

The Southwood Sit-Ins: A Day of Impressions

By RED LOCKWOOD

On the sidewalk, people in a picket line walked back and forth carrying signs. Across the street, residents stood in their yards and watched.

In the street, police stood and watched.

Up the street, a moving cluster of men moved along like a huge ball rolling down the sidewalk toward the line of walking people.

Sun glistened upon cameras — movie cameras and apparatus of the television people, tape recorders of the radio people, small cameras of newspaper people, and miniature cameras, movie and still, of so-called amateur photographers.

"Must Be Brando"

"That must be Brando," said a bystander.

One man strolling along surrounded by countless others bearing all sorts of equipment.

Men with cameras darting in and out to photograph one man.

Other striding along beside him scribbling with pencils the words he spoke.

Earlier, a girl of 14 approached one of the leaders of the line of people walking down the sidewalk to the place they were to picket and said, "Where's Marlon Brando? Isn't he coming?"

Marlon came and took a place in the line.

He was perhaps the most insignificant and least impressive of all those who walked.

Three men wore Roman collars, all Episcopal priests.

A Trim Housewife

There was a girl with magnificent bearing.

A trim little housewife.

A girl whose chiseled features in profile seemed suited to adorn the prow of an ancient sailing ship and who wore something that resembled a sack more than a dress.

A small, wiry man who appeared more like a teenager than the minister of the gospel he was.

A boy with a wispy beard and soft eyes.

A tall, lean man with leather-colored skin and a face like a hawk's.

All were endowed with more individuality, all stood out more clearly from the crowd than the man whose face had been made famous by the make-believe magic of the camera and screen.

This occurrence had happened before. It was promised that it would happen again.

Moment in History

The adults who lived in the neighborhood and those whose living depends upon selling the houses in the tract were caught up in the vortex of history, in the agony of man's struggle to learn how to live with his fellow men and they were puzzled.

Why, they asked, did it have to happen to me?

Children down the street played happily, running through a stream of water from a garden hose, apparently not aware of what was taking place, or not caring if they did know.

Spectators watched. They said little, or talked of other things—baseball, Sunday at the beach, plans for a vacation, or bits of gossip.

Restless Newsmen

The people of television, radio and newspapers bustled about, conferring with the police, talking to the mayor, or the leader of the pickets, ever restless, ever waiting for what they knew was going to happen.

The people walked back and forth in line on the sidewalk bearing signs.

At one end of the line, pickets picketed the pickets.

There were two wearing bad imitations of Nazi storm troopers' uniforms of a day long dead, with swastikas on their arms.

At the police station all was quiet.

A young girl with reddened eyes and her mother came through the door and went up to the deck.

"Her husband's drunk and he beat this child," the mother told the policeman indignantly. "He hit her on the head with a ceramic and on the shoulder with a board."

The girl put a hand to the scarf covering her head and then to her shoulder as the mother spoke.

It was found that they didn't live in Torrance and would have to go to the Sheriff's Station.

"I always thought we lived in Torrance," said the mother as they walked out.

the door.

At the housing tract some of the people walked out of the line of pickets up a driveway to sit along the wall of a garage converted to an office.

A man approached with arms held high above shoulders to attract attention.

"You are now on private property," he said in a subdued voice tightly under control. "I ask you to leave. If you do not leave you are liable for arrest for trespassing."

Not a word was said by those sitting down.

A man walked among them giving instructions in a low, taut voice.

"Don't Sit on Grass"

"Do not sit on the grass," he said. "Sit on the driveway."

He picked up cards which bore the names and addresses of those who knew that they were going to jail.

A double line of police officers marched down the street, halted at command, spread out in a single line sealing off the sitters from the walkers.

A bus came down the street and backed up the driveway.

A detail of police began to pick up the sitters and put them in the bus.

Spectators pushed close in a tight, half-circle about the scene.

Photographers pushed in close.

The people who were sitting and being carried bodily to the bus were singing.

At the police station they were booking the last of

three busloads of people who had walked and then sat on private property.

In the front of the station a bearded man sat in a phone booth.

