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Standing By Police Paralysis, Race, and the 1964 Philadelphia Riot

Although considerable scholarship has explored the riots of the 1960s as the culmination of tensions simmering throughout the tumultuous decade, this article examines Philadelphia's 1964 riot and the ways that local newspapers attempted to frame the violence. By urging Philadelphians to view the riot as the outcome of an ineffectual police department, which was ill-equipped to confront black "hoodlums," journalists privileged frames of police paralysis and marginalization. The circulation of these two frames alone, however, cannot explain the eventual demise of the city's Police Advisory Board. This study argues that the imagery of police standing idly by while the streets of Philadelphia dissolved into chaos proved invaluable ammunition for opponents of the Board, who found in the news coverage further evidence of postwar liberalism's failure to protect the populace.

On the evening of Friday, August 28, 1964, Philadelphia succumbed to the wave of urban riots that had been sweeping cities along the East Coast during a long and hot summer.¹ Violence broke out at the corner of 22nd Street and Columbia Avenue in North Philadelphia after a black couple, Rush and Odessa Bradford, was confronted by two Philadelphia police officers, Patrolmen John Hoff and Robert Wells. Hoff, who was white, and Wells, who was black, had been called to the scene because the couple, allegedly engaged in a domestic dispute in their car, was blocking the flow of traffic at the busy intersection.² Upon reaching the corner, the officers found Odessa Bradford holding her foot on the car's brake pedal. She proceeded to argue with Officer Wells, who pulled her out of the car by her wrists. Her removal should have been the end of the relatively minor disturbance, but as she was being put into the police wagon, a bystander emerged

from the crowd and punched Hoff, causing passersby to enter the fray. After arresting Bradford and the bystander, who had punched his partner, Wells returned to the scene of the Bradfords' dispute to find a storm of flying bottles and bricks being aimed at police and their wagons. The ensuing violence and looting lasted the remainder of the weekend as rumors spread throughout the neighborhood that a black woman had been beaten and killed by a white police officer. Despite the rumors being untrue, they stirred greater anger toward police. When the violence finally ended, two were dead, 350 were wounded, and commercial establishments lining the Columbia Avenue thoroughfare suffered approximately \$4 million of damage.³

Home to the highest unemployment rates in the city, poorest housing, and lowest income and educational levels, North Philadelphia was more than simply an early example of the explosiveness of the urban crisis within the existing narrative of the 1960s.⁴ Commonly referred to as "the Jungle," the predominantly African-American neighborhood was the site of 19 percent of the city's crime and only 9 percent of its population. The phrase "the Jungle" was used by "many policemen, . . . much of the white community, [and] even . . . some juveniles who live in the area," according to the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*. Such usage signaled that in addition to being "a catalogue of social failure,"⁵ as the *Bulletin* reported, North Philadelphia also was discursively constructed in highly racialized, and racist, terms. The lexicon of



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A Columbia Avenue storefront in Philadelphia shows the result of a 1964 riot.

(Used with the permission of the Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, Pa.)

descriptors conjured by a phrase such as “the Jungle” allowed for the demonization of the neighborhood and those who lived there. This casting of the neighborhood, set within the context of frequent charges of police brutality by community members, made North Philadelphia no stranger to strained relations with the Philadelphia Police Department.⁶ Urban League Executive Director Andrew Freeman dubbed North Philadelphia “a racial tinderbox” in early August 1964, waiting for a spark to ignite it.⁷ Only weeks later, the Bradfords’ chance altercation provided the spark.

Riots such as those which broke out in Philadelphia in 1964, in Watts in Los Angeles one year later, and in Newark and Detroit in 1967 have been cited by historians as the catalysts compelling federal attention to longstanding issues of racism and inequality and resulting in President Lyndon Johnson forming the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission) in 1967. In its report a year later, the commission devoted particular attention to two institutions: the police and the news media, both of which were deemed to play formative roles in “deepening the bitter residue of fear . . . threatening the future of all Americans.”⁸ Although not among the cities investigated by

the Kerner Commission, Philadelphia, as one of the earliest U.S. cities to fall victim to violence in the 1960s, contributed to the climate of turmoil simmering within the cities, which, by the end of the decade, culminated in riots elsewhere even more devastating in scale than its own.

This study positions journalists within the existing narrative of the 1960s as historical agents, who shaped discourses surrounding race, policing, and urban violence with unintended results. Through a textual analysis of newspaper coverage of the 1964 Philadelphia riot and historical manuscripts, this study contends that journalists helped shape Philadelphia’s future course, specifically regarding to whom its police would be beholden. As interpreters of the violence that broke out on Columbia Avenue in 1964, journalists urged readers to understand the riot in a particular way: as a war touched off by deviant “hoodlums” whose blatant disregard for law and order was in some ways enabled by an unprepared Philadelphia Police Department. It is argued that the two dominant frames—marginalization and police paralysis—embedded in the sources examined interacted to provide the discursive fodder for opponents of Philadelphia’s Police Advisory Board in an effort to dismantle the body.

Through an examination of the nuances of news coverage uniting, and in some instance differentiating, Philadelphia's three dailies—the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *Philadelphia Daily News*—as well as a black newspaper, the two-day-a-week *Philadelphia Tribune*, this study suggests that deeper insight can be gained into the stakes involved in coverage of the 1964 Columbia Avenue riot. In privileging the frames of marginalization and police paralysis, journalists opened up discursive possibilities even they had not envisioned, providing a language that could be co-opted by political interests. Thus, this case is one of unintended consequences: journalistic frames were used to contribute to the fortification of a conservative coalition being strengthened by a burgeoning sense among whites in urban areas that their security was threatened.⁹ Although the circulation of these two frames alone cannot explain the eventual demise of Philadelphia's Police Advisory Board, this study argues that the image of the police officer standing idly by while young black "hoodlums" roamed the streets proved invaluable ammunition for opponents of the board, who found in news coverage further evidence of liberalism's failure to protect the populace.

When the Police Advisory Board was founded in 1958 under the auspices of liberal Democratic Mayor Richardson Dilworth, it was supposed to play a vital role in the rehabilitation of Philadelphia's ailing police department, which was beset by corruption and allegations of police brutality. With the ousting of the Republican machine in 1952, which had ruled the city for more than sixty years, Philadelphia became a city run by Cold War liberals who sought to dissociate the mayor's office from the police department, historic bedfellows. Part of the liberals' plan was to act upon the recommendations of organizations such as the Philadelphia Fellowship Commission, which sought to fight discrimination and systemic injustices in schools, the workplace, and the media, among other sites, and to create an infrastructure which would enable Philadelphia to fulfill its latent potential.¹⁰

Responding to organizations such as the Americans for Democratic Action, the ACLU, and the NAACP, Dilworth intended for the board to listen to testimony from citizen complainants and accused policemen, making recommendations to the mayor ranging from discharge from the department to dismissal of the complaint. The board was a direct response to those, like a city councilman, who believed police were pursuing "terror tactics" throughout the city.¹¹ The intent of the board was that citizens could trust that their complaints would be heard by the Police Advisory Board without having to worry that they would be blindly dismissed. Unlike the department's internal board of inquiry, which was often charged with "whitewash" and "collusion between brother officers,"¹² the Police Advisory Board would be different. The mayor saw it as having particular potential in North Philadelphia, where relationships between the predominantly black neighborhood and the predominantly white police force were especially tense. The board, for the mayor and the board's

advocates, signaled hope for Philadelphia's future.

