

Letters to the Editor

Various Authors

1966

Dear Editor:

We were delighted to receive your last edition and think that you have made some great improvements in the format.

It has occurred to me that your people might want to consider some of the issues that are being highlighted—such as civil rights, housing and displacement of people, poverty programs, employment of Negro youth, etc. Is it possible to highlight these problems? There are some real “nitty gritty” issues in Detroit that need to be brought out in the open and your people could provide a real means of communication.

Since I realize you have limited time and funds to secure reporters, would it be alright for people from the neighborhoods to submit articles, or do you have a better plan?

Certainly the material that you’re presenting on the war is to be commended, but the issues on the home front, in my estimation are equally as important.

Ethel Marquart,
Neighborhood Director SWIPE

Dear Editor,

A few thoughts on Charles Whitman, the Texas mass-slayer: these are the awarenesses that have struck me. They may be enlightening, or trite, according to your level of consciousness. But they are certainly based on mine:

1) The Marine Corps builds ‘men’. If not ‘men’ at least crack-shots. Same difference. Oswald and Whitman and 100,000 others. But don’t mourn for Santo Domingo.

2) It is strange that Whitman murdered 15 white American men, women and children, the President denounced it as a national tragedy and a tremendous crime. The nation was shocked into mourning. Even Speck was forgotten. But please! Whitman was a marine, and as such, his crime against humanity (they become ‘crimes against humanity’ only when the victims are American) is the very ESSENCE of the ‘honor’ and ‘glory’, the ‘freedom’ and the ‘democracy’—which we are killing for the Vietnam.

Whitman, as a combat Marine in Vietnam, would have been held up to the highest accolades of the nation, for the murder in one fell-swoop of 15 Viet Cong. (Also men, women and children.) It is paradoxical indeed that the Marine Corps tradition should be so bitterly condemned when the preaching is practiced on US citizens, but so PAYtriotically applauded when the victims are Vietnamese.

3) Is it really paradoxical?

4) After the killings, Johnson proposed a ludicrous law which would attempt to keep firearms out of the hands of would be mass-killers like Whitman. But for all the Whitmans now in ‘service’ the President is straining the economy at the leash, to pour out the machine-guns, the napalm, the bombs, the poison gasses which are needed

to defend 'our' honor in Vietnam. Even the candy bars and the dolls that will pacify the children of those fathers and mothers who have in turn been 'pacified' by the US Marine Corps. Guns and butter.

5) A final irony: the fact that Whitman's father was a self-proclaimed 'fanatic for guns' and brought his kids up with a 'healthy respect for guns' is fully revealing as this fact, made known to the world by the Austin psychiatrist who had treated Whitman: to those students who became mentally disturbed while studying, the 26 story observation tower (from which Whitman shot his victims) becomes 'a strange and mystic symbol'.

But how can one become 'obsessed' with a euphemism?

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