

MR. WILKINS:

The Governor did not ask me about "riot control" since this conference was not in the context of preventing riots. I would expect that Governor Agnew would consult with the Negro citizens of his own State and with the white citizens of his own State on "riot controls." There isn't any use in my answering an iffy question.

QUESTION: Would you have a formula you would give Governor Agnew?

MR. WILKINS:

No one has a formula for preventing riots that will guarantee their prevention. There is one formula after a riot starts — all people who believe in law and order believe that riots should be stopped once they get started. Our business, and I presume it is the business of the Governor, is to try to prevent riots from starting.

QUESTION: Mr. Wilkins, on the Hill yesterday there was an allegation that in Newark it was Federal antipoverty workers who have agitated the Negro community to the point of helping precipitate the riot. In your experience in that city or others where Federal workers are involved, do you think there is any substance to such an allegation?

MR. WILKINS:

I only saw it as an allegation. I have no knowledge that there is any authenticity to it. As a matter of fact, I understood that the whole thing started over the arrest of a cab driver and it was the reaction of the cab drivers to his arrest which caused the riot. Now someone else said it was the "poverty workers," so a rumor mill like Newark can turn out all sorts of things. In Plainfield they said a policeman shot a 7-year-old boy, and then they found out that no 7-year-old boy had been involved in a riot at all. In Harlem we had a riot about 15 years ago, or 20 years ago, in which they charged that a boy had been taken out of the back room of a W. T. Grant store and beaten to death. Actually, the kid had stolen a knife off a counter and had been apprehended. The knife was taken away from him and he was scolded and scooted out of the back door in order to get him home, but someone spread the idea that he had been beaten to death. They said his bloody body was in the back room. I don't know about the poverty rumors.

QUESTION: At the same time, Mr. Wilkins, the NAACP passed a resolution blaming the city officials of Newark for a good portion of the riots. Will you comment?