

Negro Police Captain Calms Troubled Harlem

(VOICE readers have been kept acquainted with the "Harlem situation" from several viewpoints ever since--and even before--the mis-named "race riots" of last summer. We intend to continue these diverse reports on the nation's largest--and perhaps most unfortunate-- Negro community so that the citizens and public officials of Las Vegas, together with our law enforcement authorities, may profit from any lessons to be gleaned from these reports. The following appraisal of current conditions in the New York ghetto was written for the New York Herald Tribune by Jimmy Breslin, a highly regarded, veteran reporter.)

The woman ran along the street screaming and holding up this knife she had in her hand. The other hand was at her side. It was holding a bottle. The people on the sidewalk, on this Sunday afternoon, tumbled into doorways or turned and ran from her. They were not running from the knife. Everybody knows a knife in Harlem. They were afraid of the bottle.

The woman came across 121st Street and ran along the sidewalk, her hair falling into her face, her eyes rolling, her mouth yelling curses. She stopped at the corner of 122d Street. There were two policemen coming towards her. She backed away and then ran out into Seventh Avenue and held the knife higher. The cops came off the curb and walked at her. She brought up the bottle.

"She got lye in there," somebody yelled from the street.

The cops stopped. "Come on," one of them said to the woman. "Put it down. We're going to help you."

She shrieked and made a motion with the bottle.

Then a blue uniform, coming from the other side of the street, grabbed her from behind. The woman screamed and tried to get the bottle up and throw it into the face behind her. The two cops came at her and grabbed for the bottle. The woman fought the way the distracted always do, biting and screaming and not giving up, and now a crowd was on the street watching. They saw only one thing. They saw three white cops wrestle with a colored woman.

"They beating her," somebody yelled. "Don't you beat her. You stop beating her, you bastards," a woman screamed from a window.

The woman fighting the cops fell to the street and tried to kick and the cops bent over her to hold her and now a growl ran through the crowd on the sidewalk. And behind the growl were the voices.

"They beating her. White bastard cops beating up a colored woman. Let's go get the colored woman out of there. Cops trying to whip her head. Look at them. White bastard cops. They got pieces on them, the mothers. Hell with the pieces. Who they to beat up a colored woman?"

The cops wrestling with the woman began to look sideways so they could see the crowd. They wanted to be ready if the crowd jumped them.

Then one voice came out of the crowd. It was loud and it was complaining.

"What the hell you talkin' about? They ain't beatin' her. Nobody is beatin' nobody. They just tryin' to arrest that nut. They ain't beatin' her."

That ended it. As quickly as the emotion had built up, it disappeared. Now nobody said anything while the woman, screaming, was led away to the precinct.

A few minutes later, one of the patrolmen walked into a small office just off the desk of the 28th Precinct and he told Lloyd Sealey, the captain, about it.

"Uh huh," Sealey said. "That's fine. Thank you very much for letting me know. That's just fine."

The cop left and Sealey snapped his fingers and



Capt. Sealey of the 28th

smiled. In six months, maybe even in a whole year, this was the first time anything had ever been heard of a crowd in Harlem doing anything to help a policeman.

It works, Sealey said to himself. *Now it's starting to be what it should. Just stay with these people and get them with you.* Sealey's big black hands reached for the reports in front of him. It was a Sunday afternoon in October and his wife and kids were home, but he didn't mind working at all.

Lloyd Sealey is the first Negro ever to command a precinct in New York. He was appointed in August, right after the riots, and what he has done since then, and what he hasn't done and never will be able to do, is a lesson New York should know by heart.

It isn't much of a lesson, this business of trying to see everything through one man. But it is, right now, the only lesson there is. For it is fall in New York now and the people are not interested in last summer anymore. Last summer is forgotten. Last summer was something that was in the newspapers. Now there are school and football and elections and shopping and so many other things to keep the mind occupied.

But the summer comes very quickly. It comes after the cold winter wind stops blowing--newspapers down the streets of Harlem and it stops whistling through the loose framed tenement windows which have no storm covering. It comes in a hurry. This next summer can be different. This time they can come downtown. They live in ghettos with rats, and all they look at is crumbling buildings, but they can see beyond the ghetto. They can see downtown New York, with its new buildings, and its money. Big money. Money in wallets and in purses and in cash

registers. Money every place, and all of it in the white man's hand.

"We have until May," Jimmy Booker, one of the most perceptive of the Negro newspapermen, was saying one day last week. "We have until May and then I'll get you a front row seat. Only this time you may have to get me one because the thing is liable to be down your way."

It was said with a smile over a drink, but it was not loose talk. It was the truth and anybody who knows the Harlem of last summer knows it is the truth. And this is why Lloyd Sealey, and what he has done and what he cannot do, must be watched and discussed.

The 28th Precinct is a square cut into the middle of Harlem. It runs from 110th Street to 127th Street and from Fifth Avenue to Manhattan Avenue. This makes up 7.82 miles of street, crowded street, with garbage in the gutters and sidewalks that are rutted and cracked. The area is inhabited by 85,000 people, all of whom live badly. There is not one middle income dwelling in the area, aside from a couple of apartment houses on 110th Street, across the street from the park. There is everything in the 28th. Policy numbers and dope are street-corner items. Knives and guns are utensils. And when the riot started last summer, it started with bottles being thrown at the 28th Precinct on a Saturday evening.

When the first bottle was thrown, the last little pieces of respect for policemen in Harlem were shattered, too. The policeman, who stands for the white man and all of his laws and customs, became hated and nobody thought the hate ever would end. Then Lloyd Sealey was put in charge of the 28th. And after less than a month, on September 19, Jimmy Hicks, the editor of the *Amsterdam News*, wrote in an editorial, "There is more peace in Harlem now than there has been in 50 years."

It is all because of Lloyd Sealey and what he represents. He is a Negro. But to the Negro in Harlem,

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