THE CASE
OF
PLAINFIELD'S BLACK HOSTAGES

BOBBY LEE WILLIAMS

GAIL ADDEN

GEORGE MERRITT, JR.

Issued by

PLAINFIELD JOINT DEFENSE COMMITTEE
for
Bobby Lee Williams, Gail Madden, and George Merritt, Jr.

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INTRODUCTION

The case of Plainfield's black hostages flows from the unique history and conditions of the city, but in its essence presents a threat to the nation. The Plainfield City Fathers, through their police and courts, are continuing to brutalize black ghetto-dwellers. We submit that this tragic case deserves the attention and intervention of every American concerned with the integrity of the judicial process and with decent race relations.

- Plainfield Joint Defense Committee

"The abrasive relationship between the police and the ghetto community has been a major - and explosive - source of grievance, tension and disorder. The blame must be shared by the total society...Police administrators, with the guidance of public officials, and the support of the entire community must take vigorous action to improve law enforcement and to decrease the potential for disorder."

- National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, February 29,1968.

"All of these disasters (urban riots) have had one conspicuous feature in common: each was triggered by a confrontation between a Negro citizen and a policeman.

"Ghetto residents complain of mistreatment by police. In every major city, police brutality is a familiar complaint - on picket signs, at police stations, in hearings at City Hall. And this charge cannot be dismissed as empty talk by irresponsible elements; it has been effectively documented by three authoritative national commissions over a period of four decades, and is a matter of deep concern to many sensible, law-abiding citizens, both Negroes and whites.

"Yet the nation, by and large, has failed to take effective action against this hostility, which figures so large in what may prove to be America's gravest crisis since the Civil War...Thus, in 1967, virtually all large cities were stepping up police planning and training for riot control; few were working effectively on police-community programs to lessen tensions."

- George Edwards, Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals; Police Commissioner of Detroit, 1962-63.

"If there is anything that history teaches us, it is that those who are silent when another's rights are violated inevitably come to one of two sad ends; either they ultimately compromise their own principles to survive in a police state or they are eventually crushed themselves when it is too late to resist."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

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THE CASE IN A CAPSULE

During the "Hot Summer" of 1967 in Plainfield, New Jersey, a black youth, Bobby Lee Williams, was wantonly shot by a white policeman, John V. Gleason. Scores of ghetto residents, who witnessed the shooting, struck back in anger at the offending officer, beating him so severely that he died shortly after being taken to the hospital..
After unleashing a reign of terror in the ghetto, the police arrested twelve black people on a charge of murder and coerced others to become prosecution witnesses.

Of the twelve arrested, two young black residents of Plainfield, Gail Madden, 24, mother of two, and George Merritt, Jr., 25, a Marine Corps veteran, are now serving life sentences for their alleged participation in the killing of patrolman Gleason.

The third black youth, Bobby Lee Williams, 24, shot and maimed for life by Gleason, is himself facing trial under a three-count indictment. If convicted, Williams faces a possible sentence of 26 years in prison.

The facts of this tragic case deserve the attention and intervention of every American concerned with the integrity of the judicial process and with decent relations between blacks and whites throughout our land.

Madden and Merritt have been punished and Williams is yet to be punished, not for guilt in the murder, but because the State wants them as hostages to assure the "good behavior" of the black community in Plainfield, N.J.

PLAINFIELD, BACKGROUND FOR TRAGEDY

The background of the tragedy is a familiar one. Plainfield is a 100-year old city, long a "bedroom community" for Wall Street commuters. Its haphazard part-time government reflected the view that its well-to-do residents could take care of their own needs, while the black population, almost 14,000 of the 49,000 residents, could be safely ignored.

With rare exceptions, Plainfield's black citizens are confined by real estate practices to a ghetto that spans the city like a narrow band, encompassing decaying slums at the western end and attractive homes at the eastern end. In the densely settled west end, unemployment is high; those who work have, for the most part, poorly paid menial jobs. The drop-out rate of black children from the city's schools is high and most black children who make it to high school graduation show the results of 12 years of academic neglect in a de facto internally segregated educational system; they are all too often sent out to the labor market with no marketable skills.

The misery of ghetto life is intensified by an unrepresentative governing structure, determined not to heed the requests of the black community and quick to attribute to outside agitators any expression of protest. To keep the lid down there is a poorly led police force, manned by officers many of whom were hated by the black community for their sadistic racism.
As the Kerner Commission report notes, until 1966 Plainfield police still used the word "Nigger" over the police radio..

