

# Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1977

**The Detroit primary elections**, as usual, contained no surprises with a majority of both registered and eligible voters not bothering to venture out of their house to participate in selecting who shall rule them. Officials have even given up bemoaning the low turnouts and called this primary a success because 46% of the voters cast ballots...

Ex-radical attorney Ken Cockrel fielded a powerful public relations/media campaign and came in seventh in a field of 18 almost assuring himself a seat on the nine-member Common Council in the November election. One group getting the quick brush-off in Kenny's blitz for personal aggrandizement is the New American Movement (NAM) whose members who did all the dirty work in the earlier stages of the campaign in return for writing their candidate's campaign platform. However, the vision of an explicitly socialist program has recently been dashed by the Cockrel forces who, after months of stalling about the platform's content and release date, now have told NAM that the document will be released after the election. All elections are exercises in self-humiliation, but this one provided just a little bit more...

**Gil Scott-Heron and Brian Jackson** have just released a new album, "Bridges," which contains the selection "We Almost Lost Detroit," (after the book of the same name) describing the near catastrophe at the Fermi I nuclear plant near Monroe in 1966. Although the group enjoys considerable popularity in the Motor City and the tune is one of the better ones on the album, don't look for it to get too much airplay on any station other than non-commercial WDET...

**Sign of the Times I:** A smiling security guard at the IBM parking lot on Second Ave. and Pallister holding by a leash a snarling, vicious Bouvier dog. Farther on down the road a piece, the security guard seen standing at the entrance to the Burroughs parking lot on Third Ave. near Antoinette, wearing black leather boots with 3-inch spike heels, and an obviously bleached-blond hairdo, looks more like one of the ladies who advertises in the Berkeley Barb than a cop. But that's not a whip she's packing fellas—it's a gun and she ain't smiling...

**Sign of the Times II:** Billboards announcing "Aggressive Hockey Is Back in Detroit," which throws away any pretense that what was once an admittedly rough sport has now become other than the contemporary version of "Roller Ball." The Detroit Red Wings have signed a player whose credentials include a karate black belt and an appearance in the Paul Newman cheapie movie, "Slap Shot." Last year's team captain, one of the highest penalized players in the league, bragged about how he went looking for other players against whom he held a grudge from previous matches. Probably the only things sicker are the howling fans who dote on it all...

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**Much sympathy to 37-year-old Robert Smith**, but none to the two people he shot on Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, at the Hamtramck Chevrolet plant. A "disgruntled crane operator," Smith shot first his foreman and then the labor relations supervisor (daughter of former GM chairman Richard "Builder of Detroit" Gerstenberg) after he was suspended for refusing to punch the time clock, which had been moved away from his work station. It was the

second time Smith had been suspended for not punching his card, but this time it seems he wasn't going to bow to the time-clock's authority and walk the length of the plant to reach it. He did return to the plant to discuss it with management, however, though it's generally assumed he no longer has a job as a result of his efforts...

**The vaunted Plaza Hotel**, (artificial) heart of Detroit's Renaissance (sic) Center, has been having a public relations problem—crime. Already, several persons have had their rooms robbed while they were in the hotel bar or lobby, and evidence indicates that it was an inside job, as the doors were not jammed nor the locks broken. Since such small-scale thievery imperils management's chances of perpetrating their serious rip-offs, suspicion of all employees runs high, and some of it is being focused, apparently, on the Plaza's own rented "security" force. We've no idea who's doing it, nor do we care, but it is interesting to note that many people working as security guards have been known to brag of the lucrative pickings available to them. Entrusted with protecting the premises and property of the rich—at a pay which usually maintains the respective condition of each—"rent-a-cops" are apparently contributing to the steady erosion of law and order. The obvious solution for capitalists would be to hire security cops to guard the security cops. But then who would guard the security cops who were guarding the security cops who were guarding the...[break in original]

**The effort to have the Michigan State Police Red Squad release** all of its files collected on political activists suffered a setback October 19 when the State House of Representatives voted to circumvent a Wayne County judge's order to release the records, by passing a bill which would have the files destroyed. The cops are intent on keeping the full extent of their spying and disruption from coming to public notice for both political and legal reasons. The latter concern is based on the belief (perhaps correct) that full disclosure will bring millions of dollars in lawsuits against the state for illegal police activity and the resulting damages. The file on the Michigan chapters of SDS alone is over four-and-a-half feet thick and was assembled only through a huge amount of police intervention in the lives of that group's members...

**A little gift from the People's Republic of China** reached the state of Michigan in the form of increased radiation in our air and milk following the Chinese nuclear blast on September 17. The Michigan Department of Public Health said radiation in milk reached peak levels in early October but has been steadily declining since. In refusing to halt atmospheric tests of their nuclear weapons, the Chinese bureaucrats must bear full responsibility for their disregard for the health of the world's population.



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