

Credo for Rioters and Looters

by

Eldridge Cleaver

Minister of Information

Black Panther Party

An anonymous cop in an anonymous city shoots to death an anonymous Black youth suspected of stealing a car, and riots, on the heels of the new (news?) sweep the nation. Widespread looting is reported in a dozen cities. Roving bands of black youths set buildings on fire. Snipers, firing on policemen and firemen, are reported in several cities. In two or three places, the National Guard is called out to restore order. "Responsible Negro Leaders" given prime time on radio and TV, appeal for calm; "Cool it, Baby?" they enjoin, but Baby isn't listening to them. Strangely, demoniac, maniacal Black demagogues raise their voices above the crescendo of chaos and madness, urging the maruders to burn America to the ground .

Before the last flames die down, a Blue Ribbon Commission, established by Presidential Decree, is instructed to investigate the cause of the disorders. Distinguished Congressmen, with the insight of their racism, already know the cause of the disorders and waste no time announcing it to an uneasy nation: Stokely Carmichael! Rap Brown! SNCC! LeRoi Jones! The Black Panthers! -- these apostles of violence are to blame.

Upwards to 20,000,000 Black people, knowing you for the rotten, racist, murdering nation of white thievish hypocrites that you are, are no longer interested in explaining anything to you, America. Indeed. We understand that you already know all about it. We know that your investigations into the disorders are just a bunch of bull-shit maneuvers designed to but give you time while you multiply and perfect your machinery of repression which you have already unleashed upon us. In fact, your investigators themselves are amongst your chief and shrewdist Criminals.

Black people have already judged you, America, and have condemned you to death. And we also know that history has selected us, your slaves and chief victims, to be your executioner, the instrument of your destruction.

What a laugh! America the beautiful. Home of the Brave. Friend of the underdog. You once had a beautiful dream -- but even then, while you dreamed that dream, you were foul and corrupt and rotten in your heart, but you were a minor league brigand then and when you compared yourself to the other tyrannies of the world, you looked innocent by contrast to their greater evil. The innocent blood they had shed was a vast and ancient ocean, and yours was a fresh new stream. But now your little stream has become vaster than the sky and your evil dwarfs everthing that has gone before. Now you stand naked before the world, before yourself, a predatory, genocidal Dorian Grey, stripped of all egalitarian democratic makeup.

Is it any wonder that we burn you, that we loot you -- you who have burned and looted the world? Who are you to judge? You have no say in the matter. In the councils of the oppressed, the oppressor has no vote. The oppressor has no right which the oppressed are bound to respect.

America, you will be cleansed by fire, by blood, by death.

We who perform your ablution must step up our burning -- bigger and better fires, one flame for all America, an all-American flame; we must step up our looting -- loot, until we storm your last holding place, till we trample your last stolen jewel into your ashes beneath our naked Black feet; we must step up our sniping-- until the last pig is dead, shot to death with his own gun and the bullets in his guts that he had meant for the people.

We are not blind fools, America, we are not petty and greedy like you. You have seen to that. You have kept us from becoming like you. We are not even part of you. We are not of you or in you and you are not in us. We stand clear of you. (clean of you?) And we are not unjust, as you are. We know that there are those amongst your people who are innocent, those who have had no part in your decisions, those who were brainwashed and manipulated out of their own humanity, out of their minds? out of their lives. We know who these are. These will help us burn you. These will help us loot you. These will help us kill you, so that humanity might breathe a new air and bask in sunlight. That will not warm your grave .

Establish a Blue Ribbon Commission to investigate that!

Black Panther Party