The city has a callous, if not bigoted, local newspaper. For example, on Monday, July 17, 1967, a reporter wrote: "Gleason...was beaten to death...after a young Negro man was shot and critically injured." The paper neglected to report that it was Gleason who fired those bullets into Bobby Lee, and many thought he was killed. Thus the local press successfully concealed from the public the full story of why the crowd turned on patrolman Gleason. The bare facts were so effectively buried that two years later many area residents were still unaware of the truth.

PLAINFIELD GHETTO ERUPTS AFTER A DECADE OF STRUGGLE FOR CHANGE

By the summer of 1967, the rage and frustration of Plainfield's black citizens had reached the flash point. For more than 10 years, their pleas for improvement had been met with apathy or smooth talk, but never with remedial action. Two protest marches to City Hall, several years apart, one led by black ministers and another by the NAACP, had failed to produce any action on specific requests for change. Plainfield's ghetto-dwellers felt hopeless and desperate.

Disturbances erupted in the ghetto on Friday, July 14, 1967, which did not exhaust themselves until a week later, thanks to the insensitive, callous acts of the authorities.

On Saturday, July 15, a group of black youths met with Mayor Hetfield to complain about brutal police practices. According to an NAACP official, the meeting broke up because there were "no meaningful answers coming forth."

On Sunday, July 16, the police broke up a meeting of black youths in Greenbrook Park that had been called by black leaders to draw up a list of grievances and to cool the atmosphere. The ghetto exploded with anger. Looting resumed and fires broke out as a result.

Officer Gleason, son of a former police lieutenant, was assigned to traffic duty at Plainfield Avenue and West Front Street, a main entrance to the western end of the ghetto. His mission was to keep cars out of the black community, which had been cordoned off by a series of such check-points.

PATROLMAN GLEASON LEAVES ASSIGNED POST, PROVOKES OWN DEATH

At about 8:00 P.M. of Sunday, July 16, officer Gleason, in apparent disregard of his assignment and allegedly to investigate the complaints of harassment of white youths who had entered the ghetto looking for trouble, stalked a black youth for three blocks into the heart of the ghetto.

Hundreds of ghetto residents gathered; an unknown person threw an object, knocking off Gleason's helmet. Retrieving it, Gleason came up shooting, hitting Bobby Lee Williams with three shots in the abdomen and arm. Williams was rushed to the hospital and thought by many to be dead. The enraged crowd pursued Gleason, overtook him, and stomped and kicked him. Gleason died 12 minutes after being brought to the hospital.

In discussing this attack, the Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorder, State of New Jersey, reported on page 147, "At about 8 P.M. Sunday, several persons reported to the police that a policeman was under attack. The initial reports were discredited because...the police had not assigned a foot patrolman to the area in question." By leaving his assigned post, Gleason brought on the attack and, at the same time, kept help from coming.

The crowd involved in the attack was variously estimated at 50 to 200 persons.

On that very night, Sunday, July 16, it was reported that 46 carbines were stolen from the Plainfield Machine Co. in Middlesex, N.J. A search for the weapons, carefully planned by the New Jersey State authorities with the National Guard, turned into an invasion of the ghetto by armored personnel carriers loaded with armed troops. Local police were removed from the carriers because the State authorities did not want them on the search. As a result, it was with great difficulty that a Governor's aide convinced 26 Plainfield policemen not to resign because they had been slighted in the conduct of the search.

GHETTO TERRORIZED TO PLAN FOR MASS TRIAL

This social tragedy produced no soul-searching self-analysis by the Plainfield City Fathers. With their traditional response to social unrest, the authorities desperately sought out criminal scapegoats for the death of Gleason. The plan was to snatch from the ghetto a number of black youths to be sacrificed in a trial that would be a further means of evading affirmative responses to the needs of Plainfield's black community and would, in fact, continue the oppression of the black people in yet another form.

THE PLAINFIELD TWELVE

In September of 1967, a wave of early morning arrests during raids by teams of police signalled a new kind of terror against the ghetto. The sleeping quarters of one defendant were broken into at 7:30 A.M. He was forced to dress in the presence of the police, while his terror-stricken companion looked on. Many of the 12 victims selected to be the defendants in a mass trial for murder remained in jail for months before being released on bail. The last of the 12 arrests was made as late as August, 1968.

