

The Detroit American Hate

Fifth Estate Collective

1968

Detroit's only operating daily newspaper, *The Detroit American*, today was named "Uptight Honkie of the Month" for June by Detroit Area People Against Racism (PAR). The *Detroit American* was cited for its flagrant use of the "crime in the streets" issue to produce anti-Negro hysteria.

In announcing the award, Detroit PAR's Executive Director, David P. Kramer, said, "The media are always in a position to reinforce racist fears. During the month of June, *The Detroit American* has shown an outstanding ability in this normally subtle role."

PAR cited the following practices by the newspaper as those earning it the "Uptight Honkie" award:

- * a general overconcern with crime, as evidenced by the daily "Police Blotter" which describes each of the previous day's crimes in detail sufficient only to convey the race and unsavory nature of suspected criminals.

- * use of the words, "thug," "punk," "vulture," "brat," "slob," "whelp," "scoundrel," "sex maniac," "street tough," "street cur," and "street jackal," in referring to suspected criminals.

- * descriptions of suspected criminals which imply racial stereotypes: "thug with dyed reddish processed hair," "an afro haircut," "wore a headrag," "kinky hair," "prominent lips," "processed hair, heavy with grease; frequent use of the phrase, "the victim could describe the thug only as to his color."

- * an editorial June 20, in which the editor stated: "There have been questions asked and some eyebrows raised at the use of descriptive nouns in our coverage of crime on the streets of Detroit...we will continue to use the best weapons [against crime] at our command—publicity, ridicule, detraction, derogation, belittlement—and thus picture the 'punks' for the low creatures they really are with the hope that they will become so known to their neighbors and friends.

- * a story appearing on June 5 which contrasts dramatically in language and tone with stories of inner-city crime: 20 to 30 Grosse Pointe High students were arrested on assault and disorderly conduct charges resulting from an incident attended by 35 police officers. The students reportedly poured oil on the street and tried to set fires by spinning their tires, they pounded cars passing in a funeral procession and tore the aerial and flasher from two police cars. Throughout the *American's* story, the students were referred to as "youths."

William T. Witt, Chairman of Detroit PAR, stated: "Whatever the intentions of the *Detroit American* may be, the effect of its coverage is to fan the flames of white hysteria. By its liberal use of terms which indirectly but clearly convey that a number of crimes are committed by blacks, and by using flamboyant and provocative 'descriptive nouns' to refer to suspected criminals, the *Detroit American* is telling white people just what they want to hear: Beware of Detroit's black population."

Each month Detroit PAR elects as "Uptight Honkie of the Month," the person or institution that has played a particularly blatant or creative role in White America's continuing effort to maintain its control and exploitation of people of color at home and abroad.

Spokesmen for Detroit PAR stated that plans to present the "Uptight Honkie of the Month Award" to the *Detroit American* will be announced shortly.



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