Slightly over a year after the riot had ended in Philadelphia, George Herold, the chairman of the Commission on Christian Social Concerns, sent a letter to Philadelphia Mayor James Tate in which he warned, "Philadelphia is one of two major United States cities with a civilian review board. Properly, the nation watches what happens here."¹³ Although the debates surrounding the necessity of the Police Advisory Board had a direct impact on Philadelphia, other cities, such as New York, were looking to Philadelphia's unfolding story as they debated the merits of their own police review boards.¹⁴ However, by 1969, with the dissolution of Philadelphia's

Police Advisory Board, another symbolic nail was driven into the coffin of postwar liberalism. The discourse of fear, bolstered by journalistic frames of marginalization and police paralysis that were used to cover Philadelphia's 1964 riot, prevailed as the racial tensions that had provided much of the initial impetus for the board continued to divide the city, much like its postindustrial counterparts.

The selection of the newspapers included in this analysis was rooted in an effort to explore the range of audiences to whom Philadelphia's journalists spoke. The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, the city's newspaper of record, was a family-owned paper started in 1847, whose slogan famously read, "Nearly Everybody Reads the *Bulletin*."¹⁵ One of the ten largest newspapers in the United States in 1960, it was the largest afternoon paper in the English-speaking world. Run by the McLean family, which was known

to have made clear to its staff its belief that good journalism was thorough, unsensational journalism,¹⁶ the *Bulletin* was known for its superior local reporting in multiple daily editions.

Unlike the *Bulletin*, which had a reputation in the city as a paper of repute, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* had been taken over by Walter Annenberg upon his father's death in 1942 and was known as the mouthpiece of its publisher from the 1950s until he sold the newspaper in 1969. Historically the *Inquirer* tended toward the right of the political spectrum although it deemed itself an "independent newspaper,"¹⁷ supporting Democratic candidates in the early 1950s. Despite its self-proclaimed independence, the paper's involvement in a variety of scandals during the first decades of Walter Annenberg's tenure as publisher damaged its reputation as a legitimate purveyor of news. When asked about Annenberg's influence, *Bulletin* journalist Peter Binzen said in 1979, "I thought Annenburg [*sic*] was the most reckless, irresponsible publisher in the United States when he was going full-speed ahead here."¹⁸ Although Binzen was a journalist employed by the *Inquirer's* most serious competitor, he was not alone in his critique of the way that the *Inquirer* was run.¹⁹ Over the course of the 1960s, Annenberg made a friend in policeman-turned Commissioner Frank Rizzo, a tough cop and a staunch law and order advocate. This relationship shaped the tenor of the *Inquirer's* coverage, particularly coverage pertaining to the Philadelphia Police Department, throughout the 1960s. Although the *Bulletin's* weekly circulation exceeded the *Inquirer's*, the latter consistently dominated

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the *Bulletin's* Sunday edition.²⁰

The city's most prominent tabloid, the *Philadelphia Daily News*, was purchased in 1957 by Walter Annenberg, who made it an afternoon publication. Despite the *Inquirer's* and the *Daily News's* shared publisher throughout the 1960s, the newspapers did not consistently share an editorial stance because Annenberg's attention was devoted predominantly to the *Inquirer*. Known as the "people paper," whose circulation rested on street sales rather than subscriptions, the *Daily News* embodied a form of personal journalism largely absent from the *Bulletin* and *Inquirer*. Unlike its counterparts, the *Daily News* was a highly visual newspaper, often printing page-long photographic montages.

The *Philadelphia Tribune*, known as "the constructive newspaper" and later dubbed "the voice of the black community," was founded in 1884 by Christopher J. Perry and is the oldest continually published African-American newspaper in the United States. Founded as an advocate for the black community, the *Tribune* not only covered "hard news" in the traditional sense but also community and social events. As V.P. Franklin argued in 1984, the *Tribune* served not only as a lens through which to view the changing contours of Philadelphia's growing African-American population but as an "educational agency" that enhanced solidarity.²¹ The newspaper was published on Tuesdays and Fridays throughout the 1960s.²²

To examine how these four newspapers framed the story of the 1964 Columbia Avenue riot, this study drew upon news articles, photographs, editorials, letters to the editor, and commentaries during the two weeks following the riot's outbreak on August 28.²³ In order to assess the ways in which the papers' coverage was deployed in discourse surrounding the viability of Philadelphia's Police Advisory Board, this study additionally examined various pieces of correspondence, press releases, and pamphlets relating to debates regarding the board, from its inception in 1958 through its eventual demise in 1969.

News of the outbreak of violence on Columbia Avenue first ran on August 29 in the *Inquirer* and was followed by the afternoon editions of the *Daily News* and the *Bulletin*. Due to the timing of the event, the first *Tribune* coverage of the riot did not appear until September 1 after the violence had ended. Each newspaper devoted considerable column space to covering and commenting on the violence. The sheer quantity of coverage suggested the story's significance, but patterns quickly emerged in the quality of coverage as journalists encouraged readers to interpret the riot in a particular way: a violent outburst begun by deviant "hoodlums" whose disregard for law and order was largely enabled by an unprepared Philadelphia Police Department. The two dominant frames emerging from this reading—marginalization and police paralysis—were present in all of the papers but were

utilized in different ways by them. Despite their collective agreement that the rioters were young "vandals" who were not part of the black mainstream, the papers diverged about whether the relatively laissez-faire police department had abdicated its role by not enforcing order more assertively.

Those participating in North Philadelphia's weekend riot, according to local newspapers, were characterized not only as "rioters" but "looters," "hoodlums," "vandals," and even "urchins," a term used only by the *Philadelphia Tribune*. Taken together, these descriptors contributed to news organizations' frame of marginalization, which was reinforced by repeated dissociation of the rioters with the civil rights movement. As Police Commissioner Howard Leary stated in an interview, the "hoodlums" who led the violence were not the "responsible members of the Negro community,"²⁴ who had welcomed his men into the North Philadelphia neighborhood as they attempted to restore order. Described as "out of control," "a shouting, laughing mob," and "howling," the rioters' behavior was not only deemed disrespectful and lacking in control but indicative of their youth; all three dailies described the rioters as between their teens and thirties.²⁵ A September 1 *Tribune* headline further advanced the dailies' claim: "Youths 'Sorry' for Defacing Tan Business: New Shoes From Looted Stores Are First for Urchin."²⁶ Although the tone of the *Tribune's* headline was less disdainful than the city's dailies, in choosing to reinforce the poverty of the neighborhood's residents, the *Tribune*, like the dailies, contributed to the general sense that the rioters were simply young people who were not to be taken seriously.

