



Dick Bogle

A little more than ten years ago, the famous Kerner commission, headed by then Illinois governor Otto Kerner probed the reasons for the nation's crime rate and rioting.

It determined that frustrated hopes, powerlessness and poverty spawned the violence.

It suggested job training, schools and better housing would help end it.

Now, in fact just last week, a new Task force on Violent Crime released its final report. It too was chaired by another Illinois governor, James R. Thompson and former Attorney General Griffin Bell.

But oh what a difference. In its more than 200 pages, it doesn't suggest massive causes or cures. Instead it zeroes in on punishment.

One quote from the report says, "Millions of our fellow citizens are being held hostage by their fear of crime and violence."

The report calls for the expenditure of \$2 billion to build new prisons.

Another recommendation is to have inmates serve their full sentences and to allow prosecutors to use evidence even if police obtained it illegally, so long as the illegality was unintentional and the officers acted in "good faith."

It also calls for a waiting period in buying a handgun. (We in Oregon have had such a law in practice for many years.) Preventive detention would permit federal judges to hold people in jail without bail if there is "clear and convincing evidence" that they are dangerous or they have a past record of committing crimes while on pretrial release. The American Civil Liberties Union calls the plan "outrageous." It says it turns the presumption of innocence entirely on end by locking up arrested people because of what they might do in the future.

The ACLU says the task force is offering a band-aid reform which will not reduce crime but will cut back on constitutional rights.

Now some experts are wondering if this report will dent the nation's

huge crime problem. Some are even saying the country lacks the will to curb crime.

Somewhere there has to be a righteous middle ground. Crime affects all of us sometimes directly and all the time indirectly. Blacks are the largest single group victims of crime. It hits everyone in the pocketbook when we have to pay higher prices at stores to cover the losses from shoplifters. It hits us emotionally too when we leave our homes for any time and wonder if our property is to be violated during our absence.

But I certainly don't want to see our constitutional rights eroded. But tell me what about a person who is arrested on a felony charge, brought before a judge who releases him on his own recognizance and goes out and commits another felony and goes through the entire process not just again but three times. Right here in Portland this year one such defendant did just that. He committed a serious crime,

was released, committed another, was released, committed another, was released and committed yet another.

Judges blame overcrowded prisons. Oregon prisons no longer offer the rehabilitative job-training programs in the magnitude they once did.

Some prison officials say some inmates simply used them as a means of impressing the parole board for an earlier release date.

During the term of Governor Bob Straub, a serious miscalculation of future prison needs was made. Corrections officials determined that a decline in the age group most likely to go to prison would occur and thus make construction of a new prison here unnecessary.

Couple that miscalculation with court rulings on prison overcrowding and we have exactly what we have... a growing crime rate, former inmates released unprepared to cope with life on the outside and more and more victims.

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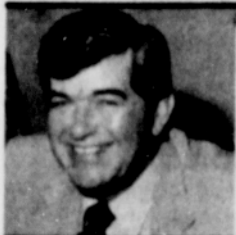


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An Open Letter

by Ronald R. Still
Chief of Police

In my last open letter, I indicated that I would discuss what happens when a police officer stops someone for a traffic violation.

I picked this topic to clear up some confusion that citizens have regarding the actions a police officer takes during a traffic stop.

First when officers receive training on how to make a safe traffic stop, safety for the citizen and the officer is of primary importance. Historically, many officers are injured as the result of a traffic stop. Most of these injuries are related to assaults by the occupants of the vehicle being stopped. For this reason, officers are very careful and I hope citizens understand this if they are stopped. Next, I will try to describe a typical traffic stop.

When an officer spots a violation, the first thing he must do is find a safe place to pull the vehicle over.

This may be several blocks from where the violation took place! Once the stop is made, the officer will pull the police car out at an angle to protect themselves from passing autos.

Most officers will want to approach your vehicle, rather than have you come back to the police car. The best thing you can do is remain in your car. Keep in mind the officer is watching for sudden movements or activity that will alert him to potential danger.

As the officer approaches, he will stand behind the door, out of direct line of sight, for his protection.

After explaining why you were stopped and obtaining your driver's license, the officer may verify the validity of your license with the Department of Motor Vehicles. This is done because many people carry licenses even when they have no legal right. This check may take a

few minutes if the computers are under heavy use.

