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Violence as Usual

Author
Schonberg, Jeffrey

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Violence as Usual

by

Jeffrey A. Schonberg

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Acknowledgments

A labor of love? No.
This process known
As writing my "diss,"
Has not been.
But I have learned a lot.
And for this I am grateful.

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Abstract

Violence as Usual

Jeffrey A. Schonberg

This dissertation is about an impoverished, African American neighborhood in Oakland, California where the murders of Antoine and Danny occurred. I map the conditions that made their tragic deaths both possible and logical within a racialized vernacular of social, political and economic tidings that enunciate what is seen as a usual, American experience for such a place--a place that is often defined by its high levels of violence. I do this by writing about my own experiences living in this neighborhood, having bought a house here in 1999, as well as those of my neighbors and the families of the victims. Furthermore, I ethnographically engage its storied history, documenting those structures that frame its violence and consequently, molded these deaths. Therefore I look at migration, displacement, and the evocation of privilege and the provocation of poverty. I write about overt and covert racism, struggle, promise and deception. I document the people and policies that greedily promote the hoarding of prosperity and the generous sharing of its losses. I notice the effects of transportation on geography, community, subjectivity and suffering. I learn how wars, both large and small, near and far, seem somehow to always penetrate our lives. And finally, about the unnatural effects of natural disasters; and specifically, how such a seemingly random event as an earthquake, "an act from God," can wiggle its way into a history of racialized oppression in the United States and emerge as a trigger of vulnerability in a homicide epidemic.

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Prologue

Fieldnote
June 2009

"And I'll huff. And I'll puff. And I'll bloooooow your house down!"

So goes the Big Bad Wolf, or "Woof," as my two-year-old Sandy calls him, warning of the impending world-destroying havoc he will soon wreak on a couple of little pigs. We have just finished reading this well-worn tale of carelessness and doom, of familial solidarity and the possibility of good overcoming evil through hard work and smarts. As the pigs savor their victory, Sandy rolls over and closes his eyes. I do the same and spoon him. A small shard of the noon sun rips around the fabric to surround the curtains of the bay windows in a halo. The room is plenty dark for a nap, especially for a tired little boy and his weary dad. Soon we have both drifted off.

"Please help. Please, can someone help." These words impress into my sleep. I am unsure if they come from inside of a dream, or from outside, from the tangible world. As seconds seem to pass, the pleas seem to grow louder and more insistent, muffled by cries and almost mellifluous in timbre, as though being pulled and stretched by waves. I am awaking.

A few seconds later, a burst of automatic gunfire sobers me fully. I immediately jump on my slumbering son and press my body-- skin to skin--to shield him. He is small enough that he fits in the space between my torso and shoulders. The pleas have since turned to a piercing shrill. More snaps of gunfire.

I wait for what seems an eternity but is more likely about thirty seconds and peel myself away, inspecting Sandy's sweet, twenty-five pound frame for bullet wounds. I search the sheets around him for blood. As almost a side-note, I check myself. He is unharmed; and he remains asleep. I push back my curtains and the halo blankets the room in daylight. On the other side of the window and roughly ten-yards away from our bed, Danny, my 27 year old-neighbor, a white guy who has just moved to town from North Carolina, lies mangled in the gutter, his girlfriend Stefanie, seemingly uninjured, hysterically hovering above him. I twist my neck and see Sandy. I am torn between staying with him and going out into the street to help. He is sound asleep. I open my front door and bolt.

My wife surprises me when she dashes from her basement office and takes Stefanie into her arms. I approach Danny and on one knee, peer closely at him. Immediately I believe he is dead. His open eyes seem to serve only to reflect the blue sky towards which they gaze. Blood trickles from his forehead to his cheeks like red mascara-streaked tears. A small slick pools below his ear. The iron smell of his blood creates a perimeter that encloses this moment. Worlds have been blown into a curdling, viscous mash.

An older African-American woman who cares for the disabled girl down the block slowly exits her house. Sofia pleads, "You're a nurse, do something!" Hesitantly she walks up to the body and places her gloved finger on his neck and claims to detect a very slight pulse. She advises we cover him to prevent shock.

I run into the house to retrieve some blankets. I open the wooden trunk in my living room that holds our linens. I am conscious of my breathing and hear it

echoing behind my eyes. What blankets do I use? Which should get ruined by the blood? Why do I care? I grab a brown striped heavy wool blanket made from a Bolivian poncho and a blue and white striped cotton blanket from the top of the pile hidden beneath pillowcases. I peek in on Sandy and look closely at his peaceful face.

I place the cotton blanket around Stefanie's shoulders who is kneeling over Danny with Sofia holding onto her back and the famous "Pieta" races into my head. I lay one blanket atop Danny's bare chest; this isolates his head and his eyes that are still glaringly opened-up onto the sky. His shins down to his feet dangle out from beneath the coverlet. He was barely dressed, wearing nothing but a pair of cargo shorts.

Kimberly is heaving sobs, "No…No…No." I cannot tell if they are dry or wet with tears, in a scream or a whisper, as though all senses have flattened, or more appropriately, deadened. I remain crouched on one knee, Sofia holds Kimberly, and we both are asking to no one but to everyone, "Where are the police? Are people calling 911?" Finally, we here a siren in the distance and a squad car comes barreling down from the north. I swear he is going to hit us because his head is turned and he is concentrating on the address numbers tacked onto the houses. He screeches to a halt about ten feet away. I feel face to face with the bumper of the squad car. He remains behind the wheel and cranes his neck downward to talk into his walkie-talkie mounted on his shrugging shoulder.

The officer's door swings open and he springs from the car. He is not calm but obviously shaken and stops dead in his tracks. The last thing we need is this cop

to project a "Holy shit!" impression. I can already sense Sofia's anti-authoritarian rage wanting to berate him for taking so long to respond. His head darts nervously around and I expect he is making sure the area is secure. Before even approaching Danny, he has the three of us move away from the body—Sofia never lets go of Kimberly and she leads her gently by the shoulders, back towards her house. I begin to backtrack towards mine.

Fieldnote
March 2007

Malia can barely walk but somehow managed to safely navigate her minivan back to West Oakland. "They took my baby, they took my baby!" she hollers while stumbling down the middle of the block. Antoine, her second oldest of her four kids, has just been killed emerging from the store a block away from where she now stands. Sofia and Anthony struggle to calm her and her arms slash about. He fireman carries her back into the minivan stopped in the middle of the street, the engine still rumbling and the door jacked-knifed open, tolerating the knees and elbows that smash at his face. As one imagines a kidnapping he seems to stuff her into the vehicle. She weakens and curls into the bucket seat and he hops behind the steering wheel and returns her to her new home, in East Oakland.

She has come, it appears, to this hallowed ground as town crier and accuser. The writing on the wall was etched onto her skin. Only a few months ago she moved her family to East Oakland in an effort to extract Antoine from the constant dangers he faced in the Lower Bottoms, the name given to our West Oakland neighborhood. Unfortunately, she could not keep her son from returning to his daily haunts.

I learn this in a phone call from Sofia. When I arrive home, the street is quiet. I bump into Barry, my neighbor who has been living on the block all of the fifty years of his life. He once ran with Malia; he was in love with her. Barry knew Antoine well as well as her other four children. He shakes his head and curses, but punctuates his anger with the statement, "I am not surprised." Carol across the street expresses no remorse. She too grew up on the block and is the same age as Barry. "Not as though he didn't have it coming." Antoine escaped a murder rap on a technicality.

Introduction
Hailing Violence as Usual

This dissertation is about an impoverished, African American neighborhood in Oakland, California where the murders of Antoine and Danny occurred. I map the conditions that made their tragic deaths both possible and logical within a racialized vernacular of social, political and economic tidings that enunciate what is seen as a usual, American experience for such a place--a place that is often defined by its high levels of violence. I do this by writing about my own experiences living in this neighborhood, having bought a house here in 1999, as well as those of my neighbors and the families of the victims. Furthermore, I ethnographically engage its storied history, documenting those structures that frame its violence and consequently, molded these deaths. Therefore I look at migration, displacement, and the evocation of privilege and the provocation of poverty. I write about overt and covert racism, struggle, promise and deception. I document the people and policies that greedily promote the hoarding of prosperity and the generous sharing of its losses. I notice the effects of transportation on geography, community, subjectivity and suffering. I learn how wars, both large and small, near and far, seem somehow to always penetrate our lives. And finally, about the unnatural effects of natural disasters; and specifically, how such a seemingly random event as an earthquake, "an act from God," can wiggle its way into a history of racialized oppression in the United States and emerge as a trigger of vulnerability in a homicide epidemic.

Choosing My Topic

Danny and Antoine's murders were not the only homicides on my block in the dozen years since I bought my house. The first incident, in 2002, was to an African American man nicknamed Rasta. Rasta grew marijuana in his basement and the extraordinary electricity bill prompted an argument with his roommate who subsequently shot him on the spot one afternoon

in their backyard (my friend, his backyard neighbor, heard the argument). Rasta was a year from a degree in Chinese medicine, already planning his move back to Mississippi to give his townsfolk an alternative means for medical care. The other victim, LaToya, was a thirty-year old African American woman employed with the water company. She was shot in the head at a party attended by a good fifty people on my corner and directly in front of her grandmother's house, where her grandmother, mother, sister, three uncles, cousin and their children lived. LaToya sat in the front seat, her cousin and best friend in the back when her murderer sat down next to her, got out, walked to her window and opened-fire point blank into her skull. She was Barry's niece and her three-year old daughter played with my two year-old son, (she adored the wild plums from my trees and was terrified of my chickens). At first the perpetrator was immediately and positively identified as her ex-boyfriend for a number of months following the killing. However, this accusation changed over time to a hired-hand friend of the ex-boyfriend. LaToya's death came a year and a day before Danny's and few of us on the block, including Sofia, the kids and I, along with dozens of her extended family, celebrated LaToya's life on that day, drinking beer, bar-b-queuing oysters and watching our children expend their soda-fuelled energy in the bounce-house placed directly onto the sidewalk. No one would ever have predicted another violent explosion the next day. Surprising, it was not.

Four murders may sound like a lot, but it is piddling if you include the immediate four blocks that surround my house on Winslow Street. Since moving there the number of murders easily exceeds the numbers of fingers and toes on a fully intact body. If you place my house at the center of a map, and measure an area less than a mile in circumference, the number of murders, in those twelve years, closes in on one hundred.

At Antoine's funeral, I met and photographed his friends-- the young boys, girls, men and women he'd spent much of his life hanging-out with around the corner from my house, selling drugs. My photography provided me with an opportunity to make a date with the leader of the dealing crew, JM, for a drink and to deliver pictures (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). He suggested we meet on the corner.

The relationship I had prior with the young men who graced my neighborhood corners had been cordial, but deeply impressed with race. On the first day I slept at my house in April of 1999, someone on the corner peppered, "Where ya goin' white boy?" as I walked to a party. That same year, one of my African American neighbors, whose family had come to the block in the nineteen fifties taunted my white boarder with, "You must be one of them dot-com millionaires," (he was actually a reformed heroin addict of twenty-years working as a drug counselor to homeless youth). And the day I'd planned on meeting JM, my standing on a corner visible from the porch of the house I'd now lived for ten years prompted the following interaction:

Fieldnote

The walk from my house to the corner is empty of people, however an illegal dumper has struck again, this time depositing a 5x8 foot quarry of broken concrete along the curb and a few stained mattresses. I glance towards the house they deal in front of but only a teenage African American girl is present.

Out of nowhere, a young African American teenager, no older than 14 years old and wearing a multicolored Spider-brand hoodie, rides by on a bicycle, and just barely audible for me to hear, mumbles, 'afternoon officer."

The youngster on the bike races by, doubles-back and standing on his pedals conspicuously flips his hoodie over his face. I place my camera bag on the corner, clasp my hands behind me and slowly crouch against the wall of the apartment building, projecting an air of calm, cool comfort:

"What do you want?" he asks through the shadow of his hoodie.

"Do you know JM?" I reply.

"Naaah, I don't know any JM… Why do you wanna know?

"He and I are supposed to share a bottle. He's meeting me at 12:00. Have you seen any pictures from Marquise's funeral?" I took those."

"My partner 'Keesie?" "What did he look like?"

"He had braids and stuff."

"Yeah, he used to. That a camera? Hold on."

Originally, this dissertation set out to fully concentrate on the "invisible genocide" affecting young African American boys and men in my neighborhood within the rapid gentrification taking place, of which I was a part (Scheper-Hughes 1996b; Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998). When I purchased my house in 1999, the median price in my zip code was $101,000 (I had actually paid $92,000). In 2008, the year of Marquise's death, that price would skyrocket to $513,000. In fact my block had turned from approximately 85% African American when I first moved there in 1999 to approximately 34% black, 34% white, 25% Latino and 7% Asian by 2011. Only one African American has bought a house that has changed hands on my block in the last twelve years and she bought it with her lesbian lover, a Caribbean woman who splits her time between West Oakland and her home on the island of Trinidad. Gays and lesbians are often cited as precursors of gentrification. (Voin 2010; Sycamore 2008).

As part of this gentrifying transformation, I could position myself as a participant-observer on a few levels. The intimate apartheid-- the concept that locates lines of racialized distinctions and inequalities formed of historically engrained segregation in the United States amongst people who are geographically and socially close--that separated the lives of JM and his crew from mine was wide enough that despite my place as a neighbor, I'd still be an observer in a more traditional, ethnographic way (Bourgois et al. 2006; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). It provided an ecological and analytical terrain foreign enough to witness as an outsider despite being so close in proximity, (Malinowski 1932). I would need to gain their trust and theirs, mine. And we would reciprocate experiences that specifically addressed this apartheid as each of us was escorted across the others' line to be introduced to our communities, both far and near (Bourgois 2000). They could associate and, at least partially, assimilate with the new population of white and Latino homeowners that were both aspiring to be middle-class; and who, to a strong degree, saw them as dangerous pariahs and a threat to this ambition. I had hoped to humanize without beatifying and provide a context to their actions (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). I had confidence in my abilities as an ethnographer to succeed in gaining the status of participant based on my many years of experience and success crossing racial, ethnic, gender and age boundaries (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). While as a white homeowner, I had the social capital to access the political and community forces both pushing and resisting gentrification. I could compare and contrast the micro and macro social-structural forces that bound these worlds through similarity and difference. Then, one afternoon, I put my son down for a nap.

The two deaths

Both were young men entangled in the war against drugs but had dramatically, different experiences that tragically merge in the end, yet not completely. Their connections to the drug war illuminate the differences their ethnic relationships lend to the powerful forces of this

mechanism of violence. Antoine was a familiar figure on the corner; "slinging" crack cocaine and other drugs in the open market since adolescence. Just the mention of this brings up for the reader a vast corps of common visuals that is both oppressively demonized and, as a form of symbolic violence, celebrated--of a familiar discourse within our national imagination (Herd 2009; Anderson 2006). His involvement with that criminal world concluded in what those around him saw as having been determined and what I see as hailed into violence as usual. Antoine's script was publicly addressed at his funeral. According to his mother, his "soul" had been stolen by what she referred to as the "the Street"—a living and breathing entity of the Mephistophelian sort and one that she too had been intimate with.

Unlike, Antoine, Danny's murder was not pinned to him. Danny, secretly but quasi-legally grew cannabis in his house. A new venture on which he embarked with no experience, he learned of this entrepreneurial possibility through rounds of Frisbee golf with another white grower named Mark who had been successfully, and stealthily, growing for two years four houses away from us (and whom I met for the first time at Danny's memorial). Danny moved to my block because he recognized a business opportunity, already realized in my other neighbors' success. This opportunity was also deemed possible by the long history of intra-ethnic violence on my streets so monopolized by blacks that Danny thought he would not be seen as a threat. Danny (and Mark's) white skin provided camouflage behind the opaque, intimate apartheid line whose other side teemed with both the sensible and the spectacle of African American drug selling and violence. Neither my friends (who were mostly African American and Latino) nor I on the block knew of the dealings. The intimate apartheid line obstructed our view of the scenarios.

Yet following a burglary spree conducted on a number of the white occupied homes on my block (including mine), Danny told his mother that he knew his marijuana operation had been exposed. He decided he would make his house on Winslow his "grow house," and couch surf with friends in Berkeley at least until the manager installed security bars on the windows. Danny and Kimberly were waiting for him, watching the movie "Marley and Me," and had locked their dogs in their parked car, on the day the incident unfolded. Whereas Antoine's death was seen by many as inevitable and by some cynics, as deserving—subjectively a result of bad character and bad parenting, Danny's quickly adopted a discourse that seemed to arise from a contentious history of racism, and one easily accessed within the progressing forces of gentrification. Sure he was naïve, but naiveté does not lead to this type of brutality. As almost all of my African American friends and acquaintances, both with and without connections to the world of drugs and violence, have said, he was killed because he was white.

Violence as Usual

Life on Winslow Street ebbs and flows between various forms of violence and life without violence that slam about each other in a tangled mosh-pit of remembering, forgetting and experience—where normal triggers violence; where violence triggers violence; *and* where violence triggers normal. This pattern is similar to what Michael Taussig calls "terror as usual:"

> "A state of doubleness of social being in which one moves in bursts between somehow accepting the situation as normal, only to be thrown into a panic or shocked into disorientation by an event, a rumor, a sight, something said, or not said—something that even while it requires the normal in order to make its impact, destroys it (Taussig 1992:18)."

What I find most relevant in Taussig's definition to this dissertation are the key terms--"normal," "somehow accepting, " and "disorientation." However, alongside terror as usual, the

waves of remembrance and forgetting that lead to a type of suffering that Taussig implies, I would like to add "violence as usual" to tap into a theoretical history of violence that lurks within a sense of the normal everyday as part of the continuum that includes everyday, structural, objective and subjective forms. (Bourgois 2001; Farmer 2002; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009; Scheper-Hughes 1992; Zizek, 2008). Violence as usual helps me to navigate the significance of "somehow accepting" and "normal." It pushes me to see being *shocked into an orientation*, the sense of being anchored in the invisibility of "normal," where the impact of violence *does not* destroy it.

