

CONGRESSMAN JOHN CONYERS, JR.

First District, Michigan

NOT PRINTED AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1980
CONTACT: HAYDEN GREGORY
PHONE: (202) 225-5126

HOUSE CRIME SUBCOMMITTEE TO HOLD HEARING ON RACIAL AND INTERGROUP VIOLENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- CONGRESSMAN JOHN CONYERS, JR. (D-MI), CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME, TODAY ANNOUNCED THAT A SERIES OF CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS WILL BE HELD ON THE RISING INCIDENCE OF RACIAL AND INTERGROUP VIOLENCE, THAT HAS OCCURRED ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN RECENT YEARS. THE FIRST HEARING WILL TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1980 AT 9:30 A.M. IN 2237 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING.

"THE ALARMING TREND OF VIOLENCE IN THE NATION," REP. CONYERS NOTED, "REQUIRES THAT CONGRESS EXAMINE IN THE MOST THOROUGH AND DELIBERATE MANNER THE FULL EXTENT, CAUSES, AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE VIOLENCE. A DANGEROUS PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE AND SET OF PERCEPTIONS HAS EMERGED THAT REINFORCES VIOLENCE. CERTAIN VIOLENCE-PRONE ORGANIZATIONS APPEAR TO FEEL THAT THEIR ACTIVITIES HAVE BECOME RESPECTABLE. GROWING NUMBERS OF CITIZENS BELIEVE THAT CONSPIRACIES EXIST.

"THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S HEARINGS WILL FOCUS ON THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF THE VIOLENCE, THE ADEQUACY OF FEDERAL LAW-ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS, ANY RELATIONSHIPS THAT MAY EXIST BETWEEN GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND PRIVATE VIOLENCE-PRONE ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE MEANS TO AVERT VIOLENCE.

"THERE IS ABUNDANT EVIDENCE OF GROWING RACIAL TENSION AND VIOLENCE IN CITIES, ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES, AND IN WORKPLACES. THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RECENTLY REPORTED THAT CASES INVOLVING THE KU KLUX KLAN HAVE RISEN 189% IN THE FIRST

SIX MONTHS OF 1980, AS COMPARED TO THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR AGO. OTHER RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH, THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, AND THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS, HAVE DOCUMENTED NUMEROUS OTHER INCIDENTS, INCLUDING THE UNRESOLVED MURDERS OF 15 BLACK CHILDREN IN ATLANTA, THE RECENT MULTIPLE RACIAL KILLINGS IN BUFFALO, AND INCIDENTS OF RANDOM RACIAL VIOLENCE IN A DOZEN OTHER CITIES."

WITNESSES AT THE DECEMBER 9TH HEARING WILL INCLUDE: REV. JOSEPH LOWERY, PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE; IRWIN SUALL, DIRECTOR, ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH RESEARCH DEPARTMENT; ARTHUR KINOY, PROFESSOR OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY AT RUTGERS; DR. THEODORE GURR, A LEADING AUTHORITY ON SOCIAL VIOLENCE AND PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY; AND OFFICIALS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

96-02-26

Relations of Violence-Prone Organizations and Governmental Agencies

Ku Klux Klan Infiltration of Armed Forces

As reported in a November, 1979 report of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith:

- 1) Ku Klux membership on the rise at U.S. Marine Corps base at Camp Pendleton, Calif.
- 2) At Fort Hood, Texas and Fort Carson, Colorado, soldiers participated in Ku Klux activities of David Duke's Knights of the Ku Klux Klan
- 3) Fort Hood Klansman, dressed in army fatigues, stood guard at Klan rally in Euless, Texas in June, 1979
- 4) Soldiers at the Yuma Proving Grounds in Arizona were joining the local Klan unit; one was caught copying Klan literature on a base copying machine
- 5) The Anti-Defamation League, based on its evidence, asked for Congressional investigations on Klan activity in the armed forces, but no such investigation took place

Collaboration Between Police Departments and Violence-Prone Organizations

A Newsweek Article of a few months ago, reporting on the Klan's paramilitary activities and guerrilla training bases, speculated that there could well be links between official bodies such as local police forces and the Klan organizations, particularly with respect to overlooking Klan violations of Federal gun laws, the possible transfer of weapons from police to the Klan, etc.

