

S. F. BLOWS

Sights and Sounds at Hunters Point Wednesday

On Wednesday, September 28, FLATLANDS went to the Bayview-Hunter's Point district of San Francisco with Mark Comfort. We wanted to see for ourselves how much damage had been done, and try to get some idea of the mood of the people in that area.

We first drove down Third St. The damage was obviously not the result of complete lack of control. In places, only one or two stores had been damaged on a block. One gas station was completely without glass; another, closer to the center of the trouble, was untouched.

Although radio and television had spoken of a "30 block" area, the visible damage extended only a few blocks on either side of Third and Palou. As in Oakland six weeks before, glass had been replaced very quickly. By noon, many of the shattered windows had new panes; there were several glass company trucks on the street.

We went into the project itself, looking for the Rev. Bruce Kennedy, a minister who lives and

works in the Hunter's Point area. Except for a few new units, the projects look as if they were made from very old cardboard. These buildings were put up as temporary units in the late 1930s. Even a quick walk through the project would tell many leaders more than thousands of words.

Talking to the people in the project, we learned that the Rev. Kennedy, Ken Simmons and two other men had been standing on a corner the night before when policemen burst out of a paddy wagon. Without a word from the police, the four men found themselves being hit in the back with rifle butts; one was injured in the head.

We went down to see Rev. Kennedy, but stopped outside the Bayview Community Center. A few people were already throwing steel bars and bottles at passing cars driven by whites.

Youths' statement

The youth of the community had had a meeting at noon, and we were handed a sheet which read:

It was decided that we want to have Governor Brown, Willie Brown, Philip Burton, John Bur-

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RIOT IN SAN FRANCISCO

Racial Violence in S. F.

by Norman Adams

Mark Comfort's Report

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Thoughts on the causes and effects of the disturbance

San Francisco has now joined other cities, such as Los Angeles, Cleveland, Chicago, Omaha, Atlanta and New York, in a rude awakening.

When people are left out of the world that makes the rules, they become angry and hopeless. Their despair will come out in violence.

In trying to find out about the incidents in San Francisco, I could not help but feel some bitterness. The people spoke of their own respect for law and order, but gave examples of disrespect from policemen in their areas.

One middle-aged Negro lady told of being stopped by a white policeman in the Fillmore district, one week before the riots, and asked if she was a street walker looking for customers.

A Negro man told how he was stopped in his car downtown by a white policeman and ordered out of his car like a criminal because he hadn't stopped at a light.

One woman told how two white policemen picked her up and offered to let her go if she would submit to them sexually. She chose jail.

All of these incidents happened before the riots. The policemen's lack of respect for black Americans brought things to a head

last week in San Francisco.

The next time

or printed in some newspaper or magazine, but no real action is taken. Some forces in the San Francisco ghetto are waiting and planning for a day that will make Watts and others look like children playing cowboys and Indians. These forces are saying "White America has not met fully with our educated and accepted black leaders, so the fire next time (and I do believe there will be a next time, if the power structure fails to act) will be Hell on earth."

I talked with a member of the underground movement, and I could tell he wasn't just threatening, but had a deep desire to carry out the ideas of his movement. In short, he was saying, "If I cannot have what is rightfully mine, then I'll watch you burn, America!"

When I asked if his movement had played a part in setting the city's racial riots aflame, he said "Hell no! We didn't shoot the kid, nor are we keeping conditions of oppression over blacks."

He made it very clear to me that there was a difference between a riot and a revolt. A riot "is self-starting or has little organiza-

tion. A revolt has organization and leadership."

Will eyes open?

My experience in San Francisco's Hunters Point and Fillmore districts made me remember a statement by James Baldwin (in

