

JULY '64

Transcript

Narrator RLB: "The Lazy Laughing South" by Langston Hughes

The lazy laughing South
With blood on her mouth
And I who am black would love her.
But she spits in my face
So now I seek the North
The cold-faced North
For she, they say,
Is a kinder mistress.

Constance Mitchell (00:01:13) "The story that we heard was that you know it started at a street dance."

Warren Doremus (00:01:19) "Sponsored by the North East Mother's Association."

Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck (00:01:22) "And there was some people who had come who were uninvited."

Trent Jackson (00:01:25) "I don't know who or what started it but all of the sudden, you know,"

Constance Mitchell (00:01:30) "Some young man had gotten unruly and,"

Warren Doremus (00:01:33) "Police made an arrest."

Frank Lamb (00:01:36) "Rumors started spreading."

Voice over O.H. Lester (00:01:39) "But I would say that the alleged biting of the child by the police dogs was only the precipitating incident that set this thing off."

(music playing)

Constance Mitchell (00:02:46) "Rochester, NY in 1950 had approximately 8,400 blacks in this community".

David Gantt (00:02:53) "We came here from Bellglave, Florida".

Trent Jackson (00:02:55) "My family was born in Cordeo, Georgia".

Constance Mitchell (00:02:59) "When I first came here, to show you how small the town was, I was standing on the corner of Main and Clinton and an Episcopalian priest by the name of Quinton Premo came up to me and said to me, "You're new in town".

Trent Jackson (00:03:13) "I burnt my hand as a one year old child and evidently there was a nurse who came to Cordeo, saw my hand and told us, told my mother and father about Strong Memorial Hospital, so they came up here with the hope that I would be treated at Strong and then they just wanted to come north".

David Gantt (00:03:36) "The unfortunate thing for me is I had some incident of which I was called an inappropriate name by a little white kid and I punched him in the face. Well if you knew anything about the south in those days that meant real big trouble for me so my mother decided to take us from the south and come north".

Narrator RLB (00:03:54) By rail, by road, by God millions came north; north to places like Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh and yes - Rochester. Rochester, NY.

Archive film voice over narrator (00:04:09) Old Colonial Nathaniel Rochester certainly picked an ideal location for a city. He really started something. Industries had developed here that have made the name Rochester synonymous with quality and precision manufacturing. A veritable Who's Who in American business. Industrial pioneers such as George Eastman, Edward Bausch and Henry Lomb founded local concerns whose diversified products are now bought and sold everywhere.

Narrator RLB (00:04:44) Rochester, the home of Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony is a mid-size city in upstate New York with a progressive social justice history and a reputation for jobs. Rochester drew people like a magnet. The black population swelled by 300% between 1950 and 1960 and continued to grow.

Dr. James Turner (00:05:06) "Leaving the south and going to the region of the north meant being respected as citizens and as human beings and also the chance to live in more modern and decent housing, being able to pursue their aspirations for a career education, for education for their young people - that was a very, very heavy expectation".

Ruth Rosenberg-Napasteck (00:05:29) "Right after WWII we changed from manufacturing war materials to peace time materials. Kodak was a major employer at that time and Haloid was about to become Xerox during the 1950's and so there were many high tech positions that people could take".

Jack Germond (00:05:48) "I came here just so that I could get a job at the paper like a lot of others who worked for the paper then, the Times Union... but it was not a very welcoming town to outsiders; there was a very clear establishment and the town was always more prosperous - Rochester -- than all the other cities in upstate, and everybody was very smug about that.

Archive film voice over narrator (00:06:14) The community is fully aware of the financial facts of life and the methods of making an economic area prosperous.

Narrator RLB (00:06:22) One local newspaper man coined the phrase and literally wrote the book that put Rochester in its place. Curt Gerling's notorious Smug town USA.

Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck (00:06:33) "Curt Gerling was talking about Rochester as Smugtown because he felt they were very complaisant, very sedentary, they saw their lives as very well set. They went to work for major corporations, their children would be able to get a job in the same place; they made a good living; they had very good culture here in the arts, and much of that owing to George Eastman's generosity too".

Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck (00:07:04) "They knew their children would go onto college and so they did not see any disruption; they didn't see a need for themselves to change".

Rev. Dr. Arthur Whitacker (00:07:13) "Rochester had its smugness. I think the Republicans had control of the city. There was a smugness in that regard. The Democrats could not get to first base; Rochester was a money town and with its money it literally said, "We don't really have any problems here".

