

2d Sniper Reported

*Deputy Says He Was Shot
By One of Two Men He Saw*

By George Lardner Jr. 1/12/73
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 11—At least two snipers fired on police at the Downtown Howard Johnson Hotel here during last Sunday's shootout, it was learned today.

David Munch, a sheriff's deputy from neighboring Jefferson Parish, who answered police radio calls for help shortly after fires broke out in the hotel, has told his superiors that he was shot by one of two black men who spotted him stepping into the eighth floor hallway from the stairwell.

"One of them blasted at him with a shotgun and knocked him against the wall," a Jefferson Parish sheriff's spokesman said.

With Munch at the time were two New Orleans police officers, who hurriedly pulled him back to avoid another burst of fire.

The two assailants then fled down the hall in the other direction.

New Orleans police investigating the 12-hour weekend rampage of murder and arson so far have said that a .44-caliber magnum carbine, recovered at the side of slain sniper Mark James Robert Essex on the hotel roof seemed to be the only weapon used against police, firemen, hotel employees and guests.

Munch has yet to give a formal statement to New Orleans police, but is expected to do so shortly.

Hit in the side and arm, Munch was treated at Charity Hospital Sunday morning and returned some two hours later to the scene to help his fellow officers.

Mark Essex harassed in Navy, hated whites. Page A6.

Harassment in Navy Turned Essex

By Austin Scott

Washington Post Staff Writer

EMPORIA, Kan., Jan. 11 — The Navy court-martial record of Mark James Robert Essex, who was killed on a New Orleans hotel rooftop Sunday by police sharpshooters, paints a portrait of a sensitive young man trying to come to terms with what he saw as extreme harassment.

Essex was court-martialed a year ago on Jan. 15 for being home in Emporia for a month the previous October, absent without official leave. His parents insist that the gentle, thoughtful son they sent off to the Navy in 1969 was changed dramatically by something that happened to him in the service.

Essex pleaded guilty to being AWOL. He needed time to think, he told his mother. And he elaborated on his reasons when he was called upon to testify at his own court-martial.

"I went U.A. (unauthorized absence) because I just needed time to think," he told the military judge, Lt. James N. Rogers, according to the court-martial transcript.

"I had had a fight," he went on. "I got a ticket to L.A. (Los Angeles) and while I was in the bus station the driver of a bus going to New Orleans left his bus and I jumped on and got to El Paso and called my folks and they sent the money to come home. I had to talk to some black people because I had begun to hate all white people. I was tired of going to white people and telling them my problems and not getting anything done about it."

By the time he spoke those words, Essex had spent two years in the Navy, all of it at the San Diego naval air base.

The problems he was wrestling with had been noticed much earlier by his immediate

supervisor, Lt. Robert E. Hatcher, Essex's division officer at the Navy depot clinic where he worked as a dental assistant who testified for the defense.

"I've known the accused for approximately a year and a half," Hatcher told the court-martial.

"Here in the service I have been acquainted with about four male-type assistants and he, by far, is the best that I have worked with. He is out-performance and duties..."

Hatcher said he had grown standing in his professional close enough to Essex "so that

he talks to me in somewhat of a confidential nature and I trust what he is saying to me is what he actually feels.

"I do know why he went U.A.," Hatcher continued. "It's a long story, basically, but he and three of his friends were put on report for excessive noise in the barracks... the men felt that they were being unjustly accused because of their color... I conducted an investigation separate from the legal officer's investigation... My investigation shows that the man that made the original complaint was a

very biased individual, and very obviously racially prejudiced..."

Hatcher testified that the base commanding officer, who he did not name, listened to his report, talked with the man who originally complained, and "decided that the whole case was a matter of injustice."

The commanding officer ordered the disciplinary proceedings stopped and told the four accused men that "he would try to do whatever he could to solve the problem," Hatcher said.

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put together, he was a very upset person during this time."

Hatcher's testimony continued:

"He was, I think, genuinely concerned about . . . his fellow blacks aboard the station, the harassments at the living quarters and the mess hall.

"He expressed to me then that he was so agitated that he couldn't sleep, couldn't work . . . He said to me, at that time, that he just could not properly do the job he was trained to do . . . I think that just the total picture of his hopelessness of the situation was the thing that precipitated his U.A. I think he needed, in his own mind, to get away from the military situation in order, to think things out as to where he did, in fact, fit into the picture."

Hatcher gave one detailed example of the harassment of Essex he kept talking about:

"He purchased a car just after he turned 21, an older model car, and he was constantly stopped, searched, questioned, almost upon each entry and exit from the base, about the car, the insurance, one thing or another.

But, he continued, "the men were dismissed and I think that the feeling from all four of them was that this was just another whitewash of the situation . . . I think that Essex, in this case, being the most sensitive and the most responsible of the four, felt that he had been sold out, and he was very despondent over it."

Part of the problem, Hatcher said, was that "immediately after the initial complaint was lodged . . . they (the four accused, who had been roommates), were separated . . . They put Essex in a room with totally incompatible people and the harassment started almost immediately . . .

"The harassment occurred in the mess hall lines, recreation areas, and so forth. So all

"Other people had access to the car and these people were also stopped, and they were black, and it was just a constant day-to-day, or at least two to three times a week, that I would notice that something was wrong . . .

"I do not know if this type of checking also occurred with junior enlisted whites. I do know that I was never stopped, and none of the other junior whites in the department had been stopped in this manner . . ."

When Essex was asked to testify in his own behalf, he told the hearing, ". . . I believe that Dr. Hatcher explained most of everything as to the reasons that I went U.A. . . ."

"One thing that made us mad was when the summary



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The Essex family answers questions about Mark's background in Emporia, Kan. From left: Nellie Essex, his mother; father Mark Essex; Penny Fox, sister, Joyce Horne, sister; brother Timmy Essex. Mark was slain in shootout.