

PRESS

ren commission's findings. Nevertheless, on a more modest scale, newspapers are fast ganging up on stories as well.

This summer The Washington Post dispatched a team of two Negro and two white reporters to find out exactly how death came to the 23 victims of the Newark riots. "There was the sniper issue," says managing editor Ben Bradlee, "and we wanted to find out the truth." After a week of hunting down witnesses, the team got its answers. "Many of the victims died," the Post piece said, "in the indiscriminating volleys of gunfire fired by police and guardsmen . . ."

After the Detroit riots, Detroit Free Press city editor Neal Shine dispatched two men and a woman reporter to determine how each of his city's 43 victims died. For five weeks the reporters checked out witnesses the police had never contacted, and their investigation turned into an authoritative 24,000-word report (NEWSWEEK, Sept. 18).

Such stories might not have been handled so swiftly, if at all, by a single reporter. "Team reporting," says Miami Herald executive editor John McMullan, "has enabled us to dig into a story more deeply, bring more talent to bear on it and wrap it up more quickly." The Herald recently assigned teams to investigate such local problems as Negro unemployment and hoodlum infiltration into business. (As a result of its infiltration series, the Fontainebleau Hotel has filed a \$10 million libel suit.)

Free: One of the most aggressive investigative forces is the "Insight" team of the Sunday Times of London. Currently, the Times has a ten-man team fanned out from Moscow to Washington digging into the Burgess, Maclean and Philby defections to the Soviet Union. The Associated Press last winter set up an eleven-man task force in Washington, which is free to roam the country to track down leads and ferret out scandals. "We're about to launch a hell of a big project," says 47-year-old team leader Joe F. Kane.

Many investigative probes lose their points. The New York Times last winter assigned a six-man team, headed by assistant managing editor Harrison Salisbury, to investigate the Kennedy assassination. The team worked for six weeks without finding anything substantially new. The project was dropped. "One of the functions of editors," says managing editor E. Clifton Daniel, "is to throw things away."

The Boston Herald Traveler threw its investigative team away. The newspaper assembled a four-man team late last year. The team, which had barely begun its work, was investigating a business transaction in which one of the Herald Traveler's stockholders was involved when publisher George Akerson intervened. "After that every suggestion we had for an investigative crime piece was rebuffed," says Nicholas Gage. Gage is now an investigative reporter for The Wall Street Journal.

Team Players

Is the lone, probing reporter going the way of trench coats in the city room and the "extra" edition? As in many another field, newsmen are discovering that more and more assignments demand team or "task force" efforts. With its great resources, television has taken the lead in assembling large investigative teams such as the thirteen reporters who worked on CBS News's four-hour report on the War-