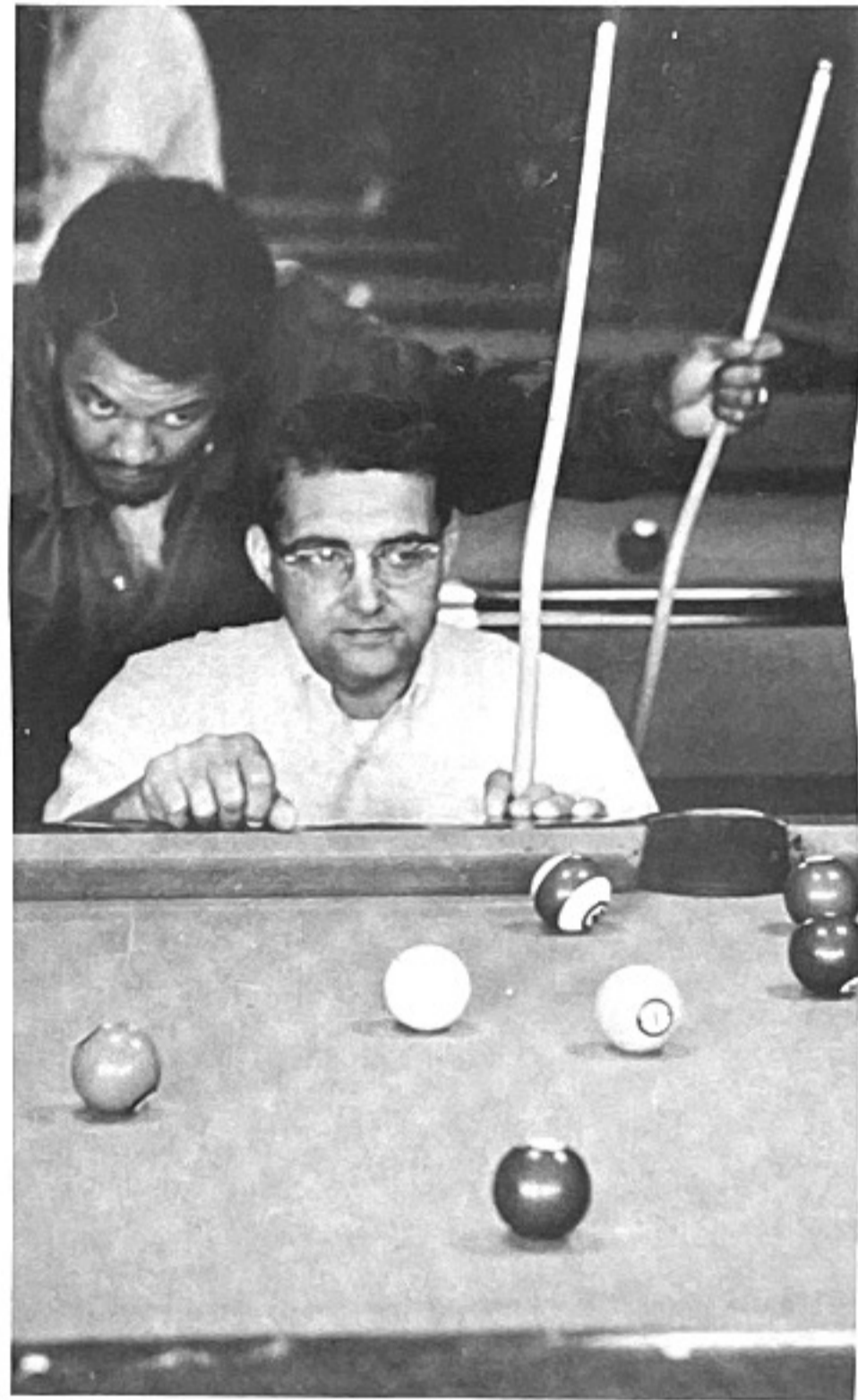


The white cop and the black rebel



Officer and rebel try shooting in Lucky Eight Ball pool hall as part of unique emotional training to wilt racial prejudices.

