



Episode 808, Story 1: Hot Town Poster

Tukufu Zuberi: Our first case investigates a poster that may be from a crossroads in the history of the 1960's. August 1968: As delegates gather for the Democratic National Convention, the streets of Chicago fill with demonstrators protesting the war in Vietnam. But on night three, as Hubert Humphrey celebrates his nomination, news cameras switch from inside the hall to the spectacle outside...Protesters, police, and National Guardsmen clashing violently in the streets. To many, the images come to symbolize the breakdown of civil society. More than forty years later, Tim Schmitt of Des Moines, Iowa has a startling image that may be a fragment from that cultural explosion.

Tim Schmitt: I've always known this was a radical poster, but never knew anything else about it.

Tukufu: I'm Tukufu Zuberi and I'm excited to take a look at Tim's poster.

Tim: Hey, how are you?

Tukufu: All right, how you doing?

Tim: Good. What happened to your foot?

Tukufu: I hurt my ankle playing squash.

Tim: Smart. Help yourself, go on in.

Tukufu: So what do you have for me?

Tim: This is a poster, a friend of ours gave us about 15 years ago.

Tukufu: Okay. 'Hot Town! Pigs in the streets, but the streets belong to the people. Dig it?'

Tim: Dig it?



Tukufu: Now what do you know about this poster?

Tim: Not a whole lot. The friend who passed it down to us said it had come from some radical political group in the late 60s. Maybe around the time of the '68 Democratic Conventions. And he told us that this name, Sunshine Jubilee was perhaps the person who created it.

Tukufu: OK, what can I find out for you?

Tim: Well basically if it's true, if it came from that era, and if it is indeed a person and if they were the ones responsible for creating it?

Tukufu: Why don't I take this with me, see what I can find out for you and get back to you with it.

Tim: Great, appreciate it!

Tukufu: 'Hot Town! Pigs in the streets. But the streets belong to the people. Dig it?' I mean this sounds very 60's, and it looks a little bit worn, you could have some serious creases right here through the middle. The fist... the angry cop... whoever created this seems like they were trying to provoke a reaction. And the language is familiar. The whole reference to the pigs is something that I really relate to the Black Panther party. When I was a kid I went to the Black Panther party breakfast program I heard a lot of their educational speeches. So I remember this being something that the Black Panther Party would've been saying. The provocative tone of the image is certainly in keeping with what was happening that year. 1968 was a pivotal year for America. April, Martin Luther King is killed; Robert Kennedy is killed later that year. Following King's murder, riots erupted in cities across the country, including Chicago. Early 60's images of non-violent civil disobedience, which had swayed the nation's collective consciousness, were replaced by pictures of angry youths fighting with police. While many people saw this as a breakdown of American society, others saw it as a call to arms. The people on the left felt betrayed by the institutions who controlled politics in this country. By the time the convention was to be held, people were ready to protest. But Chicago mayor Richard Daley intended to keep order at all costs. He mobilized his police force and asked the governor to call in the National Guard. By the time the convention began on August 26th, confrontation seemed inevitable. But I'm not finding Tim's image in my research. Carol Wells is the executive director of the Center for the Study of



Political Graphics. We're meeting at Salsedo Press, a worker-run cooperative that has been printing materials for Chicago's progressive community since the late 1960s. So just looking at this poster, what can you tell me about it?

Carol Wells: Well it looks from the late 60's, it looks like when, you know, the student demonstration period when everybody was protesting against the war in Vietnam. That's when the word 'pigs', or Black Panther Party really popularized the use of 'pigs' to refer to the police.

Tukufu: That's what my first impression was this had to have something to do with the Black Panther party 'cause of the 'pigs' and then 'streets belong to the people' and then I thought really with this fist, it just looks familiar to me.

Carol: Well the Panthers actually used that fist but I'll tell you the clue that this was not a Panther poster, the Panthers labeled everything, they were really a very early group to use the logo. It's very clearly not a Panther poster, it's also not a SDS poster because they did the same thing.

Tukufu: SDS, or Students for a Democratic Society, was one of the main protest groups of the New Left during the 1960's.

Carol: They put SDS on everything.

Tukufu: Who made it?

Carol: I have no idea. There was no information on here that would let me know who did it. I even looked up Sunshine Jubilee and I couldn't find anything.

Tukufu: But Carol does recognize the fist – which was created by civil rights worker and artist Frank Cieciorca for an anti-draft event in 1967. It became an icon for protest movements, then, and now.

