Prentis St. Popped

Ben Habeebe

1967

Kitty Genovese died in Queens while fifty people watched.

Thomas Poindexter lost his seat on the Detroit Common Council when it was reported that he saw a crime being committed and did not even bother to call the police.

Two nameless hippies were arrested on Prentis on Tuesday night August 8, while all the flower folks and their bike-less motorcycle type colleagues just stood around and gaped. Two cops had just walked on their beat down Prentis, gotten lost in the shadows then reappeared from the alley at the end of the block where they had started out. They had two handcuffed prisoners. The prisoners, somewhere between teenyboppers and hippies looked to be about 19 years old. They stooped as they walked down the street hands bound behind their backs.

The flower people, about thirty of whom were on the street at the time, sitting as they always do on porches and front steps just looked on. Nobody moved. Nobody said anything. The police moved on directing their charges toward Second.

A few of us stood on Frank Joyce's steps and watched the Prentis street spectacle—more amazed by the way the love people ignored the plight of one of their own than by the police. Finally we decided to see what was going on.

We walked down to Prentis and Second where the cops and alleged lawbreakers were now waiting for a squad car. A car did arrive, just as we did.

We watched from across the street...saying nasty things about the cops. But saying them low.

As the squad car pulled up, one of the peripatetic officers said, excitedly and proudly, "Got some Narco for you, babee." And they put them in the back seat and drove away.

We stood and talked for a minute.

When I walked back up the street, no one even asked me what had gone on.

But then *I was* wearing a tie.

Long hair and bells do not a hippie make.

Fifth Estate