In Grand Rapids: Frank exchanges mark police-Negro "sensitivity" school

FRIENDSHIP WOULD SEEM an unlikely bond for Robert Anderson and Carl Smith. Anderson is a 43-year-old white police inspector in Grand Rapids, Mich. Smith is 27, black, the city's angry young man. Anderson is committed to law and order. Smith is committed to social revolution, Black Power. By the book, Smith and Anderson should have little in common. Yet they have discovered that they share a great deal—intelligence, mutual respect, pride, curiosity, flexibility, courage and, above all, manhood. They are far from being pals, but they talk frequently, laugh occasionally and first-name each other always. A year ago, Anderson and Smith were suspicious names to each other—the white cop and the black rebel, a stereotyped confrontation so familiar to a hundred tortured American cities. They were the kind who might easily have exchanged gunfire on some bloody street corner in a midnight riot.

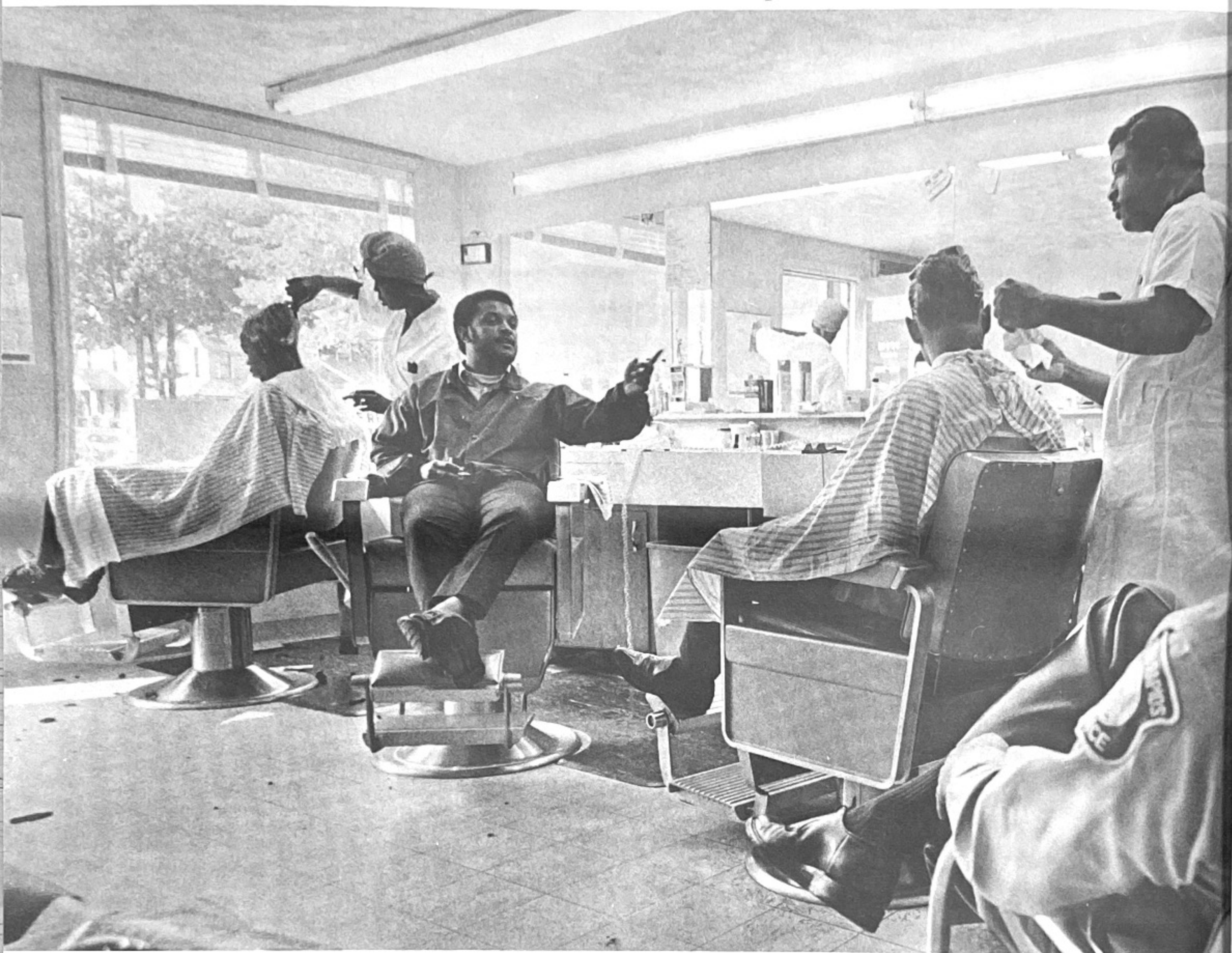
So how did this unlikely pair get together? Well, a funny

