

THE CITY ABLAZE VICE RAID ON A HOT SUMMER NIGHT TURNED TWELFTH STREET INTO THE CRUCIBLE OF RIOT

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It began **on a hot** , sweaty **night on** Twelfth Street with **a police raid on a** seedy blind pig and it ended 92 hours later with **a** morgue full of bodies and **a** good chunk of **the city** in ashes. It was **the** worst racial disorder in U.S. history -- four days of fire and pillage that scarred **the city** 's soul **as** well **as** its streets.

In an odd way, everybody saw it coming and nobody believed it would really happen. When it did, it exacted **a** terrible toll: 657 injured, 682 fires, 412 buildings destroyed, 1,700 stores looted, 43 killed by **the** end of **the** riot week. And one fragile dream -- that Detroit could escape **the** violence and racial conflict of **the** 1960s -- lay dead forevermore.

The trouble began in **the** middle of **a summer** of discontent, **on a night** when heat had stripped away all hope of sleep. But then Twelfth Street seldom slept **on a Saturday night** , not when business was so good for **the** \$10- **a** -trick hookers and **the** heroin pushers, for **the** pool halls and jazz clubs, **the** numbers runners and **the** high rollers, **the** sellers of smoky barbecue and cheap red wine.

On this Saturday **night** , **a** party was in full swing in **a** private club **on the** second floor of **a** print shop near **the** corner of Twelfth and Clairmount. **The** club called itself **the** United Civic League for Community Action; police knew it **as a** blind pig -- street slang for **a** place that dispenses liquor without **the** blessing and license of **the** state.

In **the** street below loitered **a** handful of plainclothes officers -- members of **the** 10th Precinct cleanup squad, enforcers of morality in **the** crowded, uneasy precinct, where **the** black residents were jammed in 21,000 to **a** square mile, more than twice **the** density of **the city** 's white neighborhoods.

Earlier that **night** , two undercover officers had tried to join **the** party, but something about them had excited **the** doorman's suspicions -- perhaps they were too clean-cut and athletic, traits that spelled C-O-P to any 10-year-old **on** Twelfth Street -- and **the** doorman had refused them entry.

The police could have conceded defeat and gone home. Instead, they let **the** slow, humid hours crawl by, and sometime in **the** dark, starless trough between midnight and dawn, an officer made **the** fateful suggestion: Let's give it another try before we go.

And so at 3:34 **a** .m., **on** Sunday, July 23, 1967, Patrolman Charles Henry fell into step with **a** group of giggling women and went right up **the** stairs, past **a** doorman now too weary or relaxed to notice, and strolled over to **the** bar to buy himself **a** beer. **The** room was full of people celebrating **the** return of two Vietnam veterans and no one questioned Henry's presence. Ten minutes later, time enough to be sure he had **the** evidence, his fellow officers smashed **the** glass street door and raced upstairs.

It would have been just another two-bit, **hot - night** , so-what **raid** , but for one thing: Instead of **the** 20 or 30 party-goers police expected to find, 82 people had jammed into **the** party, more than twice **as** many **as** could be accommodated in **the** police wagons now rolling up to **the** door.

A crowd gathered to watch. **The** arrested party-goers still were in high spirits; hanging out in **a** blind pig was **a** \$25 misdemeanor, an occasional surcharge that Twelfth Street revelers expected to pay for their fun. But among **the** onlookers, **the** bantering and **the** jokes began to give way to jeers and taunting of **the** police. Rocks and bricks materialized, and **as the** last police cruiser pulled away, **a** brick went through its rear window.

As far as the cleanup squad was concerned, however, it was all over but **the** paperwork. It was just before dawn **on** Sunday, normally **the** quietest and most crime-free shift of **the** week. In **the** entire **city** of Detroit, there were 193 police officers **on** patrol, or fewer than **the** number of people then milling about **on** Twelfth Street.

