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Story Behind the Chicago Story

By Sioux Falls (S.D.) Editor F. C. Christopherson

It is my opinion that if Mayor Daley of Chicago were a candidate for reelection today, he would win by an overwhelming majority.

It is also my opinion that if a poll were taken of the delegates attending the convention, a substantial majority would express satisfaction over the fact that security forces were so numerous and so vigilant.

Mrs. Christopherson and I talked to policemen. We talked to delegates. We talked to hippies, yippies and others. We talked to bystanders. We watched developments in Grant Park, along Michigan Boulevard and adjoining streets, in the lobbies of the Conrad Hilton and Sheraton Blackstone Hotels and in the International Amphitheatre.

Many Lost Their Cool

First, let it be explained, that Mayor Daley is what might be termed a big city boss who upon occasion rules with an iron hand and a dictatorship complex. Some of the methods he employed in the convention, for example, were wholly improper.

It should also be said that among the several hundred police officers on duty that there were some who lost their cool. There were also television newsmen and commentators, including some of the biggest in the business, who lost their cool. There were delegates, too, who lost their cool.

This was not surprising because it was a period of intense emotional excitement in an explosive atmosphere.

It could have been a shambles but—and note this well—no delegate was killed. No important or unimportant public figure was assassinated. No police officer was killed. No one of the many thousand hippies, yippies and others in the malcontent group was killed. No one was seriously injured. Property damage was minimal—far less, much far

less, than in many recent city riots.

What They Did

The impression that the malcontents were just nice and pleasant youngsters is erroneous. In the first place, they weren't all young. In the second place—and more significant—many were hard core militants whose objective was destruction and ruin.

What television did not show were the events that preceded in virtually all instances the movements of the police against the massed groups. They did not show the open defiance of the law. They did not show the "sweet youngsters" kicking the officers with razor blades in the toes of their shoes. They did not show them throwing bags of human excrement into the faces of the police officers and the guardsmen. They did not report their abusive—and unprintable—epithets.

A Careful Check

The spirit of revolt was not limited to Chicago's loop area. It was prevalent in the International Amphitheatre. There was security there—a lot of it. Before I could get into the building, I had to push a special card through an indicator. Once inside, a guard made me open my typewriter case and checked its contents. I had to display two cards to enter the enclosure to reach my seat with the working press.

The delegates and all other newsmen, both press and television, were subjected to the same treatment. It was an inconvenience but a modest one . . .

What I will remember primarily is that Mrs. Christopherson and I were in the midst of much of it at all hours of the day and night and came home without blemish or injury, suffering only from lack of sleep. It might have been otherwise if the police control had been less extensive.