By positioning the rioters as young people "acting out," news organizations argued implicitly that these young men and women were not exercising legitimate grievance. Only the *Tribune* unsurprisingly attempted to subtly convey an alternative reading of the rioters, referring to them once as "soldiers."²⁷ This analogy granted them a degree of legitimacy absent in the dailies. As a part of a collective devoted to fighting for a cause, a soldier is one behind whom support is rallied. Thus, the use of the term suggested a degree of solidarity with the rioters, juxtaposing the imagery of dispersed "hoodlums" ravaging the streets, which appeared more consistently in news reports. The use of the term "urchin" had a similar effect, conjuring up images of helpless children. Although the reference to "urchins" did not afford the rioters a cause implied by the term "soldiers," "urchin" suggested that the rioters could not be held responsible for their actions because they were only children. Instead of instigators, they were victims of a political system that had contributed to their community's poverty.

The *Tribune*, however, was careful not to grant the rioters too much legitimacy. Articulating solidarity with the rioters would have simultaneously undermined local black leaders who vocally denounced the riot. One such leader, the Rev. Leon H. Sullivan, distanced the rioters from the local black community, stating:

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Philadelphia brought in large numbers of police officers, who were criticized for being too passive, for the 1964 riot. (Used with the permission of the Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia, Pa.)

“The vast majority of the Negroes disapprove of the actions of a comparatively few hoodlums.”²⁸ His decision to position the rioters as unrepresentative of the broader community, which was echoed by other black leaders, signaled recognition of the riot’s potential to undermine the efforts of civil rights leaders. For this reason, the *Tribune* was in the tenuous position of having to toe the line between the black community at large and the leaders in it.

The delicate space occupied by the *Tribune* was further evidenced in the tension between the paper’s front-page headline on September 1—“Respect for Law and Order Philadelphia’s Only Salvation”—and its page five commentary—“Rioters, Hoodlums Are What They Are Because America Made Them That Way.” Thus, the paper lauded police on page one for not acting more assertively and denounced those who disrupted the peace, and then the page five commentary emphasized the neighborhood’s structural problems, pointing to the daily injustices confronted by community members. The paper’s focus on infrastructural problems plaguing North Philadelphia demonstrated an acute awareness of the African-American audience, which was comprised

of not only participants in the riot but also more established civil rights activists. Although the *Tribune*’s systemic focus in its commentary signaled a departure from news coverage, it defaulted to its characterization of the rioters as “hoodlums,” which was in accord with the local black leaders, who deemed the riot “Not Civil Rights.”²⁹ In defining the riot as against the civil rights movement, a strategy which was used by all four newspapers, and the rioters, by extension, drunken gangs of rowdy teens, race was removed from newspaper discourse as a factor leading to the violence. This, however, is not to say race was not part of the discourse on the street.³⁰ The frame of marginalization positioned the rioters as fearsome youths who fit the pre-existing racialized “Jungle” motif.

Linked to the frame of marginalization was police paralysis, which was evident in the first *Inquirer* report of the riot: “A squad of nearly 100 policemen watched helplessly at 36th and Columbia as scores of young men and women smashed a window, denuded the display in seconds, then rushed inside to pillage and plunder.”³¹ The description of a helpless police department passively watching rather than acting authoritatively was visible in a *Bulletin* headline

later that day: "Police Stand By." One day later, on August 30, the *Bulletin* reiterated police inaction, announcing, "Daylight Gangs Loot Stores as Police Watch."³²

Although the *Daily News'* language was not as explicit as either the *Inquirer's* or the *Bulletin's* in casting the department as passive, the paper's front page headline on August 29, "33 Policemen Injured Battling Looting Gangs," suggested a similar inability of the police to effectively complete their tasks.³³ Despite the *Daily News'* use of the term "battling," which suggested greater activity and effort on the part of police, the headline ultimately aligned the newspaper with its daily counterparts by pointing to the victimization of officers. Police injuries sustained at the hands of "looting gangs" served as the focal point of *Daily News* headlines rather than the success of police in attempting to quell the riot. Police officers were portrayed as victims rather than keepers of the peace, fighting a losing battle.

Resembling the *Daily News'* indirect approach to addressing the nature of police action, the *Tribune's* lead headline on September 1 made no reference to police, which was a pattern that persisted throughout the paper's headlines. Its lead headline read: "Trib Photog Gives Blow-by-Blow Account of Columbia Ave. Rioting; Sees Looters Strike Stores Like Soldiers."³⁴ Providing a detailed narrative of the violence, the *Tribune* article also offered insight into the rioters, describing a photojournalist's exchange with a young man who offered to break a store window so the journalist could "get a good shot." The photographer's interaction reminded readers that journalists, and in particular the African-American journalists at the *Tribune*, were engaged with the rioters in ways that the predominantly white police officers were not.

The *Tribune's* photographs that did depict officers captured the fragility of the newspaper's place within the landscape; like the dailies, the *Tribune* showed few images of police officers in active positions. One photograph, "Irate Police Club Suspect into Submission," marked a stark departure from the visual tableaux. Depicting an officer with his nightstick poised to strike blows on a rioter being held on the ground, the photograph displayed an aggressive, perhaps even abusive, police force. According to the caption, the picture encapsulated why "residents of [the] area are not in love with law enforcement agencies."³⁵ Police action and assertiveness, according to the *Tribune*, were not necessarily good for police-community relations because they were one of the reasons that residents of North Philadelphia were wary of police, leading local NAACP leader Cecil B. Moore to attribute the violence on Columbia Avenue to "a long history of police mistreatment."³⁶

Except for this anomalous photograph of police action, photographs of police across the city's newspapers told the same visual story: a police department that did little to intervene as the violence grew more intense. The three photographs on the front page of the *Inquirer* two days earlier captured the newspapers' collective framing of police intervention during the riot. The largest photograph was captioned: "Storekeeper retrieved register from sidewalk outside shop wrecked during night of rioting and

looting in North Philadelphia Negro section." Two equally sized photographs under it were captioned: "Police keep passersby moving in riot area, but plundering continued during Friday night and was resumed after darkness fell Saturday night" and "Police crouch behind car for cover as they are fired on by rioters during second night of violence. Officers returned fire."³⁷ The largest photograph presented the damage in the neighborhood, where residents and storeowners picked up the pieces of their homes and shops in the wake of violence. While the two smaller photographs displayed police efforts to actively stop the riot, they depicted a police department that could do little to stop the "plundering."

Thus, they reinforced the sense that if police were on the scene, they did little to help. If officers were not pictured hiding behind cars for cover, they were in formation or more informally surrounded by fellow officers. Such images only reinforced the messages of the papers' headlines and news articles of talk but no action.

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While the newspapers emphasized the department's generally passive approach to policing the riot in headlines and photographs, the frames of marginalization and police paralysis were given further credence by public officials, community activists, and police officers who, journalists reported, cited the police department's lack of control over

the unfolding violence in North Philadelphia. But despite their agreement on the rioters' marginal status and the department's hands-off approach to handling them, these sources differed in their evaluation of police passivity. Some lauded the hands-off approach as a strategic move to mitigate the potential for violence while others deemed it a lapse in police judgment.

