

# ONGOING IMPACTS

## THE RIGHT TO DEFEND ONE'S PROPERTY

### **The Sweet Trials broke a wave of attacks on the homes of Black families.**

It affirmed every American's right to self defense, regardless of race, and it started to chip away at housing discrimination.

### **The Sweet Trials were a rallying point for Black people.**

It demonstrated the importance of collective action. The NAACP was able to raise over \$70,000 for the Sweet case, more than the organization had ever raised at that time.

### **Michigan enacted racist gun control laws in response to the Sweet Trials.**

In 1927, a gun control law was passed by the State that — while neutral on its face — was intended to prevent Black people from owning handguns. It has been amended many times since, but remains at the foundation of Michigan gun control laws.

In 2006, Michigan enacted the *Self Defense Act*, which affirms an individual's right to use deadly force if they believe that force is necessary to prevent bodily harm, sexual assault, or death.

### **The Sweet Trials are still studied and discussed amongst legal scholars.**

The NAACP published attorney Clarence Darrow's closing arguments from the Sweet Trial, noting its "historical, legal, and humanitarian value."

In 1986, the Michigan Legal Milestone Program memorialized the Sweet Trials with a bronze plaque inside the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice in Detroit.

The Sweet house on 2905 Garland Avenue has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Your home is your castle.**

Poet Langston Hughes wrote in 1962 that "the Sweet case set a precedent for the law in relation to Negroes. For every citizen it reaffirmed that 'a man's home is his castle.'"