Sometime before 5 **a** .m., **a** 14-year-old Free Press carrier named Conrad Mallett Jr. left his home **on** Boston Boulevard with **a** wagon and an Airedale named Hamlet to pick up his morning papers. Twelfth Street "was always **a** hell of **a** sideshow," Mallett recalled 20 years later, so he expected to find some action. But nothing like what he saw in that muggy dawn.

Five or six hundred people were milling in **the** street, which glittered with broken glass, and there was **a** strange, nervous expectancy in **the** air, **a** feeling of something angry and pent up about to break loose. Louie, **the** white man from whom Mallett picked up his papers, had just been robbed. Someone was reaching into **a** shattered store window, and **the** father of another paperboy told young Mallett he'd better get home fast.

Mallett and Hamlet ran all **the** way home and burst into **the** bedroom of his sleeping father, Conrad Mallett Sr., an aide to Detroit Mayor Jerome Cavanagh.

"Dad," said young Mallett, "I think **the** riot has begun."

"Of all **the** major **cities** in **the** United States, Detroit was least likely to be struck by **a** race riot. Unlike Watts or Newark, Rochester or Cleveland, Detroit has worked longer and harder than any other **city** to see that it couldn't happen here."

-- Detroit Free Press editorial, July 26, 1967

In 1965, **the** year that Watts went up in flames, Fortune magazine reported that **the** Negro community in Detroit -- **the** word "black" was just beginning to shoulder "Negro" out of **the** vocabulary -- had **a** role unparalleled in any major American **city** . Blacks made up about 37 percent of **the city** 's 1.6 million population. Detroit had two black congressmen, several black mayoral appointees, **a** black councilman and two black school board members.

Cavanagh owed his upset 1961 election to black voters fed up with bearing **the** brunt of his predecessor's Negro- bashing "crackdown **on** crime," and he did not forget **the** debt. Almost immediately, an effort was launched to impose civilian control **on the** police department, to improve relationships with **the** black community and to recruit more blacks for a department then 95 percent white. White police officers thought **the** new mayor was crazy. They already knew how to handle blacks -- hit 'em upside **the** head -- and they openly mocked and defied his efforts.

In 1966, when racial disorders swept **the** ghettos of 43 **cities** , a gang of young blacks took to **the** streets of Detroit in a three- **night** spree of window smashing **on** Kercheval **on the city** 's east side. Cavanagh sent in **the** ministers instead of **the** police, ordering officers to stay behind barricades some distance away while black community leaders circulated through **the** crowd, asking for calm.

Even **the** heavens were **on** Cavanagh's side in those days. A gentle rain dampened **the** passions of **the** crowd **on the second night** , and **on the third night the** disturbance petered out without serious incident. By **the summer** of 1967, mayors all over **the** United States were asking Jerry Cavanagh to come and tell them how he did it.

"I thought that if there was a place it wouldn't happen, that place would be Detroit," Conrad Mallett Sr. recalled recently.

But you didn't have to look very hard to see that **the** conditions of life for Detroit's 600,000 black residents, locked into a tightly circumscribed and tindery ghetto, had hardly changed.

Blacks in Detroit were systematically discriminated against in jobs and housing and subject to daily humiliations **as** they shopped and worked. They were harassed by police, ignored by **the** possessors of power and money, and elbowed callously out of **the** way for freeways and urban renewal.

In **the** late 1950s and early 1960s, thousands of blacks had been uprooted from **the** near east side for **the** construction of Lafayette Park and **the** Chrysler Freeway. Many found refuge in **the** Twelfth Street area, formerly a close- knit Jewish neighborhood whose residents had moved **on** to Southfield and Oak Park.

The pimps and winos and pushers survived **the** forced migration; many legitimate black merchants and business people did not. Those who were able to squeezed onto Twelfth Street, amid a jumble of bars and pawnshops, of prostitutes and pool halls and white shopkeepers who had not yet followed their old customers to **the** suburbs -- and who sometimes treated their new ones with contempt.

