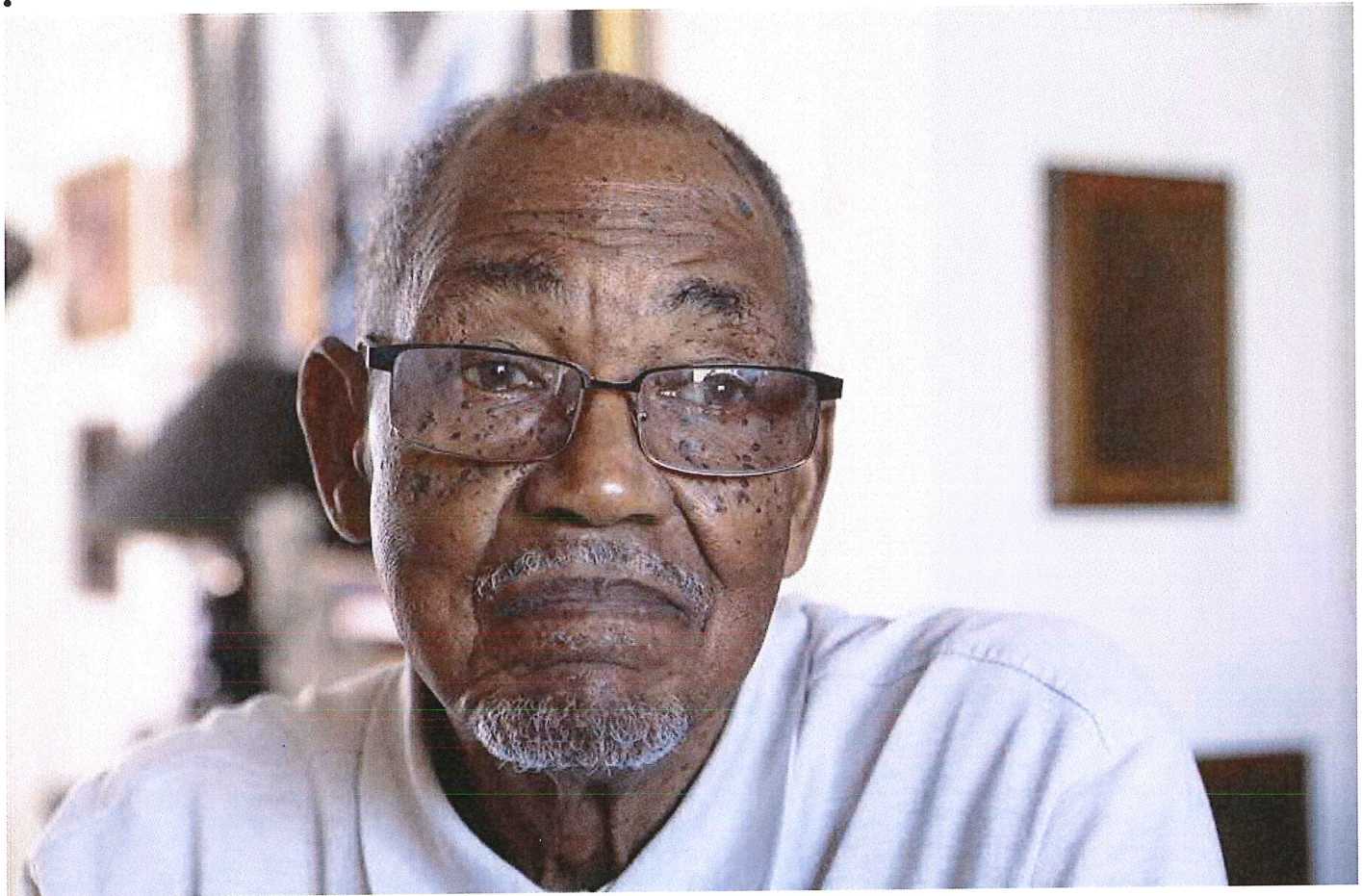


## Former Toledo police deputy recalls unrest after MLK assassination

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BY JAVONTE ANDERSON  
 BLADE STAFF WRITER



Ron Jackson speaks about being a young Toledo police officer when Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated and students at Scott High School walked out.