In addition to Police Commissioner Leary, who praised his department for its restraint, Mayor Tate remained one of the most vocal supporters of police activity during the riot. Quoted by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as saying that had police used guns instead of nightsticks, the riot would have been a "bloodbath," he proclaimed: "We weathered the storm and returned to normalcy without having to resort to horses, firehoses or firearms. And this is an achievement of which all Philadelphians can be proud."³⁸ His commentary, referencing the recent tactics employed by Birmingham, Alabama, Police Chief Bull Connor, revealed the mayor's attempt to differentiate Philadelphia from other cities which had sustained similar uprisings. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was not Philadelphia, Mississippi.³⁹

Tate's praise of police restraint was not universally shared. Opposition emerged most vocally from two camps: the NAACP and the Philadelphia City Council. Despite overlapping critiques, the roots of their resistance lay in fundamentally different concerns. Speaking on behalf of the NAACP, Roy Wilkins articulated concern that Philadelphia's riot, like other urban riots in the North, was part of a larger national conspiracy that the National Guard should have been called in to address. His call for the National Guard, although not an explicit critique of police action, suggested that Philadelphia's police could not do the job. City Council President Paul D'Ortona agreed with Wilkins' appeal for greater police

presence, arguing that Philadelphia needed to hire additional policemen to control the “hoodlums.” Where he diverged from Wilkins was in his more forceful claim for the entrenchment of law that people should fear. According to the *Inquirer*, the city council president claimed, “[T]he enemies of the decent people of this city must know and fear the power of the law.”⁴⁰ While news organizations largely focused on the apparent disregard for the law by the rioters and the inability of the police department to restore order, D’Ortona’s claim that the law was something people needed to fear rather than simply to respect marked a crucial shift in the way “law and order” was conceived.

Journalists failed to overtly adopt D’Ortona’s tone in pushing for more aggressiveness by the police, yet news reports quoting disgruntled police officers implicitly agreed with him. One Philadelphia highway patrolman claimed, according to the *Inquirer*, “We try to defend citizens and their property and even our own men, yet we have nothing to help ourselves. We were told not to interfere with the rioting or the looting. We saw people looting the stores and we didn’t stop them.”⁴¹ The *Inquirer* similarly reported Deputy Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo’s command to his men not to “make a move if you’re outnumbered. Let them break the windows.”⁴² Such statements advanced the dominant critique that police officers remained virtually powerless to combat violence and looting, presenting not only orders from such high-ranking officials as Rizzo but frustrations from below. Officers claimed they were paralyzed, constrained by the department’s chain of command.

The stories of local merchants furthered the image of an undermanned department unable to answer the calls of those victimized by the riot. The *Inquirer* chronicled the stories of two local merchants: Samuel Fox, a shoe storeowner, and Samuel Nerenblatt, a dry goods storeowner. Fox complained, “I asked for protection and I was told not to worry. The police seemed like they didn’t want to make trouble—so they just stood there.” A disgruntled Nerenblatt relayed a similar experience with police after being told, “That’s tough” in response to the his call to report the looting of his store. He said, “Isn’t there any law left? If I get stopped for speeding, can I tell the policeman ‘Forget it?’”⁴³

While the *Inquirer* and *Bulletin* cited several examples of police officers claiming their hands were tied by the departmental chain of command, Police Commissioner Leary denied accusations that he ordered police officers not to use their guns. Seeking to set the record straight, he stated, “The Philadelphia police force does not use violent methods except when required to avoid imminent injury or death to either police officers or civilians.”⁴⁴ His comment, attempting to portray his department as defensive rather than offensive, only reinforced arguments that police officers were kept from using their guns, although this was not the case.

Compounding the effects of news coverage indicating a passive and ineffectual police force, the editorial boards of the four newspapers weighed in on the appropriateness of police work during the riot. Each acknowledged that police could have done more to actively stop the violence and looting, and they agreed that firing on looters could have touched off, in the words of the *Inquirer*, “a holocaust of death.” Where they disagreed, like their sources, was whether more police would have been a good thing. For the *Inquirer* and the *Bulletin*, emphasis was placed, as the *Inquirer* noted, on the “breakdown of law and order” in a city where “young thugs have become accustomed to controlling the streets in their neighborhoods.”⁴⁵ The *Daily News* was more ambivalent, hailing police for their work during the riot but raising the question as to whether more police were necessary. The *Tribune*, in contrast, maintained its support for the police department and its leaders, crediting them with restoring order to a neighborhood that had dissolved into chaos.

The division between the *Inquirer* and the *Bulletin*, on the one hand, and the *Daily News* and the *Tribune*, on the other, was placed into stark relief immediately following the riot’s outbreak as the papers editorialized on the violence. The *Inquirer*’s August 30 editorial, “In North Philadelphia: A Tragedy,” reflected upon violence which, the paper noted, no one, black or white, wanted. Within days, however, the *Inquirer*’s tone was less somber. The “shattered” pride of the City of Brotherly Love that “must be built again”⁴⁶ on August 30 was deemed a consequence of the “Deplorable and Disgraceful” state of the city a day later. The *Inquirer* pointedly stated, “The plain unhappy fact is that police cannot even exercise routine day-by-day control over street gangs in this city. How, then, are

riots to be quelled?” Noting that “many police not only conducted themselves admirably and heroically in this crisis,” the paper claimed police “showed a coolness of judgment under fire that was instrumental in preventing a terrible tragedy from becoming much worse.” Its conclusion was nonetheless severe: “Police protection has declined dangerously in this city—a truth which this newspaper and numerous responsible citizens have been saying.” Thus, the paper’s challenge to the city was considerably more confrontational than its lament a day earlier. Although this editorial made no explicit reference to the Police Advisory Board, claims about the city’s “decline in police protection,”⁴⁷ which was represented by the paper and its counterparts in photographs and written text, would resurface in debates surrounding the board’s viability.

The tone of the *Inquirer*’s commentary grew stronger over the next several days. Following its declaration of the laxity of police protection, the editorial board clarified its critique of a city that was unprepared: “Beyond any question, the riots in North Philadelphia have demonstrated an urgent and critical need for better protection of the law-abiding citizens of this city against hoodlums.” Charging police with not “safeguard[ing] property,” the *Inquirer* continued,

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“Property could have been protected, and looting prevented, if police had been on the scene earlier, in larger numbers, properly equipped, with an advance plan of action, and with leadership prepared to execute the plan.”⁴⁸ The culmination of four days of opining about the police in the city, this editorial showed the paper had changed its view considerably from its initial positive evaluation of police work during the riot.

