

Outside Of A Small Circle Of Friends

Words & Music:
Phil Ochs

C D C D
Look outside the window, there's a woman being grabbed.
C Em F G
They've dragged her to the bushes and now she's being stabbed.
E Am
Maybe we should call the cops and try to stop the pain.
F Am Dm G
But Monopoly is so much fun, I'd hate to blow the game.
C Am Eb
And I'm sure it wouldn't interest anybody
Cm F
Outside of a small circle of friends.

Riding down the highway, yes, my back is getting stiff
Thirteen cars are piled up, they're hanging on a cliff.
Maybe we should pull them back with our towing chain.
But we gotta move & we might get sued & it looks like it's gonna rain.
And I'm sure it wouldn't interest anybody
Outside of a small circle of friends.

Sweating in the ghetto with the (colored/Panthers) and the poor.
The rats have joined the babies who are sleeping on the floor.
Now wouldn't it be a riot if they really blew their tops?
But they got too much already and besides we got the cops.
And I'm sure it wouldn't interest anybody
Outside of a small circle of friends.

Oh there's a dirty paper using sex to make a sale
The Supreme Court was so upset, they sent him off to jail.
Maybe we should help the fiend and take away his fine. (*)
But we're busy reading Playboy and the Sunday New York Times
And I'm sure it wouldn't interest anybody
Outside of a small circle of friends

Smoking marihuana is more fun than drinking beer,
But a friend of ours was captured and they gave him thirty years
Maybe we should raise our voices, ask somebody why
But demonstrations are a drag, besides we're much too high
And I'm sure it wouldn't interest anybody
Outside of a small circle of friends

Oh look outside the window, there's a woman being grabbed
They've dragged her to the bushes and now she's being stabbed
Maybe we should call the cops and try to stop the pain
But Monopoly is so much fun, I'd hate to blow the game
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[Additional verse, 1974]

Down in Santiago where they took away our mines
We cut off all their money so they robbed the storehouse blind
Now maybe we should ask some questions, maybe shed a tear
But I bet you a copper penny, it cannot happen here
And I'm sure it wouldn't interest anybody
Outside of a small circle of friends

Notes:

Chords supplied by ao555@FreeNet.Carleton.CA (Rocky Bivens)

* This line is often misquoted as follows:

"Maybe we should take a stand and send the fiend a fine"

This completely reverses the meaning of the verse and the intent of the song. However on *There and Now - Live in Vancouver 1968*, Phil himself sings it this way, although, this is probably accidental as he also forgot a portion of the previous verse in that performance.

The first verse is a commentary on the murder of Kitty Genovese. She was murdered March 14th, 1964 in NYC. Dave Marulli supplies the following about this incident:

On March 13, 1964, a 28 year old New York City woman gained world-wide recognition for her role in an event which even today is remembered by people everywhere, creating a legacy still held up as an example of American values, or lack thereof. There can be no doubt, however, that Kitty Genovese would have given all her worldly possessions to have avoided the global "fame" acquired on that Friday the 13th that gave to her the ultimate horror associated with this symbol of bad luck.

Even though 47,000 New York City residents have been murdered since, hers remains the most tragic because 38 "citizens" awakened by her cries for help watched as she was assaulted not once, but three times over a half hour period. Not only did they fail to come to her aid, they also failed to call the police for help. Vincent Mosely, her assailant, stabbed her several times, then left, only to return a few minutes later to cut her up a little more.

During his brief absence, these "decent" New Yorkers turned off their lights and went back to sleep, only to be awakened again by this second assault, a scene repeated a third time, after which she no longer needed the assistance she failed to get the first, second or even the third, and final time.

During Mosely's trial, witnesses made several statements, but one stands above the rest as a symbol of this tragic event and is the reason for its world-wide infamy: "We didn't want to get involved." No surprise to Mosely, for as he said: "I knew they wouldn't do anything - they never do."

Hundreds, if not thousands, of studies were done about this event and book after book after book announced the downfall of American values because of it.

One study concluded that on average, if more than 4 people witness an event, nobody will do anything. Each person will say to themselves "I don't have to get involved since there are other people here who can help."