Wife Stays in

When he came out he said, "The bail bondsmen are coming."

Others clustered together to arrange the priority of those who were to be freed on bail. The first was one of the Episcopal priests. His wife was to stay in jail.

Outside the station a woman drove up in a car to pick

up her husband, one of the photographers.

When she was told of the events of the day, she looked in the station and said, "I wonder what possesses those people?"

My parents hold a view about this that's all too prevalent today," said the boy with soft eyes and a wispy beard who had been a supporting member since 15 and at 18 was an active member.

"For years I worked at sub-union wages only because of the color of my

skin," said the hawk-faced man.

"My parents say that we are hurting our cause," said a college boy with crew-cut hair and level eyes, "but they never suggest a better way."

"The church must be in the forefront of the march to freedom," said an Episcopal priest.

"I am a Jew from Germany," said a little man with thinning hair, "and I thought all Americans could live where they pleased."

Disputes Red Ties

"My parents live back

east and they think this is a communist organization,"

said a young man from Glendale. "I am divorced and my former wife and her husband think it is too, but it's not."

"You should read the letter Martin Luther King wrote from his jail cell if you want to know why we are here," said a girl.

"A lot of people give lip service to freedom," said a civil engineer, "but very

few will go to jail for it."

At one o'clock in the morning the first Episcopal priest was released on bail. He chatted for a few moments with those in the lobby of the police station, then left.

"Good night, Father," "Good night, Father," they said.

"What Will They Say?"

"He's going to give a sermon," said one to a police officer, "telling his parish-

ioners that he was here in jail and that his wife is still here."

"I wonder what they will say?" asked another.

A police matron leaned wearily against the phone booth as one of the women prisoners made a phone call.

"I've been here since seven this morning," she said.

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AWAITING ARREST and singing are group of CORE sit-ins during weekend demonstrations at Southwood Riviera tract. They were among 69 jailed for trespassing on Don Wilson property. —PRESS Photo by William Schell Jr.

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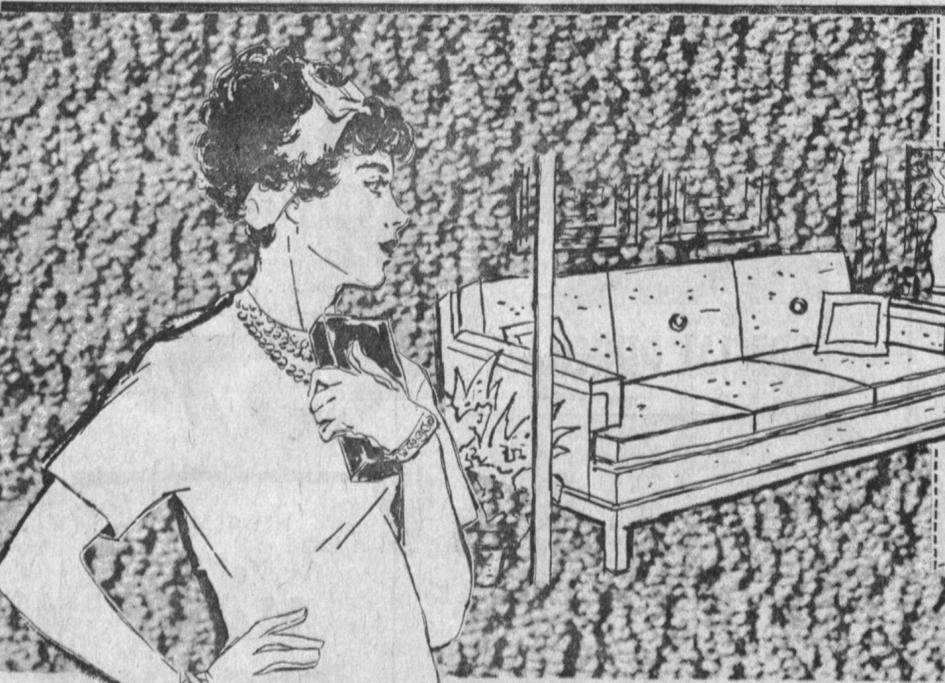
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