While the *Bulletin* editorial board’s tone never rivaled the *Inquirer’s* in intensity, the paper’s evaluation of police action during the riot was similarly disapproving. On August 31, it stated:

Two great losses remain to be reckoned. . . . One lies in the visible breakdown of law-enforcement, which permitted the looting of some 220 stores under the very eyes of the police. The long-range effects of such a display of disrespect for the law can only be harmful in the extreme. . . . A second great loss, still to be counted, lies in the incalculable damage to the sustained effort in Philadelphia to create an understanding relationship between the races.⁴⁹

The *Bulletin’s* ordering of the “two great losses” reflected its primary concern with perceptions of police inaction. However, the reference to the police department “permit[ting]” rioters to loot stores revealed more than the paper’s disapproval of the way police that exerted their authority. The *Bulletin* perceived police action to reflect a broader trend toward disrespect in the city, which wielded “long-range effects.” Cast in this way, the riot signaled short-term destruction and the potential for future disaster rooted in racial divisions. The paper’s tone may not have been as overtly aggressive as the *Inquirer’s*, but it left readers with a similar degree of uncertainty regarding the future safety of their city.

The *Daily News* remained considerably less outspoken about the riot, but one week following its end it printed a summary statement: “This newspaper believes the Police Department deserves the praise that has been heaped on it from many quarters for its conduct during the recent riot in North Philadelphia. Despite great provocation, police kept their heads and refrained from actions that could have precipitated a bloodbath.”⁵⁰ In spite of the damages in the neighborhood, the work of police was ultimately worthy of praise and admiration. Unlike the other dailies, however, the *Daily News* debated whether hiring 1,000 additional policemen, which was proposed by Mayor Tate following the riot, was necessary. It conceded that, “additional manpower, available in a hurry, might have prevented some, if not all of the looting,” but the paper did not stand by the statement wholeheartedly. Concluding on a more pragmatic note, the editorial board stated, “The taxpayers of Philadelphia will want to be convinced that the additional police are really needed.”⁵¹ Thus, the *Daily News* was more apprehensive about weighing in on the necessity of more police than its counterparts.

Closest to the *Daily News* in its commentary, the *Tribune* was the only unwavering supporter of Commissioner Leary, Mayor Tate, and the Philadelphia Police Department. Its editorial, like those in the *Bulletin* and *Inquirer*, invoked “law and order” and the need for its maintenance. Unlike the dailies, however, the *Tribune* persisted in its praise of the police department’s restraint in dealing with the violence in North Philadelphia. There was a difference between advocating respect for law and order and supporting greater police power. This differential interpretation of “law and order” lay at the root of the variations in coverage between Philadelphia’s newspapers. Embedded within the phrase “law and order” used by the city’s dailies was a racial implication: the need to

exert authority over the lawless black “hoodlums,” who disrupted order within the city. The *Tribune* did not dispute the need to keep the peace, yet greater police power, in its estimation, would only lead to greater divisiveness.

Less than two weeks after the riot, coverage subsided, and the editorial boards quieted. While the focus turned to how the city would cope with the financial burden of having to rebuild the North Philadelphia neighborhood where the damages had occurred, with occasional overtures to the so-called “ringleaders” of the riot, the discussion surrounding the relationship between Philadelphia’s Police Advisory Board and the nature of police response to the outbreak of violence on Columbia Avenue had only just begun.

The Police Advisory Board and the Police Department, from the former’s inception in 1958, had hardly maintained civil relations. The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) filed a petition for a preliminary injunction against the city and the Police Review Board in December 1959, about one year after Mayor Dilworth had established the advisory body, charging he lacked the power to establish such a board. The board received additional attention from organizations such as the Fraternal Order of Police because of the suspected impact the board would have upon police work. In 1962, the *Pennsylvania Guardian*, a pro-police publication, commented, “Why the FOP dislikes the PAB is easy to understand. The FOP is to policemen what the American Legion is to veterans. As such it’s big for law, order, and nightsticks. And anyone against nightsticks is against law, order, and the FOP.”⁵² The *Guardian’s* linkage of law, order, and police weapons highlighted precisely what police criticized the board for depriving policemen of in 1964: the ability to exert their authority.

The argument that the Police Advisory Board kept officers from effectively carrying out the duties of police work was one of the two central arguments leveled against the board by political officials and law enforcement. The other dealt with police morale: the board was created as a punitive body that would highlight the weaknesses of the police department and thereby contribute negatively to the tenor of the police establishment. Statistics proved the contrary. Between October 1958 and August 1963, the Police Advisory Board received 411 complaints about police brutality, illegal arrest or search, harassment, and “other” offenses. Of these complaints, half were withdrawn, closed, settled without a hearing, or dismissed due to the non-appearance of a complainant. Suspensions or reprimands were recommended in only thirty-one of the cases.⁵³

Although the board seemed to reinforce the achievements rather than emphasize the flaws of the Philadelphia Police Department, the criticisms leveled against it did not dissipate. The FOP continued its quest to demonstrate and reflect upon the “failures” of the board, and the 1964 Columbia Avenue riot presented such an opportunity because the outbreak of violence in Philadelphia raised questions not only in Philadelphia but also in New York City, which was looking to Philadelphia as an exemplar. New York Police Commissioner Michael J. Murphy announced in October 1964, months after the Columbia Avenue riot, that “a board of second-guessers” would undermine police morale and discipline. He stated, “Weaken the police and you weaken the entire structure of government. Demoralize the police department and you destroy law and order.” A staunch critic of New York City’s board, he believed “false charges of police brutality often are used as an excuse for riots.”⁵⁴ Evoking memories in the not-too-

distant past of Philadelphia's riot and Harlem's before it, which had begun in predominantly African-American neighborhoods where a seemingly minor disturbance sparked a melee, he argued police advisory boards kept police from actively doing their jobs.

The conversation between leaders in Philadelphia and New York City continued in May 1965 when John Samuels of the New York Democratic Club asked Police Advisory Board Executive Director Mercer Tate if he believed the board lowered police morale. Tate's response unsurprisingly was no. However, he conceded, "I think it is fair to say that policemen have been more careful in engaging in bodily contact in furtherance of their duties (and in exceeding their duties) as the result of the establishment and operation of our Board. This was, I think, particularly evident during the North Philadelphia racial riots last summer."⁵⁵ Such a comment, while meant to highlight the board's positive impact upon the Philadelphia Police Department, played well into the hands of the board's detractors.

Several months after Mercer Tate's exchange with Samuels, as the one-year anniversary of the Columbia Avenue riot approached, James Williams of Philadelphia's Congress of Racial Equality wrote a letter to Mayor James Tate, expressing concern regarding North Philadelphia. Citing heightened racial tensions, he pleaded for Mayor Tate to recognize the true potential of the Police Advisory Board, which according to Williams, was an institution that "has not been given a chance or [the] support to really become an asset." He attributed the board's lack of success to "city officials' reluctance to fight the bigots and the far right over the concept of such a Board."⁵⁶ Tate's response on August 23, 1965, reassured Williams that the Police Advisory Board had his support, which "has been consistent despite pressures by the Fraternal Order of Police and bigoted organizations like the John Birch Society to weaken or destroy it."⁵⁷ The Police Advisory Board, for local black leaders and the mayor, wielded the potential to ease racial tensions by fostering trust between the police and the African-American community.

