2d Man Is Holed Up in Roof Stairwell —Dozen Hurt

NYT-1/8/73

By United Press International

NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 7—The police gunned down a sniper atop a 17-story hotel where 10 persons died and a dozen were wounded today in a barrage of bullets and fire. But they said another sniper was holed up in a stairwell near the roof.

Firing from a Marine helicopter gunship over the Downtown Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge, the police cut down one sniper when he bolted from a concrete block above the stairwell. Tthe other sniper, the police said, retreated into the stairwell from the rooftop cubicle, which had come under gunfire.

Within an hour after sniper's death, the helicopter gunship made three more passes over the hotel, firing round after round into the concrete cubicle and stairwell area in an attempt to flush out the other sniper.

On one of the sweeps, the police reported they spotted a gun barrel and were fired upon by the second sniper. The police also said there might be a third sniper.

Fled to Bunker

The high-rise hotel, five blocks from the French Quarter, was bathed in floodlights when the first sniper made his break 10 hours after the killings began with the death of a hotel official on the 11th floor.

In these morning hours, the snipers set fires in several rooms and bolted to the roof, where they fired upon policemen and firemen arriving at the scene.

They finally took refuge in a concrete bunker atop the hotel, which has a large vertical "Howard Johnson" sign along one side fronting on Loyola Street. Smoke for a time billowed from balcony windows on the upper portion of the hotel.

The dead sniper, who was wounded about five hours after the incident began, burst from the concrete lair with a rifle

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10 in New Orleans Killed In Sniper Attack on Hotel

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tucked under his arm in a firing position. He ran across the gravel roof before he was struck down by tracer bullets from the gunship.

The police in the nearby Rault Center also began firing, as did those on the street below. The copter closed to within 50 feet as the sniper fell on his face, his clothes torn to tatters by bursts of gunfire from three points on the craft.

The gunman was described as a light-complexioned black man.

Four of his victims were policemen, including the second-ranking police officer in New Orleans. Also dead were a hotel employe and five hotel guests.

Like a Combat Zone

Downtown New Orleans turned into a combat zone during the day as fog, a light mist and smoke from the fires clung close to the ground.

"We were watching from the windows at the Rault Center," said one newsman. "The helicopter was firing red tracers. You could see a long red string leading up to him like a fuse. It hit right in front of him, then all the way up his body.

"After he went down they kept firing into him for at least three or four more minutes. Then a police officer shouted that there's another guy up there yelling, 'Power to the people.'"

An estimated total of 600 policemen were mobilized early in the day for the assault on the hotel after a maid reported that a gunman with an automatic rifle was "shooting at whites." The maid and others described the sniper as a light-complexioned black man and told the police that he possibly had a companion.

Among the dead was Louis Sergo, deputy police superintendent. Among the wounded were four policemen and two firemen.

"It's unbelievable, diabolical, maniacal," said the Rev. Peter Rogers, New Orleans police chaplain. "It looks like he was shooting at anybody in uniform."

The incident was the culmination of more than a week of periodic sniping at New Orleans policemen, which started on New Year's Eve with the death of a police cadet who was gunned down in front of police headquarters. At the time, Police Chief Clarence Giarrusso said there was a militant conspiracy to kill policemen in the city.

Joe Grijalva, an eyewitness to today's gun battle, said he saw one of the policemen apparently shot during heavy fire from the hotel.

"I was looking from a window and on the left from me there was a man—one of the policemen, I think—and he was firing when they were shooting all the shots and he screamed and he fell down behind the car he was leaning against," Mr. Grijalva said.