Nearby were many residential streets lined with solid, well-kept homes occupied by middle-class blacks who were frustrated by **the city** 's indifference to **the** sin strip in their midst. But by and large, **the** census districts along Twelfth from West Grand Boulevard to Clairmount had **the** highest population density, **the** greatest proportion of dilapidated and substandard homes, **the** largest number of landlord-tenant disputes, **the** worst unemployment, **the** deepest poverty, **the** highest crime rates, **the** lowest school achievement and **the** greatest concentration of rats, roaches and despair in **the city** .

A Hot Day Is Foreseen

-- Headline **on** Free Press weather story, July 23, 1967

As a brassy sun rose over **the city** Sunday morning, burglar alarms were pealing up and down Twelfth Street and **the** entire police force was being mobilized. Word of mouth was carrying **the** news like lightning through **the** neighborhood and looters had leapfrogged over to Linwood, a few blocks west of Twelfth, beginning an assault **on the** plate-glass shop windows there.

More police began arriving **on** Twelfth Street but, following **the** pattern of **the** Kercheval incident, they were standing back in order not to provoke **the** crowd further. A reckless, carnival air reigned **as** hundreds of looters stripped stores of liquor, groceries, cigarets, guns and guitars, wigs and shoes, six-packs and sharkskin pants, jewelry, silver, sofas, safes.

When police formed a flying wedge and charged down **the** street to clear it, **the** crowd parted like **the** sea before Moses, then came together again behind **the** police line to continue **the** sack of Twelfth Street.

Black storekeepers, alerted to **the** trouble, arrived and hastily erected signs proclaiming "Soul Brother" **on** their shops. So did a handful of white merchants seeking to save their stores from **the** mob. For a while, **the** "Soul Brother" signs kept **the** looters at bay; by nightfall, all restraint would give way and black-owned shops would be plundered **as** thoroughly **as** those owned by whites.

Teams of black leaders circulating through **the** street tried in vain to disperse **the** crowd. **The** popular black congressman, John Conyers, pleading with **the** mob from **the** hood of a car, was booed and stoned.

" **The** sound of it was something I had never heard before," said Arthur Johnson, Conyers' companion that day and now president of **the** NAACP in Detroit. " **The** combination of human noises, of glass being shattered, **the** sound of things falling and things burning. It was a terrible, frightening sound. If you heard it, you would never forget it."

Sometime after noon, **the** mood darkened, **the** Molotov cocktails blossomed and **the** riot exploded in its full, fiery intensity. Arson and looting spread to Dexter, Linwood, Grand River and Livernois **on the** west side, to Mack and Kercheval **on the** east side, up Woodward, Second, Third, Brush.

Fire fighters responding to **the** alarms were stoned by young toughs and retreated from **a** 100-block area of **the** west side, leaving **the** wind-whipped flames to leap and wander at will. Showers of sparks, like exploding fireworks, cascaded onto **the** rooftops of homes behind Linwood and Twelfth, setting several residential blocks **ablaze** . Police and fire fighters reported being shot at by unseen persons, setting off **a** fevered, week-long, near-paranoid hunt for snipers.

Radio and TV stations, worried about inflaming **the** situation, did not broadcast reports of **the** riot until late afternoon, so most white Detroiters were unaware of what was happening until 12 hours or more after **the** violence had begun.

For years afterward, Detroiters of both races would debate **the** appropriateness of **the** first police response to **the** troubles, some arguing that **a** swift, hard exercise of force and mass arrest of **the** looters early Sunday morning would have squelched **the** disorder **on the** spot, others maintaining that there would have been **a** bloodbath had **the** police tried it. If there ever was **a** moment when police could have regained control, it passed quickly.

At 2 p.m., **the** mayor called for **the** help of **the** state police. At 4:20 p.m., he called for **the** National Guard, but **the** riot had long since outraced any attempts to contain it.

At nightfall, **the** sky glowed red, **the** flames outran **the** screaming fire engines and **the** looters owned **the** streets. From **the** air, **the** center of **the** city appeared to be lit by witches' bonfires. National Guard helicopters droned overhead; bullets blasted through **the** night as police and guardsmen searched for snipers and shot at phantoms.