Violence as usual: Structural violence

Structural violence refers to how histories of political and economic policies oppress the socially vulnerable (Galtung 1969; Farmer 2004). As I present throughout this dissertation, structural violence applied through the structural inequalities of poverty, racism, ethnic prejudice and classicism have always figured in the history of West Oakland. As a predominantly African American neighborhood, the most recent statistics showing health disparities confronting West Oakland residents should not come as a surprise: 76% of the families of West Oakland live at or below the poverty line (United States. Bureau of the Census. 2002); a staggering 53% of the population above the age of sixteen is unemployed in the mainstream economy; children in the neighborhood experience a 250% greater chance of being victims of physical abuse or neglect than elsewhere in the county; a resident of West Oakland is five times more likely to have cancer; an adult is five times and a child seven times more likely to be hospitalized for asthma than the average Californian (The Pacific Institute 2004); is regularly in the top three, and often first, in children under six being diagnosed with lead poisoning (Costa et al. 2002); and carries a homicide rate four times that of the rest of the United States. As a resident of West Oakland, I witness how these figures manifest everyday and a major part of this dissertation traces a

political economy that appears all too self-evident, historically surveyed as structural violence. Much of this history has been told and retold: through neighborly chats; through public art and through published representations; in real-estate advertising and grant applications; in academic and popular books, articles and blogs; and of course, dissertations, just to name a few. They often involve major events (Sewell 1996) But it is, I believe, important to repeat and to do so in a way that links how this history has created conditions specific to my neighborhood that, as I stated above, mold the deaths of two of its young denizens.

Ethnographic History, Subjective and Objective Violence

Therefore, I do not propose a "vague *pret-à-porter* formula" that reifies a certain historical, "guiding narrative" that shapes my research with the force of blindly accepting an oppressive past (Taliani 2011). I do however recognize how absolutely fundamental the history of West Oakland is in the United States' history of structural violence and how this history has shaped the lives of our neighborhood's predecessors and continues to shape the very lives of all of us who live there today (Comaroff 1985). This history of structural violence falls within what Zizek calls "objective violence (Zizek 2008)." Objective violence is the invisible, taken for granted violence hidden in the normal everyday. It has two different identities—as "symbolic violence" and as "systemic violence." Symbolic violence is seen in language and symbols, such as racism. Systemic violence is the "often catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems" in particular, capitalism (Zizek 2008:2)." Capitalism, both liberal and neoliberal plays, a direct role in the migratory patterns that brought both Antoine, Danny and their killers to the neighborhood. Their deaths are part of the "subjective violence," the visible, physical violence we see everyday on the streets that "disrupts the normal," but, paradoxically, symbolically orients the usual in my neighborhood (Zizek 2008:5)" And though it may be hyperbole to state that the history of West Oakland is more unique than others --

everywhere has a distinct history that only it may claim (Bergmann 2008)—-the creation of the space that is West Oakland, I must say, in the context of ethnicized and racialized violence in the United States is *very special.* As I will show, prominent spectacles of both racialized oppression and acts of resistance in the United States have and continue, as you will read, to originate in West Oakland; and the telling of this history is my attempt to unify the subjective and objective violence; or what Guy Debord calls "fragmented views of reality" and ground them within an "ethnographic visibility" of the everyday that leads to both a cultural and *historical* understanding of the deaths of Antoine and Danny to be recognized, tragically, *as usual* (Cronin and Hetherington 2008; Debord 2006:1)

Violence as usual: Everyday violence

In her 1997 article entitled *Peace-time Crimes*, Nancy Scheper-Hughes suggests, "everyday violence…encompass[es] the implicit, legitimate, organized, and routinized violence of particular social-political state formations (Scheper-Hughes 1997:471)." It is a tactic deployed in the "small wars and invisible genocides" that create an inevitable bond between the usual and "useless suffering" and death (Scheper-Hughes 1997; Cohen 1986). Everyday violence is akin (albeit somewhat distanced) to terror as usual, its violence hidden in plain site of the normalized, "taken for granted," everyday, further camouflaging objective violence (Scheper-Hughes 1997:474). Furthermore, As Scheper-Hughes' oeuvre illustrates, it is accommodated through a banality of affiliation that produces social indifference to suffering. I see it, for example, in the entrepreneurial gusto of a plucky contractor taking advantage of a legitimate business opportunity that also involves the destruction of peoples' homes (as discussed in Chapter 2). It is in institutions such as the police that, despite their involvement in more obvious forms of violence, can treat their police work as a form of masculine, gamesmanship bravado between themselves and their others in my neighborhood (as will be discussed in Chapter 3). I see it in

the procedures of the court, whose common-sense logic of blind justice flattens and reifies injustice (as seen in the Epilogue) Scheper-Hughes, 1992; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004).

The shock of the usual: hailing

Racialized violence has produced a pronounced consciousness of itself in West Oakland, as it has in much of the United States. Because of this, I have found it useful to use a theory that reveals a recognition of the misrecognition of this consciousness when hidden within forms of everyday life. Louis Althusser's concept of hailing is a helpful way to locate what I see as the shock of the usual.

Althusser famously tells the story of a police officer that "hails" a "subject" in the street with a common, "Hey, you there (Althusser 1972:133)." When the subject turns and responds, he acknowledges that he in turn is the subject, and therefore becomes Subject, an established way of being (Althusser 1972). For Althusser, this "subjection" takes place within the "Ideological State Apparatus [ISA](Althusser 1972:133)." Following Marx, ISAs are material representations that "distort" peoples' relations to scientifically "real conditions of existence" and promote false consciousness (Althusser 1972:163)."

Important to Althusser is that the subject, despite being hailed at the moment of acknowledgement, is "always-already" a subject to this (Althusser 1972:172). I see ideological power ensnaring my subjects, all of us, into the discursive field of West Oakland, which has some objective truths to it that all inhabitants become palpably aware and carry within and upon them. The usual of West Oakland *is* racially charged and this truth is grounded in a history of the present, the past and, I can say with confidence, (at the least) in the immediate future. Hailing strongly maintains intimate apartheid on the streets of Oakland. As we are hailed into it, we acknowledge the web of ambiguity knotted with the power of race and racism and the violence that accompanies it.

The violences that I discuss, stretching to those people and institutions embroiled and touched by it, produce constant streams of hails through a myriad of interactive possibilities; and from whose symbols it is impossible to take cover, fortifying ideological and naturalized bedrocks of racism, ethnicized inequality, poverty, domination, useless suffering and recognition. Hailing works particularly well as a lens in which to locate reflexively the violence as usual from my experience as a participant, emerging as moments in the moment. As an accomplice of the everyday in West Oakland my role as both hailer and hailed in this theatre (seemingly) unceasingly alerts me to ways to experience a life that creates my way of being, my subjectivity, as it does my neighbors/interlocutors. Throughout this dissertation, this can be seen in many of its details—from the somewhat subtle—when, in Chapter 1, Jack London recognizes the ambiguity of his relationship to his "Mammy," his black foster mother, as her "white pickaninny;" or when I choose to accompany Danny's mother instead of the black mother of a suspect during a court procedure [see Epilogue]; and with pounding force, and what underlies this dissertation, such as when *another* young black man is killed by *another* young black man on a sunny afternoon in Spring; or when *(again)* young black men kill *a* young white man on a sunny afternoon in Spring. The shock of the usual is hailed upon like a tempest-tossed

Violence as usual as a disciplinary function

Being hailed into violence as usual therefore fits within what Foucault identifies as a power/knowledge nexus enmeshed in the development of "regimes of truth {Foucault, (Butler 1997; Foucault 2003). Power is dispersed within the bodies and minds of populations and these regimes emerge through various institutions, such as law enforcement. It is revealed within the biopolitical expressions that "discipline" my neighbors (Foucault 1994; Foucault 1995).

Therefore our "subjectivities," our way of being in West Oakland, emerges through the history that creates the limits for orienting towards this usual (Foucault 1995). Throughout the

dissertation, and especially in Chapter 3, where I discuss my community's historical relationship with the police, I show how disciplinary power hails subjectivities to live in this particular usual, whether by docility, oppositionality or everything in between, and that which is part of the larger conflict between power, resistance and race in the United States (Foucault 2003).

War at Home: Jim Crow and the Pullman Porters

The themes of Peace Time Crimes also alerted me to how influential war has been in shaping the lives of the residents of West Oakland. The War Between the States brought many of the original black residents here who were fleeing slavery and the chaos of emancipation, hoping to capitalize on the Gold Rush economy and the rapid industrialization active along the San Francisco Bay of which I discuss in Chapter 1. This influx of blacks also marks the beginnings of the apartheid like structures, such as the race restrictions on residency that emerged in the first decade of the 20th Century. At the same time, I begin to show how these apartheid like structures are forming as intimate, as blacks and whites did intermingle within the tolerance of the Bay Area, yet still within the field of race relations in the United States.

World War I brought another wave of black migrants, this time to work in the shipbuilding industries. Soon afterwards, more African Americans arrived fleeing the violent Southern Jim Crow states. Not satisfied with the throwaway line, "fleeing the violence of the Jim Crow South," I embarked on a search to specify what that may have meant. In Chapter 2, I do so through the migration of one of West Oakland's favorite sons, the labor and Civil Rights leader, C.L. Dellums. Dellums help set the foundation for a highly charged political environment in West Oakland that would gain national attention in future generations.

West Oakland became home to one of the first established African American middle class communities in the West, spurred-on by the stable employment for blacks as sleeping-car porters by the Pullman Company, for which Dellums helped establish the first all-black union in

the United States. Hope was seen in the possibility of working as a Pullman Porter, headquartered in West Oakland, whose employment opportunities, despite being deeply exploitative, provided some of the best and most secure job offerings for African Americans. It was also during this time that liberal politics first intervened, introducing new forms of social control through direct government intervention and assistance, such as the creation of the first public housing projects, another double-edged sword of possibility and disillusionment—a sign of the violence of usual it spoke of countering.

World War II and Transportation

World War II brought similar tidings, yet on a much larger scale. The population of West Oakland swelled by 150%, as the U.S. government recruited African Americans for jobs in the war industry. This is when many of my African American homeowner neighbors arrived. Overcrowding was rampant and a housing shortage forced families to live in shifts in the neighborhoods dwellings. And when these wars ended, so did the support for their efforts as racism dictated who would receive their spoils. Whites got new homes, jobs, neighborhoods, and an entire new sense of patriotic citizenship. Blacks did too, but it was much shorter lived and in West Oakland, it was eventually exploited for the fulfillment of white prosperity. Yet it also helped lead the charge that switched much of the political power in Oakland into the hands of the African American population. In Chapters 2 and 4, I map this trajectory; and throughout this dissertation I chart the progress, including the symbols that heroicized the war efforts for the white population and further oppressed the lives of the black citizens.

This can be seen, for example, in the expansion of the suburbs at the hands of the inner city; and it would appear more than the magic of coincidence that those concrete structures that physically created isolated, neighborhood ghettos would carry the names of those white heroes.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I show these ghettos forming their own identities through which small wars are being fought, leading to epidemic levels of physical, subjective violence.

Transportation, the Event, Dotcom and Murder

West Oakland has a unique history as the final stop on the Transcontinental Railroad and became a major transportation and manufacturing hub. First generation European immigrants, freed slaves as well as slaves looking to earn enough money to buy their freedom all migrated to this neighborhood, each group looking to somehow capitalize during this industrial golden age in the young United States. In Chapter One 1 I tell the story of the creation of this neighborhood, and map the relationship between the political economy, ethnicity and race through the life and writings of one of the United States' most famous sons, Jack London, who grew up on the blocks of my study area.

Yet the power behind the concept of transportation never left West Oakland. It was the transportation in support of the service based economy that created the geography which isolated, in fact, ghettoized West Oakland, as a place to avoid, literally and figuratively, by routing freeways and an underground subway system designed to pass-above and around, its borders. These decisions coincided with the scorched-earth policies of urban renewal, claimed to promote economic upward mobility for the African American residents of West Oakland, through an increase in job availability and housing; but in reality, did nothing of the sort. Instead it hailed the same racist neglect that plagued this neighborhood from the turn of the century. In Chapter 4, I connect how this legacy of this transportation political economy carved an environment that eventually collided with the emergence of the crack cocaine drug trade, helping to shape, as I discuss in Chapter 3, Antoine's relationship to dealing.

And so when the earthquake of 1989 caused one of these freeways to crumble, the history of resistance by the black community, a history I record throughout my dissertation, revealed the

real strength of the community resulting from years of opposition to oppressive politics. It unearthed the possibilities for change, revealing the industry led environmental disasters in effect since West Oakland's inception, and laying the groundwork for gentrification. This occurred as the Bay Area economy was heating up with the explosion of the dotcom technology industry in Silicon Valley that helped liberate funds for easy home loans. Conditions were now seen as available for a new type of West Oaklanders to take-up residence-- white people such as Danny (and me)-- to be part of another effort to revitalize a place that had been socially and politically manipulated through neglect and racial prejudice for almost 100 years. But the earthquakes crumbling of the freeway also did something else. It liberated new drug market avenues, creating dangerous rivalries that before had not been so volatile. The earthquakes opening of systemic business opportunities formed of capitalist entrepreneurship underwrote both of these subjective moves; and the two deaths.

Chapter 1
The Beginning at the End of the Line

In 1874, nine years following the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, a house was built from the milled timbers of colossal redwoods that stood high above in the eastern hills of what would eventually be known as the San Francisco Bay. This house sits in an area Luis Maria Peralta named, "Encinal," or "live-oak grove" in 1771, when Charles II of Spain granted him this land. (CityLight.com. 2010). Four years after Peralta's death, his sons lost this property. Three savvy businessmen squatted this land and, bolstered by the United States' victory in the Spanish-American War, undermined the Peralta brothers' claims (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2004). One of these men, Horace Carpentier, eventually became the first Mayor of Oakland, California. A decade later Carpentier formed a joint venture with his predecessor, Mayor Samuel Merritt, Leland Stanford, the owner of the Central Pacific Railroad, and two other investors. Twenty-four hours following the incorporation of their partnership, the Oakland Waterfront Company sold to a subsidiary of the Central Pacific Railroad five hundred acres of waterfront property for a pittance-- five dollars. At the same time, the railroad chose this parcel as the site for the western terminus--the end of the line—for the Transcontinental Railroad (Rhomberg 2004). A few months later, following the bludgeoning of the golden spike in Promontory Utah, passengers from the Eastern Seaboard were disembarking at Oakland Point, California--some to stay while others connecting to ferries from the Oakland Mole, shuttling further west across the Bay to San Francisco or boarding wagons northerly into the hills of the Sierra to feverishly pan the American River in Placer County for shimmering, gold nuggets.

By then, a man named John Ziegenbein had already made his small fortune in gold. He parlayed some of his earnings to open a dry-goods store in San Francisco, selling both retail and

wholesale (Sacramento Daily Union 1873a; Sacramento Daily Union 1873b; Sacramento Daily Union 1873c). At the same time he capitalized on an opportunity to purchase land in Oakland Points' Fourth Ward district, an area of West Oakland that included the railway line that shuttled passengers to the Mole.

John Hamer 1877

By the mid-1870's, San Francisco's cost of living out-priced many of its working class citizens. This left unrequited the impassioned, westward-ho imaginings of homeownership. Mr. Ziegenbein identified this gap and seized on its entrepreneurial possibilities. He "recogniz[ed] the need of cheap residences. He began building houses and selling them on the installment plan in monthly payments or on a small deposit (Leach, 1889)."

Ziegenbein's investment in housing proved another mother lode. He built three hundred structures on three hundred parcels in the Fourth Ward, including one to house himself and his family--a wife and eight children. By the time he died, at age 54, "a man of the strictest integrity in honor and business," he was able to leave a legacy of more than $50,000 in property assets, equivalent to over $1,050,000.00 today (InflationData.com 2010).

Around that time, a Scandinavian sailor-turned-grocery clerk named John Hamer was living in a boarding house in San Francisco (Pacific Coast Business Director. 1875). Likely having encountered Mr. Ziegenbein through business relations, he entered a contract for one of these homes. He chose a single-storied structure in the fashionable Victorian, Italianate Villa style, with a ¾ porch and tall, double-hung sash windows that offered an expansive view to the outside; a few modest Victorian details, such as decorative corbel brackets and paneling, and a raised basement that he hoped to someday convert into a small grocery store. The lot Mr. Hamer purchased consisted of some nine thousand square-feet, providing plenty of space for an

outhouse as well as the planting of fruit trees such as fig and cherry plum, the raising of chickens and the growing of a garden in the temperate, Northern California climate.

Hamer purchased the redwood house, number1020 on a street named, Winslow for $1,200.00. It was part of the "Bayview Tract," an area comprised of Winslow and its backyard neighbor to the east, Middle Street. This development area with the bucolic and bureaucratic title ran from 12th street south to 7th street, where the railway line ran just a few stops away westward to the Oakland Mole. And just as Mr. Ziegenbein had promised, this spot provided it's resident with a perfectly convenient place to live and commute to work.

Hamer was not alone in utilizing his proximity in West Oakland to commute to San Francisco to further take advantage of the gold-induced economy. Advertisements for available lots often included the ease of moving between these two cities (Call 1982). However, the financial success of the railroad spurred an economic boom specific to West Oakland that led to a decline in economic activity in San Francisco. No longer would San Francisco's deep-water ports be the sole points of entry for goods. The San Francisco shipping industry took a hard hit as the "other coast," blossomed. West Oaklanders soon found plenty of work close to their homes.

John Hamer had many Scandinavian neighbors in West Oakland as well as Italians, Slavs, Portuguese, Irish and Germans. These Europeans immigrants controlled a majority of the skilled crafts, small businesses and business trades both specific to the railroad as well as to the needs of the community flourishing about, each ethnicity monopolizing certain niches. For example, the Scandinavians occupied the building and small business trades; the Portuguese served as merchant seamen; and the Italians sold produce. The Irish Catholics served as laborers for the railroad while their Protestant counterparts served as police and firefighters. Women and

children often worked in storefronts and as seamstresses (Rhomberg 2004; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2004). A large Chinese population existed but was exiled a few miles to the east of the West Oakland industries.

Henry Aherns 1889

In 1889 a German immigrant named Henry Aherns purchased 1020 Winslow Street, holding onto it until 1925 (United States. 1870). Originally a bartender, he took work as a trucker for the Southern Pacific (Southern Pacific Company 1917). During these years, he opened it up for lodgers, renting it first to another Southern Pacific employee, the Irishman Patrick McKeegan and his family-- wife, Mary McKeegan, and their six children, Josephine, Frances, Irene, Emmet, Earl and Clarence (United States. 1910). When McKeegan left the Southern Pacific, he was hired as a "machine hand" for the California Door Company of West Oakland; and then, like many of his Irish brethren, he became a policeman (Stillwell 1869). Eventually, Mr. McKeegan and his family moved to a neighborhood in the northeastern part of Oakland.