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As violence escalated in Toledo the day after The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., assassination, former Toledo police deputy chief Ronald Jackson recalls officers' attempts to keep the peace at a time when there was a "distinct hatred" for all police officers — including those who were black.

"The climate was very tense," he said.

After Reverend King's assassination, the police department went into emergency status and Mr. Jackson's unit hit the streets equipped with riot gear. It was the 1960s, so a plastic helmet with a clear face shield, a nightstick, and the six-shooter on his hip was enough.

If not, there was always the 12-gauge shotgun in the patrol wagon or a simple "code 3" call over the radio to summon reinforcements.

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The morning after Reverend King's assassination was met with disturbances as high school students and others pelted automobiles with stones, broke windows, and injured motorists. That quickly escalated with several firebombs being thrown into homes and businesses.

Mr. Jackson's unit was tasked with patrolling the streets looking for any small gatherings of people who were either demonstrating, angry, or intimidating residents. They often had to push and shove their way into the center of crowds, forcing them to disperse before they got too large. They couldn't let Toledo be overturned and ravaged by rioters.

"We were putting out small fires," he said.



Toledo Police Department recruitment billboards were erected throughout the city as part of a police recruiting campaign. This billboard is at Cherry Street and Collingwood Boulevard. From left to right: Toledo Police Chief Corrin McGrath, with patrolmen Kenneth Perry, Carol Buettner, Manuel Soto, and Ronald Jackson. The campaign "It Takes All Kinds," designed to encourage men and women from 21 to 31 years of age with a high school diploma or equivalent to apply to take an upcoming civil service examination for patrol position.

Mr. Jackson said being a police officer has always been a difficult job, but it was especially tough when tossed into the middle of chaos with most African-Americans harboring a hatred for police. As a newly sworn-in black officer, Mr. Jackson said there were African-Americans who felt he betrayed them.

"Some would call me an 'Uncle Tom,'" he said.

Despite those tensions, Mr. Jackson said communicating with the local Black Panthers, Muslims, and other black community groups was essential in helping quell the violence.

"For the most part we were pretty successful," he said. "We were able to use the people we knew as informants to keep us abreast as to what these militant groups were up to or where they intended to strike."

Violence on the streets of Toledo on April 5, 1968, caused an estimated \$500,000 in damages.

The Toledo Police Department already had experience in dealing with hazardous racial friction.

The city of Toledo established a Police Community Relations Committee in 1964 to ease racial tensions and develop better lines of communication between police and the African-American community after a white patrolman shot an 18-year-old black burglary suspect in the head.

In 1966, City Safety Director Allen Andrews cited the good relationship between the African-American community and city police as being a significant factor for the racial peace in Toledo.

But in the mid-1960s many U.S. cities — including Detroit and Toledo — were shaken by riots.

It reached a boiling point in the summer of 1967 when then-mayor John Potter requested 500 Ohio National Guard troops to assist city police in keeping order. Later that year, the Police Community Relations Committee approved a set of guidelines for the prevention and control of riots in Toledo.

The police department also began searching for more minority police officers, which is roughly when Mr. Jackson joined the police department.

"When I joined in 1967, we had one of the largest classes because of the unrest and the expected unrest," he said.

So when Reverend King was assassinated, Mr. Jackson said the Toledo Police Department responded and put all officers on mandatory 12-hour shifts and also doubled the amount of plain-clothed officers manning the streets. Police officials began meeting with black leaders in the community to examine a strategy that could be employed to curtail the violence.

"We needed to produce as much manpower as possible," Mr. Jackson said.

The day after Reverend King's assassination, then-Mayor William Ensign established a curfew, forbidding all persons under 22 to be on the streets between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Police strictly enforced the curfew, arresting 58 people the first weekend after Reverend King's assassination.

Despite the violence that occurred, Toledo's turmoil paled in comparison to some of the destruction in other U.S. cities. The police department was given a large share of the credit for keeping Toledo relatively calm by then-chief Anthony Bosch, who at that time was reported saying his men did a "marvelous job" of enforcing the curfew and preventing incidents from mushrooming.

"Every man was on his toes throughout the week," Mr. Bosch said.

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Toledo Police Department Chief Anthony Bosch,  
December 30, 1969.

