

A Week of Grievances

OF the 6,000 newsmen who gathered in Chicago last week, it was Columnist Max Lerner who had the kindest words to say for the Democratic National Convention. "Here in Chicago," he wrote, "you see America plain with no holds barred, no warts missing from the portrait, with everything there, including credential fights and platform debates, with Lester Maddox and Julian Bond, with hippies and yuppies and the New Left, with soldiers and Secret Service and a maddening security tightness, with newsmen and pho-

and demonstrators, the police seemed to single out reporters and TV men as special targets, blaming them for attracting the yuppies and giving them publicity. On the first night of the convention, some 20 newsmen were beaten up and three hospitalized. "If the police ask a newsmen and a photographer to move, they should move as well as anyone else," said Mayor Daley, who became the press's chief villain of the week.

When the cops started clubbing three girls in a convertible, Chicago Daily News Reporter John Linstead protested. His reward was a beating and a scalp wound. NBC newsmen John Evans was



MIKE WALLACE & POLICE ESCORT
Both virtue and vice in the doggedness.

tographers being clubbed by over-reacting police squads, but with an unflinching resolve to show and face what America is really like."

For most newsmen, however, the week was one long grievance—against the restrictions of the convention, the highhandedness of the police and the general air of repression in Mayor Daley's Chicago. "The only people who can possibly feel at ease at this convention," wrote the New York Times's Russell Baker, "are those who have been to a hanging." "We gather," NBC's David Brinkley told his network audience, "that the Democratic leadership does not want reported what is happening." CBS's Walter Cronkite concluded one night by complaining: "It makes us want to pack up our cameras and typewriters and go home."

Chief Villain. If the frustrations of the convention bothered newsmen, however, the violence visited on their colleagues really raised their hackles. Whenever they were chasing protesters



JOHN EVANS AT WORK

struck by a policeman, had his head bandaged, then began interviewing other bandaged victims. Delos Hall, a CBS cameraman, was filming a cop-hippie clash when he was clubbed from behind. NBC Cameraman James Strickland was photographing Hall's plight when he was hit in the face and toppled. Even while he was on the air, CBS Floor Reporter Dan Rather was flattened by two security men; one hit him in the stomach, the other in the back. Rather's colleague, Mike Wallace, was belted in the jaw by a guard and hustled out of the hall. The attacks on newspaper and TV reporters became so flagrant that eight top executives of news-gathering organizations* strongly

* Leonard H. Goldenson, president of ABC; Bailey K. Howard, president of Field Enterprises (Chicago Sun-Times and Daily News); Dr. Frank Stanton, president of CBS; Otis Chandler, publisher of the Los Angeles Times; Julian Goodman, president of NBC; Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, publisher of the New York Times; Hedley Donovan, editor in chief of Time Inc.; Katharine Graham, president of the Washington Post Co., which owns Newsweek.

protested the treatment in a telegram to Mayor Daley.

The response of most newsmen was to strike back by giving the Chicago police—and in many cases the city and the Democratic Convention as well—a verbal thrashing. CBS took almost grim delight in replaying in slow motion the decking of Dan Rather, somewhat as if he were Sonny Liston going down for the count. Several TV reporters protested that they were being shadowed by security forces, and NBC's Sander Vanocur at one point told his anchor booth and all America: "We can't work with these gumshoes over our shoulders." Before long, TV men were taking considerable time on the air just venting their grievances, coloring the whole proceedings with a tinge of anger. Disgusted by the whole spectacle, CBS's Eric Sevareid went so far as to call the session of the presidential balloting "the most disgraceful night in American political history."

Same Sailmaker. Despite the harassment and the understandable pique, however, the stamina of the TV newsmen was impressive. NBC's John Chancellor and Edwin Newman, in particular, demonstrated a mastery of the art of extracting information from wary sources in the midst of bedlam. But if doggedness and improvisation were the newsmen's virtues, they sometimes became their vices too. In the inexhaustible air time to be filled, TV reporters kited and killed rumors with seeming abandon. If word got out that a Massachusetts alternate knew a fellow back home who used the same sailmaker as Ted Kennedy, the man would immediately be interviewed by men from every network. The networks often left the podium during a speech because a floor reporter had managed to collar a delegation chairman whose views might be more interesting than the speaker's (at times, they simply were not). NBC delayed showing Cleveland Mayor Carl Stokes' seconding speech for Hubert Humphrey to show a video-taped riot scene that had taken place more than an hour before.

While the press contended with convention restrictions and police, an equally contentious scene took place on ABC which continued its practice of running a 90-min. summary except for the last two days. Commentators William F. Buckley Jr. and Gore Vidal made Mayor Daley and his cohorts look like amateurs in invective. To Vidal's accusation that he was "a crypto-Nazi," Buckley replied: "Listen you queer, stop calling me a crypto-Nazi, or I'll sock you in your goddam face and you'll stay plastered. Let the author of *Myra Breckinridge* go back to his pornography and stop making any allusions of Nazism to somebody who was infantry in the last war." Vidal: "You were not in the infantry."