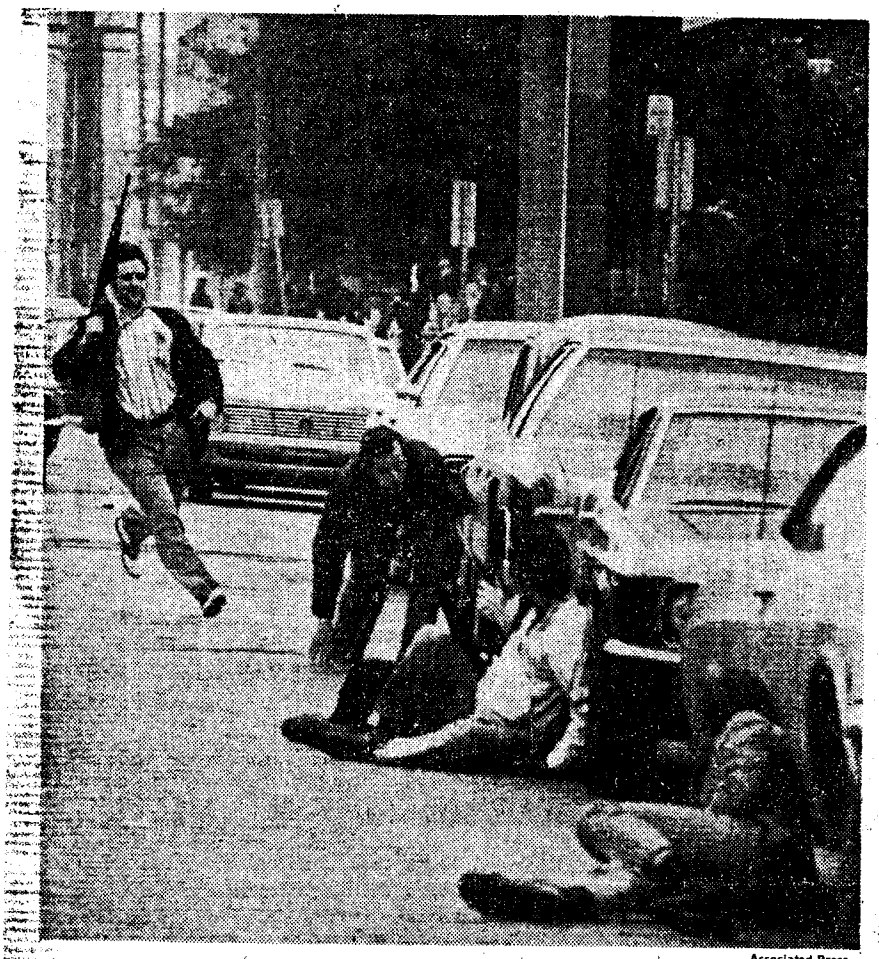
Asked what type of weapons were firing down from the hotel, Mr. Grijalva said, "there were machine guns and all sorts of rifles from all sides of the building"

10 Die in New Orleans Hotel Sniper Fire; Gunman Is Slain by Police in Helicopter

Marine helicopter gunship approaches New Orleans hotel roof just before police killed sniper at cubicle at right

Associated Press

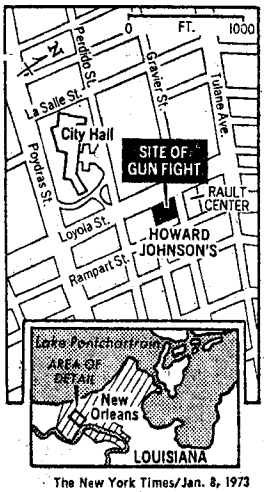
A New Orleans policeman aids officer wounded by sniper during the gun battle



Associated Press

A policeman in street clothes rushing for cover outside the hotel in New Orleans

Six Were Killed in Fire in Same Hotel in 1971



The New York Times/Jan. 8, 1973

Special to The New York Times

NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 7—The Downtown Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge, where a fire and gun battle occurred today, was the scene of a fire in July, 1971 that killed six persons in the early-morning hours.

The fire was reported to have been concentrated in the room of two men who checked out of the hotel shortly before the blaze and after hotel officials had refused them permission to bring women to their rooms. In November the Orleans Parish grand jury concluded an investigation of the fire blaze without issuing indictments.

Assistant Fire Superintendent William J. McCrossen said a sprinkler system probably could have saved the six lives.

There are no ordinances in Orleans Parish requiring sprinklers in hotels and motels.

Five presons died in a fire Nov. 30 at the Rault Center, across the street from the motor lodge. Four of the victims jumped from the eighth floor, and the fifth was killed when he was overcome by smoke in a stairwell.

Eight persons were rescued from the roof by helicopter. The building contains apartments and private club.

Sniping Case Bears Similarity To Texas U. Incident in 1966

AUSTIN, Tex., Jan. 7 (UPI)—The sniper attack from atop a New Orleans hotel today was similar in some way to Charles Whitman's killing of 16 persons on Aug. 1, 1966, from the University of Texas tower here.

Whitman fired for about 90 minutes and wounded 32 other persons before Patrolman Romero Martinez charged up a staircase and killed him.

The two sniping incidents were most similar in the immunity of the positions from where the gunmen held off the police.

The tower from which Whitman fired could be reached only by a single staircase that led from an elevator one floor below.

Since the Whitman killings, the University of Texas has built a secret second access to the tower.

The New Orleans sniper secured himself in a concrete bunker atop a stairwell on the roof of the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge so that access could be gained only by storming the bunker across the roof or rushing it from below — up the stairwell over which the sniper had a commanding view.

Whitman took seven guns to the Texas tower, including a .35-caliber rifle and a military carbine. The New Orleans sniper apparently carried only one automatic rifle.

REMEMBER THE NEEDIEST!

Associated Press

Using trucks for protection from the sniper, firemen in New Orleans tried to fight the blaze in the hotel, rear