

Black Day in July

Gordon Lightfoot

Black day in July
Motor city madness has touched the countryside
And through the smoke and cinders
You can hear it far and wide
The doors are quickly bolted
And the children locked inside

Black day in July
Black day in July
And the soul of Motor City is bared across the land
As the book of law and order is taken in the hands
Of the sons of the fathers who were carried to this land

Black day in July
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In the streets of Motor City is a deadly silent sound
And the body of a dead youth lies stretched upon the ground
Upon the filthy pavement
No reason can be found

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Motor City madness has touched the countryside
And the people rise in anger
And the streets begin to fill
And there's gunfire from the rooftops
And the blood begins to spill

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In the mansion of the governor
There's nothing that is known for sure
The telephone is ringing
And the pendulum is swinging
And they wonder how it happened
And they really know the reason
And it wasn't just the temperature
And it wasn't just the season

Black day in July
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Motor City's burning and the flames are running wild
They reflect upon the waters of the river and the lake
And everyone is listening
And everyone's awake

Black day in July
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The printing press is turning
And the news is quickly flashed
And you read your morning paper
And you sip your cup of tea
And you wonder just in passing
Is it him or is it me

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In the office of the President
The deed is done the troops are sent
There's really not much choice you see
It looks to us like anarchy
And then the tanks go rolling in
To patch things up as best they can
There is no time to hesitate
The speech is made the dues can wait

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The streets of Motor City now are quiet and serene
But the shapes of gutted buildings
Strike terror to the heart
And you say how did it happen
And you say how did it start
Why can't we all be brothers
Why can't we live in peace
But the hands of the have-nots
Keep falling out of reach

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