

# The People Own the City in Detroit Uprising

reprint from *Fifth Estate*, July 1967

John Sinclair

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“Light My Fire” rises through the radio ranks for weeks and, when it hits number one on the stations, the people respond and burn the city down. Or play Archie Shepp’s “Fire Music” album as background music for the Detroit purification: the scope and feeling of the peoples’ mood is there—an elegy for Malcolm X.

Troops massed at the Hudson’s Woodward entrances to keep the plastic cattle safe from lawless, pillaging, looting criminals, as the Governor and the President of the United States call them on TV. And still the fires burn; the stores fall; the people set the night on fire.

You can watch it on TV if you like; a new taste of instant reality for the folks back home. The mode of the music changed and walls of the city shook and fell. Yes, they did. Oh, it was Robin Hood Day in merry old Detroit, the first annual, city-wide, all free, fire sale. And the people without got their hands on the goodies.

Whole families climbed through the windows and picked the stores clean, carting home the groceries they’d been paying their lives for all these years. Free furniture, color TV’s, guitars, leather coats, shoes, clothes, and liquor.

And when their energies turned from smashing the stores, they would go for the police and not, you’ll notice, their neighbors. This country is built on a powder keg of plunder and greed, and the fuse burned down. That’s all.

The people ruled the city for a minute, and may still be ruling when this is printed. The hypocrisy of “democratic capitalism” stood exposed, naked, and ugly.

Sing it; shout it; scream it down. The news is out, PEOPLE; you own the town.

# fi fifth Estate

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