

White Journalists Don't Know Anything: Walt Bodine, [Carter], and Lena Rivers Smith

Carter: ... I don't think the knowledge of the police department. Prejudice really of the reporter-

Host: I didn't say that, did I?

Carter (over host): No, but it communicates that...

Host (over Carter): I said he's got that knowledge; I said he lacks the other knowledge.

Host (continues): I'm not saying that what he's got eliminates something else. I'm saying he has that knowledge, he has to. How's he going to function if he doesn't? I'm just saying that in general, white journalists have not bothered too much, up to now, in all media, to know what goes on in the section of the city that finally erupts, whether it's a small percentage of people or not. Sometimes it wasn't.

Carter: It's difficult...

Lena: Walt, I think this was best illustrated in some of the programing that we did during that week. Most white journalists know the President of the NAACP. They may not know his telephone number, but they know his name and they know that they can find it. They know the Director of the Urban League and certain other middle-class Negro leadership names that may be vaguely familiar with. Once you leave the organization heads, most of the white media does not know a name in the Negro community. This was certainly illustrated when there were many names being introduced that they'd never heard, and they are saying, "Who is this fellow?" and, "What is he?" Now, this is, I think, one of the lessons, if we learned anything at all in that week. Certainly, should have been a lesson to all of us, and I think it has given us all second thoughts.