

Draft

OPEN LETTER TO DAN YOTTS

Dear Dan:

As one who is no stranger to you, and one who has talked with you on more than one occasion relative to police brutality charges to the people of the South Boston district, outside of the South Boston High School on the opening day of school, September 1974. I wish you could have sent me one more telegram or made one call to inquire into the meeting which took place at the Elma Lewis School in Roxbury on _____ where you say that I "grand-standed" to the Roxbury community and requested that M.D.C. Commissioner John Snedeker suspend a motorcycle police officer who allegedly knocked over a black woman at the Carson Beach incident.

I would like to relate the entire incident that took place at the Elma Lewis School and if you desire, I will produce witnesses to substantiate the following:

On about _____ I received a call from Clarence Jones who heads up the Mayor's Office on Human Rights, City Hall. Mr. Jones was very excited. He informed me that the violence in Roxbury was getting worse and he was afraid that it may spread and more people may be injured or even scared and that the leaders of the Roxbury community wanted to sit down in an emergency meeting to discuss the entire situation and to see how it could be abated.

He informed me that the following people were invited:

Senators Kennedy and Brooke, Governor Dukakis, Lt. Gov. O'Neill, Police Commissioner di Grazia and Mayor White.

I said I would be there to join with them and with the elected officials and leaders and do whatever I could to help keep the lid on so we wouldn't have a re-occurrence of what was happening in the streets and what happened to the doctor of the Boston City Hospital who was dragged to his car and beaten. I was informed that it would be a meeting of the Roxbury community leaders and the public officials I mentioned. I arrived at the building and was seated at a table with Police Commissioner di Grazia, Superintendent Jordan, Senator Brooke and other non-elected officials. I inquired as to the whereabouts of Senator Kennedy, Governor Dukakis, Lt. O'Neill and Mayor White and was informed they were unable to be present for some reason or other. The moderator from the community then introduced people from the audience who spoke for approximately five minutes - talking about the alleged police brutality that was taking place in the streets in Roxbury and about the Carson Beach incident.

This is not what I was led to believe would take place at this meeting as I said before. Then one of the speakers addressed himself to me and said that Congressman Moakley doesn't represent the black community because of his stand on busing and as far as he was concerned the blacks were wasting their time addressing him on this matter.

I was asked to call upon the M.D.C. Commissioner John Snedeker to close Carson Beach because the speaker claimed that it is not an open beach and blacks were not allowed. I informed the speaker that I would not ask Commissioner Snedeker or anyone else to close the beach because I felt it was an open beach facility and that blacks had been using the beach since I can remember and despite the confrontations that took place, the beach was still open to all.

Someone in the hall at that time started to shout "throw him out." Somebody hollered "we're not stupid and we're not going to sit here and be lied to like that" and it was continued for a couple of minutes. Miss Lewis then asked me to call Commissioner Snedeker and have the motorcycle officer suspended because of the allegations she presented that he knocked down a woman during the Carson Beach incident. I informed her that I knew nothing about the incident and that I felt that Commissioner Snedeker is the one that would rule on that and that I would not ask for the officer's suspension. Miss Lewis kept talking about the alleged incident and other people also mentioned it. I continued to respond that it was not my function to suspend the officer or call for suspension and that I just wouldn't do it. Then somebody from the audience, or Miss Lewis, I can't recall which, said they would like to know what was happening on the matter, if anything, ^{at} and that time I said I would be glad to call the Commissioner and find out exactly what was happening and bring them up to date. I went

downstairs, called Commissioner Snedeker and I informed him about the entire situation and told him that this was the first instance I heard of the motorcycle incident and I was just called to relay information to the group at the Elma Lewis School. He said it was under investigation and would call me right back and tell me where it was at this stage. He said that he would find out and for me to call him back in ten or fifteen minutes. I called him back and he told me it was under investigation and it would be about a week or so to complete and pending the result of the investigation the officer was temporarily re-assigned.

In the entire conversation with Commissioner Snedeker, I never once asked that the officer be suspended or re-assigned and never once asked that Carson Beach be closed.

Senator Brooke asked me what happened and I informed him that the Commissioner told me the case was under investigation and the man was off the bike. Senator Brooke then left the hall and was interviewed by T.V. (I was not present when this happened) and he made the statement that I had the officer suspended - which was not the truth - but was probably ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ a misinterpretation of the entire happening. When I heard later that day what the Senator said and heard on T.V. again, I called his office and tried to correct his statement. I did not get him personally but I did leave a message to tell him exactly what transpired and I was not responsible in any way for the removal of the officer from the bike as this is the Commissioner's judgment.

I did not "grand-stand" in Roxbury any more than I tried to "grand-stand" when I discussed the charges of police brutality to South Boston people with Commissioner diGrazia or when I called Clarence Kelly, head of the F.B.I. at 7:00 A.M. asking to investigate the Rabbit Inn situation, or when I contacted the F.B.I. regarding a possible Civil Rights violation on the South Boston youth or when I called the F.B.I. asking for a full and complete investigation regarding the original South Boston Carson Beach incident involving alleged Bible salesmen or when I called the F.B.I. after talking to some of the members of ROAR concerning the involvement of the PLP or the CAR people instigating trouble in the South Boston area and blaming it on South Boston residents.

Dan, all I'm trying to say is every action of mine is not followed by a press release and one think I am not known for is "grand-standing". I know that you based your story on what you saw on T.V. but I wish you could have made one call to me to verify it as we're not exactly strangers.

P.S. At approximately the same time as your article appeared in the Tribune, a mimeographed sheet was being circulated throught the district with approximately the same material - except that which related to the Haitian who was taken out of his car and injured in South Boston.

Contrary to the way it appeared in the mimeographed sheet, I did not run to this man's aid and open up the office of the State Treasury to him. What happened was - a day or two after the incident this man was injured, someone called one of my offices about this situation and informed one of my aides that the man was treated at a local hospital and released and was still unable to move and needed additional medical attention. My aide made the arrangements for him - which he would do for anyone requesting help - and informed him of the fund that was set up to help victims of this type of crime just as my office has done on other occasions for people who have been injured in violent crimes. But it would appear according to the mimeographed sheet that members of my office staff or myself run out every time a black man is accosted - which is a complete falsehood.

Note: The meeting I had in Roxbury with these people - most every elected official in the City of Boston has sat down with some members of the black community to avoid violence and my motivations for sitting down with the leaders of the Roxbury community was no different.