Jack Germond (00:07:37) "Everybody here was so prosperous. The unemployment rate here was 2%, that kind of thing, 2 to 3%, 3% was outlandish. Everybody worked at Kodak and in January they got a huge bonus and they went out and all the furniture stores had huge sales and they went and bought cars and furniture; everybody was rich, but nobody wanted to rock the boat - nobody wanted to hear about the one's that weren't rich".

Archive film voice over narrator (00:08:19) (voiceover) A tradition of fine craftsmanship developed here effecting quality industries and quality people alike - skilled industries, skilled people. Clean industries, clean people; stable industries, stable people.

Frank Lamb (00:08:42) "We had a real wonderful economy in those years in Rochester. All the industry was doing very well. We had skilled and semi-skilled jobs".

Constance Mitchell (00:08:55) "When you go back and you look at Rochester, that a lot of the problems that we had were due to the fact that you had this mentality here that this is our city and I don't care what you say, we're going to run the city the way we want to; we don't recognize any changes that are taking place and it was, there were people that had their head in the sand in this community".

Narrator RLB (00:09:42) The newcomers settled in two neighborhoods; the old third ward and across town in the seventh. The poverty stricken seventh ward with Joseph Avenue at its heart was home to waves of immigrants over the years and the only neighborhood with public housing.

Frank Lamb (00:10:00) "The people coming in, in those years throughout the '50s, were primarily unskilled so that created some different kinds of problems not only employment, but housing problems. You know you can't draw any comparison to the blacks leaving the south and the Germans, Irish and the Italians that came because they came and they had ties usually in the community".

Dr. James Turner (00:10:30) "That's in large part mythical, for example black people were much more culturally similar to white people in Rochester - they spoke the same language, they knew the same customs, they grew up in the same country and they also were not dramatically less educated than the Europeans who were coming because these were poor Europeans who were coming, but I would argue that it was rooted in the lack of will to welcome these people in the same way they had welcomed whites who were coming over from Europe. They did fairly well there".

David Gantt (00:11:07) "When we came here we lived at I think it was 417 Ormond Street - a very mixed neighborhood. Italians were there, Jews were there, Irish were there, Blacks were there".

Chuck Mangione (00:11:18) "Well I remember the neighborhood as a wonderful place. It was kind of a melting pot of all kinds of people from all different places I guess all over the world".

Trent Jackson (00:11:30) "We would walk from the projects, right to Joseph and you would get a spot and stand and watch people because Joseph was "the place" where people came to shop. You had appliance stores, I mean anything you needed in the neighborhood - you had".

Chuck Mangione (00:11:51) "Papa Mangione had a grocery store on the corner of Martin and Grant Street and the store was actually attached to our house and so my father would eat dinner and keep the door open so he could see who was coming into the store and I don't remember him ever really having a complete meal without having to get up and go out to sell some kid some penny candy or somebody came in to get something".

Trent Jackson (00:12:19) "The Mangione store was -- you go in, Mr. Mangione looked like he had this feeling and it sounds funny I'm dating myself, but you know you could get a donut for a nickel... and you could go in and we would go in sometimes after practice and you would look at the donuts and then you would look at a piece of cake, and you would look, "Well I'll take that". Well then sometimes he would say, "Well you know you're a good boy. You get both for the price of one".

Gap Mangione (00:12:51) "One of the delightful aspects of the neighborhood that I love now even in retrospect was that it was really an idea of taking care of each other. We looked out for each other with the small things".

David Gantt (00:12:51) "Remember as I said there were Jews in the neighborhood, there were Blacks in the neighborhood, there were Italians in the neighborhood, there were Irish in the neighborhood. Those were the major groups but you know what? None of us looked at color as such. There were people who lived outside of our neighborhood who treated us differently; even those who were not black and brown.

Archive film voice over narrator (00:13:26) When you come right down to it, what brings the prospective industry to a prospective location? More than anything else it is an enlightened work force. In this respect, Rochester is second to none for clean industries that is; for industries requiring a high percentage of professional, technical, skilled and semi-skilled personnel.

Narrator RLB (00:13:53) Rochester enjoyed a robust economy and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation. More than 10,000 jobs were unfilled yet the newcomers soon discovered that jobs and opportunity were not available to all.

Constance Mitchell (00:14:10) "Rochester was just beginning to become what I call the booming metropolis. The factories certainly were not open to minorities. It was just a common knowledge that you just did not get hired at certain factories in Rochester, NY. There was not that open door policy. It was, as a matter of fact, a laughable matter among the minority community that if you put your application in at Kodak, Bausch and Lomb, Xerox or any of the corporations that your application went into File 13, which was the waste basket".