The officer has the option to cite you for the original violation. If he does cite you, he will give you a copy of the violation and explain your options. Remember, if you disagree with the citation, the place to argue is in court, not with the officer.

While this does not cover all aspects of a traffic stop, I hope that it has provided an insight that will be beneficial to you.

If you have comments or questions regarding the Portland Police Bureau, send them to me through the Public Information Office, 222 S.W. Pine, Portland, Oregon, 97204. I will not be able to respond in my open letters to each and every concern, but will select those which will assist in improving communications and relations with the community.

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Oddly, the words "flammable" and "inflammable" both mean exactly the same thing.

Contrary to popular opinion, the Liberty Bell didn't crack during the Revolutionary War. Its famous crack occurred when it rang for the funeral of Chief Justice Marshall in 1835.

It seems hard to believe, but Chicago is as far south as Rome, Italy.

Gasoline cost an average of 19 cents a gallon in 1941.

Strangely enough, 32% of all the names of states in the U.S. start with either the letter "M" or "N".



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From the Capitol

Congressman Ron Wyden

Q. Extension of the Voting Rights Act will be one of the most important and controversial issues facing Congress this fall. How do you feel about this issue?

A. I am in complete support of efforts to extend the Act beyond its scheduled 1982 expiration date. The Voting Rights Act is the most successful civil rights law ever passed by the Congress. Since the Act was enacted, registration and voting percentages for Blacks and Hispanics have risen dramatically. The num-

ber of minority elected officials has also increased significantly.

But this does not mean that all of the problems have been solved. Discrimination is still prevalent in many areas. Blacks and other minorities are still being denied their right to vote. Extension of the Act is needed to ensure that we do not lose what we have gained so far—and that we move even further along toward eliminating all political discrimination.

To that end, I have cosponsored HR 3112, introduced by Rep. Peter

Rodino of New Jersey.

Rodino's bill would extend the Act for 10 years. It would also continue for seven years the special provisions of the Act which provide voting assistance to non-English-speaking citizens in places where there are substantial numbers of such citizens who could not cast an informed vote without such assistance.

In addition the bill would amend the Act to clarify that the state carries the burden of proof in voting discrimination cases.

Letters to the Editor

To the editor:

Sometimes some of us begin to think we sound like broken records. We talk, talk, talk, and tell the dominant society what they want to hear, and what they already know.

No one fears what they already know and one who always talks. We as Blacks are like that saying, "A barking Dog Never Bites," and we are always barking.

Why can't we keep our mouths shut and go about the business of organizing in a concerted effort to get the Blacks to beat the dominant administration at its own game?

As long as we are weak at the ballot box, afraid to speak out constructively with organized Blacks and stop telling the white administration every move we make and thought we think and will think, we'll be forever appearing on public forums, speaking of the atrocities we are suffering, which seems to appease the ones who continue to do us harm.

At times, I suspiciously think

many of us are a bunch of cowards who are afraid to make the dominant administration angry.

As long as we demonstrate and march and shake our fist in empty air, no one really has anything to fear.

We are historically short on memory for all the hurt and embarrassment that has been heaped upon all of us.

We never discuss a political fund for candidates that will help us.

We never discuss politics until election time—that's too late!

It was plain and written when the administration made its move to replace Commissioner Jordan as head of the police what the outcome would be.

Now is the time to talk to all Blacks about unity and strength that will help us all. We can organize through the churches and community organizations as the moral majority has done to mobilize our brothers and sisters. Or are we so ignorant that we are thinking that the churches are the wrong place to in-

clude? Are we so blind to believe we are supposed to be continually prosecuted? Every race of people who comes into these United States forms a cohesive organization and we are still talking and talking and shaking our fists in empty air.

Now is the time to talk to all Blacks about unity and strength that will help us all. The police will never stop until we show a strong arm of unity in the ballot box.

Please, less talk about what is being done to us and more talk directly to the Black community about how we can stop what is being done to us.

If persons from the white community wish to help and lend strength, let them come and help and contribute constructively.

Finally, until all Blacks unite to stamp out the indignities placed upon us here in Portland, we will all perish as fools. For no Black is so high that he/she will not be pushed out by the dominant society.

Walter F. Morris Jr.

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