

“New cries of battle and victory”

Fifth Estate Collective

1968

“Shortly after the riot in Detroit last summer, I talked to a Negro in his late thirties, and I asked him what he thought about the 12-year old boy lying in the street after being shot by a white policeman in Newark. A newsmagazine had the picture on its cover in living color. The man said he thought it was a joke. ‘A joke?’ I inquired. He said, ‘Yeah, the whole goddam thing is a joke. Every year, they pass some new damn civil rights bill; and every year, Emmett Till gets younger.’”

So writes senior-editor Claude Brown in *Look* magazine.

At 1:20 A.M., Wednesday, July 26, 1967, the youngest Emmett Till was pronounced dead-on-arrival at Ford Hospital. Four-year old Tonia Blanding had been machine-gunned by your National Guard in her aunt’s apartment at Euclid and 12th.

At this point, one year later, it seems all too frivolous to try listing the litany of atrocities visited upon the powerless by the powerful.

You already know American history.

It seems equally frivolous, to say here that there has been and will probably be no serious attempts at orderly change among the powerful. You already know world history.

What might be said here has, really, all been said before. It is, again, frivolous to repeat it.

What can stand to be repeated then, perhaps, are these words of one Ernesto “Che” Guevara: “Wherever death may surprise us, it will be welcome, provided that this, our battle cry, reach some receptive ear, that another hand reach out to pick up weapons, and that other fighting men come forward to intone our funeral dirge with the staccato of machine guns and new cries of battle and victory.”

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