**A Letter from the Four Survivors of the 1979 Greensboro Massacre Currently Residing in Greensboro to the City Council of Greensboro**

Oct. 17, 2017

**Group 4. Bullet point 4.**

**“Lack of an Effective Plan to Protect Parade Participants and the Community: Having no effective plan and taking no effective action to intervene in the known planned attack and the unfolding of violence, injury, and death, for which GPD Officers, Klan and Nazi members were eventually found liable in court for wrongful death.”** (p. 2)

Dawson… was apparently having some misgivings or fears because on November 1st, he told Detective Cooper and Lieutenant Robert Talbott, Cooper’s supervisor, that he had gone to the City Attorney attempting to get an injunction to stop the November 3rd parade and was told it couldn’t, or wouldn’t, be done. **Note: The City Attorney did nothing with all the information Dawson gave to him!** (p.5)

Dawson left the attorney’s office angry, saying “the next damn time I’ll bring you a bucket of blood.” … The police never used the information available to them from Dawson about his reasons for wanting to stop the WVO parade. Missing this opportunity, among many others, to halt their criminal and immoral trajectory, police and city officials plowed on ahead with their plans: Dawson, pawn-like, continued to cooperate with them. (p.5)

…

Captain Thomas, responsible for the intelligence function that day, having received the report from Cooper that the Klan had guns, did not stay in touch with Cooper or any other officers. “Instead he took his son for a haircut without taking a police radio.” (Cited in *A City of Two Tales*, p. 14) Is this in any way defensible behavior by an “intelligence” officer who had any intent of providing for the safety of the parade and conference participants including the neighborhood? (p.8)

Also before the 10:00 a.m. police briefing, Detective Cooper, with Sergeant Burke, did surveillance on the house on Randleman Road where Klan and Nazis were gathering. Although Cooper failed to acknowledge it in depositions and interviews, his superior Lt. R.L. Talbott, testified to the FBI that he learned from Cooper or Thomas, that *Cooper had indeed observed weapons being placed in cars*. (p.8)

…

The tactical unit briefing on the morning of November 3rd ended shortly after 10:30 a.m. and the Tactical Unit officers were sent to an early lunch and told to be at their assignments at 11:30 a.m. The parade, as per the permit, was scheduled to begin at noon. After the briefing, Cooper drove back to the Randleman Road house with GPD photographer John Matthews arriving at about 11:00 a.m. Most of the cars Cooper had seen earlier were gone, but the two police officers left and caught up with an 8-car caravan pulled over on the onramp of I-85. It was soon joined by a 9th car. (p.8)

Clearly **“probable cause”** existed for stopping and searching the Klan caravan in view of the totality of circumstances. After all, Cooper had *seen* Klan guns being loaded into the cars (concealed weapons) and *knew* that the vehicles were on their way to disrupt a parade, so it was reasonable to think that a crime was about to be committed. No stop and search occurred. *Cooper and Matthews, in an unmarked car, proceeded to trail the 9-car motorcade to Morningside homes, parking just a few vehicles behind the last Klan vehicle.* (pp. 8-9)

The option of a police presence to accompany and monitor the weapons-laden caravan on its route also did not happen due to the police decision to have a “low profile.” … (p. 9)

…

Another irrelevant side-show delayed Lt. Spoon and took him out of radio contact at a critical time as he tried to make contact with the Pastor at the church that initially was to host the afternoon conference but that had cancelled several days earlier. The GPD knew about the cancellation so it should have been a non-issue on November 3rd… (p. 10)

…

Field Commander Spoon’s response to Cooper’s transmissions as people are being shot and are dying is shocking. Cooper radioed on Frequency 3 at 11:22.25 “OK, we got about 9 or 10 cars on the opposite side has now arrived at the formation point for the parade, and it appears as though they’re heckling at this time, driving on by, uh, they’re definitely creating attention and some of the parade members are…” and then at 11:23.10, “…we’ve got a 10-10 down here, you better get some units in here,” and at 11:23.27, “shots fired…” Spoon’s response to a Frequency 3 operator, who asked at 11:23.41, “Can you advise for F-1 where you want the (District II) cars?” was “Move ‘em into the area,…,should be there at Windsor Community Center.” Almost simultaneously Cooper is reporting on F-3, “heavy gunfire.” Spoon continues at 11:23.51, “Pull all available cars in the city to the area of, the Windsor Community Center. Don’t all come to the area, I’ll advise further when I arrive on the scene.” **So, in the face of people being shot and killed at Carver and Everitt, Cooper stays in his car with police photographer Matthews, who takes pictures of the assault, and Spoon sends his units away from Everitt and Carver to Windsor Community Center!**... (p.11)

…

… Officer April Wise… testified under oath that shortly before 11:00 a.m.--just about the time the Klan/Nazi caravan was heading into the area--she and fellow Officer Cardiff responded to a routine call about a domestic disturbance on Dunbar St., half a block from Carver and Everitt. Several minutes before 11:00 a.m. Wise received a call from the police dispatcher ordering her to “clear the area.” Wise then returned the call to say she and the other officer were wrapping up their business. (The radio frequency Wise used to confirm she was clearing the area started at 11:00 a.m., thus concealing her 10:57 call to the police.) Wise’s story was verified in sworn testimony by a woman who made a hobby of listening to police frequencies and who heard and clearly remembered the order to clear the area... (p.11)

…The order to April Wise to clear the area shortly before the arrival of the Klan caravan came from the police’s Command Post, designed to allow commanding officers to reach everyone in the field in an emergency, and [Police Chief William] Swing went there on the morning of November 3rd. … From the time Dawson was hired as a GPD informant, all the important information that Cooper received from Dawson about the Klan/Nazi plans to violently attack the November 3rd rally was passed to Chief Swing through Assistant Chief of Police, Col. Walter Burch (also the main author of the “low profile” approach). (This information from an Internal Affairs Division (IAD) report of Nov. 29, 1979) (pp. 11-12)