thing happened on the way to Grand Rapids' riot. Some of the city's progressives decided that white policemen (Grand Rapids has only eight Negro officers on a force of 244) should sit down and talk at length with Negroes. The evolution of what Grand Rapids now fondly calls "the program" is too long and serpentine to recount here. Two facts are sufficient: (1) The cohesive force was a dynamic Canadian-born parson with a Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago, the Rev. Duncan Littlefair, pastor of the Fountain Street Church, the place where the social action is in conservative Grand Rapids. (2) The instrument was Scientific Resources Incorporated, a behavioral-science outfit of Union, N. J., which brought its experiment to Grand Rapids. The program is elegantly called "sensitivity training," a form of group therapy. It thrusts hostile groups together and forces them into intimate, brutally frank, discussions. The program began a year ago with five police-

PRODUCED BY FLETCHER KNEBEL

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BOB LERNER

The friendship may be wary,
but cop and rebel know its
mortar—candor, respect, trust



men and five "community" members, three of them Negroes. They hammered at one another, raked over prejudices, acted out alien roles, guffawed at misunderstandings, visited one another's neighborhoods. Most participants found the often-savage dialogue a shattering experience that tore away racial barriers.

The beginners then taught others until 50 policemen and 50 citizens had taken the course. While no racial miracle has occurred, Grand Rapids is astonished at the change in attitudes.

