

Three days of violence have not been forgotten

JACK GARNER
STAFF FILM CRITIC

Forty years ago this week, Rochester festered with racial tension that exploded in the first major riot of the Civil Rights era. It began at a street dance on a hot July 24th in the Joseph Avenue area and ended three days later with the arrival of the National Guard — the first time they'd ever been called to duty in a Northern city.

It's the subject of *July '64*, an insightful new documentary that asks whether the volatile event was merely a spontaneous, violent response to a hot night, too much beer and a

destructive attitude or a more deeply etched social rebellion, triggered by severely limited job opportunities, poor housing and institutional racism.

July '64 is a fascinating exploration of the causes, events and aftermath of three explosive days in Rochester history.

Directed by Carvin Eison and produced by Chris Christopher, *July '64* airs at

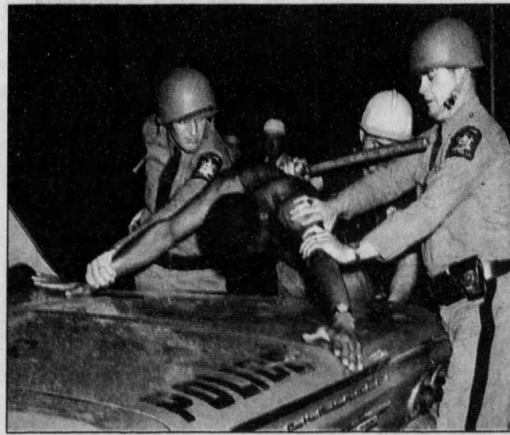
July '64

Director: Carvin Eison.
Screens: 8 p.m. Monday at the Dryden Theatre, 900 East Ave. (admission \$6).
Airs: 8 p.m. Saturday on WXXI-TV (Channel 21, cable channel 11).
Length: 60 min.
Jack's rating: With 10 as a must-see, this film rates **9**

8 p.m. Saturday on WXXI-TV (Channel 21, cable channel 11). Viewers are also invited to a preview screening at the Dryden Theatre at 8 p.m. Monday, and to discuss the film with Eison and Christopher.

Both the content of the film and its artful creation will prompt much discussion, especially since the film virtually concludes that certain core problems that triggered the riot — health, education and jobs — remain just as troublesome as they were in 1964.

July '64 combines archival films of the Rochester of 40 years ago with inter-



Provided by University of Rochester Rare Books and Special Collections

An unidentified man is taken into custody. The causes and effects of the riots are discussed 40 years later.

views of prominent Rochesterians who remember the time and the Joseph Avenue neighborhood where the trouble first sparked. They include Assemblyman David Gantt, retired Franklin High School coach Trent Jackson, musicians Chuck and Gap Mangione, community activists Constance Mitchell and minister Franklin Florence, former mayor Frank Lamb and journalists

who covered the event, Jack Germond and Warren Doremus.

The superb, deep-voiced actor Roscoe Lee Browne adds a rich narration, including well-chosen excerpts from three Langston Hughes poems. For his soundtrack, Eison also uses sections from a rare, unreleased recording of Duke Ellington with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra at the Eastman Theatre

Coming up

A four-day series, "Race in Rochester: 40 Years After the Riots," begins Saturday with a behind-the-scenes story about the making of *July '64*.

The second installment assesses the progress made on issues that fomented the riot. The third part talks with tenants of an apartment building near the riot's ground zero. The final installment explores local programs that are helping to level the playing field for African Americans in Rochester.

only two weeks after the '64 riot.

Both black and white former residents remember a general spirit of respect among folks. "People in the neighborhood took care of each other," says Gap Mangione, whose father ran a grocery store at Martin and Grant streets.

According to most interview subjects, the prob-

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