STATE COERCES GHETTO-DWELLERS TO BECOME PROSECUTION WITNESSES

The police lust for revenge - sharpened by deep-rooted racial hostility - is obvious from the extraordinary tactics employed in preparing the case against the twelve victims. After the savage arrests, a reign of terror was launched in the black community to obtain prosecution witnesses. A half-dozen witnesses, from whom the police had obtained statements, later recanted at the trial, among them a drug addict who testified under oath that he was under the influence of drugs at the the time of the killing. On the day he was interrogated for a statement by the police, he had injected himself with heroin. During the questioning, he was desperate for a second dose. Aware of this, the police kept him in custody until he gave them a statement.

Another potential witness testified that he gave the police a statement implicating a defendant after they had visited his prison cell eight times and promised him probation if he cooperated, but further charges if he refused.

Edgar Barnett, who could not read, signed a statement at police instigation and later disavowed it.

Another proposed witness stated under oath that he had signed a statement under police pressure.

Still another insisted in open court that he was drunk on the day of the slaying and on the day he had testified before the grand jury.

One of the recanting prosecution witnesses denied the contents of two sworn statements elicited from him by the police. According to documentary records, he was in jail 14 miles away, in Somerset County at the time of the assault. His testimony of how the statements were extracted is illuminating. After release from jail, he was picked up by a Plainfield sergeant of detectives, locked up for half an hour, and then taken to an interrogation room. "He started to press me about the Gleason murder...I said I was not there. They said they had received information that I was. They kept questioning me and questioning me. I don't know if they put my answers down. They said if I would sign the statements they would let me go, so I signed the statements."

TERROR FOR EFFECT AT TRIAL

The trial itself was conducted in an intimidating atmosphere of racial provocation. All participants and courtroom visitors were frisked daily for weapons by white guards who referred to black men as "boys." Even the court-appointed defense lawyers were frisked until they protested.

THE TRIAL A MOCKERY OF JUDICIAL PROCESS

The State's witnesses were carefully shielded by a restrictive order that denied the defense attorneys the right - conventionally accorded in a criminal trial - to interview them until the eve of their appearance on the stand.

The atmosphere of the trial made a mockery of the judicial process. The authorities who staged it succeeded in conveying to the jurors (and potential jurors) the impression that a group of wild blacks had senselessly and irrationally slaughtered an innocent policeman and that they might break out in further violence at any minute.

It was staged as a racial confrontation: a group of 12 black defendants judged by a predominantly white jury (out of 14 jurors and alternates, only two were blacks). And this pressure to convict, produced by falsely emphasizing the possibility of racial violence in the courtroom itself, was intensified by the fact that a white officer of the law, a symbol of authority, had been killed by blacks. It was not the defendants who were being tried, but the crime.

MASS TRIAL GUARANTEES CONVICTION OF SOMEONE

To insure that the death of officer Gleason would not go unpunished, the defendants were forced to undergo a mass trial and, although under our law guilt is personal, were subjected to a form of dragnet justice that made it inevitable that someone would be convicted. The defendants sought separate trials and filed severance motions, but these were denied. As a result, the defendants were subjected to the risk that evidence against each of them would be weighed not in isolation but in a collective, group context. The jury was thus invited to condemn one defendant because there was more evidence against him than against another defendant - even though, in separate trials, the evidence, independently considered, would be insufficient to convict anyone.

The defendants were charged under an "aiding and abetting" statute which made all of them equally guilty once a community of purpose and participation in the assault - no matter how remote or innocuous - were shown. As in a conspiracy, each individual was made responsible for the acts of his associates.

VERDICTS FOR THE PLAINFIELD TWELVE

Twelve black youths, including Gail Madden, a 24-year old mother of two, were indicted for the murder. Eleven were tried some 14 months after the assault took place. The trial of the twelfth defendant was postponed because of the illness of his attorney. Eight of the eleven were acquitted; the jury was deadlocked about a ninth and two, Gail Madden and George Merritt, Jr., were found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment on December 23, 1968. Their appeals are pending. In March of 1969, the State belatedly announced that it would not try the postponed case nor retry the deadlocked one, for lack of "sufficient evidence."

The evidence offered by the State was so glaringly flimsy that Judge Weidenburner dismissed the charges against defendant 18-year old Lawrence Brown (who had already spent eight months in jail before the long trial) in these words: "There is no legal evidence which would prove Brown an aider and abettor. The State has not offered any witness to show that Brown was even in the county."

THE IRRATIONAL TRIAL

The reckless determination to get a conviction at any cost is reflected in the quality of the courtroom evidence. The prosecution's chief witness, the man who implicated six of the 12 defendants, turned out to have 20/200 vision - one degree removed from legal blindness - and had not been wearing his glasses when he saw the assault.

