

Assault Charges Sought

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situation in hand when plain clothes officers the witnesses referred to as "Narcs" came to the scene and attempted to

arrest 16 year old Wayne Thomas. The crowd angered by this began to throw rocks and bottles at police vehicles. An altercation between police

and the crowd erupted. Two officers were hit by objects. More than 20 persons stated that after Thompson a narcotics agent was hit in the face he cursed, dropped his night stick and fired from a crouched position, into a crowd of about 100 people near the door of the Big "D" Lounge, striking Smoak who had just come out of the door.

Witnesses also stated that Thompson fired no warning shot, fired in the opposite direction of the person who struck him and fled in a car with two other officers and Wayne Thomas, who had been arrested without checking to see if he had hit anyone.

Patricia Kama said Smoak came out of the door of the Big "D" Lounge just as Thompson turned after being struck. She stated that Smoak stepped right in front of her just as someone shouted "he's getting ready to shoot." As the shot was fired she fell to the right and Smoak fell to the left. Both lay there for a few seconds, according to Miss Kama, when the crowd started to move. "As I started to get up my left leg was under his shoulder when I pulled my leg from under him I noticed he didn't move, I got on my knees and noticed the blood on the right side of his body. I shouted he's been shot", she stated.

However Chief Surratt said Monday August 18 that a detailed investigation of the disturbance had produced virtually conclusive evidence that Smoak was shot by someone other than a police officer. Reports at that time said that the investigation had failed to produce clues to the assailant's identity.

The investigation indicates that Smoak was shot by a small caliber weapon, smaller than the weapon fired by Thompson. Thompson's gun was at first said to be a .38 caliber revolver, later it was said he carried a .357 magnum. The bullet that hit Smoak still has not been found.

The investigators report also indicates that: 1- the bullet that struck Smoak traveled from the right side of his body to the left while, according to the report if Thompson's bullet had struck him it would have traveled from left to right.

2- The bullet that struck Smoak traveled at a downward angle and that if Thompson had fired that shot he would have had to be more than 30 feet above the ground.

3- A chronological reconstruction of the nights events indicate that Smoak was shot two to three minutes before Thompson fired his gun.

Officer Thompson though still on active duty was not available for comment.

African Spotlight



The Changing Times:

African '75

Those who know Africa well will agree that African has long experienced her own share of crises and social unrest. What with rapid changes in government and ethnic-wars which have at various stages been as brutal as they have been unconventional.

The rest of the world have not been without all kinds of unrest either. If you look back into history, you will find out that the present African experiences have been repeated over and over again in other parts of the world even in those parts that now behave as if they have been trouble free in their evolution.

I need not point out that the funny thing about humanity is that we do not learn from history. If human begins learn from the history of the past there probably would not have been all the wars that man have involved himself in. If man learns sufficiently from history, many would have stopped offering simplistic solutions to problems that require complicated analysis. If man learns from history, African experiences would have benefited from the sad experiences that other parts of the world have gone through.

Man also remembers what is pleasing and comfortable for him to remember and forgets what he wants to forget. I will not call this kind of behavior intellectual dishonesty, since that will imply that the people who remember only what they choose to remember are intellectuals in the first place. Rather, I will attribute that kind of sensitivity to a view of the world which is narrow in scope and simplistic in objectivity.

I will be the first to say that all is not well with many African countries. But I will also be the first to say that Rhodesia and South Africa as presently governed represent tyranny and repression at its worst. There is no justification for South Africa or Rhodesia white minority to be as brutal as they are in the name of so-called democracy.

Many rulers make a vital mistake when they fail to realize that democracy starts in the stomach. The kind of democracy that a hungry man will want to talk about is probably the democracy that tells him how to put some food in his hungry stomach. No wonder that many people do not even both to vote in many countries. They think that their votes do not count. What counts for them is not so much who is in power but how are they going to solve their day to day problems of living.

African people worry about the same thing other people worry about. And since all the trappings of free system is present in the basic lives of all African people, the ultimate result of African experience will be democratic. What is needed in many African countries, perhaps more than any other thing is a free flow of information. Those who rule must learn to live with criticism by the people they rule and look deeply into what is being said about them to find out how they can improve their leadership and accountability.

Given what we presently know about other forms of government, African states must necessarily choose to be democratic in their systems of government. Democracy will be meaningless without the assurances that make it work: the protections of minority, the right to be heard, the right to free expression and dissent and a system of justice that does not only make sure that justice is done but also shows that justice is available to all.

Democratic chemistry requires that all those involved in the process fully understand the rule of the game and that freedom becomes a right of all instead of the privilege of the few. That is why I do not consider South Africa or Rhodesia, by any stretch of imagination a democracy. Instead, they are to me and perhaps to many other people, a tyranny.

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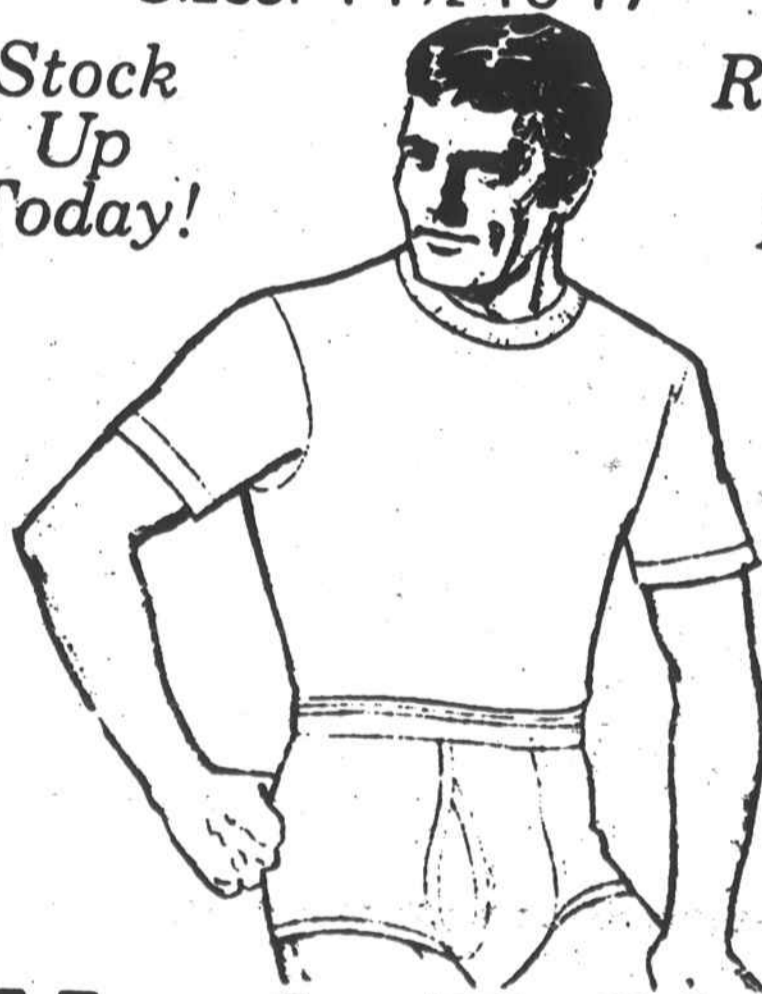
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