

# Excerpts from a Rebellion

How the *Fifth Estate* Reported It

Various Authors

2017

The following are excerpts from stories published in the *Fifth Estate* immediately following the July 1967 events.

Reading them a half century later, one is saddened and angered by the fact that the causes of the Rebellion—police brutality, racial discrimination, and wealth inequality—remain virulent and unresolved.

The complete articles and others are at [FifthEstate.org/archive](https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/).

## **The Coat Puller, a column by John Sinclair, [<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/35-august-1-15-1967/the-coat-puller/>][FE #35, August 1–15, 1967]**

“Light My Fire” [by The Doors] rises through the radio ranks for weeks and, when it hits number one on the stations, the people respond and burn the city down.

Soldiers in battle green and tommyguns hold down the banks and furniture stores where there’s still furniture, gun shops, troops massed at the Woodward Hudson’s entrances to keep the plastic castle 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.

No, baby, it’s not a “race riot,” or anything as simple as that. People just got tired of being hassled by police and cheated by businessmen and got out their equalizers and went to town. The mode of the music changed and the walls of the city shook and fell. Yes they did. Oh, it was Robin Hood Day in merry olde Detroit, the first annual city-wide all-free fire sale, and the people without got their hands on the goodies.

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. The troops protected the owners’ possessions and shot the people down in the streets for money. Sing it, shout it, scream it down—the news is out, people, you own the town.

## **“Get the big stuff” by Peter Werbe, [<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/35-august-1-15-1967/get-the-big-stuff/>][FE #35, August 1–15, 1967]**

Hippie and political residents of the Warren Forest area reacted to the situation just like their poorer neighbors—they took whatever wasn’t nailed down.

They joined the Negroes and Southern whites in cleaning out the stores on Trumbull and Forest, which now lie in ashes,. Looters came back laden with goodies, swapping stories of harrowing experiences with the guardsmen and bartering goods that they had in excess. The mayor was certainly right about the “carnival atmosphere.” Everything was FREE.

**Residents Describe Jail Experiences by Anonymous,  
[[<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/35-august-1-15-1967/jailed-residents-describe-experiences/>][FE #35, August 1–15, 1967]]**

We were almost home [on Sunday] when five cop cars pulled up with guns sticking out of all the windows and stopped us.

The cops that came over to our car stuck shotguns in our faces and made us get out. They handcuffed our hands behind our backs. They lined us up against the brick wall of a house and started questioning us, searching us and banging our heads against the wall.

At the station, as they shoved us into the cell, one cop stood and hit us in the face with his fist. Every once in a while they would bring in more prisoners. Almost all of them were brought in for curfew violations and almost all of them had been beaten.

Tuesday night they brought fifteen sandwiches on a tray to the cell block. There were now over one hundred people in the block. Those near the door grabbed the food and the cops told us they would be back in a while with more. People waited for hours until some of them started fainting. The cops refused to do anything about them [until] people started screaming.



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<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/398-summer-2017/excerpts-from-a-rebellion>  
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