POLICE COERCION OF WITNESSES KEPT FROM JURY

Not only was the courtroom evidence of poor quality, but the true picture of police behavior was never allowed to reach the jury. Only those in the courtroom or following the news stories knew of the manner in which the police had obtained statements from the black citizens in their clutches and how six prosecution witnesses later repudiated such statements. Because voir dire hearings took place outside the presence of the jury, the jurors never saw the police in their true light, frantically and illegally extracting false statements from intimidated black people. Might not the jury have reached different verdicts for Madden and Merritt if they had known these facts about the police and the prosecution?

TRIAL INDECENTLY RUSHED

Not only was the trial irrational; toward its end it was indecently rushed. In September the judge had promised the sequestered jurors that they would be home in time for Christmas. As the weeks wore on, the judge asked for and got the jury's permission to hold sessions on Saturdays, on Thanksgiving Day and, finally, night sessions. The jury could not possibly have avoided a sense of pressure as they reached their final verdicts for acquittal, one by

one. They apparently found it unthinkable to acquit all the defendants, so Gail Madden and George Merritt, Jr., had to be found guilty on December 23. On December 24, the jury failed to agree on a verdict for James Toland. The jury did get home in time for Christmas.

CASE AGAINST GAIL MADDEN

The hectic and turbulent context of riot, looting, and burning in which the assault took place made it impossible for the jury to learn what really happened when officer Gleason was assaulted. The trial is a mass of confused and contradictory statements.

The evidence that convicted Gail Madden amounts to this: One witness testified that he had seen her jumping and kicking at "something" in a crowd estimated at between 50 and 200. But no claim was made that the "something" was officer Gleason. Gail Madden, a large woman, allegedly wearing a bright dress, was seen on the edge of the crowd, not at the center of it where the assault was taking place. Most important, this witness was 560 feet away when he made his observation at the scene of the assault.

A second witness claims to have observed Gail Madden prior to the assault, almost a block from the scene, with a stick in her hand and to have heard her later say, "We killed him." But significantly enough, this witness failed to report that fact to the police when first interrogated shortly after the assault.

Anyone familiar with life in the black community or, for that matter, with the collective usages among any minority group, will recognize that "we" hardly conveys personal participation by the speaker under these circumstances. In addition, the identification of Gail Madden by the witness is wholly unreliable, in view of the fact that she had not seen her for 10 years and had made her observation from a third-story window.

Another witness testified that Gail Madden touched the officer after the assault with a small twig to see whether he was alive - hardly a gesture one would expect from someone who had participated in the assault. The same witness, who saw the beating of the officer, insisted that Gail Madden (whom he knew) was not present: "If she were there, I would remember."

In addition, the police testified, and laboratory analysis confirmed, that there were no blood stains, human hairs, or cloth fibers on Miss Madden's dress or shoes, an important indication of her innocence in view of the fact that she was arrested for "looting" 15 or 20 minutes after the assault and then subjected to a fresh and intensive scrutiny by the zealous police. Had she jumped up and down on the upper part of Gleason's body, there should have been some blood stains on her shoes. If she had jumped on the lower part of his body, her 250 pounds would have caused some visible damage, yet none was found.

Although Gail Madden was highly visible on the day of the assault, both because of her size and of her garb, at least a half-dozen prosecution witnesses who claimed to have observed the affair did not identify her as a participant in the assault.

CASE AGAINST GEORGE MERRITT

The jury found Gail Madden guilty of murder in the first degree. After all, someone had to pay for the life of the white officer. But it could hardly permit a 24-year old mother to be assigned sole responsibillty for the beating of this policeman.

It plucked out from the defendants as a companion in crime George Merritt, Jr., a Marine with a four-year service record and an honorable discharge, a government worker, highly praised by his superiors. In Merritt's case, there is only one piece of evidence that could be incriminating.

One witness, Donald Frazier, claims to have seen Merritt assaulting the officer with a meat cleaver. But the State pathologist failed to testify that the policeman's body bore a wound made with a meat cleaver. He confined himself to testimony that there were lacerations made by a sharp instrument. No meat cleaver was found, though many objects connected with the assault were recovered. This same Frazier twice, in open court, confused two defendants, Jones and Toland, as participants in the assault. Frazier further identified from photographs a third person as wielding a baseball bat during the assault, although this individual had been in jail at the time of the assault.

ix witnesses established that Merritt was not present at the scene of the assault. And, as in the case of Gail Madden, other prosecution witnesses who observed the affair failed to place him at the scene - although he would surely have been visible wielding a meat cleaver..