Carol: This is a silk screen version of that fist and it was done in 1969. This is a Panther use of the fist, if you look, it's kind of small on the side. But this one is the one that I'm really the most thrilled with because this one is from 2006 Oaxaca and it's using Frank Chicorka's fist.



Tukufu: Wow. Did Frank Chicorka design this poster?

Carol: I would say highly doubtful, highly doubtful. First of all whenever he used his fist, he had his name on it. So he would've if he had anything to do with the poster, his name would've been on it.

Tukufu: OK. Carol offers to email the image to some colleagues who are familiar with posters from that period. I've come to Chicago's Lincoln Park, the site of some of the worst violence during the convention. Retired police commander Wayne Wiberg saw the riots from behind police lines.

Tukufu: Now this is the poster I'm talking about. You ever seen this thing before?

Wayne Wiberg: To the best of my recollection, it may have been there but there were lots of posters!

Tukufu: OK, so here we are August 1968, describe that situation to me: what were you looking at and where were you?

Wayne: We were brought down here because the crowd was swelling and they were, something was going to go off.

Tukufu: Wayne says he remembers hearing stories of police having excrement thrown at them. As the protest grew, his eight man unit was scared of getting sucked into the hostile crowd and separated.

Wayne: The crowd was as far back as you can see, this way and all the way to the end. And we had our backs to the Hilton Hotel, we were watching the crowd. And it was scary, it was very scary because how do you deal with a crowd of 5,000, 8,000, 10,000? You don't.

Tukufu: As a draft-aged young man, Wayne says he understood the feelings on the other side of the line.



Wayne: And believe me, you know, I could've easily been on this side versus that side! And a lot of my friends were. And then I had a lot of friends in Vietnam. It was really, you're torn but here we are.

Tukufu: He says the evening reached its violent climax as the National Guard arrived.

Wayne: And they were driving in jeeps with big screens a front and there was a couple of them sitting on 50 caliber machine guns. And the guards stepped in front of us and I was standing next to another officer and this guard puts a bipod rifle down. And I saw him do this - and that means he injected a shell into that gun. And I stepped back because I didn't think we had reached that point. We're going to start shooting at people? My god!

Tukufu: Wayne remembers seeing policemen hitting protesters with nightsticks and demonstrators attacking the police. Who provoked the violence?

Wayne: Nobody was an angel in that game, ok? I'd be honest with you, they were attacking, throwing stuff at the police. A lot of policemen did not appreciate being called a pig.

Tukufu: Following the disturbances, an official commission led by Daniel Walker of the Chicago Crime Commission found that the police had faced widespread provocation, but had responded with "unrestrained and indiscriminate" violence. The Walker Commission Report called this a police riot. Do you agree?

Wayne: No. You had the immovable force against the irresistible object and you put them together...we had a riot on both sides.

Tukufu: Here we are 40 years later, when you look at this poster 'Pigs in the Streets' and this is supposed to be you, how does it make you feel?

Wayne: Back then it was taken personally by a lot of police officers.

Tufuku: Yeah.



Tim: But eventually somebody came up with the idea and the acronym - Pride, Integrity and Guts. That's what it stands for.

Tukufu: Now have you ever heard of Sunshine Jubilee?

Wayne: No, not off hand.

Tukufu: Wayne has his doubts about the authenticity of the poster.

Wayne: Well looking at this right now, I can tell you that's not a Chicago police officer. We had a star on our helmets along that said Chicago police and we also our star numbers above it. This man is not a Chicago police officer at all.

Tukufu: Sociologist Todd Gitlin who had been one of the early leaders of Students for a Democratic Society was also in Chicago during the riots.

Todd Gitlin: Come on in.

Tukufu: This is the object that I'm looking into, this poster. Did you ever see that before?

Todd: I have.

Tukufu: You have?

Todd: It was a poster produced in Chicago, at the time or just before the demonstrations. My understanding is that it was produced by some local people.

Tukufu: Can you discuss your memories of participating in this protest?

Todd: I remember I was in the park across the street from the Hilton, we saw that, the National Guard, coming down the street. As those crowds poured down Michigan Avenue, that was where I first heard the chant 'the whole world is watching.'



Archive: The whole world is watching!

Tukufu: The language of the poster is confrontational, and Todd says that this desire to be heard was felt by many in the streets that hot August evening.

Todd: We had been heading toward a collision with the authorities, a kind of dramatic, theatrical confrontation for quite some time. And there was a kind of spiritual satisfaction, as odd as that may sound, a kind of cultural ecstasy involved in actually seeing this moment play out.

