

# New Bethel Breakthrough

Fifth Estate Collective

1969

The pre-trial examination of Rafael Viera, accused of murder in the New Bethel shooting, heard testimony that may clear him of the charge.

Viera is accused of murdering Patrolman Michael Czapski last march in a shoot-out between police and several armed citizens. Patrolman Richard Worobec who was shot also, testified from a bed in Detroit General Hospital that Viera did not resemble the man he saw shoot Czapski. He did say Viera looked like one of the dozen armed men he saw flee the scene right before the shooting began.

Worobec, who is recovering from three bullet wounds sustained in the shooting, gave other testimony that conflicts with the prosecution's contention that two other men were involved in the shootings.

According to Worobec, he and Czapski stopped to investigate 12 armed men who were assembled in front of the New Bethel Church on Linwood where a meeting of the Republic of New Africa was being held.

As the police approached, "the group raised their rifles in a "black power" salute and ran around the corner onto Philadelphia. Czapski approached one man who stayed behind.

The single man, according to Worobec, then leveled his rifle hip-high and shot Czapski in the stomach mortally wounding him. The man then opened fire on Worobec in his patrol car hitting him three times.

Worobec described the assailant as a "Medium dark-skinned Negro male, about 5'8" and bulky; Viera is a short, slightly built, and light-skinned man of Puerto Rican descent.

Later, Worobec said that one of the men he had seen fleeing had "stringy, curly, hippy-type hair." Viera had very long hair at the time of his arrest.

With this testimony the State's case seems blown apart with the exception of an RNA member who has identified Viera as the killer. RNA leaders feel this witness is either a police agent or is willing to testify against Viera as part of a deal whereby the charges pending against him stemming from the incident would be dropped.

## Related

See other FE articles on the New Bethel Incident

# **fifth Estate**

Fifth Estate Collective  
New Bethel Breakthrough  
1969

<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/84-july-24-august-6-1969/new-bethel-breakthrough>  
Fifth Estate #84, July 24-August 6, 1969

**[fiftheestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fiftheestate.org)**