an argument about breaking into a store. Shugar had yelled at a trio of Negro boys, "Why did you break into my store?" although, in fact, he had no connection with the vacant sewing shop. Witnesses say that Edmonds was shotgunned as he scrambled to take cover inside the back door of a house on Baldwin Street. Shugar, however, is being held for murder.

As Governor Romney, Cyrus Vance, General Throckmorton, Mayor Cavanagh and a party of other officials toured the most destructed parts of the riot area. Edward Kemp died. When confronted by the police, Kemp had abandoned a cash register which he had looted. Kemp was shot by two policemen and a Guard sergeant after failing to obey an order to halt. The only nonpolice witness does not remember hearing the order to halt and is almost positive that one of the three shots which felled Kemp was fired from the police car before the car had come to a stop.

Approximately 6:00 P.M., Monday: The police department reported that the law enforcement personnel on the street at this time consisted of 812 Detroit Police Department officers, 825 National Guardsmen, 200 Michigan State policemen and that an additional 200 state policemen were being held in reserve.

Approximately 7:15 P.M.-8:30 P.M., Monday: A meeting was held by Cyrus Vance, Mayor Cavanagh and Governor Romney with officials of the Negro community to discuss the use of federal troops. All the persons present except Congressman Conyers and one other felt that federal troops should be committed at once. Mr. Vance and General Throckmorton concluded, however, that there was still insufficient basis to justify commitment. This decision was based on two factors. First, the incident rate as reflected in the figures then available was about one-third of what it had been the previous day and was holding rather level. Second, three times as many National Guard troops were committed to the city as had been the previous day and it was not clear that order could not be restored by these additional forces.



Approximately 8:45 P.M., Monday: Richard Simms left his home after spending most of the day watching TV on his front porch. He told his wife that he was just going down to the corner. A few minutes later, a witness saw Simms and another man attempting to jimmy open a side door of the Hobby Bar. Four members of a police patrol unit saw Simms and his companion. When they came after them, they ran in separate directions. The officers chose to chase Simms. They alleged that they ordered him to halt several times. He was shot as he tried to escape through the side door of a building. At 9:00 p.m., he was dead on arrival at Detroit General Hospital.

Evening, Monday: Mayor Cavanagh testified that Monday night had the highest incidence of fires and as the evening wore on, alleged sniper fire became more intense. Incidents of looting, arson and sniping were reportedly on the rise, especially on the east side. As the incident rate continued to climb, Cyrus Vance and General Throckmorton decided to move three battalions of the paratroopers from the Selfridge Air Force Base

to the Detroit Fair Grounds so that they might readily be available for deployment on the streets. Regarding the "incident rate" as an index of the volume of riot violence, Cyrus Vance pointed out that:

"the incident rate must be used with caution although an incident was at all times described as 'an event requiring police action.' A review of the specific incidents logged reveals a wide range of variation and apparent validity. Substantial numbers of individual incidents which were surveyed did not bear any relation to the riot. Hence, these data may be useful to identify trends and were used in that way but should not be considered an absolute indicator."

Approximately 9:30 P.M., Monday: At this time, Frank Tanner, a 19-year old, who had apparently been drinking and looting much of the day, was shot as he fled from a pharmacy on East Grand Boulevard. Reportedly, he ignored the commands of the police to halt and was shot in the abdomen as he ran down an alley behind the pharmacy. Police and National Guardsmen lost him during the chase. Half an hour later, several of the tenants

in the nearby building behind which he had collapsed heard him moan. For fear of being shot if they went outside, the tenants did not go to his aid. At 8:05 a.m., the next morning, 11 hours after he was shot, Tanner was dead at Detroit General Hospital.

Dr. Hubert Locke, at the time Special Assistant to the Commissioner of Police, told the Commission staff that concentrated violence against police officers and fire department personnel began at about this time on Monday and continued for several hours as snipers pinned down precinct houses and fire stations in the area. He suggested that fatigue and the increased incidents of violence directed at fire and law enforcement officers precipitated more repressive and brutal police tactics against rioters.

According to Judge Crockett of the Recorder's Court, on Monday night the arrest and booking process began to breakdown because of insufficient clerical staff and booking procedures which were complicated by complex paperwork. He said that by this time Monday night, detention

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facilities were already starting to be overtaxed and arrestees who were brought in on buses for booking at the Central Precinct were kept sitting on the buses through the night. Judge Crockett characterized the sanitary conditions as "deplorable." For example, he pointed out that one portable latrine had been set up in public near the courthouse to serve six busloads of men and women.

11:00 P.M., Monday: Cyrus Vance and General Throckmorton reported that they consulted with Governor Romney and Mayor Cavanagh and determined that local law enforcement agencies could not control the situation. Vance reported that, after recommending to the President that federal troops be deployed, the President signed the Proclamation and Executive Order authorizing the use of federal forces and the federalizing of the Army and Air National Guards. General Throckmorton immediately took command of all of these forces, ordered the deployment of the regular

United States Army troops in the eastern half of the city and gave the responsibility for policing the western sector to the National Guard. Vance reported that this division of responsibilities was made because on Monday evening the incidents in the eastern half of the city had begun to increase over those in the western half and he wanted to assign the regular troops to the most active sector. An additional factor influencing the decision to assign the troops to the east side was its proximity to Selfridge Air Force Base. One interviewee speculated, however, that a number of strategic utilities in Detroit were located on the east side, such as the waterworks. In addition, there was some speculation that the more experienced troops were deployed on the east side because it was feared that if there were to be any racial confrontations they would be on the east side where Negroes and lower class whites lived in closest proximity.

The rules of engagement issued to all troops under federal control were to "use the minimum force necessary to restore law and order." Specifically, the troop

commanders were instructed to apply force in the following order of priority: (a) unloaded rifles and bayonets fixed and sheathed; (b) unloaded rifles with bayonets fixed; (c) riot control agent CS tear gas; and (d) loaded rifles with bayonets fixed.

Approximately Midnight, Monday: Shortly before midnight, a fireman, Carl Smith, was killed during an exchange of fire between police, Guardsmen and alleged snipers. Smith was pinned down in front of an east side fire station which was described as being under "heavy sniper fire." As the newspaper account reported it, "The massive counterattack of police and National Guard undoubtedly contributed to the heavy firing." After the order to evacuate the area was given, Smith ran to the north corner of the street toward his fire truck and crouched behind a waste receptacle. A few seconds later he clasped his hand to his head and fell forward on the sidewalk. An autopsy showed that he had been killed by a .30 caliber bullet, the ammunition used in the .30

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caliber carbines carried by the Guardsmen. There was much speculation as to whether Smith was killed by a sniper or a Guardsman. No evidence was offered to support the theory given by a police report that he was probably looking up at the roof top from which the sniper was firing. The angle of the entry of the bullet indicated, on the contrary, that he was probably killed accidentally by a Guardsman at street level or by an undetected sniper on the street.