David Gantt (00:14:45) "I can remember going to Kodak, who is now laying off 4,500 people as of just yesterday, going there when I got out of college, after two years of college because my family was poor as I've said previously, but I wanted to help my mother raise the rest of my family; going to Kodak three days a week always before 8:00 in the morning for six months and could not get a job and eventually I asked the question of them because they asked of me first, why don't you go some place else and find a job? I said, I am the other two days but Kodak's the place that I would like to work. Most black people in those days got into Kodak behind a broom".

Trent Jackson (00:15:24) "There were jobs, but everybody couldn't get a job. My father used to come home and I know sometimes that his friends would tease him that you know you're a garbage man, but he said, but it feeds my family, so the types of jobs people had were, let's be honest - they were strenuous not the best paying jobs, but they were jobs you could work to take care of your family".

Narrator RLB (00:16:07) (Narrator) With its smugness, Rochester was the last major city in New York to build public housing. In 1964, 35% of the housing was still classified as deteriorating and dilapidated.

Jack Germond (00:16:21) "Rochester was predictably, characteristically the last city in upstate New York to get a public housing project. They resisted public housing until the bitter end. There were three or four projects in Syracuse, half a dozen in Buffalo - federal and state -- and so forth. Utica had them; everybody had them; we had none and what you can say now is that public housing worked so poorly that maybe that was smart but it wasn't that wasn't the reason; it was resistance to the idea that they needed public housing and resistance to government programs.

Constance Mitchell (00:16:51) "Most of the blacks lived in probably about a 12 block area in the third ward and I'd say a 12 block area in the seventh ward".

Man #1 (00:17:00) "I think housing is a big concern. I think it's one of the major concerns because this area here is one of the most rundown areas in the city and the houses are infested with roaches and rats and dilapidated properties and so forth".

Rev. Dr. Arthur Whitacker (00:17:18) "There were problems with regard to housing; as a matter of fact there were many blacks who wanted to move out of certain blighted areas but found that the realtors were not willing to assist them".

Dr. Walter Cooper (00:17:30) "Attempts to break out of those prescribed boundary conditions were very difficult. For example in 1954, while a graduate student and looking for housing for my family, the wife and I answered ads to 69, ads for 69 apartments and we were refused for all of them".

Woman #1 (00:17:58) "A lot of the houses were owned by speculators and they cut them up from a house that once held one family in six rooms to maybe three two room apartments and sometimes you'd find as many as six or seven children living with their parents within two or three rooms".

Constance Mitchell (00:18:15) "This one house at I think it was 48 Greig Street, at that time had 16 families living in this one house and what they had done is taken the rooms and they chopped them up and they put a refrigerator and a two plate burner and they called them studio apartments".

Trent Jackson (00:18:35) "My younger sister, she had to go to the hospital because she was bitten by a rat, so it was a time when your mother and father would wake up during the middle of the night, come to your room, check on you because of rats".

Minister Franklin Florence (00:18:53) "I'm convinced that many of the areas where our people are living and where we have to live and our children have to live - it's just inhuman for human beings to be there; it's a shame and it's a reproach from within a community that called itself a civilized community to allow such conditions to exist".

Minister Franklin Florence (00:19:17) "Everybody in our community, black and white, knew that something was drastically wrong in this community. There was a quiet rage".

Porter Homer (00:19:34) "Well, we knew that there were some problems. We were moving to try and reach some of those problems. For instance, we set up the police advisory board because there was a question on the way the police were handling things".

Policeman #1(00:19:57) "The only thing I'll tell you this - I'm sick and tired of this police brutality. They had no cause and they got a review board for that to find out why if there's any police brutality".

Frank Lamb (00:20:07) "Well as a matter of fact, you're looking at one of the sponsors of the police review board and I did it too and I had a brother and two nephews that were policemen and the police didn't like that, but I thought that it was a small price to pay for better police community understanding".

Constance Mitchell (00:20:35) "I think back in the '50s and early '60s we were living in a police state. John, my husband and I, witnessed along with many others in our group in the community, witnessed police brutality".

Reporter voiceover (00:20:47) "What's it feel like when someone accuses you of being brutal"?

Policeman #1 (00:20:51) "It sounds like a song on the Hit Parade".

Reporter voiceover (00:20:55) "How about you"?

Policeman #2 (00:20:57) "I feel the same way. I hadn't seen any police brutality. In fact I think all of us have bent over backwards to avoid it".

Frank Lamb (00:21:05) "Police brutality of course that was used pretty loosely by people that got in trouble with the police and they thought it was a good way to go, but sometimes there was some legitimacy to it".

Trent Jackson (00:21:19) "And you were taught this; you didn't want to be arrested and as you got older and you listened to the older people talk, number 1 - there was a feeling that if you were arrested, the police would beat you".