One prosecution witness, who had seen Merritt previously and knew what he looked like, refused to place him at the scene when asked if he could do so.

Can anyone doubt that if the defendant were white and the victim not a policeman, a symbol of official authority, George Merritt would never have been brought to trial, let alone convicted?

MADDEN AND MERRITT ARE HOSTAGES, NOT CRIMINALS

Only the complete bankruptcy of the State's case, the utter lack of any evidence, saved the acquitted defendants from being caught in the mass trial trap. But it must not be thought for a moment that the evidence against the convicted two was more incriminating than that which produced acquittal for others among the defendants. The convictions are merely the irrational result of an irrational trial. The verdict was built into the mass character of the trial. Gail Madden and

George Merritt, Jr., have become the tribute claimed by the State as part of its plan to assure the future "good behavior" of the black community - arbitrary victims of the need to find a scapegoat for the death of officer Gleason.

PLAINFIELD POWER STRUCTURE PERPETRATED TRAGEDY

Gleason's death was the culmination of years of oppression and discrimination. The real perpetrator of this tragedy is the Plainfield power structure (with its police arm), which had consistently shown contempt for the black ghetto-dwellers. The immediate cause of this unplanned and spontaneous assault on the officer was neither sinister nor mysterious.

A black youth, Bobby Lee Williams, was wantonly shot; conditioned by years of such brutality, the enraged blacks struck back at the offending officer, the most familiar symbol of their oppression.

Why was this policeman in the ghetto on Sunday night, three blocks from his assigned post? Was he there to support the right of trouble-making white youngsters to invade the ghetto at a time when they had no business being there? No one has ever explained why the officer did not simply tell the complainants to go home and not to stir up further trouble in that strife-torn sector.

WHY LIFE IMPRISONMENT?

Why the savage sentences of life imprisonment? Under the provocative circumstances that triggered this assault, conviction usually results in a limited manslaughter penalty. Here the defendants were convicted under a special statute that mandates a first-degree murder penalty (death or life imprisonment) whenever a policeman is killed in the execution of his duties.

WAS GLEASON "ON DUTY" INSIDE THE GHETTO?

There remains the unanswered question of whether an officer on traffic duty who left his assigned post at the cordon check-point, under the circumstances of this case, was actually engaged in the "execution of his duties" when he was assaulted.

There is a further question as to whether, even if the officer was legitimately performing his duties during his solitary foray into the sealed ghetto, he was acting within the scope of his duties when he shot Bobby Lee Williams. Was Williams violating the law and, therefore, subject to arrest? If he was, was it necessary for the officer to shoot him in order to place him under arrest?

PUNISHMENT OF MADDEN AND MERRITT VINDICTIVE AND BRUTAL

A pall of confusion settled over these key issues during the trial. One thing remains beyond doubt: there was no compelling reason for Gleason's presence in the ghetto or for his shooting of Williams, who was unarmed and at least 15 feet away from him. What is equally clear is that the two defendants have been punished not because of their personal responsibility for the act of murder. Conviction of first-degree murder, which carries a life sentence, would be impossible under the facts of this case because there was no premeditation. They were punished, vindictively and brutally, only because the victim of the assault was a policeman. This is a bitter irony when we consider the racial overtones of officer Gleason's unexplained presence in the ghetto and his wanton resort to gunfire.

WILLIAMS, VICTIM OF POLICE, FACES 26 YEARS IN PRISON

It is a commonplace that victims of police abuses are almost invariably falsely charged with crimes. Such charges are necessary in order to create a justification for the lawlessness of the police.

Sixteen months after he had been critically wounded by patrolman Gleason, Bobby Lee Williams was arrested and charged with three serious crimes. His indictment charges him, incredibly, with inciting "numerous and divers persons" - presumably members of the black community - to kill or injure officer Gleason. This would seem an impossible act, in view of the fact that he had been wounded and removed to the hospital before the assault on Gleason took place. He is further charged with assault on officer Gleason with intent to kill and with committing assault and battery upon this police officer acting in the performance of his duties. If convicted, Williams faces a maximum sentence of 26 years in prison.

While these charges may seem difficult to prove, the State has shown how resourceful it is in obtaining a conviction with no evidence.. The stakes are high in the Williams case. If the State can make its charges stick, by whatever unsavory means, it will have established judicially what it failed to do in its "aiding and abetting" case; it will have created a valid reason for Gleason's presence in the ghetto and, short of that, a justification for Gleason's resort to his gun.