Mr. Aherns next rented the house to a family of Austrian immigrants-- a waiter named John Barker, his wife, Mary and their two children, Pauline and John Jr. The Barkers sublet part of the house to three other waiters and a cook with whom he worked. (United States. 1910).

These two patterns of residential occupation were typical of the larger historical and political economic trends of the time. In lieu of San Francisco's high cost of living West Oakland was an affordable place to raise a family, especially a large, late 19th century one. It was also an area with a reputation where people from different ethnic backgrounds could live and work together in relative harmony:

> "The day I was born . . . I heard all these different women, different names —like in those days you weren't born in the hospital, you were born at home, and I

> heard them speak about Mrs. Moriah, Mrs. Tracy, Mrs. O'Brian, Mrs. Silva, Mrs. Riposa, and Mrs. Filotta, all those different names, I said, "Doctor, hey, doc, what kind of a place is there where all these people of different nationalities come to help this old Black woman with her baby?" And he said, "This is West Oakland." And I said, "Well, jeez, West Oakland must be a heaven on earth. It must be a really fine places (Daniels 1990: 76)."

An African American community had also taken up residence in West Oakland, comprising a mere 3% of the population (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2004:108). Many of these residents were former slaves—some freed, some escaped, as well as current slaves who had been given the opportunity to pursue riches during the Gold Rush to free themselves and their families who had been left as hostage on the plantation upon their return (Lapp 1977:27).

One example of an African American's migratory process is that of Alonzo and Jennie Prentiss. Their saga begins with the young Jennie, originally born Daphne Virginia, to a slave family in the state of her surname. While an infant her parents were sold to an unknown slave master. A few years later she was sold to John Parker, who owned a plantation on the outskirts of Nashville, Tennessee. Mr. Parker renamed her Jennie Parker and brought her into the Big House, to serve as a playmate for one of his daughters (Stasz 2001).

The Parker plantation was not spared when the Union Army ransacked Nashville and its outlying areas following the Confederate Army's retreat. Only Jennie and her mistress survived the slaughter of the entire, Parker clan. The two women escaped with just the clothing on their back and headed towards St. Louis were her mistress had family, more than three hundred miles to the northwest. Begging and foraging for food, enduring days of hunger, they stealthily made their way risking rape and murder from the soldiers while witnessing the bloody horrors of the

Civil War. When they finally arrived in St Louis, the Parker family would not allow the slave into their home. She did, however, manage to locate work as a domestic with another family.

At war's end, Jenny returned to Nashville to work as a live-in housekeeper for a light-skinned, black family headed by a talented carpenter named Alonzo Prentiss and his wife, Ruth. Alonzo used his light complexion to his advantage and often passed as white. At the start of the Civil War, he lied to the Union Army recruiter about his racial history and soon was given orders to report to a unit out of Ohio. However, during his discharge hearing, investigators revealed that his white skin was a result of a "mulatto" grandmother and that, indeed, he was black. Instead of arresting him for his deceit, they rewarded his bravery and he was given an honorable discharge. Alonzo courted Jenny and soon he split from Ruth. Alonzo and Jenny soon married.

Alonzo's light complexion and Jennie's dark skin proved difficult in Reconstruction-era, Tennessee. They appeared to be a mixed-race couple. Under threat, they left Tennessee for Chicago. However, Chicago was hard hit by the economic depression known as the Panic of 1873. They then decided to move to San Francisco, where a housing boom, the result of local, railway investment by way of the Gold Rush, announced a need carpenters. The Bay Area also had already gained a reputation for unusual, racial tolerance and the couple felt they would be less threatened (and threatening) as a married couple.

They first settled in San Francisco proper but soon moved across the Bay, where the Oakland industrial landscape flourished. Initially, they rented a house in Alameda, and then across the estuary to West Oakland to be closer to his work in the neighborhoods servicing the railroad. Being able to pass as white, Alonzo had little trouble locating employment. The ethnic mix and the small but growing African American community made this an ideal spot for the two

of them to lay roots. They had two children as well as a foster child whom Jennie nursed as an infant and would remain as close as blood-kin until he died in middle age.

The Prentiss's became a leading African American family in West Oakland. They were founding members of their church and worked for charity organizations whose memberships were important forms of middle class social capital. In West Oakland, the Prentiss's had a tightly knit community with other upwardly mobile African Americans. Here they befriended high-status families like the Shoreys.

William Shorey was a famous West Indian whaling captain and the only black captain on the West Coast. His house, on Eighth Street, between Campbell and Wood, was the center of African American society during the latter half of the 19th century. An immigrant from Barbados, his exploits at sea were well known around the Bay Area and often reported in the local newspaper. One story, headlined "Charged with Trying to Burn a Whaler" with a subheading "Captain Shorey (Colored) Says the Three Whites Conspired to Destroy his Vessel" opens with a paragraph emphasizing the ethnicity of the participants:

> "Almost startling charge has been made by Captain W. T. Shorey, who is colored, of the American whaling bark, Gayhead, against three of his men. The three men are white. Out of a crew of twenty-two men there were only five white men, the others being colored, or half-castes (Shortridge 1895)."

Thirteen years and a new editor later, ethnicity is not part of the story. Instead the article with the headline, "Whaler Returns with Mutineers," and the subheading "Crew Allege Captain Shorey Was too Fond of South Sea Beauties," concentrates on sex and violence:

> "Among the men put in arms was John Duart, the boat steerer. Duart not only refused duty, but also refused to submit to the indignity of joining his

shipmates in irons. He gave in, however, when Captain Shorey and Mate A.S. Hiller placed revolvers against his head and gave him two minutes in which to make up his mind whether he would take steel or lead.

The men blame Captain Shorey for the small catch. They say that whales were plentiful, but that Shorey lacked either the grit or inclination to go after them. They say that he wasted time at Honolulu and in the Carolina Islands with the dusky beauties ashore. Upon the fair Caroline Islanders, they say he lavished gifts of Standard Oil… (The San Francisco Call 1908)."

Pullman Porters

Both William Shorey and Alonzo Prentiss were anomalies, however. Most blacks occupied the necessary service-related jobs such as cooks, waiters, janitorial and domestic labor in the primarily white owned businesses and houses. The largest employer of African Americans in West Oakland at the time, as well as in the United States, was the Pullman Palace Car Company, owned by George Pullman. Segregationist railroad policies relegated blacks to either work as Pullman sleeping-car porters or as common laborers (Rhomberg 2004; Praetzellis and Olmsted 1994; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2004; Stewart and Praetzellis 1997).

Pullman recognized that the master/slave subjectivity established as a result of the African American slave experience would provide an integral part in the successful formula for luxury on Pullman sleeper-car and he unabashedly exploited this servant capital. Pullman had recruiters scour the large slave-owning states of Georgia, the Carolinas and Alabama to search for "house negroes," to fill his cars (Tye 2004). These former slaves had the experience of working closely with whites in servitude, already possessing the knowledge and skill of genteel hospitality. And, like all slaves, these blacks had acquired the requisite stamina for toiling hours on end without rest. Finally, they were desperately grateful for the work.

The porters were all addressed as "George," continuing in the tradition of the slave taking the slave-owner's name (Tramble and Tramble 2007; Tye 2004). The darker the porter's skin the better. Not only did this make it impossible to mistake a porter for a passenger, it also helped to enhance and exaggerate the decadent plantation-like experience. The porters "place," was never in question and he was far more "part of the furnishings" than a working, human being (Perata 1996). They fit right into the décor of red velvet and crystal, marble and gold-plating—their starched white uniforms contrasting against their smooth, dark-black skin (they were forbidden from having facial hair) complimented nicely with the snow-white sheets and pillowcases they fluffed and folded day and night. Some of the porters were so objectified that it was not unusual for them to be entrusted to undress and put to bed a white woman made unconscious from too many cocktails; or have a bevy of young, college girls "running through the cars with no clothes on"(Perata 1996:19, 55). At the same time, porters expressed care so as to not be seen in the presence of a white woman lest they be accused of stepping out of line:

> "So being on a car is just like being in the South. When your walking down the street and a white lady's coming this way, your supposed to get your black self outta the streets and let her go by. Then you get back on the sidewalk. That's true (Perata 1996:80)!"

Some porters expressed fear of being entrapped by a woman who saw an opportunity to blackmail the company. And, when a porter was accused of "attacking" a white woman, it may appear on the front page of the local paper.

Porters were at the beck-and-call of their charges, acting as both personal valet and janitor (Tramble and Tramble 2007:21). These men worked four hundred hours a month in order to earn the maximum pay and, at the historical low-point of their salary scale, following the

depression of the late 1870's, amounted to twelve-dollars per month or three-cents per hour, oftentimes pulling ten hour shifts without ever breaking or even sitting down (Perata 1996; Tramble and Tramble 2007:21). As a result the porters depended on tips to survive. (Sweets 1997; Perata 1996).

A few factors helped determine the amount of tips, including the class of car and the train route. Of course, as with most tip structures, the quality of service produced by the employee has considerable influence. For the porters, those who showed the greatest subservience were the most successful and, in turn, were rewarded with the best routes and cars. Called "Uncle Tomming" on the rails, following the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's book, this translated into managing the whims of their white charges and their personal prejudices towards skin color. The porters had to negotiate racist slurs on a daily basis, from both the clients and even more so, from their white supervisors, in order to eek-out a living wage (Cartwright 1980; Kabwasa 1997; Leach 1900; Perata 1996; Sweets 1997; Tramble and Tramble 2007; Tye 2004). As one porter expressed, "If it disturbs you, don't say nothing at all, just walk off (Perata 1996:36)."

Porters were responsible for providing their own food for meals and the Pullman Company was notorious for keeping tabs on every cent spent, breaking down the supply needs to the minutest detail. For example, a fourteen-ounce glass of orange juice utilized two oranges, and, at the end of the day, if twenty glasses were served there better is no more than forty oranges missing from the supply bin (Perata 1996). Every napkin, glass, towel, or piece of silver must be accounted for or the porter was held liable, the cost of the item docked from his pay.

The porters had their ways of resisting. Often this entailed scheming to make more money or by finding ways around the strict food supply code so they could eat better than a mere

cold sandwich bought by someone willing to sell to blacks. For example, a porter would purchase their own cheaper bag of oranges from a store and use two of these to squeeze for passengers, omitting the order from the tab. The porters would then pocket the money for the juice. Another scheme found the cooks, informed that the diner was intended for a lady or a child, slicing one of their thick steaks in half horizontally, one half to the diner and the other kept to the side for the porter's dinner; or pieces of meat and vegetables would be "trimmed," tossed in a pot and then turned into a "mulligan stew."

Pullman had a zero tolerance policy for such insubordination. To monitor the porters, the Company employed undercover "spotters." These men and women posed as regular customers, watching their every move while tempting them to break rules. They were privy to the orange-juice scheme as spotters would order the script checked by the conductor to insure that the number ordered matched the number prepared and served. Women spotters enticed porters into their births hinting at seduction, and if the porters took the bait they were fired on the spot.

Not all porters "knew their place." Many did not tolerate the exploitation and were willing to lose their jobs to defend their dignity. There were fights between the black porters and their white supervisors (Perata 1996). At the same time, it was not unusual for a white supervisor to back an African American porter when insulted by a customer (Perata 1996). At times, senior porters tried to protect the younger porters, and in turn, the reputation of the company, by orchestrating which train routes certain porters traveled. For example, a porter with multiple generations working for the Pullman Company complained when his California-native son had been assigned a route that toured through the deep South, ending in his eventual firing:

> "Now my dad…says to the Pullman Company, 'I told you never to send one of my kids down south. He has never had to go through any of that foolishness, and

with that he's gonna fight, and with that he'll get put in jail or he'll have something happen to him…" (Perata 1996:11)

Despite the exploitative conditions, the porters felt fortunate to have these jobs. Compared to their lives as slaves or living as sharecroppers under the toil of the racist South, the regular paycheck, the elegant work environment, the chance to travel and meet interesting people and the possibility of financial independence, no matter how tenuous, left these men grateful. They also came into contact with passengers who not only delivered generous monetary tips, but also generous business advice for investing and purchasing property (Perata 1996:9).

The African American porters who made West Oakland their home lived quite well. Despite their exploitation as laborers, they earned the respect of the black community throughout the United States. The toil they suffered was worth it. Some owned their own homes while renting rooms to other porters (Praetzellis and Olmsted 1994:113).

Archeologists assigned to West Oakland in the late 1980's to perform a historical study connected to a freeway replacement project revealed that the porters most likely lived beyond their means. Artifacts unearthed reflected both the ostentatious materialism popular among white, wealthy homeowners striving for a genteel, Victorian aesthetic style; as well as a more restrained style that articulates a humble, economic reality. Artifacts reflecting the most up-to-date trends made popular by the fashionable, Pullman car style of the times, collections of bric-a-brac, figurines and table settings unearthed in the deep ditches that served as the privy during this pre-toilet were perfectly good. The discarded formal service pieces and place settings revealed a desire to constantly keep-up with the latest fashion despite the economic pressure this desire may have caused. Thus, archeologists conclude that a tremendous amount of symbolic capital was invested in the material culture of the day for these porters (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2004: 107-

110, @ 280-288). It was important that the porters, at all cost, not seem poor and expresses the contrary, that they were as wealthy as the wealthiest about them. The finest threads, the most expensive foods and the highest status accessories acted to not just boost their personal dignity against which racism in the United Stated provided them with a constant barrage, but also a visual and public means in which to counter-attack (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2004: 288).

Jack London

Despite the relative domestic security afforded the porters, West Oakland did not always offer a healthy, stable existence. One of early West Oakland's most famous sons, the writer Jack London, tells many a tale of scrabbling a living at the front of the Industrial Revolution during the tail end of the "Gilded Age" in this neighborhood. Growing up approximately six blocks from the house on Winslow Street, his books offer detailed accounts of the daily hardships he and his neighbors encountered in West Oakland.

In *Martin Eden*, London's autobiographical novel about a young man struggling as a writer in the face of poverty, the protagonist, Martin Eden, reflects on the physical fights of his youth. Martin recalls how, at age six, as a he waited for his newspapers in an alley for his delivery route, he was forced to fight an older bully named "Cheese-Face." Despite the daily beatings, Martin neither cowered nor denied the taunts, always facing the bully (London 1908: 133). Martin swore he would never recoil until he had fully "licked" his nemesis. Until one day, to Martin's surprise, Cheese-Face did not show and although at first sensing victory, he would soon learn his absence was due from the unexpected death of his father. Eleven years later, Martin is again confronted with Cheese-Face. In the "nigger-heaven of the auditorium" the cheapest seats in the uppermost balcony), Eden comes to the rescue of another victim of Cheese-faces bullying (London 1908: 138). Still stung by the disrespect he experienced as a six year old, Eden is filled with an uncontrollable desire to avenge the slight. This time the two young-men

gather their street-gangs and meet at the "4th Street Bridge," where Eden, pummeling his nemesis, prompts one of his gang members to:

> "Murmur… 'This ain't a scrap, fellows. It's murder and we ought to stop it.' But no one did, and he was glad …battling away at something that before him was not a face, but a horror, an oscillating, hideous, gibbering nameless thing (London 1908)."

Gang violence was common in West Oakland at the time. Most of the gangs were "ethnic," comprised often of young men from Irish and Italian descent. No mention has ever been made of African American gangs during this time.

The West Oakland gangs often engaged in petty theft, bullying and general rabble rousing. London used the name of one of them, the "Fish Gang," in his book entitled *The Cruise of the Dazzler.* The Fish Gang, a group of "young men from seventeen and eighteen to twenty-three and -four years of age and bore the unmistakable stamp of the hoodlum class:

> "Lived in an area known as the Pit… In simple words, the Pit was merely the cramped and narrow quarters of the poor, where many nationalities crowded together in cosmopolitan confusion, and lived as best they could, amid much dirt and squalor (London and Evans 1963)."

Recollections from a group of men of European descent who grew up in West Oakland in the early 20th century and calling themselves the "West of Market Street Boys," mention with nostalgia the presence of the Fish Gang on a few occasions. In their stories, the Fish Gang often intimidated the shops up and down 7th and 4th Streets, stealing their money and their wares. However, those "bullied," were most often the Chinese immigrants. The West of Market Street

Boys tell how the Fish Gang would tie the Chinese's ponytails to the to the seat posts of the railcars without their knowledge; or they would cut them off entirely.

As one of the United States' most famously vocal socialists, London's writings usually reflected his political views. He often concentrated on providing sketches that revealed the hardships of living through the battles between labor and capital, paramount to identity formation of the U.S. during the turn of the 20th century.

In his book, *The Valley of the Moon*, the protagonists, young newlyweds named Billy and Saxon, living in a cottage on Pine Street in West Oakland (as did London), struggle to realize their dreams of domesticity in urban America at the end of the 19th century. This includes the daily toil suffered by the young couple and their West Oakland neighbors during a prolonged railroad shop men strike. "Oakland" London writes is "the place" where "Capital everywhere seemed to have selected…for the battle with organized labor (London 1913:204)." Using the American Railroad Union Strike of 1898 as his model—the famous Pullman strike led by Eugene Debs-- London provides vivid details of a violent clash between the striking railway shop men, the scabs who have taken their jobs, the hired Pinkerton security guards and the local police and state militia who back the industry bosses. Local newspapers at the time reported on mob violence in West Oakland on July 4th of 1889(Leach 1917). Five days later, President Grover Cleveland declared martial law in the states involved in the bitter conflict, including California (Slattery 1894:1).