Numerous reports on the Communist Workers Party rally and the shooting in Greensboro, N. C. suggest that the local law enforcement agencies leaked information about the Party's plans, schedule and location of its rally to Klansman and Nazi Party members

The media have speculated about the possible links between these private organizations and government bodies, such as law enforcement agencies, military units, etc.

The State Legislature of Pennsylvania several months ago approved a resolution calling for an investigation of Klan infiltration into the police force of Harrisburg, Pa., the State Capitol

There is evidence of Klan infiltration into prisons, through their members who are prison guards

COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

DETROIT OFFICE
630 FEDERAL BUILDING
231 W. LAFAYETTE
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226
PHONE: 313-226-1922

November 13, 1980

The Honorable Benjamin R. Civiletti
The Attorney General
Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

I am writing to request a meeting between the Department of Justice and Members of the Congressional Black Caucus to discuss the unsolved killings in Atlanta, Georgia and Buffalo, New York and to examine the further steps that might be taken to deal with these situations.

In mid-October I began a series of contacts with Deputy Attorney General Renfrew and other Department of Justice officials inquiring about the federal role in the Atlanta and Buffalo killings. I have not been apprised of further actions by the Department since the news releases of October 20 and 24.

I know you are aware that black citizens are deeply disturbed by the events in these two cities and, more generally, by the whole context of increasing intergroup and racial violence that has arisen throughout the country in the last few years. I personally have seen very alarming statistics on the increase in violent incidents by Ku Klux Klan organizations against black individuals and communities.

The Members of the Caucus and myself would find it highly useful and timely to sit down with you and other appropriate officials at the earliest possible time, hopefully prior to the Thanksgiving holiday recess that begins at the end of next week.

I would appreciate hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely,

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

COMMITTEE:
JUDICIARY
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

DETROIT OFFICE:
699 FEDERAL BUILDING
231 W. LAFAYETTE
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226
PHONE: 313-228-7022

November 13, 1980

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Members of the Congressional Black Caucus

FROM: John Conyers, Jr.

SUBJECT: Actions for Dealing with the Atlanta and Buffalo Killings, and
the Larger Context of Racial Violence

In mid-October, I began a series of contacts with Attorney General Civiletti, Deputy Attorney General Renfrew, Assistant Attorney General Drew Days, and other Department of Justice officials to urge a more active role of the federal government in solving the murders of six black citizens in Buffalo and the disappearance of fifteen black children in Atlanta, ten of whom have been found murdered.

Recognizing the political sensitivity of a strong administration commitment in response to black concerns just before the election, I first asked for the Attorney General to show his concern by his appearance in the two cities. I reminded him of the constructive effect of his trip to Miami last May. A further option suggested was to hold a press conference to articulate the deep concern of the President and Attorney General over these killings. I spoke several times during this period to Deputy Attorney General Renfrew and made these requests. I also spoke to White House staff, who pledged intervention by the White House, but none was forthcoming. The upshot was that the Department of Justice issued very general press releases, on October 20 and 24, indicating they were entering the picture, for example, in sending Assistant Attorney General Drew Days to Buffalo.

I was informed just yesterday by Atlanta Public Safety Commissioner Lee Brown that repeated requests by Mayor Jackson for a full federal investigation have fallen on deaf ears. Although the Attorney General announced last week that an investigation would be conducted based on a possible violation of the federal kidnapping statute, Commissioner Brown reports that no FBI agents have shown up yet to begin the investigation. Under the circumstances, I believe we should take a series of actions on the violence against blacks throughout the country, including but not limited to the killings in Atlanta and Buffalo. Our efforts should also address the resurgence of hate groups such as the Ku Klu Klan.

Attached is an outline of steps that I suggest we take, I would like your approval for arranging a meeting next week, prior to the Thanksgiving holiday recess, with Attorney General Civiletti and other Administration officials. I need to have your views and suggestions on this matter, and will be contacting you shortly.

