

Violent Crimes Increase 40 Per Cent in Five Years in Washington, D.C.

(Editor's note: Washington, D.C., is a city in trouble. This is the second of three dispatches reporting on the "very bad situation" which President Kennedy says exists in the nation's capital. It deals with Washington's rising crime rate.)

By LOUIS CASSELS
United Press International
Washington - (UPI) - Mrs. Brooks Hays is a gentle, petite, 65-year-old lady. She lives in a nice home on Capitol Hill. Her husband works at the White House as a social assistant to President Kennedy.

In the late afternoon of Jan. 21, Mrs. Hays was sewing in an upstairs bedroom. She looked up and saw a young Negro standing in her doorway. Before she could scream for help, he grabbed a pair of scissors from her hand with a rough gesture that broke her wrist.

"Give me some money or I'll kill you," he said.

She gave him some church envelopes, containing about \$12, that were lying on her dresser. He fled from the house.

Because her husband is a prominent man, Mrs. Hays' experience was reported in newspapers all over the country. But it was not an unusual experience for a resident of the nation's capital.

Last year in the District of Columbia there were an average of 16 housebreakings, 8 aggravated assaults, 7 auto thefts and 6 robberies every 24 hours. There were 2 homicides each week, and a rape every three days.

It is small comfort to District residents to point out that Washington's over-all crime rate is surpassed by that of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Detroit and several other major cities, according to the FBI's uniform crime reports.

The fact that weighs most heavily with Washingtonians

is that they are no longer safe walking the streets at night, or even sitting in the privacy of their own bedrooms within the shadow of the Capitol dome.

The rising incidence of violent crimes up more than 40 per cent in the past five years has contributed to the racial tensions in Washington. White residents are inclined to blame the whole crime problem on Negroes, who now constitute a majority (54 per cent) of the District of Columbia's population. They cite police reports showing that Negroes are involved in about 85 per cent of the felony arrests here.

Less often cited by nervous whites is the equally true fact that a disproportionate number of the victims of crime - the women who are raped, the cab-drivers who are slugged, the homeowners who are robbed - also are Negroes. Crime flourishes in slums, and Washington's inner city slums are populated mainly by Negroes.

jurisdiction of federal courts. In 1957, the U.S. Supreme Court laid down what is now known as the "Mallory Rule." It forbids the use as evidence of any confession or other information which police may obtain by questioning a suspect held unduly long before he is formally arraigned before a magistrate and advised of his constitutional rights not to talk.

"No other police department in the country has to operate under such a severe restriction on its methods of interrogation," Murray said. "Criminals here are well aware of the protection afforded to them by this rule, and they have been taking full advantage of it."

He displayed a chart showing that the crime rate here has risen steadily since the Mallory rule was laid down in 1957.

Several prominent federal

judges agree with Murray's attitude toward the Mallory rule. Judge Alexander Holtzoff, for example, has testified before congressional committees that the rule "unnecessarily blocks the work of the police and at times leads to acquitting the guilty."

Defenders of the Mallory Rule - and they include a majority of the judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals here as well as the justices of the Supreme Court - contend that it is a necessary safeguard against third-degree methods and extorted confessions. They also assert that the police could learn to live with the rule by questioning suspects "voluntarily" before arrest or after arraignment, if they tried.

Chairman John L. McMillan (D-S.C.), of the House District of Columbia Committee, has been trying for years to

push through legislation to modify the Mallory Rule by giving police the right to question suspects for up to six hours without placing formal charges. The McMillan bill has twice been passed by the House, but each time has died in the Senate.

This month, McMillan called in Senate leaders, District government officials, police and court representatives to discuss the crime situation here, and to seek agreement on legislative remedies. Chief Murray appealed for passage of McMillan's bill. But the

District of Columbia commissioners - the three-man body appointed by the President to oversee Washington's municipal affairs - backed another bill, which would require police to go before a judge and show probable cause before holding a suspect for questioning and investigation.

Urge Other Measures
The District commissioners also urged Congress to fight crime by restricting purchase and ownership of firearms, tightening anti-loitering laws for juveniles, organizing a

Civilian Conservation Corps for high school dropouts and other jobless youths, providing unskilled jobs on city projects for unemployed adults, and setting up "urbanization schools" for people newly transplanted to the city from the rural South.

What remedies for crime Congress will enact remains to be seen. The one sure thing is that the residents of the city will have no say in the matter. The decision will be made by congressmen who are elected by and responsive to citizens in every part of America except the District of Columbia itself.