The battle takes place directly in front of Saxon and Billy's house just a short block from the railroad yards. The pregnant Saxon watches the spectacular violence unfold, initiated by the strikers and their families, including cobblestone throwing youth and toddlers. She witnesses the point-blank shooting of a hired strikebreaking "goon" stuck in her picket fence; followed by the

goons' retaliatory gunshot into the gut of her family's best friend who collapses dead upon the strikebreaker; as well as the multiple shootings and bludgeoning with pickaxe handles of other familiar strikers and "scabs:"

> It was battle without quarter--a massacre. The scabs and their protectors, surrounded, backed against Saxon's fence, fought like cornered rats, but could not withstand the rush of a hundred men…. There were curses and snarls of rage, wild cries of terror and pain. Mercedes was right. These things were not men. They were beasts, fighting over bones, destroying one another for bones.
>
> *Jobs are bones; jobs are bones.* The phrase was an incessant iteration in Saxon's brain. Much as she might have wished it, she was powerless now to withdraw from the window. It was as if she were paralyzed. Her brain no longer worked. She sat numb, staring, incapable of anything save seeing the rapid horror before her eyes that flashed along like a moving picture film gone mad… (London 1913:189).

Interestingly enough, London does not reveal the ethnic backgrounds of the strikebreakers. Historical accounts of the early labor strikes in the United States point to the hiring of various ethnicities that industry bosses believed would not show solidarity with the strikers (Whatley 1993; Cartwright 1980; Schneirov et al. 1999; Moreno 2006; Tramble and Tramble 2007; Moreno 2010). This list includes Italians and Irish—two ethnicities well represented in mixed West Oakland—as well as African Americans. There is a good chance African Americans did take part in the Pullman strike of 1894 as strikebreakers (Daniels 1990:35; Moreno 2010:73). Most of the strikers were not members of skilled labor unions, such as conductors and firemen--jobs that African American's were excluded from holding. They

were comprised of the unskilled shop laborers, jobs in to which blacks could easily step. Furthermore, Debs' American Railroad Union, the union that represented most of the unskilled laborers during the strike, excluded blacks, as did almost all unions in the United States at the time. African Americans even created the "Anti-Striker Railway Union," adding manpower to the strikebreaking forces (Moreno 2010:74).

The Polluted Waterfront

Following her miscarriage and the loss of her work as an independent seamstress, Saxon finds herself alone in the small cottage while Billy serves a month in jail. Billy, having been out of work due to sympathy strikes by his fellow teamsters took up boxing for his income and the two of them had to take in a border. During a drunken fit, Billy attacked the boarder after falsely accusing him of seducing, Saxon. She takes up scavenging for food and firewood by the West Oakland waterfront:

> She wrung her hands and wept loudly as she stumbled among the windy rocks. The hours passed, and she was lost to herself and her grief. When she came to she found herself on the far end of the wall where it jutted into the bay between the Oakland and Alameda Moles. But she could see no wall. It was the time of the full moon, and the unusual high tide covered the rocks. She was knee deep in the water, and about her knees swam scores of big rock rats, squeaking and fighting, scrambling to climb upon her out of the flood. She screamed with fright and horror, and kicked at them. Some dived and swam away under water; others circled about her warily at a distance; and one big fellow laid his teeth into her shoe. Him she stepped on and crushed with her free foot (London 1913:261).

The environmental disasters as a result of the booming industrial economy in West Oakland transformed, in a single generation, the waterfront from a functioning ecosystem filled

with a free and easily accessible source of food in the form of clams and oysters and fish to a polluted, rat infested cesspool that festered into a typhoid epidemic throughout the area (London 1913; Praetzellis et al. 2004). One of the first community organizations in Oakland, the "West Oakland Improvement Association" formed in 1888 to address the issue of the polluted marsh and it's effects on the public health of the local community. Through London's writing we can understand why, back in 1913, London wrote "Oakland," need not be "an end in itself. It is just a place to start from (London 1913:268)."

London recognized during the infancy of his successful writing career the importance his biography played on his book sales (Stasz 2002). Realizing the capital in an Horatio Alger-esque backstory London provided to his publishers, he included honest details of the suffering he endured growing up poor in West Oakland such as his being exploited as a child laborer. He also included exaggerations of his suffering (Kershaw 1999; Reesman 2009) (Praetzellis and Olmsted 1994; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2004). He readily admitted, later in life, that he created his biography with an eye towards what would be most marketable to the publishing world (Kershaw 1999; Praetzellis and Olmsted 1994; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2004; Reesman 2009).

Jack London failed to mention in his biography that it was he who was the former slave from Nashville, Jenny Prentiss' foster child. London's mother, Flora Wellman could not nurse, for both physical and emotional reasons, and found Jennie Prentiss, who had just miscarried, to wet nurse little John. For Flora and William Wellman (his biological father—the name London is from his step-father) her color was not an issue. Flora was raised among blacks in an abolitionist family in Ohio. Her father had dug a safe house underneath his farm and was a stopping point on the Underground Railway. William was a "racialist," astrologer, believing in racial inferiority,

but one that could be overcome. Together, in San Francisco, they were members of a "countercultural group that was pro-labor, pro-negro, and for free love and freethinking (Stasz 2002; Stasz 2001:11, 2001)."

Flora left John with Jennie and she and William moved out of the Bay Area for a few years, leaving her to raise the boy with her own family. She called him "Cotton Ball," and London considered her other children, "his cousins." When Flora and William returned to West Oakland to open a grocery store at the corner of 7th and Campbell Street, along with a nine-year-old daughter of Williams from a previous marriage that returned to live with them, the family continued a very close relationship with the Prentiss's. Jack may have spent more time with the Prentiss's than his own family, easily fitting into their African American community. According to his daughter, London "always said that the only love and affection he knew as a child came from Aunt Jennie (London 1997)." He played with the family's children and the children of their extended network. He attended church with them. In fact, people believed London was their biological son, given the whiteness of Alonzo's skin and the lightness of the Prentiss children.

The Prentiss's were far better off, socially and economically, than the London's. London's father was often out of work, his mother worked freelance knitting (she was the model for Saxon in *The Valley of the Moon*), and Jack, famously, worked for various industries as a child laborer on the Fordist assembly lines, packing pickle jars and making jute ropes. When Jack decided to earn his living on the water, first pirating oyster beds and then, switching from outlaw to law, policing those same waters for pirates, it was Jennie who loaned him the $300 to purchase the Razzle Dazzle. Jack even found early love from the Prentiss' community.

Lucy Caldwell was the granddaughter of an East Coast Jew who married an African American. In West Oakland, both the Caldwells and the Prentisses were part of a close-knit

community of light-skinned blacks. Jack and Lucy were close enough for those in the group to believe that they would get married (Stasz 2001:32). However, Jack's ruffian ways, his waterfront-spiked diction along with the reputation of his family, seemed to doom him from the start. Lucy's standing in the local African American social hierarchy was far too great for the likes of one of the uncouth Londons.

Jack London was a superstar in his day and his political views were just as famous (or infamous) as he. A radical socialist, London called for the overthrow of the United States government in favor of a worker-led revolution. Typical of socialist thought in the United States during his time, his calls for working class solidarity did not always extend across ethnic boundaries. A large body of scholarship exists exploring London's views on race [c.f., Kershaw, 1999; Metraux,; Mitchell, 2004; P and Lasartemay, 1991; Reesman, 2009; Stasz, 2002; Stasz, 2001; Stefoff, 2002; Ward, 2004; WETA, 20050. An example of his views can be found in a letter London wrote to a friend in 1889: "I do not believe in the universal brotherhood of man… I believe my race is the salt of the earth (Kershaw 1999)." A few months later he wrote to the same friend, "Socialism is not an ideal system derived for the happiness of all men; it is devised for the happiness of certain kindred races. It is devised so as to give more strength to these certain kindred favoured races so that they may survive and inherit the earth to the extinction of the lesser, weaker races (Kershaw 1999:102)." Following with this sentiment, he eventually published, in 1902, an essay entitled "The Salt of the Earth" in Anglo-Saxon Magazine, espousing a social-Darwinian philosophy in favor of a Teutonic "strong breed" that will "hew down the weak and less fit (Kershaw 1999:154)."

One of London's most famous essays at the time, written while covering the Russo-Japanese war, the "Yellow Peril" is unambiguously critical of Western arrogance while at the

same time praising the character of the East. Obviously influenced by a socialists' repudiation of imperialism, he concludes his piece with the following:

> "No great race adventure can go far nor endure long which has no deeper foundation than material success, no higher prompting than conquest for conquest's sake and mere race glorification. To go far and to endure, it must have behind it an ethical impulse, a sincerely conceived righteousness. But it must be taken into consideration that the above postulate is itself a product of Western race-egotism, urged by our belief in our own righteousness and fostered by a faith in ourselves which may be as erroneous as are most fond race fancies (London 1909)."

An interesting way of understand the nuances of race in West Oakland during the late 19th century could be through the relationship between Jack London, and the boxer, Jack Johnson, the first black heavyweight champion of the world and a frequent habitué of West Oakland during the first decade of the 20th Century. London was a big boxing fan and had himself been an amateur boxer. Reminiscences of London by other West Oaklanders place him weekly at the fights, rooting for boxers such as Ed "Gunboat Smith," one of Johnson's favorite sparring partners (Kershaw 1999; Praetzellis and Olmsted 1994)

Johnson was a true iconoclast, and like London, extremely famous during his time. Known as the "Galveston Giant," this son of freed slaves wore a grill of pure gold across his teeth that sparkled when he flashed his frequent smile. He spoke in a highly exaggerated, fake upper class British accent. During matches, he openly taunted his white opponents, the white audience and the white press, "eyeballing" them with a self-mocking "mean mug" which he could quickly abandon while proclaiming his physical and mental superiority. Much of the white world reviled him, lobbing daily death threats and racist epithets at the fighter. Racism of

the day was glaring even when the intention seemed to be sympathetic. In an article from the San Francisco Chronicle, dated December 10, 1903, a reporter covering an upcoming fight just south of San Francisco between the "Colored World Heavyweight Champion," Johnson and a white opponent, Big Sandy Ferguson, writes from Johnson's training site in West Oakland:

> "Johnson does not care if the fight be postponed for a few weeks. He has struck a congenial atmosphere in West Oakland where his race abounds and has been crowned king of them all. The colored population of all ages has thronged his quarters until there was scarcely room left for him to work, but J Arthur behaved himself and now rests in prime condition. West Oakland will 'string theirs' on the colored chap to a man and he needn't come back up unless he 'cuts the watermelon.'
>
> There are many 'palefaces' who will also bet that Johnson wins, according to the betting odds…(Anonymous 1903).

At the time of this articles' publishing, West Oakland's black community had nearly doubled and already possessed a reputation as an enclave for African Americans (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2004:288). Seventh Street began to grow as a commercial and entertainment strip that both served this community as well as employed them for the white owned businesses catering to the working class European immigrants. Johnson would have either boarded in a house owned by an African American or in one of the hotels that primarily served the Pullman Porters. Exactly a month following Johnson's stay in West Oakland, Booker T. Washington would come to town, a guest of the Shoreys on Eighth Street, only a few short blocks from the Aherns on Winslow. He was in the Bay Area to deliver a speech at the University of California, Berkeley and raise money for his Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Over 5,000 people were in

attendance. On the night of January 14, 1903, the Shoreys hosted a private dinner party and fundraiser for their esteemed guest. Washington secured $1,500 from the gathering of the social elite from the Bay Area, including $500 from Mrs. Millicent Hearst, the wife of the newspaper magnate, William Randolph Hearst (Dennis 1903).

During that year, London received international acclaim as one of his most popular books, *The Call of the Wild*, was serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post*. London had already earned enough money to move to the Oakland hills a few years before, but was currently living in an apartment rented by one of his boyhood friends in the mixed-ethnic area of downtown Oakland following his split from his first wife (Kershaw 1999; Wissdorf and Etzel 1999).

No reports show Johnson and London ever meeting in West Oakland. However, the two men are known to have met in 1908. London, by this time a world-renowned writer for his essays, fiction and reportage that took him around the world, was hired by the New York Herald, the flagship tabloid of William Randolph Hearst's newspaper syndicate, to cover the first World Heavyweight Championship title bout *not* between two white men, but between Johnson and the Canadian, Tommy Burns (Kershaw 1999; London and Shepard 1970; Mitchell 2004; Reesman 2009; Ward 2004; WETA 2005).

London had already published short stories and books on boxing and had first reported on the sport for Hearst in 1901 for the San Francisco Examiner. That he was covering the Johnson/Burns fight became as newsworthy as the fight itself. Needless to say, there was plenty of controversy surrounding the fight, which was to take place in Australia. Burns announced, "I'll fight him even though he is a nigger," as a way of making it publicly known that he'll do it for a high price (Ward 2004:114). When the boxers did start to negotiate money, Johnson was forced to agree to one-sixth the amount of money offered to Burns in order to get his shot at the

championship (Reesman 2009:106). And when terms were agreed upon, the Sydney *Truth* printed the headline, "Da Big Coon am A-Comin (Ward 2004: 115)." London spent time in the camps of both fighters, but there was no journalistic objectivity about his viewpoint:

> Personally, I was with Burns all the way. He is a white man, and so am I. Naturally, I wanted to see the white man win. Put the case to Johnson, and ask him if he were the spectator at a fight between a white man and a black man which he would like to see win. Johnson's black skin will dictate desire parallel to the one dictated by my white skin.

London's focused his observations on racial attributes normatively applied to blacks, vis-à-vis Johnson. London's racialist views were already well known through his other writings. Such essentialized behaviors included craftiness and what was called the "yellow streak." The yellow streak referred to cowardliness in the face of a challenge. Johnson had never displayed the "yellow streak" that all African Americans were said to possess because he was so dominating, never being fully tested by an opponent. The audience would have to wait to see the yellow streak, as Johnson's dominance continued, forcing an end to the fight in the 14th round.

Following London's pronouncement of his solidarity based on race, he called upon the former, undefeated heavyweight champion of the world and now retired, Jim Jeffries, to "emerge from his alfalfa farm and wipe that smile from Johnson's face." Jeffries had left boxing a number of years prior and had also refused to fight Johnson. He was, as London would popularize, "The Great White Hope," whose duty to his race was to dethrone the black boxer. The Johnson-Jeffries fight would be one of the greatest sporting spectacles of its time.

The "fight of the century" was scheduled to take place in Reno, Nevada in June of 1910. This gave the retired champion plenty of time to train and work himself back into shape. During

this period, Johnson spent more time in West Oakland. The San Francisco Call reported on August 30, 1909:

> Jack Johnson Arrested for Speeding: Jack Johnson, the heavyweight, pugilistic champion of the world, was arrested late last night by a policeman half his size at Seventh and Wood streets…. Johnson, with a few chosen admirers, was cutting corners sharply and scorching through crowded streets…Johnson…had been arrested here previously for speeding.
>
> Johnson drove to the police station and charged, before Desk Sergeant Wood, that the police were discriminating against him because of his color (Slattery 1909).

Johnson's arrest occurred less than a block from the Shorey House, where Booker T. Washington stayed a few years prior. Washington's views on racial equality advocated a gradualist approach that promoted upstanding behavior by blacks based on common American values. Eventually, he believed, whites would cast aside their prejudice and welcome blacks into American society. Hence, Johnson's behavior was anathema to Washington's philosophy. His brashness and his flash were anything but accommodating to white society. He refused to allow white society to pigeonhole him. Everything he did seemed to be in opposition to the ways a black man should act. Johnson exemplified this ambiguity by proudly displaying his fondness for white women. Johnson said, in an expression of symbolic violence, "I didn't court white women because I thought I was too good for the others like they said. It was just they always treated me better. I never had a colored girl that didn't two-time me (Jazz 2010)."

During a time when black men were getting lynched for merely the suggestion of looking at a white woman, he spoke openly about his sexual escapades and married three of them.

Photos were published in newspapers throughout the world of the boxer and his "Mrs. Jack Johnson[s] (Ward 2004)." His first wife, whom he physically abused throughout their marriage, committed suicide with a bullet to the head. A few months later, he married his second wife, a prostitute. She divorced him on grounds of his infidelity. A year later he married his third wife. She eventually became his widow. During his lifetime, calls for his head were not uncommon, with members of the U.S. Congress taking a role. In 1910, the White Slave Traffic Act was passed. Also known as the Mann Act, it prohibited "white slavery," and made illegal the transport of women across state lines for "immoral purposes." Johnson's exploits influenced the laws' fruition; he was investigated under the guidelines *before* the law officially took effect; and he was the first person indicted under its mandate, his second wife turning against him as a witness for the prosecution (WETA 2005).

By 1910, the African American population of West Oakland continued its gradual climb. The 1906 earthquake and fire that leveled San Francisco brought both a huge growth in population and industry to the East Bay. The increase in industry created the elixir of more jobs and more pollution. Houses in the neighborhood were all painted "West Oakland gray" because the black smoke that spewed from the factories stained the clapboard siding so profusely that it was seen as useless to try and hide it (Praetzellis and Olmsted 1994). The increase in population and local commerce increased the availability of work. At the same time, second generation Californians began to acquire more capital and looked for new places to live that offered less crowding and less pollution. For whites, they would start moving north and easterly towards the hills. These neighborhoods, with their ethnic specificities, for example, the Italian Temescal neighborhood of North Oakland, did not permit the sale of property to African Americans.

However, a small group of well-to-do blacks did have a place to go and for them this was South Berkeley.

The flight of capital--financial, symbolic and cultural-- from West Oakland allowed the Oakland politicians to look elsewhere to develop and spend. As the population grew poorer, darker and less established, the political forces focused their resources on the growing wealth outside of the urban bustle. Inadequate sewage, no street lighting and general decay were permitted to fester. The middle class was slowly deteriorating (Rhomberg 2004).

London reported on the fight for twelve days—eleven in their camps and the twelfth during the actual match. Throughout, his sensationalist stories continued to perpetuate the common racial tropes. However, his report of the fight takes somewhat of a reversal.

Jeffries was no match for Johnson and, similar to his Burns coverage, London makes no bones about telling it. However, his subjectivity still cannot be rid of the dominance of the racial politics of the day, yet it is Jeffries who embodies the weaker peoples. London writes:

> There is nothing heavy nor primitive about this man Johnson. He is alive and quivering, every nerve fiber in his brain…so artfully, or naturally. He is a marvel of sensitiveness, sensibility and perceptibility. He has a perfect mechanism of mind and body. His mind works like chain lightening and his body obeys with equal swiftness (London and Shepard 1970).

Blacks were jubilant throughout the country. In some places race riots were reported. A few African Americans were killed (Ward 2004). And that year, a warrant was issued for Johnson's arrest through the Mann Act and he fled to Mexico. In exile, he boxed and soon he would come back and serve time in federal prison. Eventually, Johnson's career tumbled and he

earned much of his living as a spectacle in small carnivals. He died while driving to fast around a turn, crashing into a telephone pole.