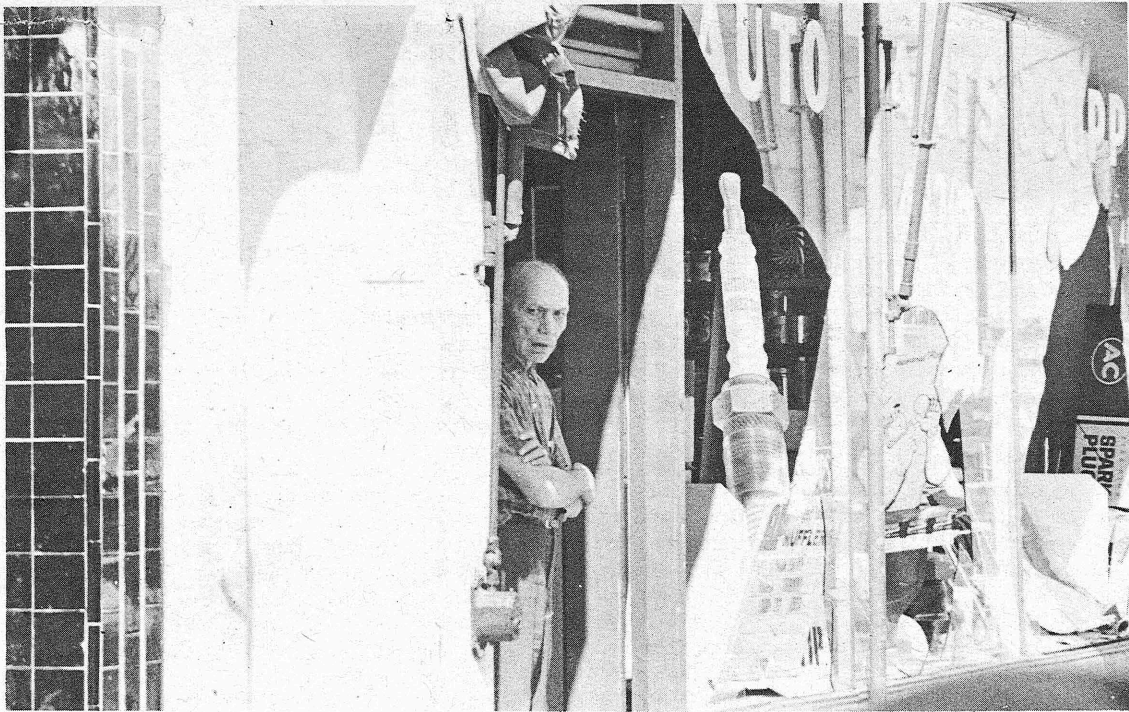
Many people are asking about the causes of riots and unrest. Often the answers are filed away,

his book, "Notes of a Native Son") "People who shut their eyes to reality simply invite their own destruction."

It sometimes seems as if the American whites — that is, some — have shut their eyes to reality about America's black people. If this is so, then the Los Angeles war cry will be heard throughout the land: Burn, Baby, burn.

Oakland has much to learn from the unrest in San Francisco, for the elements for a much greater riot and racial unrest exist in Oakland.

Riot or revolt, San Francisco, Oakland and all America are in for more awakenings if they return to business as usual. They cannot afford to overlook or forget that Negro Americans are no longer pleased with ghetto living, with poverty, discrimination and lack of human respect.



Third St. business man after riot.

Hunter's Point vs. Police Department

The fight on Tuesday night

by Calvin E. Booker

I was driving in Oakland when a news flash came over my car radio that small groups were throwing rocks and breaking windows in San Francisco, and Mayor Shelly was called to the scene and was booed away by the crowd. He didn't get a word in on the bull horns and everything else.

I arrived there about 10 p.m. There was great excitement at Third and Palou. As I approached the scene, the police with riot guns were making Negroes back up. The people were shouting "Whitey must go."

At the time the burglar alarm was going at a number of places along 3rd St. Sam's shoe store at 4634 3rd St. had been looted. The glass at the U-Save Meat company at 4608 was knocked

out. The police stood by in the middle of the streets. At each corner large groups of Negroes marched in the area shouting, "Kill that Nigger killer." "Whitey is a dirty dog and he must die."

Large crowds, mothers, fathers, and small children, were standing around, like spectators waiting for something to happen. At the 4600 block of 3rd St. a crowd of Negroes decided to plan a strike on downtown San Francisco along Market street.

A KTVU reporter's car was damaged by a fire bomb. At Bay View down 3rd Street, a burglar alarm was sounding. The police rushed to the area. Some broke the glass of The Bay View Inn and climbed through the window to search the place while 20 or more police stood outside with guns ready to shoot. In the 4700 block there must have been 40

policemen standing in the street with riot guns and high-powered rifles watching roof tops.

Large crowds of Negroes were standing on the sidewalks shouting dirty names at police in the street. Then a battle line of police marched like soldiers on the sidewalk through crowds of Negroes. The police did not break a double line but kept marching, holding riot sticks and guns.