Constance Mitchell (00:21:35) "I think the police believed that they had to put the fear of God into people".

Minister Franklin Florence (00:21:41) "On one occasion a policeman entered a church during an 11:00 service Sunday morning fully garbed -- gun, cap, dog -- during an 11:00 Sunday morning service".

Trent Jackson (00:22:07) "In my entire upbringing, the dogs were the number one subject that I knew I would say most of the people thought about, talked about, wanted something to be done about it because that was a bad situation".

Frank Lamb (00:22:24) "A lot of inner city folk didn't like police dogs and on the famous night of July 24th that came home to roost in a way".

Rev. Dr. Arthur Whitacker (00:22:38) "It is as though we are going to go after animals and unfortunately that is how some whites view blacks in America, as animals, and they feel that it is perfectly okay for police dogs to be used".

Frank Lamb (00:22:57) "Police dogs - they served a very good, useful purpose in many ways but it was unfortunate that some of the people in the inner city thought it was strictly designed against them and that wasn't the true reason. We were trying to get at whoever was breaking the law and send the dogs into very difficult, dangerous situations. Rather than risk a life, we were risking a dog and those dogs were treasured and they were smart and good and well trained and so sometimes when you do good you have people that get upset".

David Gantt (00:23:45) "Understand this, the dogs were good dogs but the dogs took their commands from the officer. If the officer's bad, that means that the dog then is inappropriately abusing people and I don't care whether Frank Lamb or anybody else say what they say, I can tell you as a youngster - I saw it".

Dr. Walter Cooper (00:24:04) "Let's face it, in every community across the country, the police were viewed as the power to keep blacks in their place and they were used that way".

Dr. James Turner (00:24:14) "That happened in Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, the Bronx, East St. Louis, Gary, Indiana, Chicago; these were fairly common patterns you see and I think this is what's often missed and this is how the hopes of black people were dashed because they would say alright if it was just Rochester, we'll leave Rochester and we'll go to Syracuse, we'll go to Buffalo or we'll leave all together and go to Gary, Indiana but what they had heard and seen from cousins and relatives, this was the pattern".

Archive film voice over narrator (00:24:53) (voiceover) Times change and you either change your city to fit them or they'll change your city, often unpleasantly or often unprofitably.

Constance Mitchell (00:25:04) "There was a group of us that met at my home that evening for a meeting and there was about 20 of us and what we were meeting that night to see if we could curb the rumors that were running rampant in the community that we were headed for trouble".

Frank Lamb (00:25:20) "That was a Friday night and I was home packing getting ready to leave the next day for Miami, Florida to give a speech at the National League of Cities.

Warren Doremus (00:25:36) "I was home just about to go to sleep and I got a call from one of our photographers and he had been listening to a wave of broadcasts of transmissions by the police, indicating to him that this was more than a Friday night, typical Friday night in July".

Rev. Dr. Arthur Whitacker (00:26:03) "We of course had been away for an overnight as I recall and as we entered the city, we overheard that something was brewing in the Baden-Ormond section".

Darryl Porter (00:26:17) "It was like a big block party; everybody was having fun and enjoying themselves. Randy was having a little more fun than the rest of us you know and unfortunately got a little intoxicated".

Frank Lamb (00:26:32) "So right around 10:00 at night, I got a call from the deputy commissioner of public safety and he told me there's some problems down on Joseph Avenue and it's quite serious but we want you to know and if it gets more serious we'll get back to you.

Warren Doremus (00:26:56) "I called him back and I said are you still hearing this stuff? and he said yes worse than ever. I said pick me up right away and I have to tell you as we approached the city we heard police sirens, we didn't know what we were going to get into, I had never been in a riot before but here it struck me, this riot to be a baptism of fire".

Narrator RLB (00:27:34) (Narrator) Some say the crowd went wild when the police used excessive force to arrest 19 year old Randy Manigault. Others say Randy's friends interfered with police business. Tempers snapped, fists flew, rumors swirled - "a child was bit by dog", "a pregnant woman was slapped" -- whatever it was, it was out of control. Some said it was an uprising, a riot, urban combustion. Constance Mitchell said it was a keg of dynamite and all it needed was a match.

Constance Mitchell (00:28:11) "I mean people were like wild and it was almost like they had gone insane".

Warren Doremus voiceover (00:28:20) "The riots grew out of an incident following a street dance at the corner of Joseph Avenue and Nassau Street just before midnight. A policeman had tried to arrest a man for public intoxication. Negroes claimed that a K9 dog bit one of them setting off the explosion".

Frank Lamb (00:28:34) "Rumors started spreading that a police dog bit a young girl. That was never substantiated by anyone".