It is not that surprising, given London's subjectivity, that his relationships to blacks and black prejudice could be enigmatic and ambivalent. Two letters exist that London wrote to Jennie Prentiss. The first, a thank you letter for lending him money to purchase his boat "the Razzle Dazzle," begins with "Dear Mammy" and is signed "your son." London was well aware of the significance of the title, Mammy, as Prentiss had lectured him in the past about her taking insult to the slur (Stasz 2001). The second letter, from 1916, ends with the salutation "Here is loving you and always lovingly, your white pickaninny (Stasz 2001)." We can therefore see, in the Oakland Point of the days of Jack London and Jennie Prentiss, how hailing marks you in a community steeped in the ambiguities of race and violence and how it fits within forms of domination. In the next Chapter, I will show how hailing nurtures subjectivities that emerge through dramatic acts of racist violence, domination and opposition.

Chapter 2
Jim Crow, The New Deal and Slumification

In 1923, Cottrell Laurence "C.L." Dellums, a self-described "hell-raiser par excellence" departed his East Texas town of Corsicana (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:3, 1973) with the hopes of studying law one day at the famous University of California. His original destination was San Francisco, a place unknown to most of the people of Corsicana, and another reason why he chose it as his destination "California" to the Corsicanans, equaled Los Angeles (Dellums and Henderson. 1973). With "zero contacts west of the Rockies," he heeded the advice of a friendly porter, disembarking at the 16th Street Station, in West Oakland, where "the few negroes around here in the Bay District" lived (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:40)

At the time, the black community in Oakland comprised only 2.5% of the general population; and except for a handful of exceptions, all resided in West Oakland. The Bay Area swelled with industries servicing the First World War. At wars end, the local military industries recessed, giving rise to a merchant and professional class, encouraging the development of the eastern and northern parts of the city (Rhomberg 2004). These areas were dominated by white, Protestant, and mostly native-born Oaklanders that saw segregation as part of the recipe for a successful middle-class subjectivity (Rhomberg 2004).

Dellums quickly landed a job as a "room steward" on a steam ship that traveled up and down the Western seaboard, a position that ran the gamut from "maid" to food server (Dellums and Henderson. 1973). The stewards slept in the "glory-hole" packed on bunks stacked three-high (Dellums and Henderson. 1973). Unfortunately, the low pay did not cover the bare minimum in monthly rent in a room he secured when not at sea a few blocks from the train station. He began hanging around the Southern Pacific Railway offices with the hopes of

landing a position as a waiter on a train. After months of rejections, he got his chance. He was told of this however, with a bit of a lesson:

> You're not the type the Pullman Company employs for porters," he recalled. That is why [the foreman] Mr. Wells hesitated about giving you an application the first day. You speak good English, but you say "yes" and "no." You said yes and no to Mr. Wells. That's why he wasn't going to hire you (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:8).

Even though a "yes" and "no" were unacceptable for a black man to address a white man without following with the hierarchical, "sir," his luck turned for the better when a superintendent noticed the symbol of the Masons pinned to his lapel (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:16). This superintendent was a fellow Mason who therefore had no choice but to hire Dellums based on the code of this secret society.

Dellums' journey took place during a time that historians call the first "Great Migration," when approximately two million African American's left the violence of the Jim Crow south. Most of these migrants went to the urban centers of the industrial north and Midwest. These paths coincided with the expansion of industries supporting the First World War. From 1910 to 1920, West Oakland's black population increased almost 60%. (United States. 1920)

Dellums' attitude did not ingratiate him with most of the managers who used their powers over the scheduling to deny him work. He refused to Uncle Tom-- "didn't clown, no scraping and bowing, no grinning around them (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:18)." However, Dellums did find a sympathetic manager who had served as a white officer in one of the army's four "Negro regiments" during the war:

He didn't have the stereotyped ideas about Negroes that this other guy had because he knew more about them. I don't know whether he really liked me or was in sympathy with the position that I had taken. But he liked the fact that I didn't scrape and bow. I called the sign-out men by their names. No other porter would call the regular sign-out man "Frank," but *I* called him "Frank" because I knew it would make him red-headed! [Laughs] He didn't like it. But that was his name. He didn't call me "Mr. Dellums" so why should I call him "Mr."? But the Major didn't mind (Dellums and Henderson. 1973: 20).

Fleeing Jim Crow

1922, Dellums' last year in Corsicana, saw one of the bloodiest in terms of Jim Crow violence during the first half of the 20th century. Race riots and hangings abounded. A headline in the New York Times in July of that year announced, "Texas Leads in Lynchings (The New York Times 1922)." In fact, almost all seventeen lynching's in the state of Texas that year occurred within 100 miles of Dellums' hometown. The furthest of those hangings took place 180 miles away; the closest only twenty-miles; while the most notorious, a quadruple lynching following the murder of a fifteen year-old girl, barely thirty miles from his home in the neighboring county. In fact Corsicana played a major part in this tragedy. The details of this murder provides a context to what Dellums left behind from his East Texas town and how it may have shaped his relationship to whites, his struggles for equality and hence, as a man who refused to budge to the inequities of racism.

On May 4th, seventeen year-old Eula Awsley was torn from her horse as she rode home from her school in Kirvin, Texas, a rural town of about five hundred, with a multitude of stab wounds (Akers 1999). Forty-eight hours later, Snap Terry, John Cornish and Mose Jones were located by bloodhounds, "brought…from the penitentiary at Huntsville, via airplane," tortured,

lynched and burned at the stake by a mob of folks equaling the towns' population (Chapman 1973:111; Schneider 2002:180, 2002; Akers 1999). The next day, Frederick Green suffered the same treatment.

Newspapers around the country provided the gruesome details perpetrated by the mob (Archives 2011). *The Norwalk Hour* of Connecticut, under the sub-heading "Incineration was in City Square in Presence of Mob" reported:

> "Snap" Terry, 26, who was captured after a 36-hour chase with bloodhounds, was the first to be burned. He was tied to the seat of a cultivator after he is alleged to have made a confession. Oil was poured on his body and a match struck. As the flames mounted about his body, Terry shouted, "Oh, Lord, I'm coming".
>
> Mose Jones, 44, and John Cornish, 19, were the other Negroes burned.
>
> This was after Terry had been ignited and shouted, "burn Jones and John Cornish – they are as guilty as I am." Terry's chant "Oh, Lord, I'm coming" rose higher and higher as the flames leaped. Then the body was completely saturated with kerosene and petroleum. Terry's chant died away. Jones was then roped and dragged over the plow. Wood was thrown on. In about six minutes he died. John Cornish was lassoed and dragged onto the fire. Again more fuel was added and the three bodies were burned to a crisp. At 8 o'clock the fire was still burning."

The Desert News of Salt Lake City, Utah, ran the *Associated Press'* wire story:

> …All three Negroes were employed on the farm of J. T. King, a prominent farmer of this community, and grandfather of the dead girl, with whom she lived,

both her parents being dead. King was present at the cremation and the mob leaders are said to have obtained his approval before lighting the torches.

The lynching was carried out in orderly fashion. There was no discharge of firearms nor was any undue violence attempted, although it is understood that the bodies of the negroes were mutilated before being tied to the stake. With the exception of a few shouts and the screams of the condemned men, there was little to disturb the early morning quiet of the backwoods community. The incinerations took place on a small open plot directly in front of two small churches. One of the negroes is said to have died singing a church anthem.

While the *Victoria Advocate* of Victoria, Texas printed the *United Press'* wire story, adding:

The capture of the three blacks was the most thrilling man hunt in Texas history. Farmers and businessmen of three counties began early Friday to chase the slayers of the white girl. With a clue from another negro, who told them Terry was guilty, the creek and river bottoms and hills were beaten back and forth for the negro.

Texas Governor Pat Neff sent two detachments of Texas Rangers to Freestone county immediately following the vigilante's slaughter. The sheriff declared an uprising by blacks, "imminent (Archives 2011). Papers across the country ran stories of "race riots." Corsicana, Dellums' hometown, was at the center of these accounts. One eye witness claimed that the killers were '"sort of like professionals…[who] came from over at Corsicana and… from all around; why it just thrilled them to death to get out there and get those niggers, to have an excuse (Akers 1999:164).'" *The Lewiston Daily Sun*, of Lewiston, Maine, with dispatches from throughout the state reported on June 2nd:

NEGROES AND WHITES PREPARE FOR BATTLE NEAR KIRVIN, TEXAS

Several Thousand White Men, Heavily Armed, Reported Rushing To Scene Where Bad Feeling Has Existed Since Three Negroes Were Recently Burned – One White Man Killed Yesterday.

Corsicana, Texas: According to reports received here, a gathering of negroes (sic) estimated at between 75 and 100 is lined up about three miles southeast of Kirvin. They were reported heavily armed. All citizens of Streetman, eight miles north of Kirvin, except a few left on guard, the report said, have responded to calls for help. A Corsicana hardware store received an order from Kirvin late today for all the arms and ammunition in stock to be delivered at once. Many persons from Corsicana are reported to be en route to the scene of the trouble.

Dallas, Texas: Corsicana and Wortham report that advices of the race difficulty at Kirvin had been received and that several thousand men heavily armed. All telephone lines between Dallas and Kirvin, except one line through Wortham, have been cut, the local telephone office reported.

Fort Worth, Texas: Jack Marshal, chief dispatcher of the local railway station at 9:45 tonight stated that a mob of 400 white men from towns surrounding Kirvin were hurrying to the Powell farm south of Kirvin with machine guns.

Teague, Texas: A crowd of men estimated at 500 left Teague at 7:25 tonight for a place near Kirvin where it was reported 75 to 100 negroes were preparing to march against the white residents of that section.

Many of the stories of large-scale retaliations by African Americans were rumor. One that stated "three hundred negroes" from Corsicana were en route "proved unfounded (Archives 2011). Another stated that "an automobile army which invaded Kirvin…when race war rumors were widely circulated, disappeared when it became evident that the '"uprising would probably not materialize.... As the day progressed, negroes came out of their homes and went about their regular business. (Archives 2011)." However, violence did erupt between whites and African Americans:

> Mexia, Texas: One white man was reported killed and two others seriously wounded by negroes at the John King farm, near Kirvin, this afternoon. The white men are reported to be relatives of Miss Eula Awsley, whose slaying recently was followed by the burning of three negroes and the hanging of another at Kirvin. Mr. King, grandfather of Miss Awsley, was reported among the wounded. The number of negroes said to be involved has not been determined, although it was said to be a good many. Four loads of county officials have left here for the scene to assist officials of Freestone county. Officers said "bad feeling" had existed in Kirvin between whites and negroes since the burning of the negroes. Deputy Sheriff King and City Marshal King, of Kirvin, with a posse of men, arrested Leroy Gibson, a negro, this afternoon at the home of Mose Gibson, about five miles north of Teague. Three negroes in the house opened fire with rifles as they were leaving with the prisoner, the officers reported. During the battle Leroy Gibson was killed. Shortly after the shooting of the youth between 40 and 60 negroes are reported to have taken possession of a deserted house on the Powell farm four and one half

> miles south of Kirvin. They are said to be armed with rifles and to have threatened to resist any attempt of a crowd of whites to enter the house (Archives 2011).

In fact, Leroy Gibson was pulled from the house and was "shot into doll rags" by a posse that implicated him in the original murder. After the family believed the posse had gone, his young nephew left the house with a rifle to check on his mother and he was shot dead barely upon stepping beyond the threshold. Another relative then grabbed his rifle hoping to take down as many as he could from the posse (Akers 1999:126) A "reign of terror" occupied the region for months following the burnings.

Unfortunately, what should be ironic in this history is all too usual. On the day of the Awsley murder, a number of newspapers reported that two white men were arrested and questioned. These men had a running feud with Eula's grandfather and had vowed revenge two years prior. Eula's grandfather was convinced of their guilt when informed of his granddaughter's death. Their footprints were identified at the scene of the crime and they were even found, after the fact, *at* the scene of the crime by the sheriff who accepted their story of "mashing bran" for liquor (Akers 1999). Finally, the entire family clan left town, never to be seen again on that day.

During and after the burning of Snap Curry, many expressed that, without a doubt, John Cornish and Mose Jones were completely innocent, including the sheriff (Akers 1999). In fact the last of those three to be burned that night was Mose Jones and he faced the worst of the torture as the mob was not satisfied with the amount of suffering the prior two endured. An undercover investigator for the NAACP who was on the scene only a few days after the hanging reported in a speech at their annual convention later that year:

> Sheriff Mayo himself said that he believed that Mose Jones was innocent…I spoke to the people of the community, many of them. They had no particular interest in the matter that two innocent Negroes had been burned. Some of them even started their story, 'Well, I don't believe that Mose Jones was guilty, but Snap Curry wanted him to go on the trip with him…
>
> Two of them burned rapidly. The third the mob was not satisfied to burn in this way. So they tied a big rope, which had been soaked in water, around his neck and another around his feet. They then threw him in the flame for a moment and pulled him out, threw him in again and pulled him out, and continued to do that until the rope burned and he clasped his arms around the plow and refused to be dragged away, meeting his death as soon as he could (Kelly 1922)."

As I mentioned above, C.L. Dellums never spoke about this incident and relatives, including his grandson, expressed to me that they had never heard his grandfather mention it. However, in a personal conversation with the historian, author, and resident of Kirvin, Monte Akers, who has written the definitive book on the tragedy, there is absolutely no way Dellums could not have been "fully aware" of the event. That he did not speak publicly of the details of this violence remains a curiosity. However, it did shape how he approached it symbolically when he left for the West Coast, becoming one of the most important labor leaders and civil rights advocates in the United States.

Dellums and the Pullman Porters

Two years after Dellums arrived in West Oakland, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters officially declared themselves a union and the first in the United States established to represent an industry dominated by African Americans. Dellums immediately offered his services to the union following a speech given in West Oakland by the organizations magnetic

leader, A. Philip Randolph. Randolph was an early black civil rights activist, socialist and founding editor of the political and literary magazine, *The Messenger,* published out of Harlem, New York:

> …Then I met Randolph and saw him and heard him speak for the first time in January 1926. He made his first trip West then and held meetings in the Parks Chapel Church, located here in West Oakland, at Ninth and Campbell… [Y]ou could just see integrity all over Randolph's face. I was just confident of him, sitting there looking at him and listening to him. This man will stick, I thought, and he will pay whatever price is necessary to pay. He'll never desert the cause.
>
> So the next day I went over to his room. Negroes couldn't get into hotels then and the price kept us from making an issue of it. Randolph was staying in a house right around the corner on Willow Street, right off of Seventh Street. I went down to see him the next day, sat in his room and talked with him there. I told him then that I had helped…to get the porters together. This is the movement and you are the man. So I'm just here to let you know that as long as you are leading it you have one advocate here in Oakland. I'll be with you (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:12).

Dellums, a person of "impeccable appearance, his handsome features marked by piercing hazel blue eyes" soon became the unions' authority on the West Coast and Randolph's right hand man (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:vi). He shared Randolph's knowledge and celebration of radical, revolutionary movements and causes (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:12). He pushed successfully for Randolph's platform with a bulldog-like aggressiveness throughout the state and the country, gaining a reputation for unrelenting tenacity with a gentle charm.

Dellums did not last long as a porter. Pullman transferred the Mason affiliated supervisor that hired him. In his stead, they promoted a man whose first order was to "get rid of Dellums", which they did after placing an undercover spotter on his train who accused him of loafing on the job while "spread[ing] Bolshevik propaganda by Randolph." Dellums had been reading a copy of the *Messenger* (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:17, 25). Following his termination, the union and the workers supported Dellums, passing a hat around to help pay his rent; while Pullman kept him in their cross hairs, filling his everyday with trench-coated goons' furtive and overt threats, his wife fearing is immanent disappearance (Dellums and Henderson. 1973). Labor-related violence stung Oakland and the greater Bay Area at the time. These were the historical years of intense clashes between labor and their bosses; and the political environment that heavily favored business interests over workers in Oakland was hot. For example, in the downtown, police in "heavily armored vehicles…filled with men with sawed off shotguns and revolvers" open-fired upon strike sympathizers hurling pipes and placing automobiles and signal torpedoes in front of railcars driven by scabs (Times 1919). During this same strike, the Mayor of Oakland declared a "Lawless State," when six people were killed and five others were wounded during strike-related rioting (San Francisco Chronicle 1919). Besides the rails, violent strikes erupted in all types of industry in the Bay Area, from meatpackers to the construction unions during the years just following the end of World War I (Times 1926a; Times 1926c; Times 1926b; Times 1926d; Times 1926e; Times 1926f).

There was not only strife between labor and business, but also inter-ethnic conflict arising out of class stratification. In the African American community of West Oakland, with it's history of upward mobility for blacks combined with the neighborhood as a destination for migrants, this struggle emerges within the much more complex discourse of black subjectivity.

As an organizer, Dellums addresses this conflict through the language of the labor struggles. Typical of the labor fights, the Pullman Company sought to fracture communities—professional versus working class; accomodationist versus agitator (DuBois 2003; Washington 2003):

> The Pullman Company had their stool pigeons put out some propaganda that the Pullman Company was the only monopoly job the Negroes had in the nation. Pooling with Randolph and Dellums and their kind would cause Negroes to lose that monopoly. It's amazing who some of the Negroes were who attempted to use that to influence porters to desert the Brotherhood! They used it among what I dubbed "the parlor stool pigeons," professional Negro doctors, dentists, lawyers, schoolteachers, whatever, there were all kinds of schemes to get those people to talk to the porters and to the porters wives.

These "stool pigeons," convinced porters and their wives that Dellums' views threatened to upend their gains. The Pullman Company managed to create an organization of local, black professionals to fight against Dellums. The social capital the professional class possessed convinced some porters to recognize that what they had was not worth the larger cause Dellums sought to realize in the form of a labor movement. Wives slammed their doors in his face. However, C.L. Dellums was more successful than not. The Porters were a powerful front in the movement, forcing historically racist union shops to accommodate them (Dellums and Henderson. 1973).