"WHERE IN HELL are **the** federal troops? . . . **the** Men of **the** Street, **the** police and **the** fire fighters and even **the** weary young national guardsmen were asking it at 2:15 a .m. Tuesday morning . . . handcuffed by **the** mayor and then **the** governor . . . ordered to hold their fire, they felt like dummies while **the** looters frolicked all about."

-- Mark Beltaire, Free Press columnist, July 26, 1967

On the second day, **the** dying began.

The 1967 disorder was no race riot in **the** classic sense, nothing like **the** 1943 riot in Detroit when roving gangs of blacks and whites committed mayhem **on** each other and **on** innocent victims. In 1967, rioters were infinitely less interested in interracial violence than in getting in **on the** great grab bag and **the** torching of buildings for fun and gain.

Within hours, whites had joined blacks in **the** looting. Except for **a** few rock-throwing incidents, white journalists in **the** riot area felt they were in far less danger from **the** rioters than from **the** gunslinging guardsmen.

Not until 20 hours after **the** trouble began did **the** riot claim its first fatality -- **a** young woman shot by an unseen gunman **as** she rode in **a** car **on** Woodward near Clairmount. Around midnight, **a** 45-year-old white man was shot by **a** white grocer in **the** Cass Corridor, **as** he emerged from **a** gutted store with **a** pocketful of shoelaces and cigars.

But anger and humiliation had been building all day Sunday among white police officers, who believed **the** order to show restraint had left them powerless against **the** flagrant looting and jeering hooligans. **On** Monday, tired, raw-tempered and still uncertain about precisely what their orders were, police began firing **on the** looters, who were slow to realize **the** rules of **the** engagement had changed.

At **the** same time, frightened, loose-triggered guardsmen had begun to respond to loud noises and rumors of snipers by spraying streets, streetlights and apartment buildings with automatic weapon and .50-caliber machine-gun fire. **The** fierceness of **the** riot had peaked and would soon begin to dissipate; **the** death toll was starting to rise.

One Detroit policeman was shot by **a** fellow officer in **a** scuffle with **a** looter. One fire fighter was shot by **a** sniper and another was electrocuted by **a** high tension wire while battling flames from an aerial ladder truck.

But what most of **the** victims had in common was that they were unlucky, civilian and black. Tonia Blanding, **a** four-year-old black girl, died in **a** hail of machine-gun fire when her brother lit **a** cigaret and guardsmen outside thought **the** flame was **the** flash from **a** sniper's rifle. Julius Dorsey, **a** black security guard struggling to fend off **a** group of looters, radioed for help; police and guardsmen arrived and shot Dorsey dead.

In **the** most notorious incident of **the** riot, three unarmed black youths were shotgunned to death at **the** Algiers Motel in what witnesses claimed was **a** lethal game of harassment and terror. Two policemen were charged with **the** Algiers slayings. Only one was brought to trial, and he was acquitted.

The final death toll was 33 blacks and 10 whites.

Thirty of **the** victims had been killed by **the** police or military. Of **the** 18 people fatally shot by Detroit police, 14 were looters. Guardsmen were involved in 11 deaths; nine of their victims were innocent of any crime.

Regular Army forces were involved in only one death, **on** Saturday afternoon, long after **the** force of **the** riot had been spent. Ernest Roquemore, 19, was killed when he ran into **a** paratrooper's line of fire in **the** alley behind an east side flat. Officers said they fired because one of Roquemore's companions carried **a** chrome-plated pistol. No pistol was found. Another youth at **the** scene said officers had mistaken his shiny transistor radio for **a** weapon.

As **the** body count began rising, Cavanaugh, Gov. George Romney and President Lyndon Johnson were engaged in **a** struggle over **the** terms under which federal troops would be flown to **the** burning **city** . Johnson wanted to put **the** onus for calling out **the** federal troops squarely **on** Romney; he did not want his critics saying, in his words, that "we cannot put enough people in Vietnam, so we go out and shoot civilians in Detroit."