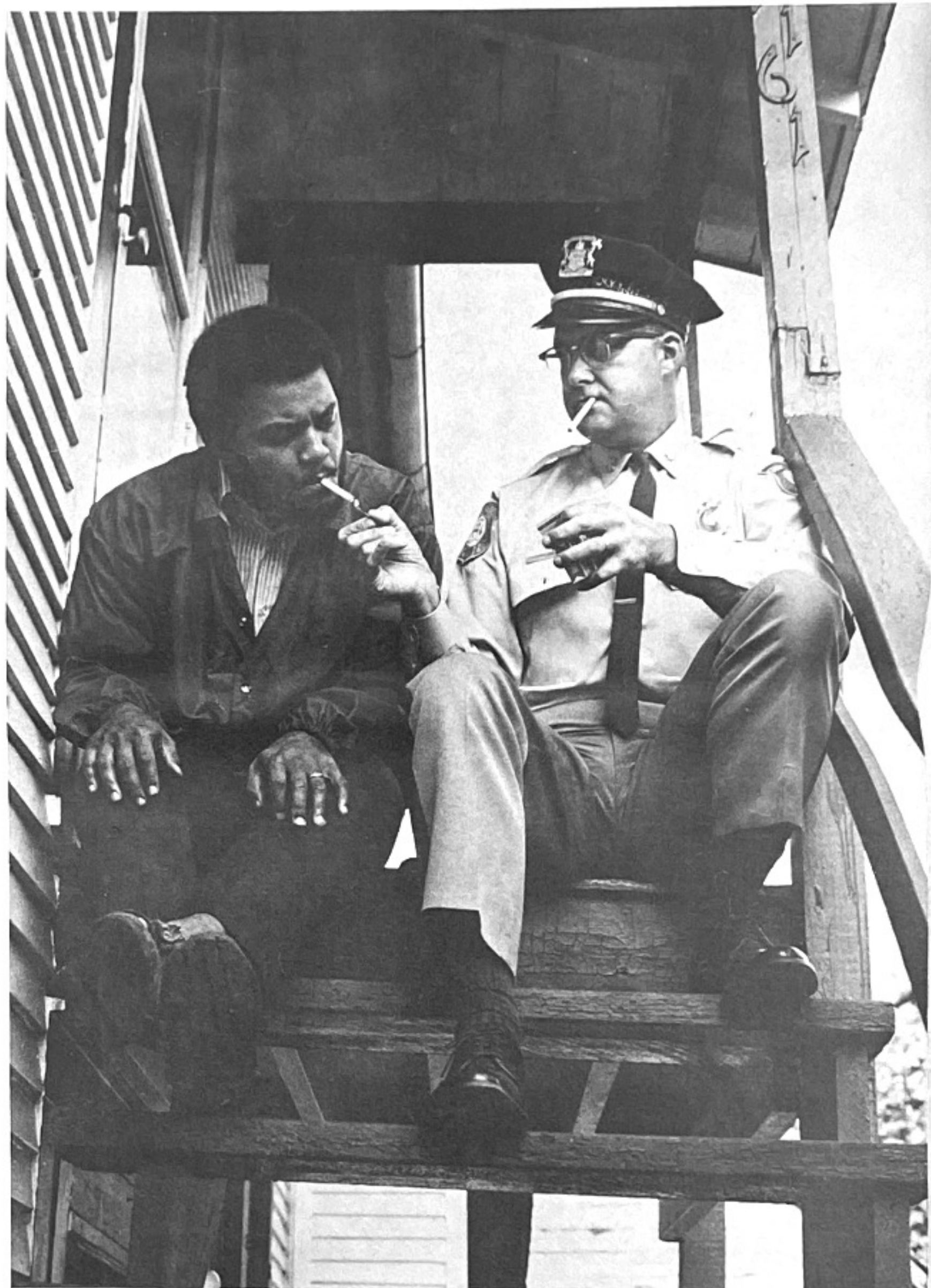
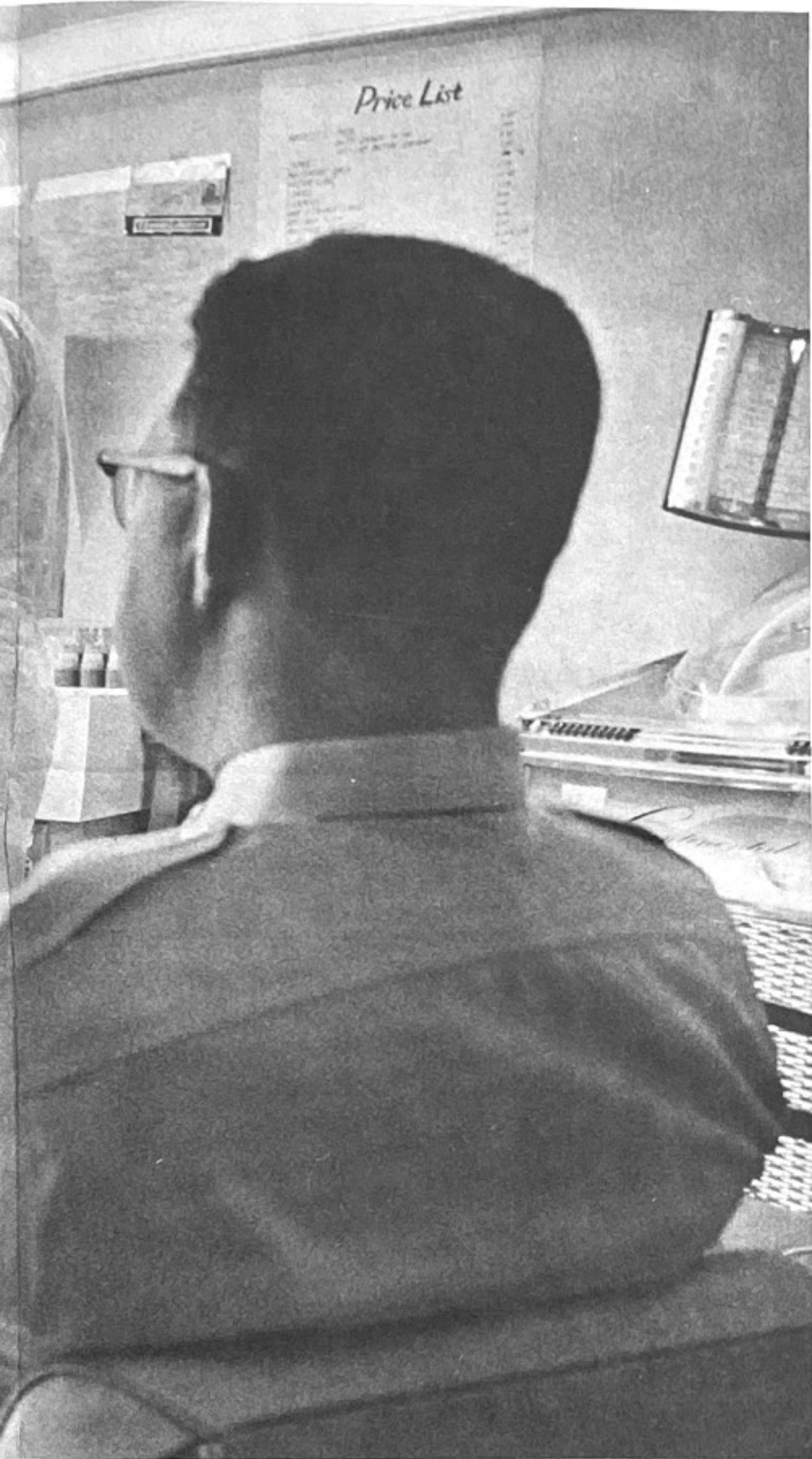
As keys to the new understanding, Smith and Anderson have a wary friendship. Says Anderson: "I have a depth of feeling now and a greater sensitivity for people." Anderson appreciates the embattled pride when Smith says: "I'm black, man.