By the late twenties, West Oakland was "jumping." Dellums' office above the pool hall on 7th Street was a large part of this excitement as he gained a national reputation as a fighter for the rights of workers and of blacks. Outside his door, the greatest jazz musicians in the country came to play on 7th Street, rivaling Harlem for its cultural importance. The African American

community in West Oakland was expanding in wealth, status and reputation as a fine place for blacks on the West Coast to settle.

A couple of short walking blocks away from Dellums' office, on the corner of Eighth and Winslow, Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association [UNIA] opened their West Coast headquarters. Just as in Harlem, the building etched with the name Liberty Hall above the threshold, the UNIA meetings were arrays of cultural celebration. Hundreds filled Liberty Hall to absorb, with "formality" and "order" the music and the poetry from the evening's agenda, at least as much as they did to hear the philosophy of self-help repatriation (Broussard 1981:347; Daniels 1990:146). UNIA competed for followers with other black community organizations in the neighborhood, in particular the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP]. Other black organizations, such as the Urban League, opted out of concentrating efforts in the Bay Area. The Bay Area, they noted, had "no Negro problem" as compared with other large metropolitan regions (Weiss 1974; as quoted in Broussard, 1981, @349). However, they had considered opening a branch in Oakland to "accelerate the integration of Afro-Americans into the general populace" with the possibility of forming a "viable interracial organization" to promote African American upward mobility through integration (Broussard 1981:350). They also wanted to verify the veracity of the claims that the area was indeed as tolerant as it's reputation made out (Broussard 1981:350).

The New Deal

Relative prosperity, in the form of tolerance and economics, was just that, relative. In the 1930's, large-scale public works projects administered by President Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration were being planned for West Oakland just as they were in the rest of the country.

Roosevelt recognized the housing industry as a place to start putting people back to work. The Great Depression halted building starts while the rate of defaults on personal mortgages skyrocketed. To staunch the bleeding construction economy and the deluge of foreclosures, the federal government passed H.R. 9620, also known as the National Housing Act of 1934.

The Act was designed, "to encourage improvement in housing standards and conditions, to provide a system of mutual mortgage insurance, and for other purposes (9620. 1934:1)." H.R. 9620 created mortgage guarantees and re-structured the mortgage lending market so that loans were easier to acquire for new and existing housing structures. It created a powerful government agency, the Federal Housing Administration to manage and monitor its directives. The FHA's ultimate purpose, however, and what pushed the Roosevelt Administration to fight for its creation, was the hope that its passage would restore jobs to the construction industry.

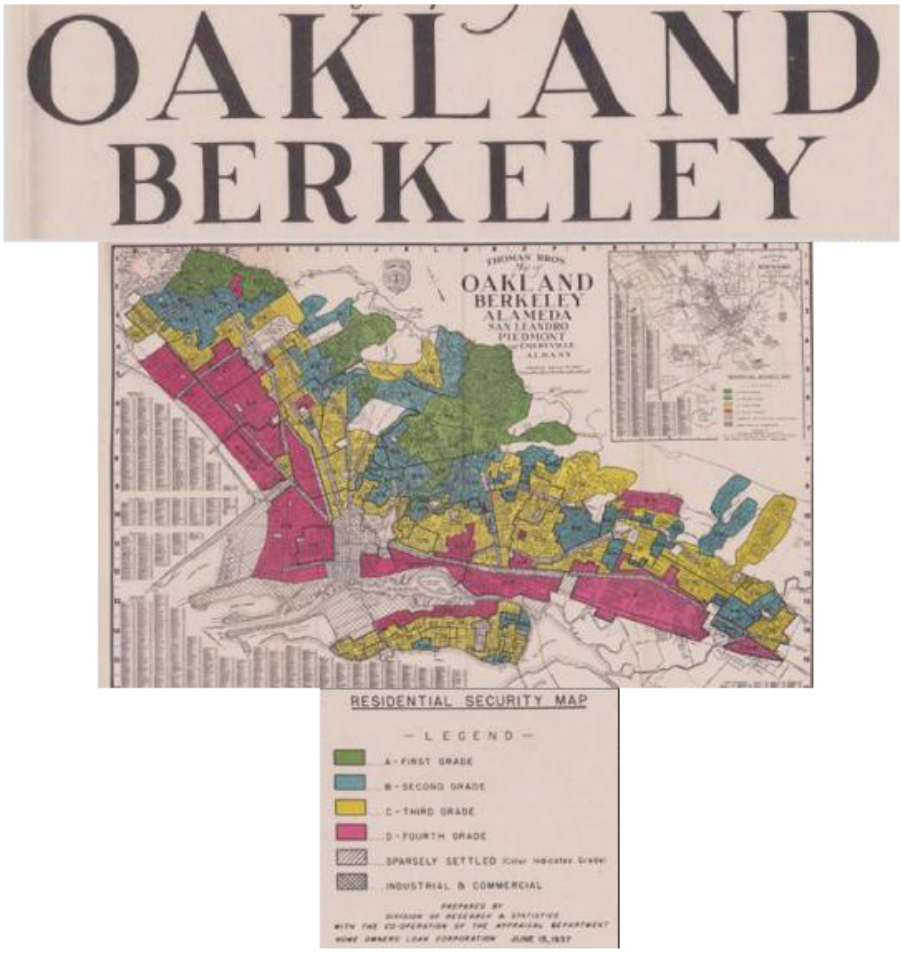
The Act did in fact assist a number of households, insuring 513,000 homes between 1935 and 1939 (the program continues to this day) (Jackson 1980:424). However, it also had a deep effect in hastening the segretory slumification of inner city neighborhoods like West Oakland while at the same time advancing the white suburbanization of the United States, including the East Bay. It also created an ethnic divide between those who are worthy of realizing the American Dream of home ownership and those worthy of being wards of the government by institutionalizing a dependence on public housing.

All loan guarantees had to go through a strict assessment conducted by a trained FHA underwriter to determine the risk associated with the loan (Jackson 1980:429). His job was to rate the borrower, the property and the neighborhood. Through their meticulous "Underwriters Manual," the FHA had a list of ten criteria, of which they weighed importance. The top two, comprising 60% on the scale, included, " **"**relative economic stability," at 40% and "protection

from adverse influences," comprising 20% (Jackson 1980:430). To further assist in utilizing the material, the manual stated "crowded neighborhoods lesson desirability," as well as problems with "smoke and odors," and most significant "inharmonious racial or nationality groups" were to be avoided? (Jackson 1980:429)."

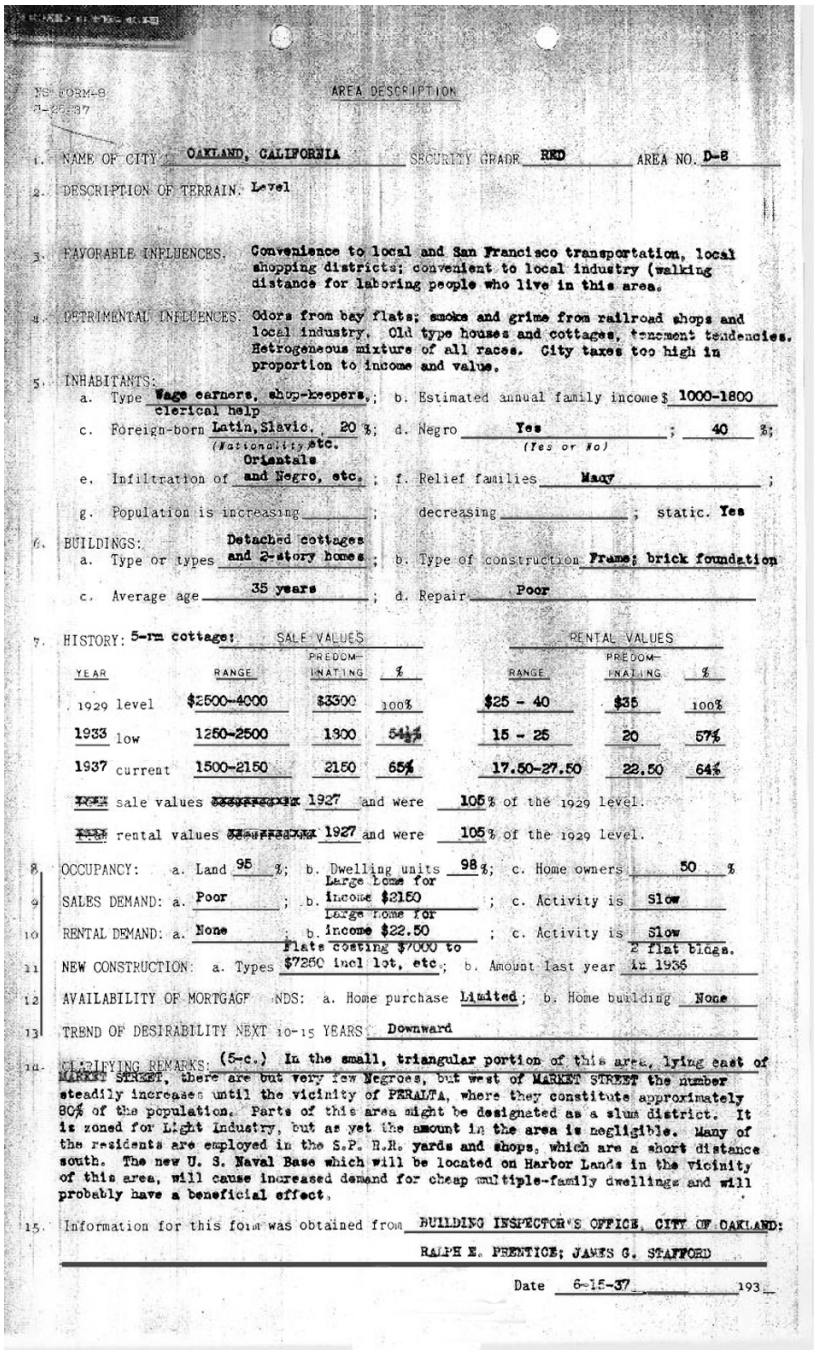
Cartographies of Risk

The FHA created cartographies of risk called "Residential Security Maps." This surveillance mechanism was designed to assist assessors in navigating the landscape in order to avoid potential hazards and spotlight security and insecurity in their quest to distribute monies. Below is the map for the cities of Oakland, Berkeley and Emeryville:



The legend on the map presents four colors connected to an alphabetic designation: Green marks category "A--First Grade"; blue, "B--Second Grade;" Yellow, "C-- Third Grade;" and finally, red, "D--Fourth Grade." Two other keys in a grid in a checkerboard pattern represent "sparsely settled," and "industrial and commercial " areas. The Oakland map appears like a manual for dissecting a carcass.

Adjoining these maps are single page documents, listed as "NS FORM-8" and simply titled "Area Description:"



NS FORM-8
7-[illegible]37

AREA DESCRIPTION

1. NAME OF CITY OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA SECURITY GRADE RED AREA NO. D-8

2. DESCRIPTION OF TERRAIN: Level

3. FAVORABLE INFLUENCES: Convenience to local and San Francisco transportation, local shopping districts; convenient to local industry (walking distance for laboring people who live in this area.

4. DETRIMENTAL INFLUENCES: Odors from bay flats; smoke and grime from railroad shops and local industry. Old type houses and cottages, tenement tendencies. Hetrogeneous mixture of all races. City taxes too high in proportion to income and value.

5. INHABITANTS:
a. Type Wage earners, shop-keepers, clerical help; b. Estimated annual family income $ 1000-1800
c. Foreign-born Latin, Slavic, etc. (Nationality) 20 %; d. Negro Yes (Yes or No); 40 %;
e. Infiltration of Orientals and Negro, etc.; f. Relief families Many;
g. Population is increasing ____; decreasing ____; static. Yes

6. BUILDINGS:
a. Type or types Detached cottages and 2-story homes; b. Type of construction Frame; brick foundation
c. Average age 35 years; d. Repair Poor

7. HISTORY: 5-rm cottage:

YEAR	SALE VALUES RANGE	SALE VALUES PREDOMINATING	SALE VALUES %	RENTAL VALUES RANGE	RENTAL VALUES PREDOMINATING	RENTAL VALUES %
1929 level	$2500-4000	$3300	100%	$25 - 40	$35	100%
1933 low	1250-2500	1900	54½%	15 - 25	20	57%
1937 current	1500-2150	2150	65%	17.50-27.50	22.50	64%

~~1929~~ sale values ~~decreased~~ 1927 and were 105% of the 1929 level.
~~1933~~ rental values ~~decreased~~ 1927 and were 105% of the 1929 level.

8. OCCUPANCY: a. Land 95 %; b. Dwelling units 98 %; c. Home owners 50 %
9. SALES DEMAND: a. Poor; b. Large home for income $2150; c. Activity is Slow
10. RENTAL DEMAND: a. None; b. Large home for income $22.50 Flats costing $7000 to $7250 incl lot, etc.; c. Activity is Slow 2 flat bldgs.
11. NEW CONSTRUCTION: a. Types; b. Amount last year In 1936
12. AVAILABILITY OF MORTGAGE FUNDS: a. Home purchase Limited; b. Home building None
13. TREND OF DESIRABILITY NEXT 10-15 YEARS: Downward
14. CLARIFYING REMARKS: (5-c.) In the small, triangular portion of this area, lying east of MARKET STREET, there are but very few Negroes, but west of MARKET STREET the number steadily increases until the vicinity of PERALTA, where they constitute approximately 80% of the population. Parts of this area might be designated as a slum district. It is zoned for Light Industry, but as yet the amount in the area is negligible. Many of the residents are employed in the S.P. R.R. yards and shops, which are a short distance south. The new U. S. Naval Base which will be located on Harbor Lands in the vicinity of this area, will cause increased demand for cheap multiple-family dwellings and will probably have a beneficial effect.
15. Information for this form was obtained from BUILDING INSPECTOR'S OFFICE, CITY OF OAKLAND; RALPH E. PRENTICE; JAMES G. STAFFORD

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Fourteen categories provide details to the color-shaded areas. On the previous page is the description of the crimsoned area where the Winslow Street house presides. In the most obvious way, the map illustrates just how fundamental race and ethnicity played in the planning of

housing policy. Whether the maps were effective in determining the pattern of loan distribution is debated (HILLIER 2003; Hillier 2005).

However, a survey of the homes in the Winslow Street environ reveal that no single-family house dates to the time of the loan distribution nor do they reveal rehabilitation construction in this area of "heavy odors from Bay flats, smoke and grime from railroad, a heterogeneous population, the "infiltration," of "Orientals, Negroes, etc.,"(i.e., it goes without saying), --many families on "relief," (shorthand for government welfare), values not worth the property taxes; "tenement tendencies," i.e., multiple people living in units; Latin (i.e., Italian or Portuguese) and Slavs; and where blacks "constituted approximately 80% of the population." In contrast a bordering vicinity, where the question of a "Negro" population was answered with "Not known, but a threat;" where the "Infiltration" was of "Business, rather than undesirable;" and whose "Clarifying remarks" state: "If this area were not a border-line case, it might with propriety, be graded HIGH RED (D) or designated as a business area; but on account of predominance of old single-family residences, and absence of undesirable racial elements, has been accorded A LOW YELLOW(C) grading," has plenty, possibly as a safeguard against the realization of the menace.

This neighboring area had already become populated with apartment complexes prior to the neighborhoods indexing by the federal government. Through their funding mandates, the FHA continued to promote this pattern, providing private investors with lucrative financing to develop multi-family rentals. In many cases the FHA even paid 30% more than the necessary construction costs, thus providing developers with risk-free opportunities (Jackson 1980).

Working our way backwards, a number of other maps exist that were used in the creation of the RSMs and illustrate risk in greater detail. These maps feature every structure on every

block, represented by a thin rectangular box. They indexed categories such as "Contagious Diseases" and the number of "Tuberculosis deaths between 1931-1935;" as well as "Juvenile Delinquencies between 1931-1935." Where one of these people or diseases reside, the box is shaded so that the entire document looks like a semi-completed, standardized test.

Also on each of these maps is a larger box of a five-block by two-block area cordoned-off in red ink, and marked "designated area." Another separate map is a blow-up detail of this designated area. Here, rectangular dashes of red signify the maps heading: "Buildings Occupied by Negroes."

These maps were created after government "enumerators" went house to house, meticulously checking boxes on 4"x 6" index cards, jotting the particulars of the dwellings and the dwellers in the neighborhood. Enumerators did not only map spaces such as West Oakland, but created taxonomies with every house in 60 different cities in the country.

The cards are divided into sections, designating areas for building makeup, details of the occupants and the areas to be filled by the office worker, enmeshing structure, subjectivity and bureaucracy. Questions such as "type of structure" and "business units," "year built" and "condition" occupy one part of the card. The other part offers the questions such as "occupancy," "duration," "running water," refrigeration," "number and age of all persons," and "race of household." On the back of the cards is a section that lists "present employment," "past employment" "location" and "mode of transportation."

The cards on Winslow Street reveal an ethnically mixed block yet somewhat segregated by direction. Those living on the southern half of the block are mostly African American renters; while those on the northern part are mostly "Latin," homeowners. As a side note, none

of the houses on the block had any type of refrigeration equipment, including an icebox, a symbol of their mostly working to lower class status (Praetzellis et al. 2004).

Two houses on the block lacked hot running water. Both were rented by "Negroes" and were declared "unfit for use." Neither house had a bath but had a "1/2 flush toilet." In one of the homes lived a family of five, four children between the ages of "under 1 year" to between "10-14." They had been living in this house for over five years. The adult lists her occupation as a "housewife," and is receiving "D.R." or direct cash relief from the Federal Government. A note written in cursive on the back reads, "House condemned tenants ordered to move out at once." The other house on the block without hot water had similar remarks. A single, African American, "laborer," domiciled here for two years. He too was ordered to move immediately.

Of the homeowners, the house at 1020 Winslow, originally owned by John Hamer, and now owned, for the past seven years, by a "Latin" "bakery wagon driver," named Giovanni Caponio, is the only house in need of "major repairs." After ascending the twelve front steps, the enumerator found that eight people were living in the house, including one toddler, one adolescent, four teen-agers and two adults no older than 64. The house was valued at $2,650.00.

The one "Negro" homeowner's property was in need of "minor repairs" and valued at $3,500.00. There were only two adults in that house and the one employed worked as a "garbage man" in South Berkeley, the destination for upwardly mobile African Americans. The couple had owned the house for eight years.