WILLIAMS MAIMED FOR LIFE; MEDICAL REPORT

Bobby Lee Williams, with three bullet wounds in the abdomen and arm, spent 3½ months in the hospital in 1967 and 3 weeks again in August, 1968, followed by innumerable weekly and monthly visits to the clinic. He suffers almost constant abdominal pain changing in intensity and most severe at times of eating and bowel movement. He has seven abdominal scars and underwent 4 operations, including painful colostomy.

He is thin, underweight and tired. His muscle tone is poor; his knee reflexes exaggerated; he fatigues easily; his breathing is difficult on exertion, and he cannot easily walk, lift, pull or stoop. His appetite is poor yet he must eat 7-8 times daily in small quantities, because greater amounts bring on severe abdominal pain. At night the severe pain causes insomnia, yet he needs 16 hours of sleep daily. He was told he should receive training to pursue a work job that is light and sedentary.

STATE AIMS TO TIGHTEN GHETTO BONDS

A conviction of Williams will rid the community of a militant who, at great personal risk, is seeking to contribute to the leadership of Plainfield's black population. Though Williams was physically removed from the scene prior to the assault on Gleason, the police later threatened him if he refused to serve as a prosecution witness in the murder trial. Williams steadfastly refused to join the conspiracy. In December 1967 a sealed indictment against Williams was handed down. As late as November 12, 1968, a last effort was made by the police to force Williams to testify. For his refusal, he was threatened with indictment. Two days later, on November 14, 1968, the indictment was made public and Williams was arrested.

A conviction of Williams will intimidate and tighten the bonds of the ghetto on those trapped within it. But the State can achieve its goals only through a frame-up similar to that which produced the convictions of Gail Madden and George Merritt, Jr. Bobby Lee Williams, Gail Madden and George Merritt, Jr., are innocent of the charges levelled against them. Only public concern can help guarantee their freedom.

FRANK DONNER, WILLIAM KUNSTLER JOIN THE DEFENSE

Gail Madden and George Merritt, Jr., have obtained Frank Donner, labor and civil liberties attorney, to handle the appeal of their convictions.

Bobby Lee Williams will be represented at his trial on September 15th in the Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth by civil rights attorney William Kunstler. Both of these eminent lawyers are serving without fee.

PLAINFIELD JOINT DEFENSE COMMITTEE

At the behest of the defendants and their families, community leaders, convinced of the innocence of Bobby Lee Williams, Gail Madden and George Merritt, Jr., have joined the PLAINFIELD JOINT DEFENSE COMMITTEE FOR BOBBY LEE WILLIAMS, GAIL MADDEN, AND GEORGE MERRITT, JR. The Committee's co-chairmen are Freeman Whetstone and Dr. David Frost; the treasurer is Paul Polskin; and the executive secretary, Mrs. Emma A. Williams.

WHAT TO DO TO RELEASE PLAINFIELD'S BLACK HOSTAGES

The Plainfield Joint Defense Committee calls upon the public for all possible assistance. An informed and aroused public can strengthen the hands of the attorneys and thereby help guarantee freedom for the three black hostages.

Urge your relatives, friends, and neighbors to do the following:

1. BRING THE FACTS of these cases to your church, synagogue, trade union, school, youth organization, political club, civic organization. Obtain copies of our printed brochure and invite our committee to send a speaker to your group.

2. WRITE TO: Governor Richard J. Hughes, State House, Trenton, New Jersey, asking him to quash the indictment against Bobby Lee Williams and to free Gail Madden and George Merritt, Jr. Send a copy of your letter, and of any replies you receive, to the Joint Defense Committee.

3. WRITE TO: Jacques E. Wilmore, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 26 Federal Plaza, New York, N.Y., asking him to investigate the conditions in Plainfield, New Jersey, and the conduct of the governmental authorities that led to the indictment of 12 young black people for the murder of patrolman Gleason and to the indictment of Bobby Lee Williams. Send a copy of your letter, and any replies you receive, to the Joint Defense Committee.

4. CONTRIBUTIONS are needed for court costs for Bobby Lee Williams' trial and for the appeal of Gail Madden and George Merritt, Jr., and to carry on an extensive public campaign. Make your check payable to "Plainfield Joint Defense" and mail it to Plainfield Joint Defense Committee, P.O. Box 455 (218 Watchung Avenue) Plainfield, N.J. 07061.