

Who Killed John Leroy?

Frank H. Joyce

1967

Ronald Powell crouched inside the car. So did the other four men.

Already wounded in firing that had lasted for five minutes, later Mr. Powell said, "I was just waiting for the bullet that would be fatal. It was horrible."

Charles Dunson, the driver, reached up and shut off the engine, hoping the police and national guard would think they were all dead. Mr. Dunson was also wounded.

John Leroy urged the others to remain quiet and as calm as possible. He had been shot in the chest, stomach and arm.

Two other men in the car were also wounded.

Charles Dunson will be permanently blind in one eye and possibly the other as well.

Ronald Powell is still carrying shot gun pellets in his head and a .30 caliber slug in his hip.

At 5:00 a.m. on July 28, John Leroy died.

John Leroy was murdered by the National Guard and/or members of the Detroit Police Department.

At 10:30 p.m. on the night of July 24, Charles Dunson volunteered to drive his step-brother Ronald Powell home. Mr. Powell's wife was nine months pregnant and due to deliver any day. John Leroy and two other men in the neighborhood of Mr. Dunson's home at 5105 Garland decided to come along. It turned out to be a bad decision.

After getting into Dunson's 1963 Plymouth station wagon, they proceeded toward Powell's home at 3489 Lycaste. At Gladwin and Mack they were stopped at a police-national guard checkpoint.

They were questioned and told to proceed by an alternate route because of "sniper fire" ahead. Apparently satisfied with Mr. Powell's reason for trying to get home, they were not arrested at that time, even though it was after the curfew, nor were they told to return.

They went ahead, following exactly the route that had been suggested by the national guard. Coming South on Charlevoix, they turned right onto Lycaste, shortly after 11:00 p.m. At this point they were one and one half blocks from Mr. Powell's home.

Driving slowly up Lycaste, Mr. Dunson noticed an empty jeep parked on the sidewalk on the west side of Lycaste. Thinking they were to be questioned again, he slowed down and as they came abreast of the jeep he stopped.

As soon as the car stopped, the firing began. It came from the front, and both sides of the car. The firing lasted for nearly ten minutes. The firing came from troops and police who had apparently been concealed as they drove up the street.

When the firing ceased, everyone in the car remained silent for about ten minutes. Nothing happened. They began to cry for help. Their cries were ignored.

More than one-half hour later a voice said "If you want any help, you'll have to crawl out of your car and lie down. They did so.

For more than an hour they were to lie in the pools of their own blood and vomit. They were given no medical attention.

Those who live on the street who came out to learn what had happened were told to get back in their houses or they too would be shot. Finally, after 1:00 a.m. police scout cars arrived and began transporting the men to the hospital. The men in the scout cars were sympathetic.

The Fifth Estate and People Against Racism (PAR) will continue its investigation until all of the questions about John Leroy's death are answered. More than \$2,000 in reward money has been made available for information leading to the solution of killings such as John Leroy's as well as other deaths and damage to property.

In the Leroy case the following questions remain:

Who were the police and National Guardsmen on duty on Lycaste between Charlevoix and Goethe that night?

Why do the police claim that John Leroy was shot in an incident totally unrelated to the one described above and that he had been looting?

Who was the guardsman who was shot by another guardsman in the crossfire at Dunson's car?

Who was the photographer who appeared after the shooting and took pictures of the whole scene?

Who were the two white men in a white two-door hardtop who drove down Lycaste after Dunson's car did?

Did the guardsman at the first checkpoint radio ahead to the guardsmen on Lycaste that the car was coming?

Why will the police not comment or release any information on this incident?

If you have information about any of these questions, call 962-3855 or 831-6478 immediately. There is a reward.

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New Evidence in Leroy Killing by Frank H. Joyce, FE #37, September 1-15, 1967

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