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There is fairly general agreement that Washington's crime problem cannot be blamed on an inadequate or corrupt police department. Congress, which has held a tight purse-string on expenditures for many other public services, has been very generous about providing Police Chief Robert V. Murray with as many men, dog teams, squad cars and other facilities as he asks. Walter N. Tobriner, president of the District of Columbia Board of Commissioners, says the Washington metropolitan police department is "one of the best and cleanest in the country." This appraisal is privately endorsed by high FBI officials who live and work here.

Although he has no complaints about money and manpower, Chief Murray said in an interview he does believe that law enforcement in the District of Columbia has been "greatly hamstrung" by court rulings.

Under Federal Courts
He pointed out that crimes which elsewhere would be prosecuted in state courts come in Washington under

The Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of a family disagreement presented to the Council. The Council deals with problems, major and minor, encountered by guidance counselors and social workers. Edited by Mrs. Alma Denny. (Copyright by General Features Corp.)

Genevieve R. - He can't seem to find himself after retirement.

Jerome R. - I feel like a used car nobody wants to buy.

Genevieve R. - My husband was a sea captain. Every job he ever held was on a boat or ship. As a boy he used to do odd jobs on fishing trawlers. Then he stuck to sailing until he got his seaman papers. After that he rose to commanding cargo freighters for shipping companies.

But now he's over age and has been retired. There's no dire financial problem. Maybe he'd be better off if there were. He'd have to get busy with something. He doesn't want to travel any more. So he just sits by the radio doing crossword puzzles, or does in front of TV. I'd like to help him get out of this daze, but he says it's no use.

Jerome R. - The first few months of my retirement weren't bad. My wife and I got into our car and drove here and there all over the

U.S.A., like the landlubbers do. We even took one of those bus tours to California, and some train trips to Canada.

But I know that in the end I must stay put, in one place. And since all I know how to do is run a ship, there's not much for me to busy myself with when I'm aground. What's the use of my forcing myself on others when they're busy with their own interests and I have nothing in common with them?

I'm like the used car left over in the lot, or the fish out of water. It's the end of the run.

The Council: Retirement in the prime of life is so recent a phenomenon in our society that we haven't had time to come to grips with making the best use of it. A generation hence, we'll be there'll be Transition Centers (whatever the name may be) where "decompression" takes place. That is, the work horse who has put in his 8-hour day for forty years or so, will be prepared for the slower pace, the freer choice of the retirement period.

So let's just say that Jerome was born too soon for the directional signs to be up and awaiting him. A do-it-yourself job is in order. And Genevieve's role is to encourage Jerome to try one little thing, take one small step out of his blue funk of despair. For never was it more true that one thing leads to another when the one thing is a reaching out to serve a fellowman.

What can Jerome offer? Well, he certainly didn't spend his life in a vacuum. He can visit veterans' hospitals and swap yarns. He can talk to stamp and coin clubs, telling them of his visits to the places they know only from their atlases and albums.

If he is a literate man he can offer to help school kids with their reading. What fun to ask him to bound Alaska or name the Dodecanese Islands! Older children, per arrangement with the P.T.A., can bring their tough geography homework to him.

And if his lack of schooling makes this line of endeavor impossible, how about sorting mail in a hospital, running errands and acting as messenger in a home for the aged? Also, the want ads shout encouragement. We read one which asked for "teen-agers or retirees" to act as guides in a museum.

All depends upon Jerome's admission that even an old sea dog can learn new tricks. Perhaps it will take a guidance counselor to eke that admission out of him. Or he may meet a living example of same, like the retired ironworker we know who is now a dextrous hairdresser, turning out fluffy delicate coiffures.

Husband-Wife Teams to Lunch

Salem - (UPI) - The nation's only husband-wife legislative teams will be honored at a dinner in Olympia, Wash., next week end.

Sen. Ben Musa and Rep. Mrs. Musa (D-The Dalles) represent the districts on Oregon side of the Columbia river opposite the districts represented in the Washington legislature by Sen. Al Henry and Rep. Mrs. Henry (D-White Salmon).

Musa said he and his wife would visit the Washington legislature Saturday "to see how they do things."

House Speaker Clarence Barton (D-Coquille) and Rep. Ross Morgan (D-Gresham) visited the Washington legislature Saturday.

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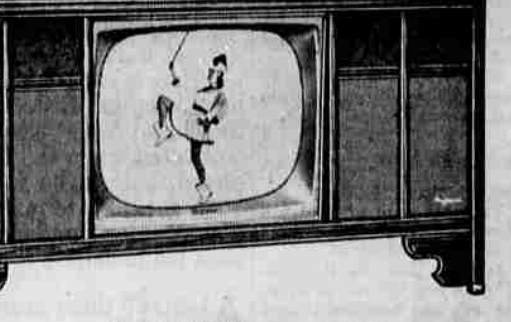


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