Local chiefs strafe Spreen's slap

Oakland County Sheriff Johannes Spreen became a verbal target of local police chiefs this week after ac, the murder investigations of four Oak-land youths. Spreen, in a speech delivered in At-lanta, Ga. said the homicide in-vestigation was plaugued by fragmenta-tion and "inter-departmental" jea-lossies.

vestigation was plagued by fragments in and immer-departmental" jeation and "immer-departmental" jeaAuthorities are trying to solve the
kidnap murders of Timothy King of
Birmingham, Kristine Mihelich of
Berrikey, Jill Robinson of Royal Oak
and Mark Stebbins of Ferndale.
Police chiefs involved in investigating the crimes accused Spreen
police chief should be a considered
police of the crimes accused Spreen
and a por-example to push for unitied
police efforts and labeled his attack
inwarranted.
"That dummy," said Franklin Police Chief Frank Wilson, who entered
the investigation when Kristine Mihelich's body was found in Franklin in
January, and so and the said
January
police department,
and the chiefs don't trust him.
"It raises my ire no end." Wilson
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could hamper the investigation and is
very littimed."

Spreen's campaign for more unified police efforts, said the sherilf's criticism of the task force investigation did not deal with reality. Birmingham joined the multi-jurisdictional Ostathand County Homicide Task Force after Timothy King did to the state of the sta

ASKED ABOUT Spreen's allegation that half the tips collected during the five days of Timothy King's disappearance had to be reinvestigated. Tobin said the second look was not

land County heirarchy. What he wants is a metropolitan police department, and the chiefs don't frust him.

"It raises my fre no end." Wilson added. "He's a political opportunist, he did this for political reasons. It could hamper the investigation and is every ill-timed."

BIRMINGRIAM POLICE Chief Rolling to the chiefs of the chiefs of



JOHANNES SPREEN

no doubt in their minds we handled this to the best of our ability."

this to the best of our ability."

THE TROY Police Department, valich came under füre from Spreen for not calling in crime lab technicians when Jill Robinson's body was discovered along 1-73, would make of comment on Spreene allegate into comment on Spreene allegate in Comment on Spreene allegate in Comment. Robertson, in charge of the task force investigation, also refused comment. Southfield Police Chief Milton Sackett issued a 300-word statement criticizing Spreen Tuesday.

Spreen Charged that Southfield had failed to call in county and state crime lab technicians when Mark Stebbin's body was discovered and criti-



cized the department for removing his

clusters are the clothes.
"It is obvious Sheriff Spreen has not taken the time to be properly apprised of the facts surrounding the investigation." Sackett said.

vestigation." Sackett said.

"HIS CRITICISM is unwarranted and is without basis and demonstrates a lack of his personal knowledge of his investigation. It is not said to be succeeded to the said of the laboratory, existing since 1953, stating they conducted the crime scene search with the aid of the Ferndale Police Department and the Oakland County Medical Examiner. "The body was removed with the approval and in the presence of an assistant medical examiner," Sackett said. "The clothing was taken immediately to prevent any further contamination of possible trace evidence."

dence."
Sackett accused Spreen of criticizing the local department "in an effort to further his own political inter-

"It is high time the citizens of Oak-land County recognize that local en-forcement agencies do not need the du-plication of law enforcement services which is constantly being forced on them by the county sheriff at their ex-pense." Sackett said.

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WHEN ARE YOU INVITED?



Sheriff touched a nerve

Oakland County Sheriff Johannes Spreen has long been an advocate of unified police efforts. And he has said before that small local depart-ments with limited resources are hard pressed to

ments with limited resources are hard pressed to solve major crimes. But the speech he delivered last week touched a sensitive nerve among law enforcement officials, causing some to retaliate with comments about Spreen they had previously kept private. The speech cuttled "The Child Killer Morst!, was delivered Friday in Allanta, Ga, at a police conference. All the spreen charges in the address that the investigation into the kidnap-murders of Timothy King, Kristine Mihelich, Jill Robinson and Mark Stebbins has been hindered by "the folly of fragmentation."

King, Kristine Mihelich, Jill Robinson and Mark Stebbins has been indered by "the folly of fragmentation."

He also cites examples of what he depicts as "inter-departmental" jealousies" and outright errors.

Concerning the slaying of Il-year-old Timothy. King of Birmingham. Speen states:

King of Birmingham. Speen states:

King of Birmingham. Speen states:

Van Gold Timothy of the control of t

"SOME OF THE officers never had a chance to ecome familiar with all the cases, yet they were urdened with the responsibility of catching the

become unman with all the cases, yet they were burdened with the responsibility of catching the killer.

"The mere fact that some of the investigators were inexperienced resulted in the improper elimination of some suspects. Recently, the task force was forced to review all of the tips that were submitted during the five-day period that Timothy King was missing and had to reinvestigate almost had of them.

And the concedes it was our more considered with "a common their leaf of them." of the concedes it was offered the responsibility of the concedes it was offered the responsibility. And the concedes it was offered their leaf of the concedes it was offered to the concedes it was o

forcement."
But at the same time, he adds:
"The work of the task force was hampered from the start by many problems. It was discovered that one jurisdiction charged with the investigation had virtually no reports and in another jurisdiction, evidence had been misplaced and mishandled.
"The investigative team was forced to investigate one of the slayings from the very beginning. Another agency was reluctant to submit their report to the task force." Speen later identified this agency as Troy.

THE SHERIFF criticizes the Southfield and Troy police departments for not calling in crime lab technicians when the bodies of Mark Stebbins and Jill Robinson were discovered.

"Although the state police maintain two relative-

ly close crime labs and the Oakland County Sher-iff's Department also has an excellent crime lab, none was called to process the scene (where Steb-bins was found). "By the time the investigator from the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office had arrived, the body had been moved from its original posi-tion.

County Medical Examiner's Office had arrived, the body had been moved from its original position.

"The body was them transported to the Southfield Police Department rather than directly to the County of the Coun

sent: also says a crime lab was not called in Sprean also says a crime lab was not called in When the body of Jill Robinson was found in Troy in the cerebe 19 at 18 to 18 to 18 to 18 to 18 to in the cerebe 19 at 18 to fort with county and state police" after the Robin-son and Stebbins slaying.

REFERRING TO THE Mihelich slaying.

HEFERRING TO THE Mihelich slaying, Spreen says:

"As the body of the Mihelich girl was deposited in a very small community (Franklin) with up a five-man department, many problems in protecting the crime scene area at the outset.

"Traffic onlookers, responses of many local departments, media, etc., created confusion. The chief of the five-man department, having no personal experience in homicide investigation, turned the investigation over to the state police, who then requested assistance from area departments.

Spreen reserved his harshest criticism for the

then "recognition to the state poince may be included assistance from area departments."

Spreen reserved his harshest criticism for Oak-may be recognited as a task force spokesman for a period after the Mhletch slaying, Spreen is a Democrat: Patterson is a Republican.

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In the special prosecutor seized in the second in the

"MAYORS, CITY managers, township super-visors and police chiefs are reluctant to relinquish

their power."

Instead, he advocates formation of "major crime units" on the county level to assist local de-

crime units" on the county level to assist local departments.

"I urge every progressive sheriff and police chief to consider a coordinated effort, yet keeping accountability at the local level of government.
"The sheriff can provide this coordination in the form of a major crimes unity with countywide jurisdiction. manned by the best investigators in the county to be deputized and mobilized upon the occurrence of any infamous crime within the county to assist and support local jurisdictions.
"As sheriff, I have consistently pointed out the evils and problems of fragmented law enforcement. Here we see how our county citizens are paying the price of the folly of fragmentation."









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