O.H. Lester voiceover (00:28:47) "Well Warren, to tell you what caused it is like trying to determine the raindrop that caused the flood or the snowflake that caused the blizzard but I would say that the alleged biting of the child by the police dog was only the precipitating incident that set this thing off".

Warren Doremus voiceover (00:29:12) "On the Central Avenue in front of the railroad station a negro woman had fallen in front of or had been struck by a car. She was one of the milling throng of whites and blacks who appeared ready for a pitched battle".

David Gantt (00:29:33) "I had never seen anything like that in my life. I sat there and watched them - the black community on one side out in front of the train station and the white community on the other side and incidents went back and forth and slurs went back and forth screaming at each other".

Warren Doremus (00:29:48) "This was a scene right out of a movie and to be there with the lights playing and these fire hoses hitting people as they walked across the street who ran away from the scene under police direction".

Warren Doremus (00:30:22) "It was something that I recall having seen on television in other cities but could not imagine that I was seeing it right here in my own city".

Rev. Dr. Arthur Whitacker (00:30:36) "There was foul language; the crowds had gathered; police were everywhere; they were sounding off and they were beginning to move toward downtown but the police of course contained them so they started setting fires and breaking storefronts, glasses and all of that in their immediate neighborhood and it was a terrible thing; it was terrible".

John Holley (00:31:08) "Chief Lombard came down; he was coming down I believe it was Joseph Avenue around Central Park there".

Warren Doremus voiceover (00:31:17) "Lombard had tried single handedly to control the disturbances by reasoning with the crowd".

John Holley (00:31:21) "He had his mic on telling everybody to get off the street, go home".

Warren Doremus voiceover (00:31:32) "But they spat on him, threw rocks at him, two of which badly bruised him and either of which could have killed him".

John Holley (00:31:37) "And they surrounded his car, just turned his car over. Wow, throwing rocks and I was surprised he didn't get killed".

Warren Doremus (00:31:52) "It was astonishing to see that. There encapsulated in that one scene was the brutality, the violence and the danger that was all about us".

Trent Jackson (00:32:06) "You knew the shop owners, you know you knew people in the neighborhood and all of the sudden now you're seeing their store being looted, their store being burned later on; you'd have mixed feelings. You don't want that to happen but then you know you keep your mouth shut because you know I can't tell this guy, don't go in their store and do this because I don't know what his problems are ; I don't know what has motivated him, so there was a time when there was a sad time in terms of why did this have to happen to my neighborhood".

Frank Lamb (00:32:43) "It was a very tense situation and hey you're going through this for the first time and nobody had a script to follow, you just had to follow whatever your best judgment was".

Warren Doremus voiceover (00:33:00) "About 2:00 in the morning as every policeman was being called to duty, Chief William Lombard delivered instructions on the use of riot weapons".

Chief William Lombard (00:33:09) "Armed with your night clubs, if you stick together you'll be able to move this mob along.

Policeman #3 (00:33:14) "Some of these people might know what we've got here. We're only going to use this in case of an emergency. We've got an emergency but we want it worse than it is before we start using tear gas or any other weapon".

Constance Mitchell (00:33:26) "They had turned over Police Chief Lombard's car so we heard about that and we wanted to find out if he was hurt because he was a good friend of ours. We went down to the Public Safety Commissioner's Office and that's when we found out how the city fathers felt about black Rochesterians. The names that they were calling us in that place - it was a disgrace".

Frank Lamb (00:33:53) "And so we had all kinds of discussions that early evening and people were stunned to how could this happen in Rochester, you know an affluent eastern city that had a reputation of being very benevolent and generous".

Narrator RLB (00:34:19) The majority of Rochester awoke that morning to the stunning news of the nights events while those most closely effected struggled with the broken reality they faced. The heart of the neighborhood was ripped out. Joseph Avenue would never be the same.

Warren Doremus (00:34:34) "Mr. Casentino, who do you think is responsible for all of this"?

Man #2 (00:34:45) "The morning after it's just like a drunk - there's the hangover, there's regret on the part of the people who took part in it".

Trent Jackson (00:34:55) "It was like a bomb had been dropped".

Constance Mitchell (00:34:58) "It was a sight to behold".

Morton Dean (00:35:01) "Les, that store behind us is yours there's quite a bit of damage there. Where were you when the rioting and the looting took place"?

Man #3 (00:35:08) "Upstairs listening to all of this going on - looting, knocking everything all over, damaging the store, breaking the windows. We stood up there taking it all, taking it all in".