Smart Rap. In all the week's fracas, some part-time journalists not usually noted for their diffidence managed to stay inconspicuous. David Merrick was

on hand to record some acerbic impressions for the Washington Post. Candice Bergen was getting the swinging woman's point of view for *Cosmopolitan*. Elia Kazan quietly rounded up information for *New York Magazine*. The one journalist-celebrity who did get in trouble with the fuzz would seem to be the least likely to do so, if only because he rarely ventures forth into the outside world: *Playboy* Editor-Publisher Hugh Hefner.

One night, Hefner forsook a week-long party at his mansion to observe some night's rioting in the company of Columnist Lerner and Cartoonist Jules Feiffer. A car screeched to a halt alongside and disgorged six cops. "Move it!" they commanded. "That's just what we're doing," said Hefner. Whereupon a cop gave him a smart rap across the butt. More indignant than injured, Hefner held a press conference next day, swore that the attack had moved him to get out more and get more involved in useful causes. That may have been the worst mistake the Chicago cops made all week.

REPORTING

Eccentric View

Working hard to enhance its reputation for publishing the unexpected, *Esquire* was not inclined to entrust its convention coverage to conventional reporters. The magazine may never again be able to field as odd a team of reporters as the threesome it sent to Chicago: Novelist William Burroughs, French Novelist and Playwright Jean Genet, and Satirist Terry Southern. They were joined on arrival by Poet Allen Ginsberg, who was in town to observe.

Almost instinctively, the four began their work with a pilgrimage to the hippie encampment in Lincoln Park. It was mutual love at first sight. Hippies fondled Ginsberg's black beard and flowing tresses; Genet showered dollar bills on the hippies and received a hippie ring in return. "They are so beautiful; they are such angels," he murmured. The convention that the four were supposed to be covering was less to their taste. "Boring and unoriginal" snapped Genet. So he and his colleagues decided to return to the idyllic delights of Lincoln Park, only to run into a clash with police. A flying bottle narrowly missed Burroughs' head. Genet, who looks like one of Santa Claus' elves, was almost clubbed by a cop before he calmed his would-be assailant with a beatific smile.

Obsessed with Dogs. The foursome split into twosomes. Ginsberg and Genet held hands in *Esquire* cars and wandered rhapsodically among the hippies; Burroughs and Southern spent their happiest hours in the dark, cool interiors of various bars, where they were joined by Southern's girlfriend. But as becomes participant-journalists, they showed up at all the proper rebellious places. At the un-birthday party thrown



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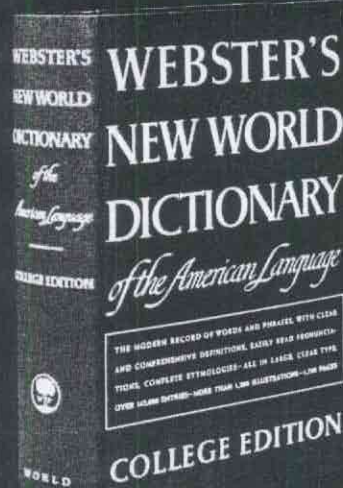
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GENET IN CHICAGO
Happiest with the hippiest.

for Lyndon Johnson by the hippies in the Chicago Coliseum, they matched animalistic descriptions of the cops. Burroughs called them "vicious dogs," and asked: "Is there not a municipal ordinance requesting that vicious dogs be muzzled and controlled?" Genet thought a better description was "mad dogs, who for the past 150 years have done the same thing, with even greater brutality, to the blacks." Improving on even this literary eloquence, Southern found the "dog-cop image quite apt, but in my view there is also a salient strain of swine in the character of those who drove the young people out of Lincoln Park. Swine, or perhaps the hated mandrill."

Ginsberg was going to read some free verse that he had composed for the occasion, but he had lost his voice after too much chanting. So he let one of the Fugs read it for him: "All is poetry, the political convention's fake images, mobilizes conspiring with reason to demonstrate America unconscious, hippies chanting Om, the first word of the universe under cloudy new moon light and brilliant sun."

No Time for Marching. Next day, all four were on hand for the skirmishes at Grant Park in front of the Hilton Hotel. Ginsberg had recovered his voice enough to croak and urge the hippies to avoid overexcitement. He proposed combatting the cops with the Hindu charm word Om. Caught off guard, the cops even warmed up to Ginsberg, who, after all, was trying to cool the hippies. "Look after yourself," said a plainclothesman. "There are some wild people in the park today."

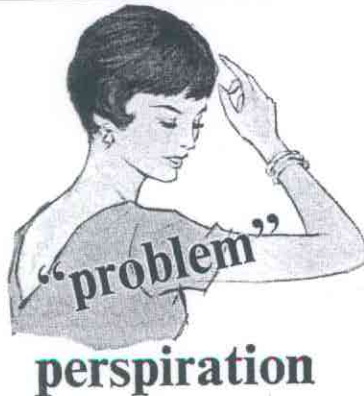
Unmolested and little heard from all week was another novelist-turned-journalist, Norman Mailer, who was in town for *Harper's*. At the Grant Park rally, Mailer explained his uncharacteristic silence. "I'm a little sick about all this and also a little mad, but I've got a deadline on a long piece and I'm not going to go out and march and get arrested. I just came here to salute you all."

At least somebody was writing.

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