A block away from the riot area, police went into skirmish formation and marched down 3rd Street clearing away Negroes standing on the corners on both sides of the street. Some Negroes weren't doing anything but watching and didn't like being shoved around for nothing. So they decided to argue back and tried to push against the police. But there were three policemen to each rebellious person.

Most of the young people moved quickly away from the skirmish,

ton, Mayor Shelly, Chief Cahill to meet with us for the accomplishment of said agreement as to solving the problems we are confronted with today.

We the people of the Bayview-Hunter's Point Neighborhood community will not be contented with anything less than justice; we do not want usual promises from the leaders; we will not settle for anything less than the following:

1. The San Francisco Police department not be allowed to wear arms in said meeting. NO ARMS ALLOWED and

2. The harassment be left to the people of the Bayview-Hunter's Point area . . . that the system might be corrupted. Try to investigate the system, and

3. The Bayview-Hunter's Point children, young adults receive some of the things that have been promised for so long in jobs, recreational equipment, education, and

4. The press stop the harassment, no photographers allowed at said meeting, and

5. We organize as clubs to express attention and to monitor order in the area, and San Francisco Police Department and National Guards move out to certain boundaries.

Talk in the afternoon

One man wanted to tell us his feelings about what was going on. "The others, they live on the avenues," he said, "to hell with 'em."

We asked if the damaged stores had been specially chosen. "They know who the enemy is," he answered, and described which ones had been saved and why. He explained that the untouched service station had always employed Negroes, and had been decent to the kids when they had very little money. He told similar stories about other stores.

"It's what the kids want, not me. I'm over the hill, I'm over 40 years of age; it's what the kids want — anything they do, we'll back 'em up."

"These black mothers bringing their little kids out here. . . in years to come they'll know what this is like. The kids are doing this, it's for the younger generation. They want an education and everything else."

Mark Comfort stayed throughout the evening (and as he was

not allowed out, until the next day) and was able to record some of the words of the people and the sounds of the trouble when things were worst. Much of what follows without quotes is in Mark's words, although it is impossible to identify voices clearly in the noise.

Inside Bayview Community Center at about 5:30 people were singing. To the refrain, "And before I'll be afraid, I'll be buried in my grave," they were using verses such as "No policemen, no more cops," or "no more Jim Crow." They also sang, "Do you want your freedom?" and answered "Certainly, Lord, Certainly Lord, certainly, certainly Lord."

Men called out: "We've been negotiating with the white man for years and years and years. . ."

"Black power, black power, all over here."

"White man's been taking, so what's wrong with the black man taking . . . nobody don't like it, — 'em."

They sang again, "This old light of mine, I'm going to let it shine . . ."

Outside, the kids had started to throw bottles, a few shots were being fired. Someone shouted "You guys gotta get organized, every time a cop comes, we're going to stone him . . ."

On the street

Approximately one hundred police officers with their nightsticks and shotguns really are moving up the street. They have the kids blocked off, now they're going to start moving in on them. (To the kids:) keep moving, keep moving, keep going, keep going, move on out.

Now the Highway Patrol and the riot squad are moving in, clearing the street at 3rd and Newcombe; one Negro has been shot in the street (police were in front of the liquor store shooting across the street toward the Community center, up Newcombe.)

(At this point, Mark shouted "Cease fire." They did, for a while. Then, to the kids:) Lay down, lay down; one Negro has been shot; one man behind the Cadillac has been shot; freeze on it, hold it.

"They're bringing him (the wolded guy) down on their shoulders. Three are wounded."

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and reformed skirmish lines up one street, while police sent a battle line up another. Then the Negroes, seeing two lines approaching, retreated to the top of the hill in the housing project area; here they stood firm and started fighting. As Negroes were battling on one street, a small group went to another street to protect the rear.

With 75 or more policemen closing in on them, all of them got away except three. The captured Negroes were ordered to stand with hands and feet apart, were loaded into paddy wagons. I witnessed the Negroes being moved from one wagon to another. One Negro, Earl Alexander, was standing in the back door of the wagon trying to talk to the cops. He was punched in the face by a cop standing in the back of the wagon. Soon the area down below was

beginning to look like a ghost town.

One of the top brass arrived

Comfort Report

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There are now six cops on top of the center with shotguns, and also a couple M-1s, so these guys are not playing games.