Mayor Tate remained steadfast in his conviction that the board was a pivotal part of civilian oversight of the police department, although he increasingly became the voice of dissent as opponents of the board became more vocal in their critiques both inside the city as well as across the nation. The *Town Crier*, a monthly newsletter published by the Philadelphia Committee to Support Your Local Police, reported in January 1966 that "our nation's chief law enforcement officer, J. Edgar Hoover has stated, 'A Police Advisory Board constitutes a backward step in law enforcement.'"⁵⁸ Echoing Hoover's critique, FOP President John J. Harrington took the claim one step further by bringing it back to Philadelphia. Despite his statement during the riots that he was "perfectly

satisfied" with the ways the violence was handled,⁵⁹ in October 1966 he stated, "Ten square miles of businesses in Philadelphia were wiped out during the 1964 riots because that city had a civilian-staffed police complaint board."⁶⁰ The statement marked a staggering shift in content and tone from those during the riot, reflecting the increasing pressure by law and order advocates outside the city as well as in it.

Harrington's controversial claim that the board caused the destruction of the North Philadelphia neighborhood spawned a variety of reactions and attempts to set the record straight. Maurice Fagan, the chairman of the Philadelphia Fellowship Commission, argued that Harrington's statement was patently untrue. In a letter to Philadelphia Managing Director Fred Corleto, he wrote: "I spoke today with Howard Leary about the statement, and he says there is absolutely no foundation to it and under no circumstances, would he had tolerated any police officer refusing to do his duty for this or any other reason."⁶¹ Board Executive Director Mercer Tate took on the mantle of refuting Harrington by writing a letter to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the newspaper which had first printed Harrington's statement. He claimed:

The statement that ten square miles of businesses were wiped out in the 1964 Philadelphia riots is untrue. The businesses which were damaged were isolated and such damage in no way occurred because of the existence of the Police Advisory Board. Police were neither "confused" nor "afraid to use nightsticks or blackjacks" nor were they promised by any city official that they would not be taken before the Police Advisory Board as a result of actions taken during the riot period.⁶²

Tate's attempt to make clear the real "effects" of the Police Advisory Board was evident. He argued that the board did not tie the hands of officers, and it did not cause police officers to be paralyzed in the line of duty.

Tate's words did little good. By March 1967, the language of the board's detractors had taken hold, and the executive order creating the Police

Advisory Board was deemed in violation of Philadelphia's Home Rule Charter.⁶³ Consequently, the board was prohibited from listening to additional cases.⁶⁴ In response, Mercer Tate wrote to the mayor, "I feel it is a great tragedy that your Police Advisory Board is languishing while police-community relations are rapidly worsening. This is a national problem."⁶⁵ And languish the board did, despite pleas from local news organizations, including the *Bulletin*, and Advisory Board advocates.⁶⁶

On December 22, 1969, the Philadelphia Police Department received, in the words of Police Commissioner Rizzo, the greatest Christmas present it could have asked for: the Philadelphia Police Advisory Board was dissolved. Mayor Tate claimed the Police

“Although the delegitimation of the rioters enabled news organizations to dismiss the violence as unrelated to the efforts of civil rights leaders and, by extension, to racial strife, the marginalization of the rioters simultaneously reified the broader language used to describe a neighborhood known commonly as ‘The Jungle.’ The ‘shouting, howling’ members of the North Philadelphia community described by news organizations were envisaged as part of an unruly mob unaware of its actions and in desperate need of policing.”

Advisory Board “did not measure up to the Police Department’s own Board of Inquiry, and that, at best, its activities and procedures were negative.”⁶⁷ A stunning pronouncement from one of the board’s most avid supporters throughout the 1960s, Mayor Tate’s press release revealed the extent to which the climate of the city had changed since the election of Cold War liberals Joseph Clark and Dilworth to the mayor’s office in the 1950s. A year and a half prior to Tate’s announcement of the board’s dissolution, President Johnson’s Kerner Commission provided hard evidence for the necessity of institutional infrastructures aimed at easing racial tensions in urban areas. The federal commission championed bodies such as police advisory boards as advocates of all people, black and white. Philadelphia, however, did not heed the words of the commission. Still reigning was the “bitter residue of fear” of cities dissolving into chaos at the hands of black radicals and of police unable to contain the violence, which was cited by the commission.⁶⁸

News coverage of Philadelphia’s 1964 riots did not lead alone to the Police Advisory Board’s demise. As the debates surrounding the board’s viability reveal, pressures exerted from within as well as outside city limits by pro-law enforcement agencies were exerted on Mayor Tate, political officials, and the courts. Yet, news coverage of Philadelphia’s 1964 riot on Columbia Avenue, privileging the frames of marginalization and police paralysis, offered more than an interpretive lens through which to view the eruption of violence. In encouraging readers to understand the riot as a war between the city and black “hoodlums” whose disregard for law and order was enabled by an ill-equipped police department, news organizations provided a language that could be co-opted by political interests to advance the agenda of law and order conservatives. The simplicity of news frames enabled the circulating discourse to focus on police power rather than on the larger, structural problems confronting the predominantly black neighborhood, problems only alluded to briefly by Philadelphia’s black press. Emphasizing the rioters’ marginal status, news organizations characterized the young men and women of the community in which the riot broke out as outside any legitimate movement. They were “acting out” rather than exercising a legitimate grievance, according to the newspapers.

Although the delegitimation of the rioters enabled news organizations to dismiss the violence as unrelated to the efforts of civil rights leaders and, by extension, to racial strife, the marginalization of the rioters simultaneously reified the broader language used to describe a neighborhood known commonly as “The Jungle.” The “shouting, howling” members of the North Philadelphia community described by news organizations were envisaged as part of an unruly mob unaware of its actions and in desperate need of policing. When police were needed in the case of the 1964 North Philadelphia riot, they held back, reluctant to use their weapons to restore order, and subsequently were cast as weak and ineffectual actors in stemming the violence. Agreeing to the substance but not the spirit of the *Inquirer’s* and the *Bulletin’s* coverage, the *Tribune*, and the *Daily News* to a lesser extent, remained the voices of dissent, praising police action during the riot. Like Mayor Tate, newspapers articulated concern that additional lives would have been lost in a neighborhood “bloodbath” if police used guns. Yet, the papers disagreed about alternatives.

When news coverage first emerged in the wake of the spontaneous violence that erupted on August 28, no mention was made of the potential impact of the Police Advisory Board upon police action. Within months, however, as debates surrounding the necessity of such advisory bodies flared not only in Philadelphia

but also in New York City, coverage of Philadelphia’s riot seemed to provide much needed evidence for the Fraternal Order of Police and other board detractors that police power would be restrained when law enforcement was compelled to carefully consider the ramifications of its actions. Restraint, for the board’s opponents, signaled a weakness: deference to the rioters wreaking havoc in Philadelphia. Yet this restraint, which this study refers to as a frame of police paralysis, became evidence of not simply police reluctance to use force but of the liberal “permissiveness” against which a growing conservative movement was reacting.⁶⁹ Journalistic discourses were co-opted in the service of ends that news organizations had not anticipated.