Narrator RLB (00:35:19) (Narrator) The scene was almost beyond comprehension. Stores were empty and looted of their goods; fixtures were torn apart; TV's and appliances were smashed and scattered across sidewalks that were littered with glass, pieces of brick and debris. Remarkably some stores like Mangione's grocery store were left untouched. Others were completely destroyed.

Constance Mitchell (00:35:46) "It was the young people that stole the televisions and stuff like that but it was just the young people that stole milk, pop, bread, meat and all I did was sit on my front porch and cry".

Trent Jackson (00:36:02) "You were shocked when you saw Joseph the night after the riots because you know all of the sudden now it was stores with no windowpane; clothing stores empty".

Woman #2 (00:36:27) "He can't say, he's too broken up to realize the damage - he had a good thing and it's too bad".

Gap Mangione (00:36:38) "We knew about the troubles that had happened over on Joseph Avenue and farther over from there. We had heard about it through the media. I certainly wouldn't have gone into a dangerous situation knowing that it was a dangerous situation anymore than you might try to get close to a fire or something that might explode".

Morton Dean (00:36:57) "You going to stay in business; are you going to fix it?"

Man #3 (00:36:59) "I think this is going to be the coupe de grace - I think this is going to drive us out".

Trent Jackson (00:37:04) "I don't think anyone envisioned nor expected that night when the darkness vanished and the light comes how is the neighborhood going to look and the people were talking in terms of hurt feelings in terms of our neighborhood. That was the biggest talk after the riots - it was look what are we going to do with our neighborhood; look what happened to our neighborhood. It wasn't a feeling of we got you back or anything like that; it was look what happened to our neighborhood".

Rev. Dr. Arthur Whitacker (00:37:37) "Reverend Andrew Gibson, Reverend Father Quinton Primo and I and a few others, we walked the streets that night and they recognized me and they said Reverend we're coming over to your side tomorrow night and low and behold they did".

Constance Mitchell (00:37:55) "We went down with a group of ministers and I think there was about eight of us, went down to the Public Safety Commissioner's Office to ask if we could have, because they had talked about having a curfew, if we could have special passes so that we could go out and talk to the young people, and someone left the intercom on in the inner office and what we heard was, "Let those niggers do what they want to do, but the minute if they step outside of the boundaries of Clarissa Street or Jefferson Avenue and head towards Main Street, shoot to kill".

Frank Lamb (00:38:39) "Well, number one - I never heard such a thing and wouldn't believe that our police were instructed that that was the last resort and it never got to that, thank God and so I think that was a total fallacy".

Porter Homer (00:39:06) "I hereby order a curfew in the city of Rochester to go into effect at 8pm on July 25, 1964 and 8:00 pm each night there after until the state of emergency shall be terminated".

Darryl Porter (00:39:25) "Actually it was spontaneous on Friday night and there was a curfew that was put out for Saturday, but Saturday was planned for Saturday after curfew, there is a difference on that because of what happened on Friday night and that's when things started to organize as to what was going to happen on Saturday, what was going to happen, how it was going to happen, that type of thing - it was like okay you got Friday night and you think that it's over and it's done with but it's not".

Constance Mitchell (00:40:19) "On Saturday evening we were sitting on the front porch because it was very warm, and we heard the first brick thrown. I tell you it was like a circus atmosphere. We tried to walk the streets. They had the state police walking the streets. They wouldn't let us off the porch".

Narrator RLB (00:40:50) (Narrator) Despite the curfew and closing of downtown and all liquor stores, violence broke out across town in the third ward that night with an intensity that pushed the limits.

Narrator RLB (00:41:17) (Narrator) Angry mobs swarmed the streets; molotov cocktails were tossed. Rocks and bottles rained down from roof tops.

Darryl Porter (00:41:26) "We had people who were up on the roofs who had 20-30 cocktail waiting to throw on top of the cars because they knew they were coming".

Rev. Dr. Arthur Whitacker (00:41:36) "There was a great deal of hate coming from both sides. I think that there were those angry, young blacks who were furious and I do mean furious".

Man #4 (00:41:45) "Something will have to be done. It has to be done I mean we can't get our rights, so I mean if you can't get your rights you've just got to take them some kind of way or another, ain't ya, ain't ya"?

Darryl Porter (00:41:54) "I picked up everything I could. I picked up rocks and threw them, I picked up bottles and threw them - whatever I could get my hands on that wasn't nailed down".

Rev. Dr. Arthur Whitacker (00:42:07) "And yet on the other hand, you could see the venom coming from the police in retaliation and the anger and the movement, trying to corral and move about and push people back and all of that. Oh yes, there was hate. It was a terrible time in the city of Rochester".

Reporter voice over (00:42:32) "What's it been like out here these last few nights"?