Rise of the housing projects

As the surrounding, less "threatened" neighborhoods welcomed new residents through the FHA loan program, West Oakland was simultaneously becoming the beneficiary of another type of multi-family housing development. On the horizon was the first, large-scale public housing project for low-income residents in Oakland. The designated area outlined by the

broken red line would soon become "Campbell Village," named after one of the streets on which it presided. This project, and the many others that would follow, inaugurated struggles over claims and rights to a space, promoting a neighborhood steeped in contestation that never seemed to end, displaying all the requisite symbols of a hard worn, entrenched battle — spoils, spilled blood, victors, victims, beneficiaries and heaps of collateral damage.

This housing "experiment," along with a number of others scattered across the urban United States, represented for the first time the federal governments direct hand in assisting the poor with long-term housing assistance (Abrams 1965). Having been undertaken in Europe for many a decade, liberal politicians pushed the issue of the right to safe, affordable housing as akin to the necessity for food and healthcare during the New Deal (Abrams 1965:72)

Unlike the FHA loans that prioritized direct construction in vacant, "park-like" less populated spaces and in those that could stem the tide of the "less-desirable," Campbell Village was a construction through destruction approach in a heavily, heterogeneous populated neighborhood. As is the case with most federal projects, a large part of the objective was not purely in public assistance but in private welfare. That the people would be helped just "sweetened the deal (Abrams 1965)."

The first course of action necessary to commence construction was to clear the area of domiciles, and, in this case, had been accorded the designation of "slum." Eminent domain, it was preached, would provide jobs, increase the badly needed housing stock, and right the social ill of the squalor by flattening families' homes. C.L. Dellums saw the writing on the wall, "Under eminent domain you cannot win," he exclaimed (Dellums and Henderson. 1973: 75), but that did not stop him from fighting for the badly needed low-income housing.

As Dellums tells it, the local housing authority contracted the assessments of the property values on the homes in the Campbell village vicinity to a realtor's office located in the township of Piedmont, California. Piedmont, an incorporated city of only 1.8 square miles that literally exists as an island within Oakland proper, boasts of the 1920's era nickname, the "City of Millionaires… because there were more millionaires per square mile than in any city in the United States (City of Piedmont 2010). In the eyes of a Piedmont resident, these buildings were worthless.

Dellums therefore concentrated his efforts on helping homeowners obtain a fair price. Yet the priority for these neighbors was not the dollar pinned to their houses, but the extermination of their homes and community, their *mana*, that force of the fetish in the commodity that bounded them to their place and situated them in the fundamental, reciprocal relationship with a government that promised, in return for good citizenship and the payment of taxes, the protection of private property in the American dream cycle of landed home-ownership. Eminent domain was the ultimate betrayal—the fundamental taboo.

A multi-ethnic group of homeowners created the West Oakland Welfare Association to fight the razing. They took umbrage that their homes were demeaned as slums. In fact, they were downright insulted. The homeowners retaliated with a first strike consisting of what today we call a NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) argument, patriotically supporting the need for "rehousing slum dwellers," just not in their neighborhood of "substantial homes (Tribune 1939c)." Dellums led this fight and helped provide the rhetoric. A staunch supporter of what he saw as a badly needed project, it was being conducted on the wrong block. As he recalled a number of years later, things would have been fine literally one or two blocks either west or south.

The press ran stories that illustrated the force of the homeowners' attachments (Tribune 1938; Tribune 1939a; Tribune 1939b; Tribune 1940; Tribune 1939e). One particularly maudlin piece published by the Oakland Tribune during the incipient stage of the struggle told the story of the aptly named Miss Edna Gardner and her three elderly sisters. Destined for the chopping block was the white family's meticulous two-story Victorian home. Photographs illustrate the glory of the houses sprawling gardens and goldfish-pond lined stepping-stone paths through orchards of apple and peach; and even feature Teddy the hulking tomcat, peacefully resting on a blanket nestled in a basket in his own bedroom, a pair of fine porcelain feeding bowls perched at his side. The Gardner's parents bought the house new in the 1880's and the kin had lived there since infancy, as was the case with their neighbors across the street. The article concludes "sentimental women have no place in the march of progress (Tribune 1938)."

Their fight lasted a year and a half. The dissenters, who collected over 1500 signatures to petition the dismantling of the low-income program, hailed that the Housing Authority intended "to discriminate against the Negro race," by creating a "Jim Crow project," through "segregation {Oakland (Post-Enquirer 1939; Tribune 1939d; Post-Enquirer 1939). The black owned Oakland Post-Enquirer headlined, "City Council Disrupted by Wild Riot," described the scene when three hundred and fifty homeowners toppled the velvet ropes and hopped the banister to overrun the City Council chambers, even sequestering the gavel of Mayor William J. McCracken. This flame was ignited when the lone public supporter of the project, a white, West Oakland homeowner and brother to a former city councilmember insulted their patriotism, accusing the protest of being "promoted by reds and agitators" (possibly in reference to Dellums) during the public commentary (Post-Enquirer 1939)" A cadre of ten police officers stormed the chambers and physically evicted the mob (Post-Enquirer 1939; Tribune 1939d).

The homeowners took the fight to court through a handful of separate cases, demanding that the razing was in the purview of the judiciary, not the City Council legislated local Housing Authority, a cozy body of political appointees. The homeowners also contended that they were strong-armed to accept low-balled payments for their properties. On each case, the judge, shipped in from rural Lake County, home to fruit orchards, wealthy resorts, and the decimated Pomo Indians, accepted the defenses arguments and tried each motion on a case-by-case basis. Newspaper clippings show jurors touring homes, observing for themselves the fairness of the slum designation and the offered price. In the end, the judge offered a compromise decision and split the difference, supporting the Housing Authority's, authority while accepting the jury's recommendation's of greater financial compensation. Six months later, photographs reveal a clean street corner with neat stacks of switches crisscrossing electric lines in foreshortened, rooftop photographs.

To great fanfare, the head of the Federal Housing Authority flew-in from Washington D.C, to tour the construction. Flanked by the mayor and other local dignitaries, he addressed a new group of protestors--landlords:

> Some apartment owners have been afraid that these projects will take away their tenants… We have repeatedly assured them that our housing program involves only persons in the low-income group. In fact, the clearing of slums has invariably stimulated private, building booms (Post-Enquirer 1940).

Dellums "raised sand" for any victory he could muster (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:70). Through continuous rabble-rousing, he fought to integrate, or "checkerboard," Campbell Village (Dellums and Henderson. 1973:70). The Housing Authority hired an African American realtor, who had previously integrated some local, unrestricted neighborhoods, to

manage the property. After cherry-picking new tenants, (choosing those he believed would behave best), he placed blacks and whites, northern and southern, next to one another (Dellums and Henderson. 1973). Dellums recalled his friends' inspired effort and illustrated this model of a cordial community through the example of politeness in sharing a bathroom. He also highlighted the quaintly friendly, inter-ethnic competitions that formed around clipping hedges and housekeeping.

Newspaper reports during the construction and following the completion of the project do reveal a mix of African Americans and whites; however, the blacks appear in the minority. In what looks as a set-up picture to my eye, two black and five white youngsters between the ages of pre-teen and toddler, step through an empty courtyard, tugging Radio-flyer wagons behind. The caption below it reads:

> VILLAGE SCENE. While a group of children romps along the sidewalk, Campbell Village presents a vista of peace and quiet… Uncle Sam is tops as a landlord for them (Post-Enquirer 1941).

In another article marking the one-year anniversary of the projects' opening, three young "Latin" youths in bathing trunks hold hands while play in a "spray pool," the older grasping the hand of the young toddler while the third gives a deer-in-the-headlights stare at the camera. The interior photo depicts a young white mother reading to her five and nine-year old on their living room couch, the caption noting the father's employment in the shipyards. The article accompanying the images promotes the worthiness of the poor from the projects by highlighting their success in molding the tenants' into models of bourgeois domesticity. The belly of the article is a bolded quote from Dellums' friend, William P. Butler, the village manager, "Well,

they weren't ALL first class housekeepers when they moved in…But they are now (Livingston 1942).'"

Only a few months after the first resident moved into Campbell Village, another large-scale, low-income public housing project opened a few blocks to the east. Peralta Villa did not checkerboard, but adopted what Dellums called "integrated segregation,"--buildings divided by ethnicity. Dellums blames "both the Negroes and the plain folk" for this digression, claiming they "went fishing!" before a fight could even rage (Dellums and Henderson. 1973). However, by this point, it did not matter. With Hitler already having conquered much of Europe, the gallows of a world war loomed large in the shadows. As noted in the Area Description above, the Campbell Village site was close to the new U.S Naval base at Harbors Landing and this would be "beneficial" to the war effort. Peralta Villa, just a few blocks away, was immediately converted to war housing, populated entirely by war migrants (Johnson 1993). Another housing project, Cypress Village also emerged from the war effort. This, however completely abandoned any foresight for ethnic harmony, segregated entirely for African Americans war laborers.

Chapter 3
A New Landscape

West Oakland has always maintained some of the lowest property values in the City. One reason has been the proximity of industrial factories to houses, a growth dating back as far as the late 19th and early 20th Century, when, as I had mentioned in Chapter 2, "West Oakland Improvement Association" formed in 1888 to address the issue of the polluted marsh and it's effects on the public health of the local community, including typhoid epidemic; when Jack London wrote of "giant rock rats" at the Oakland Mole; and when houses were said to be painted, "West Oakland gray," in order to hide the omnipresent soot that their shiplap siding absorbed. Within an eight block radius of the Winslow Street house sat large canneries, metal and pipe fabrication, a cigar factory, industrial laundry, industrial printing, a yeast factory, a milk and dairy processing plant, a chemical distribution factory, rail service yards, automobile and truck parts manufacturing and ship building and repair, as well as federally backed military equipment plants, to name just a few. This relationship between political and spatial economy within a racialized, American discourse, factors heavily in the creation of West Oakland's legacy as a poor, African American reserve.

Beginning in the 1920' and up until the mid1950's, the city of Oakland, as did many cities in the United States, confront a weakening of its downtown in terms of capital accumulation. In Oakland, the downtown business districts' property values plummeted 50% in those 30 years (Self 2003: 26). The growth of metropolitan regions began to take effect with larger department and chain stores weakening the fiscal power of the individual merchant. To counter this, Oakland created a plan to woo East Coast industries to open satellite factories on its

outskirts and in places like West Oakland, preserving the surrounding hills for housing the workforce.

After World War II, this plan accelerated. The shrinking, military industrial complex necessitated Oakland seeks ways to ride the postwar, economic boom into the future. Oakland hoped to compete against other municipalities for industrial expansion, especially by capitalizing on the military industrial complex that had been such an important fixture of its economy. Simultaneously, new developments in housing construction, planning and finance technologies made the dream of homeownership a reality for a great number of people returning from the war. Oakland attempted to position itself at the forefront of this new era by adapting a boosterism campaign that was based on the concept of the planning design known as the "industrial garden." The industrial garden, Lewis Mumford's expansion of the urban designer Ebenezer Howard's Garden City project for the English working class, proposed a perfectly balanced urban plan, separating the less attractive excesses of labor—the ribald and the dirt-- from the bucolic possibilities of tranquil, domestic bliss (Meyers 1998; Self 2003). A metropolitan core would manage these efforts through municipal services, as well as collect and showcase the cultural expression springing from the convergence of excess capital and social life {(McClintock 2011:20, 2008; Self 2003)."

The downtown Oakland business and political elite saw itself as this core, as the metropolitan center of a greater, East Bay industrial garden (Self 2000). They endorsed industrial expansion and suburbanization to the east on agricultural land. They also promoted the infrastructure established in West Oakland. It already housed a number of industrial plants, including the shipbuilding and military facilities at attention and ready to return to their capacious productivity of the war years. The port sat within its boundaries. And, not to mention,

transportation defined its environs, pivotal in its role of western expansion that feverishly created the modern, United States.

The Oakland hills, already home to the business and political elite boasted a sublime climate for recreation and relaxation. It was close enough for daily, commuter convenience and yet far enough to avoid the effluvia of working class life, especially for the young executive.

With a weak political presence and very little tax generation from its poor and immigrant, non-white population, the political establishment saw West Oakland as a major beneficiary of land-use permits requested by industrial and corporate entities. Eventually, this strategy became ensconced through official decree. Oakland's first "General Plan," "zoned" West Oakland as "industrial," "general commercial" or "high density residential" (as opposed to the low density residential hills) (Russell 2011). The plan also extended West Oakland's rapport with transportation, running the essential infrastructure for urban sprawl through the yards of its residents. These factors laid the groundwork for the massive "urban renewal" and "revitalization" programs that dominated much of the municipal terrains of the postwar years (Russell 2011).

Urban Renewal and Revitalization

Oakland's philosophy towards urban renewal emerged from the convergence of a liberal, patrician desire to rescue the poor from the conditions of their poverty with the fear that culture-as-race propagates it (Lewis 1959; Moynihan 1969) As discussed in Chapter 2, the security maps exemplified the epistemology determining those areas in need of "slum clearance" During the 1950's, these areas were declared as "blighted," a term in the urban renewal literature that had originally been distinct from that of "slum:"

> A slum is most simply defined as housing (on whatever scale) so inadequate or so deteriorate as to endanger the health, safety, or morals of its inhabitants. A

blighted residential area is one on the downgrade, which has not reached the slum stage (Wood 1935).

Slum and blight were used interchangeably. Yet given to where these policies eventually led, the etymology of the term, "blight," considered the more polite of the two, is worth mentioning. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "blight":

> Emerged into literary speech from the talk of gardeners and farmers, perhaps ultimately from Old English *blæce,* a scrofulous skin condition and/or from Old Norse *blikna* "become pale." Used in a general way of agricultural diseases, sometimes with suggestion of "invisible baleful influence;" hence figurative sense of "anything which withers hopes or prospects or checks prosperity" (Harper 2001).

Fundamental to the logic of blight is that it will spread, infecting other neighborhoods. Blight can be easily visible, seen through the crumbling landscape. It is codified through taxonomies charting economic hardship, crime and health problems as I expressed in Chapters 2 and 3. Blight declaration seeks to eradicate the "prosperity checking" virus while inoculating the surrounding area, a healthy white fearful of a sickly pale. Poverty could be solved with cleansing.

The urban renewal programs designed in the 1950's involved a number of bureaucratic and political entities. In a nutshell, for Oakland to receive the dollars being offered through the federal, Department of Urban Development [HUD], often amounting to 75% of the budgeted costs of a project, the local planning committee and redevelopment agency defined areas that fit seven factors of a "workable program," including: "(1) that redevelopment is necessary for the public health, safety, welfare, and morals and (2) that a relocation plan for residents of the project area has been established." It also must show that codes have been implemented to

prevent future blight and that the private sector has not succeeded in providing proper housing. In order to define these conditions, HUD insisted on community input through a citizen's committee. (Rhomberg 2004) When a plan is finally created, the planning commission votes. If they vote to approve the plan, the local legislature can pass it with a majority vote; if the plan is rejected, they require a two-thirds majority.

HUD's rhetoric may have prioritized a citizens' voice, but it was not a voice of those citizens affected most by the plans. HUD's strategy required "the overall welfare of the city," be reflected, a stipulation the local government utilized to exploit racial prejudice. In Oakland in the 1950's, the citizen's committee, the planning commission and the Redevelopment Agency were all appointed by the mayor—a Republican conservative aligned with the downtown business elite (Rhomberg, 2004; Self 2003).

A West Oakland space bordering the downtown district was chosen as the first site for this postwar redevelopment (Tribune 1959). The City hoped to simultaneously increase tax revenue while simultaneously creating a buffer between the downtown business, the political district and the pollution from the west, particularly the impoverished, African American population crowding its limits. (Hausler 1987; Self 2003). Named the Acorn project, (referencing the concept of growth in the land of the Oaks), it was a twenty-four and a half acre site that would combine new housing with new factory development. It sat directly adjacent to the Moore Shipyards where thousands of African Americans worked building warships. Adjacent to the shipyards lived many of these employees, housed in cramped, temporary shelters who, at wars end, were absorbed into and already, seam-bursting, West Oakland housing stock. Acorn, it seems, did not possess the ideal of the industrial garden; but it would be good enough given the conditions in which it was realized to protect the downtown.

The Acorn plan was initially met with mixed emotions, similar to Campbell Village, the first public housing development I discussed in Chapter 2. Many neighbors and leading African American organizations, including the NAACP, supported government intervention, but not quietly. They saw "blight," not, of course, as a cultural trait, (although there were conflicts between what was seen as the less sophisticated, new Southern black immigrants compared to the already established African American community) but as a result of entrenched racist neglect. The need, therefore, was in an increase in the City's affordable, quality housing stock as well as the rehabilitation of previous units, including private homes that were haphazardly subdivided in the scramble to absorb the war migrants (Rhomberg 2004:131) And with people like C.L. Dellums in the fray, and with the experiences and legacy from previous battles, they scrapped for inclusion in the employment resulting from these efforts.

The federal government tied their funding to "integration" a concept the planners embraced by actively seeking *white* tenants as residents. This would displace a majority of the black population that had formerly lived within its boundaries (Wood 1968). Rents were controlled, priced low to attract the new residents. However, income levels were also limited. Yet instead of putting limits on maximum amounts of dollars earned to qualify for an apartment, an established practice for the poor in need of housing, it placed *minimum* amounts, assuring tenant roles filled with the burgeoning middle class.

The restrictions placed on grants and loans for rehabilitating houses in industrial areas—a major risk factor for blight and a policy carried out in West Oakland since its birth-- negated qualifying a majority of the West Oakland homes. In fact, razing was justified as the only possible solution. If industry were placed in other parts of the city, property values in those neighborhoods would shrink, thus negatively affecting the tax revenue in a process detrimental to

"the overall welfare of the city." Articles appeared in the black press denouncing the racist actions, while the mainstream press promoted the civility of white integration (Wood 1968). Parts of the plan went to the U.S. Supreme Court. However, it was to no available.

The Oakland City Council approved Acorn in 1957 and the destruction began in 1962. Despite actually identifying 30% of the housing structures as qualifying for rehabilitation, they preferred the clean slate, razing the entire space of 1,790 housing units that sat on 50 city blocks and covered 190 acres. 9,000 people were displaced (Hausler 1987; Self 2003). A part of 7th street was destroyed despite revenue generated through its businesses. This revenue, according to planners, was "marginal (Rhomberg 2004:128)." The planning agency did however elect to keep three buildings—a house for their field office, a church, and a mortuary.