Years after the riot on Columbia Avenue ended, the frames of marginalization and police paralysis had not disappeared. They served as potent reminders of what could happen if police decided to “stand by” while lawless black “hoodlums” ruled the streets. Although journalists had not covered the riots with the intention of shaping the board’s fate, the coverage was ultimately used for ends that they had not envisioned, bolstering the claims of law and order advocates. In the wake of rioting in Watts in Los Angeles in 1965, and in Detroit and Newark two summers later, where violence had begun under conditions mirroring those in North Philadelphia, the city stood at a crossroads. Philadelphia could either internalize the messages of the Kerner Commission, encouraging racial unity through institutional change, or yield to the pressure of conservatives. Choosing the latter course, Philadelphia embarked on a rightward political turn that deepened the existing racial schism as it sought to define itself against the lingering frames of marginalization and police paralysis. Thus, Philadelphia stayed the course that the Kerner Commission observed as defining urban America: “two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.”⁷⁰

NOTES

¹ According to the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, the riots in Philadelphia became the sixth similarly violent outbreak during the summer of 1964. The *Bulletin* cited the riots in Harlem, which occurred from July 18–23, as the first. The other four riots occurred in Jersey City, N.J., Paterson, N.J., Elizabeth, N.J., and the Dixmoor suburb of Chicago. See “6 Cities’ Pattern: Looting Follows Incident,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Aug. 30, 1964.

² There is disagreement about whether both officers were white. Historian Courtney Ann Lyons referred to “White patrolmen Robert Wells and John Hoff;” freelance writer, University of Pennsylvania graduate, and Philadelphian Lenora Berson described the police officers in her 1966 report as “Robert Wells, Negro, and John Hoff, white;” and the *Philadelphia Tribune* referred to Odessa Bradford’s altercation with a “Negro policeman.” See Courtney Ann Lyons, “Burning Columbia Avenue: Black Christianity, Black Nationalism, and ‘Riot Liturgy’ in the 1964 Philadelphia Race Riot,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 77 (Summer 2010): 324–48; Lenora E. Berson, *Case Study of a Riot: The Philadelphia Story With Commentaries By Alex Rosen and Kenneth B. Clark* (New York: Institute of Human Relations Press, 1966); and Chris J. Perry, “False Killing Rumor Triggered Riot,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, Sept. 1, 1964.

³ Given discrepancies among accounts of the riots, this study provides a narrative of the outbreak of violence on Columbia Avenue that is based on several primary sources. These sources include: Officer Wells’ rendering of events as printed in the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* on Aug. 30, 1964; the *Philadelphia Tribune’s* first analysis of the riots, which was printed on Sept. 1, 1964; and Lenora Berson’s retrospective. See Robert Wells, “Attacker Fought Madly, Says 1st Officer at Scene,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Aug. 30, 1964; Chris J. Perry, “False Killing Rumor Triggered Riot,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, Sept. 1, 1964; and Berson, *Case Study of a Riot*.

⁴ On “urban crisis,” see, for instance, Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996). Details on the North Philadelphia neighborhood were cited in “Two Police Districts in North Phila. Have 19% of City’s Crime,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Jan. 24, 1965.

⁵ “Two Police Districts in North Phila. Have 19% of City’s Crime.”

⁶ In February 1961, North Philadelphia ministers met with Mayor Dilworth and Police Commissioner Albert Brown to grapple with the question of how brutality could be avoided in the neighborhood. The meeting concluded by suggesting that congregations, community groups, and civic associations should meet with police personnel regularly to communicate grievances and relay successes in an effort to forge less hostile relations between the Police Department and community members. See “Meeting of North Philadelphia Ministers with Mayor Dilworth and Commissioner Brown,” Feb. 14, 1964, Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 1, folder: Police Advisory Bd Correspondence-Director, 1960-1964, Temple University Urban Archives, Philadelphia. For scholarly work on the historic relationship between police and the African-American community in Philadelphia, see Karl Johnson, “Police-Black Community Relations in Postwar Philadelphia: Race and Criminalization in Urban Social Spaces, 1945-1960,” *Journal of African American History* 89 (Spring 2004): 118-35.

⁷ Joseph R. Daughen, “Philadelphia Called ‘Racial Tinderbox,’” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Aug. 5, 1964.

⁸ United States Kerner Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1968), 15.

⁹ For the rise of American conservatism, see Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001). For examples of studies exploring the development of a white backlash, see Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985); Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985); and Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

¹⁰ For more on Philadelphia’s unfulfilled postwar potential, see Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); and Guian Mckee, “Urban Deindustrialization and Local Public Policy: Industrial Renewal in Philadelphia, 1953-1976,” *Journal of Policy History* 16 (January 2004): 66-98.

¹¹ Robert J. Eisler, “Sawyer Blasts Police Board in Civilian Cases: Councilman Wants Separate Unit to Hear Citizen Complaints,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Oct. 27, 1957.

¹² “The Police Advisory Board: A Philadelphia First in Intergroup Relations,” Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 2, folder: Police Advisory Bd, Articles & Pamphlets, Barol, Martin S., Temple University Urban Archives.

¹³ George O. Herold to Mayor Tate, Sept. 20, 1965, box 1, folder Correspondence—Jan.-Dec. 1965 Chairman, Temple University Urban Archives.

¹⁴ Michael Flamm, “‘Law and Order’ at Large: The New York Civilian Review Board Referendum of 1966 and the Crisis of Liberalism,” *Historian* 64 (Spring and Summer 2002): 643-65.

¹⁵ Peter Binzen, ed., *Nearly Everybody Read It: Snapshots of the Philadelphia Bulletin* (Philadelphia: Camino Books, 1998), 2.

¹⁶ Interview, Peter Binzen by Walter M. Phillips, Sr., Nov. 27, 1979, Walter Philips Oral History Project, Temple University Urban Archives.

¹⁷ Edgar Williams, “A History of the *Inquirer*,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 20, 2003.

¹⁸ Interview, Binzen.

¹⁹ For more on the history of Walter Annenberg and his family, see Gaeton Fonzi, *Annenberg: A Biography of Power* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1970); and Chris Ogden, *Legacy: A Biography of Moses and Walter Annenberg* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1999). For additional details regarding Annenberg’s tenure as publisher of the *Inquirer*, see Williams, “A History of the *Inquirer*.”

²⁰ Circulation statistics were found in the *Editor & Publisher* yearbook.

²¹ V.P. Franklin, “‘Voice of the Black Community’: The *Philadelphia Tribune*, 1912-1941,” *Pennsylvania History* 51 (October 1984): 261-84. For more on Philadelphia’s postwar demographic shifts, see Carolyn Adams, David Bartelt, David Elesh, Ira Goldstein, Nancy Kleniewski, and William Yancey, *Philadelphia: Neighborhoods, Division, and Conflict in a Postindustrial City* (Philadelphia: Temple Uni-

versity Press, 1991); and Janice Fanning Madden and William J. Stull, *Work, Wages, and Poverty: Income Distribution in Post-Industrial Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

²² No circulation data for the *Philadelphia Tribune* is available for this period. Currently, it is published four days a week.

