

Cops Riot at Belle Isle

Have Hate-In

Frank H. Joyce

1967

“When you have \$50 billion invested in defense what you need most isn’t allies but an enemy.”

— Nelson Algren said in *Ramparts*, May, 1967.

When you have policemen on horses and Tactical Mobile Units with little baseball bats and “riot-trained” commandos, what you need most is not a Love-In but a riot.

And when the Detroit Police Department wants a riot bad enough, they get one; manufactured it right out of plain ordinary friendliness, like the one they invented on Kercheval last summer.

This one they pinned on the Outlaws instead of the Negroes. But then the Outlaws are almost as good an excuse. Besides, once it’s started, you can crack heads without regard to race, creed, color or national origin.

To a policeman that is apparently what a head is for.

One of the heads belonged to the son of a Dearborn doctor named Clem Kocinski. The police claim he was hit by someone other than a policeman. Dr. Kocinski, whose son was not even on Belle Isle and hadn’t been all afternoon, said his son was struck as he emerged from the Howard Johnson’s Restaurant at the foot of the Belle Isle bridge.

The doctor added that a Detroit area school teacher had called to inform him that he too had been attacked by the police when he sought assistance in getting from the restaurant to his car.

Most of the trouble a high police official has privately admitted. came from the mounted police. Miss Nancy E. Goldsworthy, who attended the love-in with companions, including a returned Vietnam Marine veteran, in a letter to the *Detroit Free Press* on May 3, supported the charge that the police were at fault: “The sidewalk (on Jefferson) was no sanctuary as the police galloped...into the crowd recklessly smashing the closest head with their clubs. The remnants of the crowd were still trapped on the bridge with but two choices: to jump over the railing and fall 80 feet or to crouch down helplessly... We feel that the Detroit Mounted Police started a riot rather than prevented one. We used to think police brutality was a farce but may be it isn’t.”

One can sympathize with the police. They were confused. Confusion leads to frustration. And frustration, the psychologists tell us, produces aggression.

Role confusion is the technical term. What is a policeman supposed to do at a love in anyway? Usually they find out what to do by listening to their superiors. And the superiors find out from the newspapers and the politicians. But the newspapers and the politicians were confused.

On one day, the *Detroit News* ran four separate stories, features and columns on John Sinclair. Enough to make you forget about the war in Vietnam. Damn near bumped out crime in the streets. For what?

Because they don’t understand it. Fear of the Unknown. Anthony Bertoni, former head of the Tactical Mobile Units and currently chief inspector of the Detroit Police Department issuing a joint statement with convicted dope peddler, sex maniac, molester of children’s minds John Sinclair. Just getting past the pun involved is enough to boggle the mind.

And boggle it did. The newspapers still haven't figured out whether they were for it or against it. And the prosecutors of Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties haven't yet apparently figured out whether the Sun is obscene or not and whether it should be sold to people under 85 years of age. So they're no help.

School principals are more decisive. They have taken to suspending students from school for "sales or possession" of either the Sun or the Fifth Estate. What would we do without the educators, training young minds in Freedom and Democracy?

History would seem to indicate that hate will carry the day.

fifth Estate

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