Attachment

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS CONCERNING VIOLENCE DIRECTED AGAINST BLACKS AND INCREASED ACTIVITIES OF VIOLENCE PRONE GROUPS

- I. We should immediately approach the Carter Administration and make an issue of the fact that they have not used their best efforts to systematically control the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and investigate and prosecute people who have engaged in violent attacks on black citizens, such as have occurred recently in Atlanta and Buffalo. Concerning these two situations, a detailed account of Administration activity should be requested. A meeting with the Attorney General is being arranged for this purpose.
- II. The Congressional Black Caucus, civil rights groups, and parents of victims of violence should be mobilized to pressure the government for its failure to adequately protect the constitutional rights of black people in the face of this rising tide in racial violence.
- III. The CBC should conduct a study of how the Federal Government perceives the problem of racial violence. We should start by asking the Attorney General to inform us of all efforts the Federal Government made in this area. A monitoring mechanism should be established within the federal government to document and report on acts of violence against blacks and activities of violence prone groups.
- IV. The CBC should assemble data and witnesses so that regional hearings can be held across the country on the issue of racial violence.
- V. The CBC should petition the House and Senate Judiciary Committees to set up a Select Committee to study the problem of racial violence.
- VI. The Caucus should initiate pressure on local government officials to prosecute incidents of racial violence. Pressure should be applied to professional groups such as the National District Attorney's Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, and other law enforcement groups which function at a local level.
- VII. Contact should be made with the Reagan transition officials responsible for Justice matters. We should indicate to them that we do not consider these to be partisan issues, and solicit a pledge of strong action against such acts of violence and intimidation.

Perception Growing Among Blacks That Violent Incidents Are Linked

By NATHANIEL SHEPPARD Jr.

Special to The New York Times

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio — It was the night after Halloween and a 15-year-old black girl named Veronica Vaughan was walking home from a party with a friend, unaware that three white youths were cruising her neighborhood in a pickup truck, shooting at blacks with a .22-caliber rifle.

The gunman had failed to hit anyone. Another of the youths criticized him for being a bad shot, the police said later, so the youth gave the rifle to his critic and told him to see if he could do any better. The truck turned a corner.

A black couple on the sidewalk came into view. A shot rang out. One of the blacks fell to the pavement. It was Veronica Vaughn, three blocks from where she lived with her parents, friends of the city's police chief.

A stunned Youngstown reacted angrily. Both blacks and whites deplored Miss Vaughan's killing as senseless, but many of the blacks saw it as more than an

isolated event. For them, the killing gave credence to a growing perception among blacks here and in other cities that a series of violent incidents against blacks is a result of a national conspiracy to terrorize and kill them.

Justice Department officials stress that there is no compelling evidence of a conspiracy even though violence against blacks appears to be increasing. They acknowledge that they have not conducted an extensive investigation of whether there is a conspiracy, but they say the perception that one exists is widespread and growing.

In the New York City area, where there has been little unusual racial violence, blacks interviewed said that there had been an increase in tension but that they did not necessarily believe there was a conspiracy. But in such cities as Atlanta, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Portland, Ore., and Salt Lake City, violent

Continued on Page 64, Column 1

Many Blacks Suspect That Recent Viol

Continued From Page 1

and highly publicized attacks on blacks and increasing activity by the Ku Klux Klan and other white extremist groups have created or heightened the perception of conspiracy, leaders of civil rights groups said in a series of interviews.

"There is certainly a lot of violence directed against blacks and its gratuitous character makes it more frightening than ever before," said Drew S. Days 3d, the Justice Department's Assistant Attorney General for civil rights. "But there is no concrete evidence one way or the other to say there is or isn't a conspiracy."

Indeed, many blacks, including some civil rights activists, cite as evidence of a conspiracy attacks that have not been proved to be race-related. Frequently mentioned as evidence, for example, are the murders of at least 11 black children in Atlanta; the authorities say they have no clue about the race of the killer or killers.

"But," said Mr. Days, "the more incidents, the more the perception."

The incident in Youngstown illustrates how the perception grows, fueled by rumor, the violence itself and the frequent antagonism between the police and the black community.