Tukufu: Todd says that ultimately, the partisan tone of the poster, like the spectacle of disorder in the streets, failed to connect with ordinary people in Chicago.

Todd: I had spent two years as a community organizer among poor whites in Chicago.

Tukufu: Would they have been sympathetic to a poster like this?

Todd: I would've been amazed if there had been vast numbers of people in the neighborhood who would've either thought of the police as pigs or would've been eager for some sort of collision with the police.

Tukufu: Before I leave, I have one more question for Todd. Do you know what Sunshine Jubilee refers to?

Todd: I'm not sure that's a person, it might be an occasion, but no I never noticed that to tell you the truth.

Tukufu: Although Todd recognizes Tim's poster, I'm still not any closer to finding out who made it. But I do have a message on my phone from Carol Wells. After hearing from some of her colleagues, she suggests that I speak with a longtime Chicago resident named Michael James, who runs an uptown restaurant called the Heartland Café.

Michael James: Welcome to the Heartland.



Tukufu: Pleasure. So this is the poster I'm investigating, have you ever seen that before?

Michael: I have seen this poster.

Tukufu: You have? Now when did you see it?

Michael: My most distinct memories about this poster came during the Democratic Convention. I think probably a lot of this poster gets distributed during the Democratic Convention and after it.

Tukufu: As a community organizer, Michael says he wanted the Democratic Party to pay more attention to poverty in the United States.

Michael: There was a book, Michael Harrington's *"The Other America,"* which really called a lot of attention to poverty in America. So poverty and the plight of poor and working people was first on my agenda and increasingly then an anti-imperialism and an anti-war in Vietnam emerged in my own consciousness and way of thinking.

Tukufu: What were you doing during that week of the Democratic National Convention?

Michael: I remember starting off that week being in Lincoln Park, and we were laying up having a good time, it was you know, like a peace festival. The next thing I know there were police in riot gear with, with gas masks coming into the park and just the gas was everywhere. They forced people out of the park. Once they did that, they drove us into the streets, I was like 'yeah ok you want to fight? We're going to fight you' and we did. I remember a paddy-wagon came careening into the center of Michigan and Balboa, right in front of the Hilton Hotel where a lot of the delegates were staying. A number of people started to rock the van. I actually have a picture of it. That's me. I still had blonde hair and more of it. This officer comes out of the car, he grabs somebody, I grab the officer, I take him down.

Tukufu: So you were in the thick of it basically?

Michael: We were in the thick of it.



Tukufu: OK, can we get back to the poster? What exactly is Sunshine Jubilee? What Michael tells me next is the answer Tim's been looking for. As you had thought this poster was made in 1968 and it was made in Chicago.

Tim: That's excellent.

Tukufu: It was made weeks leading up to the convention and about 500 to 1000 of them were made and they were circulated all over the city of Chicago.

Tim: Very cool. Did you find out anything about the name Sunshine Jubilee?

Tukufu: Yes I did.

Michael: Sunshine Jubilee would be me. It was about happiness and kind of an optimistic future.

Tukufu: So you actually made the poster?

Michael: It was my idea, my buddy Patrick Sturgis I think probably was the person who laid it out.

Tukufu: Why did you make this poster?

Michael: I loved my country then, I love my country now, I don't love necessarily the rulers. This fellow is not actually a policeman and we didn't learn that till later. He was like you know, a movie delivery guy. And he fits the bill, he's scowling dude with the sunglasses, his helmet. Boom. And then we have Frank Chicorka's beautiful fist which was symbolic of the times. Then we put 'Dig it?' but we put 'Dig it?' with a question mark? That is really my only regret about this poster that we didn't have an exclamation point.

Tim: Wow.

Tukufu: This poster really does kind of symbolize the polarization around the politics of that moment.



Tim: You know 1968, I was a year from being born still, but I grew up knowing instinctively that it was a very important time. I think it's great to have a piece of that, that survived and came through.

Tukufu: Many Americans were frightened by the radical youth culture that — rightly or wrongly — was associated with the violence in the streets of Chicago. That November Richard Nixon, having campaigned for the presidency on a law and order platform, won the popular vote by a narrow margin. In the years after 1968, Michael James turned away from street fighting, forming a political organization called "Rising Up Angry", and serving healthy foods in his uptown restaurant. He now serves as President of the 49th ward for the Chicago Democratic Party.