It was midafternoon Monday before 4,700 troops from **the** 82d and 101st Airborne divisions were flown into what was then Selfridge Air Force Base outside Mt. Clemens, and early Tuesday morning before they were committed to **the** streets. **The** disciplined federal troops, many of them Vietnam veterans, **a** large number of them black, were deployed **on the** east side of **the city** , where **the** rioting had been less intense to begin with, and they brought swift, if uneasy, quiet and order to **the** area.

At **the** order of Army Gen. John Throckmorton, **the** federal troops left their weapons unloaded and were warned to fire only **on the** command of an officer.

On the west side, where random gunfire and fear of snipers were most intense, National Guardsmen either did not hear or ignored Throckmorton's order. **The** sharp bark and ricochet of rifle and automatic weapons fire continued, and so did **the** casualty count.

Across **the city** , at **the** peak of **the** deployment, there were 4,400 Detroit police, 8,000 national guardsmen, 4,700 federal troops and 360 state police -- **the** equivalent of **a** major occupation force.

On the third day, **the** forces of order felt **a** flickering hope that **the** end of **the** storm was nearing. . . . It was too late for this Negro fireman, overcome by heat and smoke, unaware that someone knelt beside him to sponge **the** soot from his face. And when he woke, **a** weary **city** wondered -- what would he see?

-- Caption under **a** Free Press photograph, July 26, 1967

On Monday, **as the** temperature soared toward 90, **the** orgy of looting continued. Knots of looters cruised **the** central **city** in **the** afternoon lull, then **the** serious arson and gunfire picked up at nightfall. Opportunists with an eye for **the** high-ticket items smashed into Saks Fifth Avenue **on** Second near Grand Boulevard; into Demery's at Woodward and Milwaukee; into Scholnick's and Capper & Capper **on** Washington Boulevard, **as well as** into Federal's and Sears **on** Grand River and Oakman, and into **the** pawnshops that lined lower Gratiot.

By Tuesday, though scores of fires still burned, most of **the** likely targets had been plundered and **the** rioters' energy began to flag. One-third of **the city** 's liquor stores had been looted, along with several hundred of its small groceries. Gas stations had been closed for two days, to deny gasoline to **the** firebugs. Those who had come late and cautiously to **the** great pillage pawed and kicked aimlessly through **the** debris.

Most streets in **the** center of **the city** remained ghostly and deserted, except for an occasional roving band of looters, **a** military jeep or clanking tank. Fire trucks screamed from blaze to blaze, aided by crews and equipment from 41 communities. Some Windsor fire trucks, rushing to help early in **the** riot, were delayed at **the** Detroit-Windsor tunnel by punctilious employees who insisted **on** collecting **the** tolls. Warren later sent Detroit **a** \$4,325 bill for its help.

In **the** indiscriminate sweep-up of looters, of curfew violators or anybody else whose looks they didn't like, **the** police arrested 7,231 persons, holding many of them for days in primitive, sweltering and hastily rigged detention facilities that soon became fetid with **the** smells of urine, garbage and sweating bodies.

The prisoners were jammed into **the** Belle Isle bathhouse and precinct lockups, held aboard **city** buses, crammed into **the** police garage where they stood or lay in **a** slush of motor oil and urine. There were 6,407 blacks arrested and 824 whites. **The** youngest looters caught were 10 years old; **the** oldest was an 82-year-old white man. Half of those arrested had no criminal records. Only three percent of those arrested ever came to trial; half of them were acquitted.

By Wednesday, with troops and police bunkered all over **the** riot area, **the** fever was burning itself out. Stores and offices reopened downtown. Romney lifted **the** citywide 9 p.m.-to-5:30 a .m. curfew but reimposed it before sundown, **as** hundreds of carloads of sightseers descended upon Twelfth Street to gape at **the** acrid, smoldering ruins.