Only a week before Miss Vaughan was killed, this depressed steel-mill city of 120,000 people was gripped by apprehension because of persistent rumors that Klan members were planning to come here to bomb a black high school and kill 10 blacks before Halloween. Some blacks were chased off the streets by whites in cars and bullets were fired through the windshields of some cars owned by blacks, but, as Halloween passed, no blacks had been murdered.

3 Youths Charged With Murder

Then came the Vaughan shooting. Three youths were arrested shortly afterward and charged with her murder. One said that he and his friends had decided to go out to shoot blacks because he had been "jumped by a couple of niggers" a short time earlier and was tired of such treatment. The father of one of the youths pleaded no contest to contributing to the delinquency of a minor for allowing them to use the truck even though he knew of their plans.

Civil rights activists said they had learned privately from police sources that a large quantity of literature advocating white supremacy had been found at the home of one of the suspects. The police would neither confirm nor deny this publicly, and many blacks assumed that the report must be true.

A predominantly black group of ministers appealed to the Justice Department to investigate whether the Vaughan slaying and other attacks elsewhere were part of a national conspiracy by white extremists.

"We are concerned because looking at the national trend, the killings of blacks in Buffalo, the missing black children in Atlanta and the assassination attempt on Vernon Jordan, there could be a link," said the Rev. Lonnie Simon, a spokesman for the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. "We don't know, but we want it looked into."

'There Is Almost a Hysteria'

Leaders of civil rights organizations elsewhere share the view.

"There is almost a hysteria in black communities because of the belief that there is a conspiracy," said the Rev. Jesse Jackson, leader of the Chicago-based Operation PUSH. "Blacks correlate events in Buffalo, Atlanta and other cities with the events in government such as Reagan opening up his campaign talking about state's rights and minority rule in South Africa, and the right-wing element in the church.

"Without question there is a psychological conspiracy," Mr. Jackson continued. "Racism has become fashionable again and feelings of guilt toward blacks have turned to feelings of hostility. This country has taken a definite swing toward fascism. To understand the problem, you have to look beyond the guy who fires the gun, you have to consider the climate of permissiveness in which he acts.

"Now, we are seen as the cause of making the economy sick. Whites say money for busing has made the schools collapse and that affirmative action is the reason they don't have jobs."

Mr. Jackson said he could offer no evidence to support his assertion, but he said he believed the shooting of Mr. Jordan, the executive director of the National Urban League, was part of a calculated plan to murder black civil rights activists. He asserted that he and Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the N.A.A.C.P., were among the other targets.

'Real Right to Be Concerned'

Mr. Hooks is less certain that there is a conspiracy.

"I can understand very easily why, with the physical brutality, the passage of the antibusing amendment by the Senate, the attacks on affirmative action and verdicts like those for the six Klansmen in Greensboro, how people can link events," Mr. Hooks said. "Blacks have a very real right to be concerned.

"Those who are prone to violence read the paper and look at television and are

"Blacks have a very real right to be concerned."

— Benjamin Hooks



"The more incidents, the more the perception."

— Drew S. Days 3d

"There is almost a hysteria in black communities because of the belief that there is a conspiracy."

— The Rev. Jesse Jackson

ticked off to do things," he said. "There may not be a conspiracy but the more they hear antiblack utterances the more they are encouraged to do things they might not do in another climate."

Mr. Hooks said that as the head of the N.A.A.C.P. he had to "consider my remarks carefully" but that, speaking as an individual, "my judgments are different."

"My personal sense is almost right with those of the people" who believe there is a conspiracy, he said. He said the eagerness on the part of many blacks to believe, in the absence of proof, that there was a conspiracy was a measure of the degree of panic that the perceived climate of the nation had instilled among blacks.

Klan and Neo-Nazi Groups Cited

Blacks interviewed cited the Klan and neo-Nazi groups as being responsible for

ent Incidents Are Linked by Conspiracy



blamed the nation's economic decline for the change.

"When there is high unemployment, there has to be someone to blame," said Larry Wood, acting executive director of the Urban League of Long Island. "Minorities have kind of become the whipping boy. A great many white people feel their rights are being violated and they're being penalized" by affirmative action and other advances made by minorities.

The idea that there is an orchestrated plan to harass blacks began to arise publicly about three years ago when some civil rights activists asserted that whites were mounting a campaign to drive black elected officials from office.

