

## KQED/TV NEWSROOM SCRIPT – 1973

### DEATH IN THE VINEYARDS

By Dick Meister

Thousands of people marched slowly through the streets of the little Kern County town of Delano today behind Cesar Chavez, Joan Baez and other leaders and supporters of the United Farm Workers Union, in a procession fully one and a half miles long.

They carried black flags, they wore black arm bands, and they chanted a funeral dirge for one of the two union members who were killed this week in the vineyard area where the Farm Workers Union is striking for its very survival.

Up front, six union members carried the casket of Nagi Daifullah, who died – at the age of 24 – in a scuffle with deputy sheriffs outside a bar frequented by strikers.

And even as they marched, other funeral arrangements were being made for a 60-year-old union member, one who was there at the union's beginning in 1965 -- a man named Juan de la Cruz. He was shot and killed with a single rifle bullet as he drove away from a picket line near Delano yesterday.

An inquest will be held next week to try to determine the precise circumstances of Daifullah's death, which the union blames on undue force by deputies.

In the shooting, the sheriff's department has charged a 20-year-old farm worker with murder, but probably will release the 64-year-old worker who also was arrested after the shooting. The circumstances of that incident also are in dispute. But it appears that the shooting came in response to rock throwing by pickets who pelted the sniper's car as it passed by a struck vineyard.

Investigations into both deaths and into other incidents of violence also are being made by the FBI and other agencies in the Justice Department, and the possibility of a congressional investigation also has been raised.

The crucial question, however, is whether the heavy atmosphere of violence can be cleared before there is more serious injury.

Chavez has called for a three-day fast by his members, and other acts of what he calls "a re-dedication to non-violence," and the union has called off picketing at least temporarily.

And that, anyway, will undoubtedly ease the situation. For though accounts of the reason for the violence vary according to who's doing the talking, all sources agree that most of it stems from confrontations on the picket line.

Growers and sheriff's deputies generally blame the pickets for provoking it, by throwing rocks, running into the vineyards and otherwise harassing non-striking workers. Union

adherents blame the growers and some of the non-strikers, as well as the deputies, for carrying arms and purposely provoking fights. But whatever the cause, if there are no pickets, there should be no fights.

But the grape growers are not willing to give up the contracts they signed recently with Teamster Union organizers, even though higher level Teamster officers have repudiated the contracts. And so, any halting of the picketing by the Farm Workers Union can only be temporary. The union's whole purpose is to get contracts from the grape growers, and if the growers continue to refuse them, the union will sooner or later take to the picket lines to try to get them.