Thursday morning, at scores of intersections, soldiers and guardsmen still stood in their fatigues, shouldering rifles and machine guns and watching **as** people streamed back to work through **a** shell-shocked **city** . Sporadic looting and fires and occasional shooting of suspected looters continued until **the** end of **the** week, but for all practical purposes, **the** riot was over.

Officially, it had lasted from 4 a .m. Sunday to midnight Thursday, 92 hours of fire and rage, greed and madness, exhilaration and despair. It was **the** deadliest and costliest American urban riot of **the** century. It made Detroit **the** only U.S. **city** ever to have been occupied three times by federal troops called out to preserve order -- once in 1863, when whites rioted against blacks, **the** second time to quell **the** 1943 race riot and **the** third time in 1967.

Television images of **the** events in Detroit sparked racial disorders during **the** week in Kalamazoo, Pontiac, Toledo, Flint, Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Saginaw and Mt. Clemens. Altogether, **the** were 59 racial disturbances in U.S. **cities** in 1967. None came close to **the** ferocity of Detroit's.

To this day Detroiters who lived through it can be divided into two groups: those who call it **a** riot, **a** spontaneous and anarchical outburst, and those who believe it was an uprising of **the** oppressed against their oppressors, and refer to it **as a** rebellion. **The** Kerner Commission, established to probe **the** causes of **the** urban riots of **the** 1960s, called it **a** civil disorder. **The** governor of California in 1967, **a** fellow named Ronald Reagan, called it **the** work of "mad dogs and lawbreakers." "Look upon these ruins, citizens of Detroit, and make your unbelieving eyes grow accustomed to them. For they will doubtless be with us for **a** long, long time. . . ."

-- Columnist Judd Arnett, Free Press, July 25, 1967

The early headlines during riot week blared of \$500 million in damages, thousands of buildings burned, hundreds homeless, **a city** ravaged and demolished. It was weeks before more accurate figures were available. One month after **the** riot, **a city** tally showed 388 families homeless or displaced and 412 buildings burned or damaged enough to be demolished. Dollar losses from arson and looting were difficult to pin down, but **the** revised figures ranged from \$40 million to \$80 million, or about one-tenth to one-fifth of **the** original estimates.

Gutted and razed buildings could be seen **on a** dozen major streets in **the** central **city** , but if you added up **the** land area occupied by **the** burned-out buildings, it came to little more than that of **a** good-sized urban renewal project. By then, however, **the** belief that Detroit had been torched from end to end and suffered half **a** billion dollars in damage had been firmly fixed in **the** minds of Detroiters and **the** nation.

After all **the** firepower expended by police and **the** military during **the** riot week, only **a** handful of **the** hundreds of alleged sniper incidents were confirmed. **The** Kerner Commission and other investigators later concluded most of **the** sniping was really panicky and poorly trained guardsmen firing off wild volleys in response to each other's fire.

No evidence was ever uncovered to support theories that **the** riot had been inspired by radical black agitators from outside **the city** , or that it had been planned in advance, or that it was anything but **a** burst of rage triggered by **a** hated police force and directed against **the** symbols of an affluent society that had locked blacks out.

It happened because for two **summers** some Detroiters had watched **the** television images of violence erupting in other **cities** and had come to think their own moment would come. It happened because once **a** few reckless and angry young black men had begun **the** trashing and looting, thousands of others were swept up in **the** heady sensation of power and **the** eagerness to get something for nothing.

Most of all, it happened because discriminatory housing practices had penned up **a** critical mass of people in **the** Twelfth Street area, under conditions of deprivation and extreme stress, and too many of them were out **on the street on a hot** , muggy **night** when **the** police lingered too long.

For **a** time, it appeared that **the** riot would be **a** tragic but cathartic experience, one that would force **a** dramatic change in attitudes and **a** transition to **a** truly integrated Detroit. Many blacks believed that now, at last, **the** white community would understand **the** depths of black hurt and grievances, **the** need for jobs and opportunity and dignity.