The last brother who was taken away was carrying a mike, trying to keep things down.

"I've got a feeling this is going to make things worse, I really do."

Dr. Goodlett spoke again, "This is what happens when men resort to violence. You know, I'd go and get the man if the cops don't feel like its safe to get him but then I'd about get shot."



Some of the cops on top of the roof are laughing—I guess they think this is funny. Police officers are making themselves comfortable in this situation (this referred to one officer sitting on a chair on the street. Heari this said; he answered, "I mig as well."

Someone from the Center tried to speak:

"Now that the police and the National Guard are coming in, we need to make some positive move. Here's what we'd like to do; we'd like to get some people who are spirited about protecting the Hunter's Point community. We need people who are willing to get out on the street."

Others spoke up: "We're going to have to go beyond 3rd St. with this, we're going to have to go downtown."

"This afternoon, I have witnessed a lot of children who look like my son who doesn't even know what this world is all about."

Finally, one man called out: "This is an American problem; for 400 years, this is an American problem."

The two boys are lying on the street. One is crawling to the other—now one is limping trying to run, he gets away, the other is still on the street.

"None of these kids were armed, they are now victims of the police force."

Now fourteen cops coming up the street (Newcombe) with shotguns, telling people to move it out; there are still groups of black people on the corners. Some shouting "we don't have any guns at all."

A couple of Negro boys moving up with some stretchers, the ambulance now moving up. One man

who was trying to stop the riot was shot; Adam Rogers, an EOC aide, was shot in the leg.

The shooting was quite heavy at this point. Dr. Carlton Goodlett of San Francisco was speaking for a television cameraman.

"Two or three of the young people were shot. The important thing is that violence is not the way and I'm hoping that this tragedy . . .

"I know we have the resources in this community to deal with the problem of jobs for these young people . . ."

As Dr. Goodlett spoke, two boys were wounded.

All telephone lines were cut off; can't get anything out. No Negro reporters in the area at all.

"I wish the black man would wake up to the fact that the white man is out to kill him."

"There's a man wounded, they are searching his pockets."

"Two wounded on the streets, Cadillac all shot up. We're all taking a chance to be shot in the back. Can the black people fight back . . . maybe this will wake them up."

The officers had their shotguns aimed at the windows at the top of the Community Center. At 6:30 the ambulance came up (one newspaper reported the ambulance wasn't allowed through.

"You little kids get off the street; they don't care who they shoot, everything that's black."

"I've never witnessed anything like this in my life; these people don't care who they hurt. You can break out windows and do what you want, you're not going to get anywhere till you hit 'em where it hurts."

"They started to shoot everything that didn't get out of the way."

FLATLANDS SAYS

The worst and saddest thing about riots is that they seem to work for a while. When hundreds of people will stand in front of guns, lots of other people start to ask why. And when they think they've found the "cause", they come up with the cure:

Did it happen because one white policeman shot one Negro boy? Then you suspend the white man and send Negro policemen to the boy's funeral.

Did it happen because the shooting made the gangs mad? Then you make a curfew and even stop the football games so the gangs can't meet anyone they might get mad at.

Did it happen because it was too hot, or because the moon was full? Then you can only hope it will get cooler—the moon's bound to change, at least.

Did it happen because of "outside agitators"? (Sounds like Mississippi). Then you announce an investigation.

Did it happen because there weren't enough jobs? Then presto! You find 2,000 jobs right away.

And so on.

But these are small wounds, not causes, and the cures that go with them are bandages — they might hide the trouble, but they won't make things better. Bussing school kids is that kind of a bandage; the Job Fair was that kind of a bandage; San Francisco had a Job Fair months ago.

No. The grade school teacher must learn the language her Negro pupils speak, just as they must learn her language. The high school counselor must learn to look at grades and scores instead of skin and clothes. The man who hires must learn to think about people who want to get in instead of those that are already in. The unions must remember — because they're supposed to know it already — that all men have the right to decent work for a decent wage.

Nobody in the flatlands has a magic wand big enough to do all this at once. But there are a few chances to chip away at the fixed ideas of the schools, the businesses, the unions, the powers-that-be. Maybe, if the people act strongly and peacefully in boycotting the schools so that everyone in Oakland is forced to see that real changes are needed; if the unions and those who hire will reach out, then maybe no little boys will be wounded by rifles in the streets of Oakland — because someone was killed, because it was a hot day . . .