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# Police youth bureau squeezed for personnel

BY JENNIFER FEEHAN  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

Around the youth services office at the Toledo police division, the empty desks outnumber those in use.

The office, which handles child abuse and missing persons cases as well as juvenile offenses, has had its investigative force cut from 26 detectives in January, 1990, to 12 as of Jan. 1.

Also beginning Jan. 1, the office, which previously was staffed around-the-clock, closes at 4 p.m. everyday. Complaints involving juveniles and juvenile suspects brought in between 4 p.m. and 7 a.m. now are handled by detectives in adult investigations.

Police division officials say the cuts are a direct result of the shortage of police officers. Officials in youth services say the cuts mean the

can act on it.

Captain Burnside said the youth services section was established in the 1950s as a way of reaching juveniles and minor juvenile offenders before they became adult criminals. Officers from the unit spoke regularly at city schools and worked with school officials on truancy cases and other problems that are now considered too minor to handle.

Juvenile Court Judge James A. Ray said he fears the reduction will mean more juvenile suspects will be charged and sent through the juvenile court system when that may not be the best remedy.

"The detectives in the juvenile section do an amazing job of screening kids and filing charges against the ones they believe the court can help and adjusting cases where they do not believe the court is needed," Judge Ray said. "I think what we

fewer of those adjustments and more cases where kids are just cited into court whether they are needful of the court or not."

Juvenile detectives frequently work with the juvenile offender to determine if restitution can be made for property damage or theft or to ascertain that the juvenile's parents or family plan to discipline the child. In those cases, filing

**“We’re so short of personnel, we’re simply going to have to utilize every person and prioritize cases as they come in.”**  
**Ronald Jackson**  
*deputy police chief*

charges through juvenile court is not always necessary.

Judge Ray said detectives accustomed to dealing with adult crimes also may be unfamiliar with juvenile court procedures and with the mentality and sociological development of juveniles, which differs from adult offenders.

Deputy Chief Ronald Jackson, who heads investigative services, said detectives working afternoon and midnight shifts who have not

nile procedures by a command officer from youth services.

He said he does not believe there will be a change in how juvenile

crimes are handled because detectives in the adult division will be handling some incidents.

"We are not de-emphasizing the importance of juvenile crimes," he said. "Juveniles commit the same kinds of crime that adults do so you do not always need a juvenile specialist."

Deputy Chief Jackson said detectives throughout the police division are becoming more generalized than specialized because the division simply "cannot afford specialists."

Robbery and homicide detectives were combined in January, 1990. Last month, auto theft detectives became general theft investigators.

The child abuse squad also was abolished as of Dec. 1, although detectives in youth services continue to work on abuse cases. Previously, two detectives were assigned full-time to child abuse cases.

In the investigative services bureau, a bulletin board listing the personnel levels in each unit says at the bottom, "A good manager makes do with less." And while they may be making do, police division officials do not deny they are doing less.

"We're so short of personnel, we're simply going to have to utilize every person and prioritize cases as they come in," Deputy Chief Jackson said.

He defined high priority cases as crimes of violence, missing persons, child abuse, and significant losses of property.

"The detectives are going to have to be very creative in conducting these investigations and be very thorough with the ones they are given," he said.

Of all of the units within the

investigative services bureau, though, youth services was hardest hit in 1990. And, while the youth services' staff has shrunk by more than 50 per cent, the number of complaints involving juveniles and abuse cases continues to grow.

The youth services section received 12,370 complaints in 1988 and 15,276 in 1989, according to statistics compiled by the police division. Through November, 1990, nearly 10,000 complaints had been made.

Lt. Shirley Green said youth services no longer handles reports of status offenses, such as unruly behavior. In the past, officers had time to talk to such juveniles and potentially make enough impact to deter future run-ins with police, Capt. Burnside said.

He said the crime prevention bureau, as youth services was originally known, was once a model for other police departments that wanted to start similar units.

"It was a shining example and it no longer is that," he said.



was originally created to do.  
"Originally this was the crime prevention unit and we did crime prevention," said Capt. William Burnside, who heads the section. "We no longer do that. We react."  
"We're getting like the field operations bureau. Instead of going to the scene before the crimes happen, we're just sitting around waiting for someone to send us a report so we