

# BLACK YOUTH TRIED IN SHOTS AT POLICE

## Detroit Case Part of 2-Year Dispute Over Elite Force

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DETROIT, May 5—A 19-year-old black youth named Hayward Brown, charged by the state with shooting four members of the Detroit Police Department's most elite crime-fighting force last December, went on trial here this week.

But in a sense it was the elite force itself—called STRESS—for "Stop the robberies, enjoy safe streets"—that was on trial.

For if the jury agrees with the reasoning of Mr. Brown's attorneys, the elite group will stand convicted informally of having provoked the shooting itself and of creating an unnecessary climate of fear in Detroit's black community.

### Two-Year Controversy

The case is the latest development in a two-year controversy over the operations of STRESS, a force of about 100 volunteer plainclothes policemen who operate in small teams of about four men each, patrolling the streets in unmarked cars in an intensive, constant search for crimes about to happen.

The teams' job is essentially one of surveillance, but sometimes one member of such a team will pose as a derelict or a drunk to attract potential muggers. When a mugger accosts the decoy, other members of the team close in to apprehend him.

Since the inception of the force in early 1971, team members have shot and killed 17 Detroiters, most of them black, and injured others. And although the number of such killings has decreased sharply in recent months, and although the use of decoys has been reduced, there appears to be a widespread feeling among blacks that STRESS has misused its crime-fighting mandate to declare war on them.

At the same time, the elite force has many backers, who are impressed with the assertion of Police Commissioner John Nichols that it has significantly reduced street crime.

### Could Be Mayoral Issue

Some observers expect the force to be a major issue in next fall's mayoral election, especially since Commissioner Nichols is expected to be a candidate. Also expected to be in the race is Kenneth Cockrel, a black lawyer who has conducted a continuing campaign against STRESS and who is Mr. Brown's chief counsel in the trial.

Mr. Brown is charged with four counts of assault with intent to kill. Conviction on such a charge carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

The four team members involved in the case—Sgt. Richard Grapp and Patrolmen Billy Price, Eugene Fular and Robert Rosenow—were cut down by a volley of gunfire as they patrolled the northwest Detroit neighborhood at 1:05 A.M. last Dec. 4.

The search for suspects in the shooting quickly narrowed to Mr. Brown and two other young blacks, John Percy Boyd and Mark C. Bethune. Late in December, two more team members were also shot, and one was killed. The three young blacks were also sought in connection with that incident.

### Two Were Killed

After what was said to be the most extensive manhunt in Detroit history, Mr. Brown was caught here in mid-January. Mr. Boyd and Mr. Bethune were subsequently shot and killed in separate gun battles with the police in Atlanta.

Testifying for the prosecution this week, the four STRESS members who were shot in the Dec. 4 incident all testified that the three suspects had all been in a light-colored Volkswagen that was stopped that night by the STRESS crew.

All four officers conceded under cross-examination that the occupants of the car had committed no observable offense, leading Mr. Cockrel to assert that if the STRESS crew had not pulled the car over for no apparent reason, there would have been no shooting.

In any event, the four men testified that as they had been getting out of their unmarked car to approach the Volkswagen, the three youths suddenly began shooting at them. Sergeant Grapp said that he had seen Mr. Brown firing a shotgun.

Mr. Cockrel's position, put forth in his opening statement, is that the shooting by the youths constituted self-defense. That is, they knew the officers were members of STRESS, and, given the widespread fear of the group among blacks, the youths were afraid for their lives and shot to protect themselves.

The case is expected to go to the jury next Tuesday.

## Medicare Resolution Voted

SAN FRANCISCO, May 5 (UPI)—The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union has adopted a resolution asking that the costs of Medicare be paid from the Federal income tax base instead of through the Social Security payroll tax. Delegates to the union's convention yesterday called the Social Security tax "grossly regressive."