Policeman #2 (00:42:35) "Well it hasn't been pleasant, that's for sure; been rough, busy, I'll be glad when it's all over I guess. Don't we all feel that way"?

Policeman #1 (00:42:45) "That's for sure. It is tiresome and surprising. It really hurts the city of Rochester".

Man #5 (00:42:54) "It's all because of the cops I think. In a way it's not necessary on this side of town. Across town it started over there you see and over here it's just for kicks more or less".

Man #6 (00:43:05) "As far as an opinion is concerned, I think it's wrong in this sense because it's not gaining us anything. It's not gaining the colored people anything. It's just making us, you know putting us farther back in the hole because somebody's got to make up for this".

Woman #2 (00:43:20) "We all love him; we all love him".

Warren Doremus voiceover (00:43:23) "Mr. Casentino, do you think the people in this neighborhood are responsible, or...?"

Mr. Casentino (00:43:26) "No, I don't think it's the people in the neighborhood because I got along with the people in the neighborhood. I think it's more the people that were out of towners".

Woman #3 "Out of towners! Out of towners!"

Constance Mitchell (00:43:35) "People wanted to blame it on outside agitators, but when you look at that list of people who were arrested, who was arrested? They were Rochestarians".

Narrator RLB (00:43:45) (Narrator) Nearly 1,000 were arrested. At first the police focused their attention on those that appeared to be leading or agitating the rioters.

Darryl Porter (00:43:53) "You know they just grab you and throw you in there and take you downtown. They had some real mean intentions when it came to me.

Narrator RLB (00:44:30) (Narrator) City Manager Porter Homer's official report indicated that the majority of those arrested were between 20 and 40 years old, employed and had no prior record of arrest. 15% were white.

Dr. James Turner (00:44:44) "When you have uprisings that last for days, this is more than a riot. A riot is when people can't get into the football stadium or they're locked out of the concert and they have a ticket, been drinking too much beer, they let off steam for a couple of hours and then that's it, but when this goes on for days it tells you that there's deep sense of social injustice that people are responding to."

Minister Franklin Florence (00:45:09) "When you looked on the street, there were grandmothers, fathers, uncles, aunties, young people -- because folk actually -- they didn't look at this as a riot, they looked at it as a rebellion".

Constance Mitchell (00:45:27) "There was a lot of blame and finger pointing after the riots. I had been asked to go on Channel 8 and to tell my people to condemn them and I refused to do that. I went on air and I said, I understand what caused this but it doesn't need to continue".

Darryl Porter (00:45:50) "I was ready to stop because of the devastation to the community, you know it was strange I think it was Sunday I was on my way to church - it was like I was walking through a war zone".

Warren Doremus voiceover (00:46:06) "Sunday afternoon, July 26th, as the emotional weight of these awful happenings and the heat of summer were causing the population a unique discomfort, there occurred in the city yet another sensationally tragic thing. A helicopter crashed on the sidewalk in front of 452 Clarissa Street. It burned fiercely and the house became an inferno".

Warren Doremus voiceover (00:46:28) "Curtis Green could you describe what you saw, please"?

Curtis Green (00:46:31) "Yes, I saw the helicopter come over and he was right at the top of the building and he paused for a minute and he was determined to sit right in between, right in the highway there, right in the street and but he was a little too close and his one side bumped the top of the building and it made him wheel and then he fell right down into the street see".

Warren Doremus voiceover (00:46:49) "A part of the helicopter hit that house this morning"?

Curtis Green (00:46:51) "Yeah, yeah hit the roof and then he fell to the front of the building then he hit the ground".

Frank Lamb (00:46:58) "Disturbances and riots you know they tax your community to the fullest and your manpower and we didn't have a lot of manpower, enough to meet the problems".

Warren Doremus voiceover (00:47:11) "With the situation out of hand for two straight nights, and apprehension growing that more riots were apt to take place Sunday night, city, county and state officials agreed that despite the nearly 1,000 man police force on the scene, the National Guard had to be called down".

NYS Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller (00:47:27) "I came to Rochester because the state has committed some 450 state troopers here and I have called out the National Guard. As governor and as a citizen, I deplore this kind of violence. Regardless of the objective, it cannot be justified. This is not the way to achieve progress in a Democratic society".

Reporter voiceover (00:47:57) "Rockefeller emphasized that marshal law was not declared but rather that the guardsman were there to help weary local and state police in controlling the rioting and the looting".

Warren Doremus (00:48:07) "This was the first time the National Guard was called out in a northern city".

Morton Dean (00:48:14) "Officials feel the worst is over for now but it is guarded optimism. Next weekend they say will provide the acid test. The city is now in a state of shock and embarrassment as well as a state of emergency of the first 25 persons we asked for comments in the downtown section tonight, 23 refused to say a word. This is Morton Dean reporting from Rochester for WCBS TV news".