In Edward Jackson's House of Styles No. 2 barbershop, lusty argument flares over police, "processed" hair, prostitutes. Inspector Anderson hears bittersweet indictment, laced with laughter, of police. Serious consensus: Negroes want good law enforcement, equal treatment.

I'm beautiful... Listen, if you can train a dumb white boy, you can train a dumb black one... If you want me to say I love you [to a white], you're insane. Whites are just as vicious to other whites as they are to blacks... This society needs a total change. And I'm not going to Africa either. If anybody leaves, it's going to be you [whites]." But Smith now concedes there are "some decent

whites." In a Negro barbershop, after flailing police, Smith told black friends: "But there's one cop you can trust. That's Bob Anderson."

Anderson spoke his mind at a civic meeting last September when continuation of the program was discussed—and later approved. Inspector Anderson pleaded for more funds: "I've learned more about Negro history and culture since January than I have in my whole life... We learned to look at each other as human beings, not symbols." When he finished, Anderson walked over to the door, then paused and looked back. "Time is awfully short. I leave you with the remark of one young Negro, 'Hell, man, I'm dying anyway.'" With that, Bob Anderson, the plain, quiet cop, made one of the most eloquent exits in the city's history.

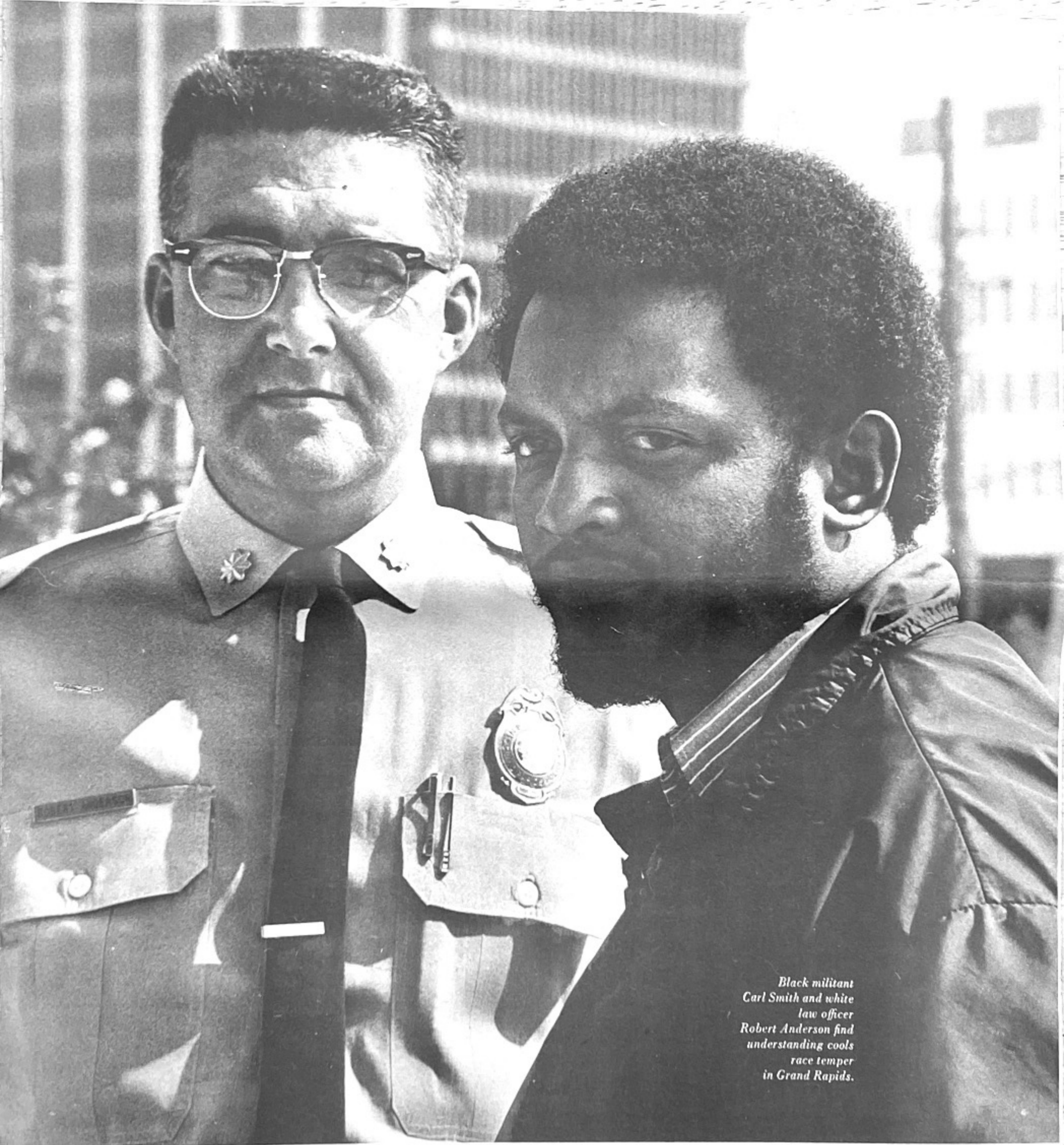


In his old antipoverty job, Carl Smith advises Charles Lovelady. Smith now heads Black Peoples' Free Store, Black Power focal point.



On steps of Smith's walk-up rental apartment, Inspector Anderson, a patient listener, hears Smith blister racial bias in the Air Force. He served in New Zealand and the Antarctic: "They got sore because I went with a New Zealand girl. If they wanted me to go with black girls, they should have imported some."

Anderson and Smith survey stores burned out in Grand Rapids' mini-riot last summer. "It was hatred of whites," said Smith. "It was against the Establishment, the system, the slum landlord." Police and Negroes who shared the training program helped dampen riot violence.



*Black militant
Carl Smith and white
law officer
Robert Anderson find
understanding cools
race temper
in Grand Rapids.*

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