²³ The focus of this article remains on newspaper coverage for two reasons. First, local television news coverage of the riots is unavailable archivally. Second, television was forced to cope with the constraints of the medium during the riots because the cumbersome nature of the equipment kept reporters from maintaining continuous coverage. See Rex Polier, “Riot Pleas Fill Air on Weekend; Radio Bests TV in Coverage,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Aug. 31, 1964.

²⁴ “Leary Praises Residents Who Helped Police,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Aug. 31, 1964.

²⁵ See “1000 Rioters Loot N. Phila Stores; 14 Policemen Hurt,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 29, 1964; Dick Aarons and Jack Helsel, “33 Cops, 85 Others Hurt as Gangs Riot, Loot Stores in North Phila.,” *Philadelphia Daily News*, Aug. 29, 1964; and Malcolm Poindexter and J. Harry Camp, “Dawn Finds Looters Still Raiding Shops: Police Stand by as People Line Up With Shopping Bags,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Aug. 29, 1964.

²⁶ Staff Writers, “Youths ‘Sorry’ For Defacing Tan Business: New Shoes From Looted Stores Are First for Urchin,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, Sept. 1, 1964.

²⁷ Jack Franklin, “*Trib* Photog Gives Blow-by-Blow Account of Columbia Ave. Rioting; Sees Looters Strike Stores Like Soldiers—Ducks Brick Which Clunks NAACP Prexy,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, Sept. 1, 1964.

²⁸ James S. Lintz, “‘Civil Destruction, Not Civil Rights,’ Negro Leader Says,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 30, 1964.

²⁹ “Not Civil Rights,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sept. 3, 1964.

³⁰ Jack Franklin of the *Philadelphia Tribune* reported hearing a rioter yell to Judge Raymond Pace Alexander: “Go home, you Uncle Tom. We don’t need any handkerchief-head judges around here.” See Franklin, “*Trib* Photog Gives Blow-by-Blow Account of Columbia Ave. Rioting.”

³¹ “14 Police Hurt as 1000 Rioters Loot in N. Phila.,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 29, 1964.

³² Bayard Brunt, “Daylight Gangs Loot Stores as Police Watch,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Aug. 30, 1964.

³³ “Traffic Turn Argument Touches Off Negro Riot: 33 Policemen Injured Battling Loot Gangs,” *Philadelphia Daily News*, Aug. 29, 1964.

³⁴ Franklin, “*Trib* Photog Gives Blow-By-Blow Account of Columbia Ave. Rioting.”

³⁵ “Irate Police Club Suspect into Submission,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, Sept. 1, 1964.

³⁶ Robert S. Ingersoll, “Hate Group ‘Influx’ Probed,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 30, 1964.

³⁷ Photographic captions, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 30, 1964.

³⁸ “Mayor Defends Leary Against Riot Criticism,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Aug. 31, 1964.

³⁹ Philadelphia, Miss., was the site of the June 21, 1964, murders of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, who were traveling around the state to register voters. Some were sensitive to the comparison between Philadelphia, Pa., and Philadelphia, Miss. On Aug. 31, 1964, the *Inquirer* printed a letter from Edgar H. Schuster of Melrose Park, Pa., who claimed, “Though it is obvious that we still have many integration problems here, the idea that there is no essential difference between Philadelphia, Miss., and Philadelphia, Pa., is pure poppycock. When was the last Negro lynching here? When did we last see civil rights workers shot by KKK members? When was the last time a Negro was prevented from voting in Philadelphia, Pa.?” See Edgar H. Schuster, “Two Philadelphias Are Quite Different,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 31, 1964.

⁴⁰ John P. Corr, “D’Ortona Urges Hiring of 1000 New Policemen,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sept. 1, 1964.

⁴¹ “Our Hands Are Tied, Cries Police Sergeant,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 30, 1964.

⁴² “14 Police Hurt As 1000 Rioters Loots in N. Phila.,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 29, 1964.

⁴³ “Store Owner’s Work of 30 Years Disappears in One Night,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 30, 1964.

⁴⁴ “‘Bloodbath’ Averted By Police, Tate Says,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sept. 1, 1964.

⁴⁵ Editorial board, "Deplorable and Disgraceful," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 31, 1964.

⁴⁶ Editorial board, "In North Philadelphia: A Tragedy," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 30, 1964.

⁴⁷ Editorial board, "Deplorable and Disgraceful."

⁴⁸ Editorial board, "More Police, Better Planning," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sept. 2, 1964.

⁴⁹ Editorial board, "Law and Order Come First," *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Aug. 31, 1964.

⁵⁰ Editorial board, "Need for More Police, Higher Taxes Debatable," *Philadelphia Daily News*, Sept. 9, 1964.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² "If You Can't Beat 'Em . . . Smear 'Em," *Pennsylvania Guardian*, Nov. 16, 1962.

⁵³ Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 1, Disciplinary Action, October 1958-November 1966, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁵⁴ "Mob Action Becoming Fad, Police Head Tells Editors." *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Oct. 6, 1964.

⁵⁵ Mercer Tate to John Samuels, May 14, 1965, Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 1, folder Police Advisory Bd, Correspondence-Chairman, Jan.-Dec., 1965, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁵⁶ James O. Williams to Mayor James Tate, Aug. 17, 1965, Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 1, folder Police Advisory Bd, Correspondence-Chairman, Jan.-Dec. 1965, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁵⁷ Mayor James Tate to James Williams, Aug. 23, 1965, Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 1, folder Police Advisory Bd, Correspondence-Chairman, Jan.-Dec., 1965, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁵⁸ *Town Crier*, January 1966, vol. 1, no. 1, Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 1, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁵⁹ "FOP, Cops Split on Riot Tactics," *Philadelphia Daily News*, Aug. 31, 1964.

⁶⁰ Maurice B. Fagan to Honorable Fred T. Corleto, Oct. 21, 1966, Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 1, folder Police Advisory Bd, Correspondence,

Chairman, 1966, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁶¹ Maurice Fagan to Managing Director Corleto, Oct. 21, 1966, Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 1, folder Police Advisory Bd, Correspondence, Chairman, 1966, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁶² Mercer Tate to "Editor," Nov. 2, 1966, Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 1, folder Police Advisory Bd, Correspondence, Chairman, 1966, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁶³ The Home Rule Charter of 1951 is the document that defines the powers of elected office within the city.

⁶⁴ Mercer Tate to Mayor James Tate, March 22, 1968. Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 1, folder Police Advisory Bd, Correspondence, Chairman, 1968, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ While Gilman Spencer, the editorial spokesman for WCAU-TV and later the editor of the *Philadelphia Daily News*, voiced his support for the board, along with other news organizations such as the *Bulletin*, their support was not enough to sustain the board. See Editorial, WIBG Radio 99, Sept. 23, 1965, Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 2, folder Newspaper Clippings, Chairman, 1959-1969, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁶⁷ Press Release, Office of the Mayor, Dec. 22, 1969, Police Advisory Board, ACC 670, 677, box 3, folder Police Advisory Bd Termination, 1969, Temple University Urban Archives.

⁶⁸ Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, March 1, 1968, 15.

⁶⁹ On the demise of liberalism, see Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1984); Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); and Thomas Byrne Edsall with Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1992).

⁷⁰ Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, March 1, 1968, 1.