In 1978, Mr. Hooks and Mr. Jordan, speaking at their organizations' annual conventions, warned that a "new wave of conservatism" was sweeping the country, threatening civil rights accomplishments through attacks on affirmative action programs.

Then, in the last year, a spate of racially motivated attacks on blacks has been highly publicized along with accounts of paramilitary training and other activities by the Klan and other white extremist groups. As a result, the notion that there is an organized plan to harass blacks has expanded to include a conspiracy to commit violence against blacks.

5 Killed in North Carolina

Last November it was the fatal shooting by Klan members of five members of the Communist Workers Party, including a black woman, at an anti-Klan rally in Greensboro, N.C.

A sampling of other violent incidents includes the wounding in April of four black women on a street in Chattanooga, Tenn., shortly after two crosses were discovered burning nearby. Three Klan members were charged with firing a shotgun into their legs.

In May white policemen were acquitted on charges stemming from the beating death of a black insurance executive in Miami. The acquittals led to two bloody racial clashes in that city.

Then, shortly after 11 P.M. on June 8, two black teen-agers in Cincinnati were killed by sniper fire as they went to buy hotdogs from a neighborhood store. Rumors of a conspiracy swept through the city.

Rioting in Chattanooga

In July in Chattanooga, after two of the three Klansmen were acquitted in the shooting of the four women and the third was convicted on a reduced charge after he admitted firing the gun, four nights of rioting broke out and eight policemen were injured.

In August, two young black men in Salt

Lake City were killed by sniper fire as they jogged with two white women. In the days before the shooting, a burning mattress was thrown on the steps of a black church and a cross was burned at a transit authority workshop where a black man was employed. A racially pejorative photograph made its way into the yearbook of one of the city's high schools.

In September, four blacks in Buffalo were killed by sniper fire within 36 hours by an assailant who witnesses said was white, beginning a two-month series of violent racial incidents in Buffalo. In October, two black taxi drivers were murdered and their hearts were cut out. The race of their killer has not been established.

Later, animal hearts were left in a locker room used mostly by black workers at the Bethlehem Steel Company and in a bathroom used mostly by blacks at the downtown public library.

Attempted Murder in a Hospital

A cross was burned in a black neighborhood and a black patient was attacked in his room in the Erie County Medical Center. A nurse who surprised the attacker told the authorities that a white man was trying to strangle the patient and that he said "I hate niggers" as he fled.

At the end of October, after weeks of speculative newspaper articles, a man wanted for questioning in the racial sniper-killings of 10 blacks in five states, Joseph Paul Franklin, was arrested in Florida. He was indicted on Federal charges of violating the Salt Lake City joggers' civil rights by killing them; investigations into the other killings continue.

On Monday, two white men linked to the Klan in court testimony pleaded guilty in Federal court in Detroit to a charge of plotting to shoot a black man last summer, and a third alleged Klansman pleaded guilty to charges of trying to burn down the home of a black couple living in predominantly white Romulus, a suburb of Detroit. The three entered the guilty pleas after bargaining for reduced sentences.

Despite efforts by the authorities in various cities to squelch the notion that there is a link between various incidents, including setting up rumor control centers, the suspicion of a conspiracy persists.

In Youngstown, the police chief said the Vaughan killing was an aberration.

"I suppose that if I were black and kept hearing about all the things happening like in Buffalo and Atlanta, I would worry a bit too," said Stanley Peterson, the white chief of police of Youngstown. But the killing here was not part of a conspiracy."

re conspiracy, and Mr. Jackson said he thought that Federal law-enforcement agencies might also be playing a role.

The N.A.A.C.P. held two days of meetings last week at which local affiliates discussed a possible conspiracy against blacks. "We wanted to look for common threads in events," Mr. Hooks said.

In the New York City area, leaders of civil rights groups say they do not necessarily believe that there is a national conspiracy against blacks. They say blacks in New York are not feeling the kind of fear that is gripping blacks in other cities, but they point out that, except for cross burnings on Long Island last summer, their area has experienced few racial incidents.

Nevertheless, activists in the metropolitan area said that a civil rights re-enchantment was increasing tensions between blacks and whites, and they