

# ***Free Press* Confirms *Fifth Estate* Stories on Leroy Killing**

Frank H. Joyce

1967

On Sunday, September 3, the *Detroit Free Press* ran a five page feature entitled, "The 43 Who Died." It was an in depth investigation into each riot connected death carried out by three competent *Free Press* staff reporters.

The three, Barbara Stanton, William Serrin and Gene Glotz, compiled evidence on the John Leroy case among the others. Their finding substantially corroborate the *Fifth Estate* version of his death (see *Fifth Estate*, August 15–31, 1967 and September 1–15, 1967). They added some new information as to the horror Leroy and his companions suffered at the hands of the National Guard.

## **Bystanders Threatened**

They tell how people on Lycaste Street responded to the wounded men's pleas for assistance as they lay bleeding to death and were threatened by the guard to get back in their houses or they would be shot, too.

The article demolishes the Guard contention that anyone in the Leroy car was armed or shot at anyone.

The total lack of compassion by the Guardsmen for their wounded victims comes through in these quotes—"one Guardsman asked by one of the wounded men to take him to a hospital replied: 'What do you want me to do? Carry you on my back?'"

And further, "Dunson claims one Guardsman told the wounded 'Shut up or we'll shoot some more.'"

This grisly tale of the unbridled use of power is just one of 43 that are chronicled by the reporters. No sensitive person can read through them without turning away and asking himself, was this slaughter justified? The conclusion of the *Free Press* staffers is that "A majority of the riot victims need not have died. Their deaths could have been—and should have been—prevented."

Significantly, the Guard comes in for the most severe criticism for their refusal to obey Gen. Throckmorton's order to unload their rifles resulting in at least nine innocent people dying.

## **Police "Restrained"**

Our main area of disagreement with the *Free Press* is their assessment of the performance of the city police which they describe as "generally restrained and impressive." After interviewing rioters, looters, police prisoners, being in the riot area ourselves, and talking to the police we can't see how the *Free Press* came to a conclusion such as they did.

Our investigation leads us to believe that the insurrection was a period of an unbridled orgy of sadism and cruelty on the part of the police. The Detroit Police and their day-to-day methods of repression within the ghetto

were the immediate cause of the uprising, one of the major factors that accounted for the continuance of it, and will be one of the major factors in the next one unless drastic steps are taken to remedy the situation.

We suggest as beginning steps the following measures initiated in a letter from State Rep. Jackie Vaughn III to the Speaker to the State House, Rep. Robert Waldron. They are as follows:

1. An immediate investigation into the police department which would include mental examinations to determine which officers are unfit to serve because of prejudicial or psychopathic tendencies.
2. An independent civilian police review board set up at the precinct level to review charges of misbehavior by officers.
3. All white policemen must be removed completely from the black community.
4. Demand that the Justice Department investigate and prosecute cases of conspiracy by Detroit Police officers to deprive Negroes of their civil rights during the rebellion.
5. Institute a new policy for the use of firearms for police, as suggested by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. This policy would allow a police officer to fire his weapons only to save him self or another person from being "grievously injured or killed.
6. The city council of Detroit be elected by districts giving ghetto citizens more of chance for political participation in the affairs of their community.

Will these proposals end the problems of Detroit? No, but they will be a beginning and we must start somewhere besides the Hudson Committee.



Frank H. Joyce  
*Free Press Confirms Fifth Estate Stories on Leroy Killing*  
1967

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/38-september-15-30-1967/free-press-confirms-fifth-estate-stories-on-leroy-killing>  
Fifth Estate #38, September 15-30, 1967

**[fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net)**