
Oakland, Calif., School Official Killed in Ambush by 3 Gunmen

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OAKLAND, Calif., Nov. 6— Superintendent, Robert Blackburn, Dr. Marcus A. Foster, the Superintendent of Schools here, was shot and killed tonight and his deputy, was critically wounded when gunmen ambushed them as they emerged from the Board of Education building.

Dr. Foster and the Assistant Superintendent, Robert Blackburn, were confronted by three men as they were about to enter Mr. Blackburn's car, which was parked beside the school district headquarters. One of the gunmen aimed a shotgun at them and started shooting from close range, the police reported. Dr. Foster was struck twice in the chest and fell mortally wounded.

Mr. Blackburn also suffered two wounds, the police reported.

Dr. Foster was reported dead on arrival at Highland Hospital. Mr. Blackburn was admitted in critical condition, officials reported.

The Superintendent, a 50-

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year-old black man, had been honored for his work in the Philadelphia school system in the nineteen-sixties.

Witnesses told the police that the three gunmen were black men who wore knit caps and heavy leather jackets. The man with the shotgun ran from the scene, police said.

The two others, who were believed to have been armed with automatic pistols, fled in a car.

Buildings Searched

The residential neighborhood surrounding the school board headquarters was sealed off immediately after the shootings and the police began searching nearby apartment buildings for the gunmen.

Five minutes before the shootings, the two educators had finished meeting with the Board of Education on plans for securing additional funds for a recreation-and-social program in Oakland's schools.

Dr. Foster, the father of one child, was appointed to his \$42,500-a-year position here in 1970. He was the first black to be named superintendent of a large school district in California.

He had previously served as associate superintendent of community affairs in the Philadelphia school system. In 1969, he received a Bok Foundation award for his contributions to Philadelphia's schools.

Backed Integration

A firm advocate of racially integrated schools, Dr. Foster asserted in 1970 that "if you don't do something, make a commitment to integration, you're asking for more militant action by minorities."

Another of his major goals was broadening the black community's involvement in the operations of the 91-school system. He organized a Master Plan Citizens Committee and incorporated its opinion into the decision-making process.

Lately, however, Dr. Foster drew increasing criticism from the Black Panther party here. The Oct. 6 issue of the party's paper, Community News, called him the "elite black Oaklander's educational pride," and accused him of operating a "shaky operation" for black children in the schools.



Associated Press

Marcus A. Foster