

Cleveland--an Unsafe Place to Live

When I was a youngster growing up on E. 101st St. in Cleveland, the city was billed as "the best location in the nation."

After being away for several decades, a recent visit and a personal tragedy have convinced me that Cleveland is now in an advanced state of social and economic decay, and that its problems are being papered over with a public relations campaign by the city's business and civic leaders.

It is a fact that Cleveland, especially the downtown area, is now in the midst of one of the most serious crime waves in the city's history, and that violent crimes are increasing at an unparalleled rate while the police department is ridiculously understaffed and the homicide department unable to cope with the rising number of murder investigations.

Business interests apparently are playing down the physical dangers of working and shopping in the downtown area, the newspapers give too little space to downtown crimes, and the public relations slogans ("There's a whole new generation in Cleveland") roll on.

The truth is that Cleveland is unsafe, the police are crippled by lack of manpower, and the City Council is unable to protect the most precious right of all, the right to life and personal security. Anyone who walks along Euclid, E. 9th, and central areas sees the armed guards in most stores, the loiterers on the streets, and feels the tension in the air.

Last October, my brother, Arthur Jaffe, was murdered in cold blood by a robber at his place of business on Carnegie and E. 65th St. He believed the slogans about Cleveland and was shot by one of the idiots from that "whole new generation" that has grown up in Cleveland.

Despite genuine effort, the police have as yet been unable to find my brother's murderer, and with so many murders and armed assaults to investigate, it will be a miracle if they ever do. Even the \$10,000 reward offered has not been claimed.

The irony is that such events are taken for granted by interests who try to fool the public about Cleveland's safety, by the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation which expressed condolences to the family but applied no pressure on city hall to increase safety measures and to "solve" the murder of a prominent fellow-Jew and respected community leader.

The general apathy is pathetic. This fatalistic surrender to violence is insane, but the conspiracy to play down the seriousness of the situation in Cleveland is absolutely criminal.

I would urge every Clevelander who reads this to protect himself, to stay out of high crime areas, to stay away from downtown as much as possible, to move business and home away from Cleveland, and to do everything possible to protect the personal and economic safety of yourself and your loved ones.

Let the store owners have the downtown area to themselves. The City administration and the business community should not expect confidence and citizen support if they cannot provide the right to live without fear for personal safety. How many more innocent souls have to perish before something serious is done about Cleveland's problems?

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