Reporter (00:48:39) "This is Darryl Porter, President of the Matadors, a group of boys in this area. Darryl, it's been two weeks since the riots. I guess you were involved in them weren't you".

Darryl Porter (00:48:50) "Yes".

Reporter (00:48:51) "What did you do"?

Darryl Porter (00:48:52) "Well, I was doing about what everybody else was doing. I was breaking the law; throwing bottles, breaking windows, robbing places and things like that because people in Rochester were getting tired of all of these slum houses and the brutality from the policemen and the way they beat on teenagers and the way they yell at you if you're standing on the corner and the treatment that they do to you when they get you down to the police station their self".

Chief Robert Duffy (00:49:18) "To this day, I know that just from friends and associates in our community, I'll hear time and time again that things have gotten so much better, but they still carry perceptions and anger based on how things may have been decades ago, so something that may have happened inappropriately or just clear cut wrong in 1964 to this day can be carried with a person that just has a very difficult time with the police".

Mayor William Johnson (00:49:37) "So we just worked consciously over the years to break down these attitudes on both sides and create a more harmonious environment in which effective police work can be done".

Reporter (00:49:47) "Well Darryl, did you really think that by robbing a store and by throwing bricks, breaking the law that way that you were going to achieve anything?"

Darryl Porter (00:50:06) "When all of the rioting was going on, this made the mayor and the city get up on their high horses and wanted to come to see what was going on and why it was going on, so since it happened, now everybody's getting down to talk about it and I think there should be a little bit more change in this world".

Constance Mitchell (00:50:21) "The riots of the '60s was a crude awakening for America and I think that for the first time in history along with the assassinations and all of the things that were taking place within this country, I think people came to the realization that if we really were going to survive in America, we had better come to the table and sit down and start dialoguing and begin to try to get some type of understanding of who we are, where we are and where we're going".

Narrator RLB (00:50:54) (Narrator) The events of July '64 did bring people to the table and many conditions including policing improved over time, but many things did not.

Minister Franklin Florence (00:51:06) In the '60s the problem was health, education, jobs. At the infancy of the 21st century, the problems - health, education, jobs.

Narrator RLB (00:51:29) (Narrator) Today, large areas of the city are plagued with high rates of unemployment, infant mortality and teen pregnancy. The per capita number of children living in poverty is the highest in the state and among the highest in the nation. Some things are actually worse now in the riot areas then they were in 1964. Home ownership is down; a larger percentage of the population fails to complete high school. At the present time, only 25% of Rochester's ninth graders will graduate at the end of their senior year.

Mayor William Johnson (00:52:06) "I think that we have too much crisis now to be smug. I think we've been shaken out of our smugness, but I still find that there are people who want to do business in the old way which is sort of an insider kind of game. It still amazes me that in the year 2004 that I can go to meetings in this town of the power elite and I'll be the only person of color in the room and it's very clear that if I weren't mayor I wouldn't be in that room".

Dr. James Turner (00:52:38) "Right, and that often times as blacks ascend to positions of power or authority in the city, they find it's a kind of empty victory because the corporations and the tax base leaves the city as whites move out to the suburbs and as plants relocate and disburse their operations to other areas of the country, so it's a kind of empty victory; it's the kind of crude hoax. They now have political office but they have to administer over a much more dramatic social problems then was before with a dramatically decreased revenue base. That's the crisis of the black politician".

Warren Doremus (00:53:24) "I think that most people in this nation are now at peace within their own hearts with people of other races and other cultures and that if they cannot welcome them, they at least could live peaceably and respectfully with them".

Dr. James Turner (00:54:28) "There is still the desire to define advantage and social status around race. There is still the residual belief in this society in concepts of white supremacy and black inferiority".

Mayor William Johnson (00:54:44) "This community in my view for a long time is going to be a multi-ethnic, multi-racial community and it is, it's not dirt poor, it has lots of resources, but it's becoming harder and harder to marshal those resources, so my view is we have to find bridges into these various communities because that's the only way we're going to overcome some of the challenges that we face".

Constance Mitchell (00:55:14) "We're in the middle of a social revolution within this country and I think that the same thing that happened in Rochester Friday night can happen in any other community in America".

Constance Mitchell (00:55:28) "Throughout this community there is still that feeling that it could happen again".

Narrator RLB (00:55:38) "Harlem (2), from "Montage of a Dream Deferred" by Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun or fester like a sore and then run.

Does it stink like rotten meat or crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags like a heavy load

or does it explode?

END