

Hate In The Haight

Thorne Dreyer

1968

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF., JULY 19 (Liberation News Service)—The scene in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury was tense Friday evening. Street confrontations between cops and free men had occurred the two previous nights and more street activity was expected into the weekend. On Wednesday and Thursday night, according to one witness, "People were throwing molotov cocktails as freely as rocks and bottles." Barricades were erected and set aflame in the streets of Haight and the pigs were greeted with flying objects.

Wednesday night's action was ignited by several narc busts on the street. The Tactical Squad (TS) of the San Francisco Police made the scene armed with a brand new weapon of destruction: a club with a triangular cross-section which, when swung, cuts flesh through heavy clothing.

A fire barricade was constructed across Haight at Clayton Street, with material liberated from a nearby construction site. The most imaginative element in the barricade was a burning outhouse. The pigs got especially up-tight about the fiery shithouse, dousing it continually. The portable pisser was always the first object to be re-ignited.

Windows of a nearby branch of Bank of America were broken (as had occurred during the Berkeley street actions of the previous week). A molotov cocktail was tossed in, but the bank reports "little damage."

The TS split for a while, leaving the regular San Francisco fuzz in charge.

They soon returned, however, many on motorcycles. The pig bikers roared through the middle of the streets and up onto sidewalks, chasing the local folk.

At least 50 people were injured by the cops and 43 arrests have been confirmed. No curfew was imposed.

San Francisco mayor Alioto declared, "Our citizens are sick and tired of false charges of police brutality. In circumstances like these, we will use whatever force is necessary to keep the peace."

Thursday night was more of the same. Cops arrived with warrants, probably from the night before. Barricades were again set up and the air was full of missiles.

The pigs singled out one house as a trouble spot, and charged, clubs swinging. They emerged with sixteen residents, clubbing them on the head as they dragged them out.

One of those arrested during Thursday's action was Richard Burgess, former San Francisco cop. Burgess, known as "Sergeant Sunshine" was recently fired by the SF Police Force when he came out advocating the legalization of marijuana.

The Bay Area of northern California is tense, as more shit is expected to fly in the Haight, Berkeley is smoldering and could re-ignite, and Stockton, 20 miles from Oakland and the scene of battles between young blacks and cops earlier this week, could easily erupt again.

The emerging battle cry is "The Streets Belong to the People," and more and more of the people are becoming committed to taking that which is theirs.

fifth Estate

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