

Protesters, Police See Peace in Miami

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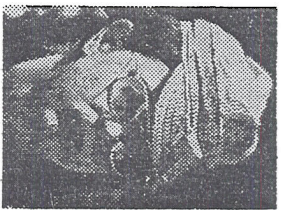
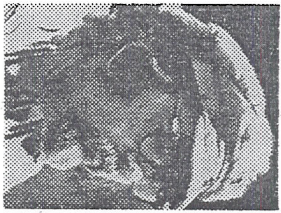
MIAMI BEACH — Attorney General Richard Kleindienst, who has promised stern and immediate law enforcement should protesters in any way impede the GOP National Convention, is concerned that it's going to be one messy week for this sweaty Florida resort city.

But the demonstrators themselves think it's going to be relatively peaceable — and so does the Miami Beach Police Department.

Law and Order

"You've got to realize one thing," said one dark-haired young man wearing a blue shirt. "The Republicans are running on a law and order platform, so their Attorney General has got to talk tough about demonstrators and strict law enforcement."

The speaker is Pete Corso, the police department's convention liaison officer. He says that contrary to ru-



The faces of Flamingo Park . . . youth gathers at GOP convention

—AP Photo

mors, the Miami Beach police are going to police this convention.

The way the rumor mill's scenario has it, at some appointed hour Kleindienst will take over law enforcement in Miami Beach, declare a sort of martial law and clap all the demonstrators in irons.

Some newsmen who arrived early are placing bets as to whether the Attorney General will order mass arrests on Wednesday, the day the most massive protests are planned — or the night

before, to rob anti-GOP demonstrators of their moment of drama.

'Feds Won't Interfere'

Policeman Corso scoffs at this. He feels certain there will be more arrested during the GOP convention than when the Democrats were in town (there were only two riot-associated busts then) because there are more demonstrators expected — and because Nixon is a more appealing target for anti-war people than McGovern. But Corso feels sure the

"Feds won't interfere with police business in this city."

Estimates vary as to the number of demonstrators that will turn up. Cops say they hear that efforts to recruit dissidents to come to Miami haven't gone well. Corso won't attempt any numerical predictions. The Miami Convention Coalition, consisting of nearly all the protest groups, predicts 10,000. The unaffiliated Zipplies, the anarchists of the radical movement, predict less than half that many.

About 3000 turned up last month for the Democrats.

'Day of Unacceptance'

The big production number for the demonstrators this time is the "Day of Un-

The "mobile" actions will take the form of random and unpredictable "street theater" happenings, where demonstrators will stop to create a disruptive scene, then move on before police can arrive. The notion behind this is to keep the cops jumping by "hitting 'em where they ain't."

But all protest groups except the Zipplies have taken a four-part pledge of non-violence: That there will be:

- (1) no disruption of Miami Beach's huge community of elderly people,
- (2) no attacks on military or police personnel,
- (3) no trashing or property damage, and
- (4) no physical attacks on delegates.

Non-Violent Vow

Anti-war organizer Rennie Davis, who promises "the most massive sit-in in American history," adds that the GOP jamboree will not be "another Chicago."

"In every way," he tells newsmen, "it will be non-violent."

In the first Miami Beach

Campaign '72

police action, 100 demonstrators were rousted from Flamingo Park — staging site for the protest groups — early last week. But that was because they had arrived before their lease started. Their park permit extends from this past Thursday until “24 hours after the convention’s final gavel.”

A fundamental question that often gets lost is: Why have these people come to express their protest in the first place?

The protest coalition’s Bob Lamb, 25, says he thinks it’s basically opposition to the war.

“Yes,” he says, “we constantly hear the argument that demonstrations are counter-productive. That our presence may just build sympathy for Nixon. But what other recourse do poor and young and minority people have? Nobody else represents us, so we have to represent ourselves, and take our case directly to the people who run the country.

“The only alternative is to stay home, sit back and hope Nixon will finally end the war. And with the bombing continually escalating in Vietnam, that doesn’t appear too likely.”

Oddly enough, the police department feels comfortable because of close working relationships it has established with one of the staunchest protest groups on the Miami Beach scene during the Democratic convention — the Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Marshals

The VVAW’s will be marshals for the anti-GOP demonstrations and while, in the words of policeman Pete Corso, “those vets play lousy softball,” local cops feel they are the best insurance toward keep brother demonstrators non-violent.

“The vets want to show they are opposed to the war, to violence and to the Administration,” says Corso, “and they’re not going to let any unfortunate incidents confuse those issues if they can help it.”

In a softball game here the day before yesterday, by the way, the score was Cops 19, Vets 3.