In **the** midst of **the** riot, Mayor Cavanagh asked department store heir Joseph Hudson to form an organization of top business and civic leaders to help rebuild Detroit. For **a** while, **the** chief executives of **the** biggest companies in Detroit faithfully attended **the** meetings of New Detroit, **the** group Hudson chaired. Gradually, they became weary of being harangued by "grassroots" people **as** honky exploiters of **the** poor and began to delegate attendance to executives farther and farther down **the** line of authority, meanwhile continuing to move their factories and investments out of **the** city and into **the** suburbs.

Walter Reuther promised to mobilize 600,000 UAW members to clear **the** rubble from Twelfth Street immediately, but **city** workers protested at volunteers doing civil service jobs, **city** officials worried about lawsuits from **the** landowners and few UAW members matched Reuther's enthusiasm or sympathy for **the** riot area.

Detroit-area corporations promised thousands of jobs for **the** hard-core unemployed, and many companies delivered **on** **the** promise, but 1967 also marked **the** turning of **the** auto industry's fortunes and **the** slowing down of **the** economy in general **as** **the** drag of **the** Vietnam war began to be felt. Detroit was about to begin **a** long period of attrition of jobs in which blacks suffered first and worst.

After all **the** eloquent promises to remedy **the** root causes of **the** riots that had swept urban America for three years, **the** chief post-riot action taken by Congress was to pass **a** \$100 million appropriation for police departments to buy tanks and armored cars and bullet-proof vests to store against **the** next round of disorders.

Four days before **the** riot, several Macomb and Oakland County suburbs had been drenched by **a** tropical five-inch downpour. Forty-eight hours later, President Johnson declared them **a** disaster area, eligible for low-interest loans, federal grants and other services to repair **the** damage. Smoldering, rubble-strewn Detroit made **a** similar request for federal help, but **the** White House, fearing **the** president would be blamed for rewarding rioters, stubbornly ignored **the** request. **A** few weeks later, it was quietly withdrawn.

Twenty years later, **the** streets that bore **the** brunt of **the** rioting -- Linwood, Grand River, Dexter, Mack -- are lined with abandoned buildings and bricked-up storefronts, ghostly wrecks with doors kicked in to reveal their gutted interiors. **A** few may be relics of **the** riot; most are **the** result of **the** long period of malaise and urban decay that followed.

It was 10 years before **the** long mile of gutted buildings **on** Twelfth Street from Clairmount to LaSalle Gardens was cleared and ground was broken for construction of **a** row of modest two-story town houses. It took 15 years of determined effort by neighborhood residents before **the** street saw **the** construction of **a** small shopping center anchored by **a** supermarket. Where **the** wind whipped **a** river of fire up **the** neighboring streets, vacant land still waits to be developed.

The city renamed **the** street Rosa Parks Boulevard, after **the** black woman whose refusal to give up her seat sparked **the** Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott, but **a** second set of signs underneath still reads "Twelfth Street."

The scars are still there, if you know where to find them. There are buildings that still bear **the** marks of **the** riot bullets, and people who remember how they wept that week for **a** wounded **city**. But where **the** worst peacetime riot in U.S. history began, there is only **a** tiny park with **a** brick walk and handful of locust trees. **On the hot** July days, young men lounge **on** pink cement benches and old men rest in **the** shade, and **the** children who play at their feet are too young to remember **a city** 's ordeal by fire.

CUTLINE:

Top: Flames moved from one house to **the** next **on** Pingree, east of Linwood, and part of **a** neighborhood disappeared during **the** 1967 riot. Above: Today, **a** treeless playfield replaces **the** homes **on** Pingree destroyed by fire in 1967.

At Twelfth and Virginia Park, **on the** first day of **the** riot, **the** police were **on** one side of **the** barricade, **the** people of Twelfth Street **on the** other.

John LeRoy, 30, shot by National Guardsmen at **a** roadblock **on** Lycaste near Mack. He died three days later, **the** riot's 37th fatality.

Caption: Photo File Photo; PAULINE LUBENS

Memo: SPECIAL SECTION

Pain & Promises: **The** Detroit Riot's Legacy

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