Despite the requirement stating that displaced residents must be placed into better conditions for a workable program, this was not the final consideration. Four hundred and seventy housing units were to be erected, of which ten-percent, or forty-seven units, were guaranteed for the nine thousand displaced residents (Post 1968). The other ninety percent as I stated above, were intended for middle class working folks to vaccinate against spreading blight. In fact, Acorn was owned by a labor union organization, pitting the working, middle class against the working lower class; as well as the unemployed and the lumpen.

Displaced and needy black residents were hailed to what they saw as overt racism. Beyond the brutality inherent in the razing of homes and small businesses and the focus on white integration, the work immediately began on the industrial segment and seven years later, there were twenty industrial buildings up and running, including Mack Trucks and Ford Motors (Russell 2011). This industrial segment represented over ten million dollars in private industry investment. The jobs promised to the African American community, much of it the result of "rabble-rousing," through Dellums' efforts to pass the Fair Employment Practices Law of 1959, only barely materialized

(Dellums and Henderson. 1973). The city agencies charged with delivering the contracts blamed the employers for not following through on promises; the employers, mandated to hire through the union shops, blamed the unions for their discriminatory ways; and the unions blamed both the agencies and the employers. Racism was entrenched within all of these entities, yet all could deny its damaging affect through the banality of bureaucratic maneuvering (Self 2003).

The everyday violence realized through the bureaucracy furthermore stalled the building of the housing. The structuring of the housing portion's funding was made dependent on the income emanating from the industrial portion. This financing had been tied to the city's 25% financial commitment to the project (Russell 2011). The taxes generated from the factories and warehouses reimbursed the city's allocation. The city further stalled erecting the housing when they first investigated, and then fired, the original contractor, who was black; and in a stunning catch-22, the release of funds were stalled over serious concerns by HUD that market-rate housing was being offered in a blighted neighborhood, therefore destined to fail. For eight years, a large swath of overgrown weeds and crabgrass occupied the place where hundreds of families had been uprooted (Rhomberg 2004; Self 2003).

Eminent Domain—Bart and the Postal Hub

The Acorn project was not the only eminent domain, blight clearance effort to emerge in 1957. The State of California created a blueprint to replace the old Key System electric train that operated throughout the county and shuttled commuters across the Bay on the lower deck of the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge. Instead, the planners envisioned an underground subway to transport the newly burgeoning suburban class profiting from the postwar boom from the surrounding cities, many of which enforced de facto and official racial covenant restrictions on the ethnic make-up of their dwellers.

As I discuss in Chapters One and Two, West Oakland's birth had been defined by its identity as the transportation hub for passaging in the West in an abundance of manifestations--from daily

working commutes through the gates to gold. One hundred years later, the legacy still shined. West Oakland would be the last stop on a subway line before travelling to San Francisco via an engineering marvel of a tunnel underneath the Bay.

This new system, dubbed the Bay Area Rapid Transit [BART] would enter West Oakland directly following stops in the downtown corridor. BART in the downtown corridor would run underground. In West Oakland, BART would contribute to the eradication of blight. Unlike the plans in most of the other cities that, like the downtown, drilled underground to preserve the areas along the route, in West Oakland they elected to construct elevated tracks. And, in a nod to history, the BART route would mimic the commute path to San Francisco as from the days as Oakland Point. In order to achieve this, they directed the train along the 7th Street corridor, destroying more homes and the commercial center, and, significantly, the African American cultural heritage. This street, where Dellums' Pullman Porter union offices were located (as mentioned in Chapter 3); where Jack Johnson trained; where Jack London's foster mother, Jenny Prentiss would have picked-up little "cotton ball" Jack from his father's grocery store to stroll with her family. By the 1960's it carried the nickname, "the Harlem of the West." The jazz and blues legends that played the fancy clubs and not so fancy joints of 7th Street in the early days, from Billy Holliday to Big Momma Thornton hosted the funk and soul of the 1960's, with such luminaries as Aretha Franklin and Sly Stone performing during their earlier years. Yet to the planners, 7th street looked merely like a run down denizen of prostitution, crime and uncouthness.

West Oakland was not the only place with elevated tracks, but routes in the white areas were designed to preserve their commercial corridors, such as in the predominantly Irish and Italian (ethnicities now treated as white) neighborhood, the Rockridge, an area that would by the 1990's be one of the most expensive in the city.

During this period, a main postal hub had also been planned on 7th street as a way of promoting economic development. It was presented as an opportunity for the African American community to gain stable employment (Self 2003; Self 2000). However only a few would benefit as it was automated, providing for fewer long-term jobs but increased, temporary and holiday positions. To make room for the economic prospect, more homes and local businesses were destroyed on 7th street and on the surrounding blocks.

A newspaper article published during the postal clearances sums up this historical moment. The Oakland Tribune headline, dated August 16, 1960 reads: "Wrecker Uses Sherman Tank to Blitz Old Homes." The tank was most likely made at the converted, Ford Motor plant in Richmond, California, a city ten miles away along the waterfront with a very similar history of violence as usual as Oakland. This was one of only three tank depots in the country and is now the home of the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park (National Park Service 2006). The tank was named after the controversial, yet highly successful Civil War general, William Tecumseh Sherman, famous for his scorched-earth strategy. As part of "total war," scorched earth is the military tactic that destroys all that is in its path-- from food supplies to infrastructure. It dominates both physically and psychologically:

> …Destroy[ing] the economic system and terrify[ing] and demoralize[ing] the civilian population… and…despoil[ing] and scatter[ing] the families of the soldiers.... (Walters 1948).

The behavior of the contractor was greatly applauded and the article highlighted his entrepreneurial gumption. His bid was significantly less because of his ingenuity; and his productivity many times greater. The Mayor, observing his efforts, at first scratched his brow in confusion, but eventually patted the back of this man as records show this job led to a long history of contracts with the City of Oakland (Board of Port Commisioners 1971). What was not addressed in

the article was the fact that these homes had memories steeped in the redwood framing that so easily tumbled. To whom those memories belonged where merely hailed back into the storm of racially prejudice.

Cypress Viaduct

There was no armistice however, in this small war (Scheper-Hughes 1996a). In the same year that the Oakland City Council approved the Acorn project and began planning the BART project, the Cypress Viaduct opened. The Cypress was a stretch of freeway that connected the new interstate I-80 and the I-580 highways to the I-880 Nimitz freeway, (named after the admiral), which handled the flow of traffic between the sprawling suburbs of the east and the Oakland- San Francisco Bay Bridge. It was the first double-decker viaduct of it's kind, constructed of heavily reinforced steel and concrete (California Department of Transportation. 1999).

Similar to the redevelopment projects discussed above, the Cypress viaduct required the city seize even more property and further raze a large number of poor peoples' homes. These homes were sacrificed, according to a Caltrans educational film, to "expedite the flow of…50,000 vehicles…by channeling [them] away from local heavy cross-traffic between port, industrial and commercial traffic" for a quick and accessible ride east-west, to and fro the Bay Bridge and into San Francisco (California Division of Highways. 2008). The Key System electric rail that travelled across the lower deck of the Bay Bridge, and had been operating since the turn of the 20th century, was increasingly being made obsolete with the federal government's push towards automobile and truck consumption (and later, the BART) (Snell 1974; Weingroff 1996). The Key System had also been one of the victims of sabotage by giants of the transportation industry such as General Motors, Standard Oil, Phillips Petroleum, Firestone Tire and Rubber, and Mack Trucks, a number of who had factories in Oakland (Bianco 1998; Snell 1974). These companies were eventually tried and convicted for conspiring to purchase and dismantle local electric rail streetcars throughout the United States.

Prior to the Cypress viaduct, cars and trucks exited an off-ramp and drove along Cypress Street--a two-lane road dotted with both single-family homes and large manufacturing plants--through the West Oakland neighborhood and two blocks behind the Winslow Street house. The new double decker freeway literally cut a swath through West Oakland. It isolated the area to the west of the Cypress, the blocks surrounding my house and the original Oakland Point, into what would soon be called "the Lower Bottoms--" a nickname that designated it geographically, economically and socially, as summed-up in the phrase, "You can't get any lower than the bottoms." Along with the BART train running above, and no longer with a commercial or cultural center, the viaduct further entrenched this area as a place to drive-by on the way to somewhere else. It was no longer, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, as London wrote, "just a place to start from" but truly, in the eyes of the planners, a non-place, helping to solidify the reputation fostered in the decontextualizing of Gertrude's Stein's famous adage, of there being "no there, there" in Oakland (Auge 1995; Stein 1971).

Furthermore, trucks travelling west about 75 miles to the east, to the Central Valley, the "land of a billion vegetables" and responsible for one-third of the produce grown in the United States, benefitted with a route that no longer required them to exit an east-to-west trajectory before *indirectly* connecting to the I-5 freeway south to Los Angeles. I emphasize indirectly because *there is* a direct route east to west. The Macarthur freeway, named after the famous American general, is a stretch of Interstate 580 that runs alongside the white suburbs in the Oakland hills. Prior to the Macarthur freeway's construction, trucks were banned from passing through these neighborhoods along their local roads. And when the Macarthur was built, the transit authority grandfathered-in this ban, against massive protestations by residents and the trucking industry (California Department of Transportation. 2013). Eventually solidified as law, this forced all diesel truck traffic to route through the flatlands of West Oakland.

The City's efforts to create the industrial garden had failed. The suburbanization efforts pushed by the United States and the local planners precipitated the demise, instead of the rise, of the metropolitan dreams of the Oakland elite. The development of the BART and the freeway had succeeded in their goals of promoting white flight further and further in and over the hills into tract homes. Yet it was not only whites leaving Oakland. Upwardly mobile African American's continued moving into South Berkeley, swelling these streets and expanding to its North Oakland neighbor.

The Freeways Dictates the Landscape

The Cypress viaduct succeeded in creating distinct, neighborhood affiliations. The residents of Acorn stayed to the east of the freeway, and the Lower Bottoms maintained it's own distinct identity to the west. While to the north, two other "neighborhoods" emerged, squeezed between the Cypress and the Macarthur freeways: "Dogtown," apparently named because of the prevalence of stray dogs; and "Ghost Town," a sliver of space divested of much of the population as a result of razing. Earl, Antoine's father seldom went to the Lower Bottoms while living and dealing drugs in East Oakland. The people there, he stated, "had an attitude," that others didn't possess. "Lower Bottom blacks didn't let anyone else in like we did in East Oakland, we were more open minded. They acted as though they lived in a different place. Its like they had their own world there behind the freeway."

My neighbor Barry said something similar, claiming "We was different. There was a time when people wouldn't come this far behind the freeway. They stayed on that side. The freeway divided us."

The fights around low-income housing, eminent domain, blight, the BART, the post office, the destruction of the infrastructure --these scorched earth policies--were met with fierce resistance. Although they often flailed in the short run, they did lead to greater power for the

African American community in Oakland, as well as inspiring a legacy of creative oppositionality.

Out of these fights arose a new, African American political establishment, including the first black mayor that sincerely attempted to put to good use the money flowing from the Johnson Administration's War on Poverty. Federal funds were secured for more low-income housing and increased economic opportunities for blacks. Another eminent domain driven blight-reducing plan, neighboring the Acorn site, was successfully resisted by a block of older, African American homeowners that convinced the designers to rehabilitate instead of raze (Self 2003). Two other projects slated for the already cleared Acorn site added 4,000 units of housing, much of it designated for low-income residents. For the first time in the United States the building contractor, as well as the design firm (founded by a former Pullman Porter) for this project, were all local, African Americans (Debro 2011; Sun Reporter 1969). The developers of Acorn boasted of the integrated tenant roll (Examiner 1970). The Acorn project helped realize other forms of redress for the social inequality in the neighborhood, such as the building of a clean, new school and creating the community based West Oakland Health Center, a model in the domain of public health for local, culturally specific, affordable, quality health care. Another first was planned for an empty lot across the street from the Acorn site, an African American-led shopping center project-- a strip-mall that would include a supermarket. An African American columnist for the Oakland Post that managed to cross the de facto apartheid line and live in the Oakland Hills, stated that soon enough Acorn will be "the flower of the city of Oakland" and "the heart of Oakland's major activity." Even a black owned grocery store opened a half-block from Winslow Street in the Lower Bottoms with a ribbon cutting ceremony that included "the

Mayor… Vice Mayor…and many other dignitaries (Post 1970)." It was the only grocery store in West Oakland.

Unfortunately, this progress was short-lived. The Acorn shopping center plan passed through many hands, including a number of failed attempts for a supermarket. The black-owned grocery store in the Lower Bottoms shuttered after six months. With a story opening in a black-owned paper with the line, "That 'the white store's ice is colder' is not the only reason the market is closing," it reported that the owner was being extorted by the loan holder and was in jeopardy of losing not just the store, but also his home, mortgaged to open the store. "This" the owner exclaimed, "is a way to suppress a form of Black power (Sun Reporter 1970). A liquor store followed.

Acorn housing's bloom also quickly wilted. Barely five years after the first family took residency the project required dramatic renovations in structure, management and image. In a community desperate for housing, it barely filled half of the units; while half of those vacancies were deemed, "uninhabitable (Hill-Thompson 1979)." During it's inauguration, it was called by a writer for the Oakland Post a "prototype of progressive low-income housing…with a 50 percent black and 50 percent white population (Hill-Thompson 1979)." Yet, as this same reporter lamented:

> Latent structural defects, such as a non-existent drainage system, vandalism, crime pervasive drug traffic, lack of recreational space for teens and unresponsive management took hold to bring on rapid deterioration. By the early seventies anyone who could live elsewhere, moved. Its population is now 98 percent black, with only 60 of the original tenants. Now Acorn is the last place people look for housing (Hill-Thompson 1979).

The middle class buffers quickly left Acorn. The pollution and the noise affecting their quality of life as a result of the freeway drove out those who could afford to leave. **Industrial Contraction**

Industrial contraction in the private sector had since taken hold and the factories that moved to the outlying flatland areas closed. The Moore Shipyards, converted back to its dry dock days for the public sector, closed. In an eight-block radius from my house on Winslow Street there were a number of shuddered plants. American Steel closed on six acres of land bordering the Cypress viaduct ("American Steel Studios: A Community of Art 2012). Two blocks away, also along the Cypress, the Carnation milk processing plant, a place my neighbors remember fondly, purchasing twenty-five cent ice creams, as kids, also closed. It too sat on multiple acres of land. Smaller, factories, such as those that produced cigars and provided industrial printing, went defunct.

Yet others continued to operate while some moved in to previously abandoned sites. The Red Star Yeast Company continued making yeast as it had when the Lower Bottoms was called by its original name, Oakland Point. AMCO Chemicals, a chemical distribution company, took over a site from a storage tank manufacturer with ties to the U.S. military during the 1950's; which took it over from a bottle and rag dealer during the Depression era, 1930's; they took it over from its original tenant, Anheiser-Busch, who had built a storehouse on the property in 1910 (Agency 2013).

Various recycling and metal smelting plants opened, including the largest of its kind in the West (Winston). As did a number of diesel truck yards and shops, capitalizing on the push to expand the Port of Oakland into one of the busiest and largest container ports on the West Coast.

A few residents repaired trucks on the street in front of their houses. Except for these unlicensed mechanics, a majority of these industries did not employ West Oakland residents.

The apartheid experience that defined West Oakland, a community forced into spatial isolation and dislocation with few employment opportunities, suffering profound neglect and rampant poverty; confronting blatant racism through a punitive local government with an oppressive police force—were fundamental in altering the discourses around race, justice and resistance forever in the United States. It was the specific experience of living in West Oakland that hailed Huey P. Newton, to orient the Black Panthers' anti-colonial discourse and guerilla tactics through the symbolic gesture of confronting the racism through police violence (Self 2000).

Chapter 4
Police, drugs and dealing

I met Sergeant Johnson at the Starbucks closest to his office at the Hall of Justice. He is the undercover officer who arrested two of the four suspects responsible for Danny's murder. He is the same man who interrogated my wife and I in his office twelve-days after the shooting. A stocky African American in his late forties from the infamous streets of South Philadelphia with a deceptive charm, the sergeant puts you at ease without you ever realizing you never were. After both of our interviews, I found myself inviting him to dinner with my family. I wanted him to be my friend.

While in line waiting for coffee, the girl at the counter called out his order ahead of a half-dozen others. Hesitantly, he relented to let me pay, and the cashier charged me full price while giving his drink a hefty discount. He slipped a dollar into the tip jar and headed to a table in the back, waiting for me to join.

Throughout our interview, his eyes were constantly darting about in what seemed less like paranoia than curiosity. If my eyes briefly wandered, he twisted his head to check-upon where my gaze fell. He voiced concern about revealing his identity, and I assured him that his confidentiality would be one of my priorities; and when I asked if I could record the interview, he turned me down not out of fear, but spoke to me like one professional information-gatherer to another, alerting me to the loud ambient noise of the café.

Growing-up, the cops were not Sergeant Johnson's friends. He remembers vividly seeing his dad on a number of occasions "beaten-up and robbed by the police," after returning home from a nights work. His opinion changed however, when he left the Navy. Stationed in Vallejo,

California, (a city now bankrupt following the closing of the Navy base during Bill Clinton's military contraction of the 1990's), he fell in love with the Bay Area but returned to Philadelphia after his discharge. Unhappy, he followed a Navy buddy back West and the two entered the Oakland Police Academy. He has been in the department for twenty-four years.

Policing he tell me, is "very different today than when [he] began," the result of a few specific police abuse scandals. Two scandals arise from Los Angeles and one, on his home turf of Oakland. Both of these cities absorbed the largest influx of African Americans during the Great Migrations.

In Los Angeles, the Rodney King incident, where an African American man's beating by a pack of Los Angeles officers was nationally televised along with their subsequent acquittal, resulted in the worst ethnic riots in California since Watts; as well as their "Ramparts" scandal—a tangled web of police involved abuse that involved contract killings, (including the rumored murder of one of raps leading stars, the Notorious B.I.G) amidst major multi-million dollar drug dealing —has had profound influences on their practices (Boyer 2001; Frontline. 2012; Monmaney 2012). Locally for the Sergeant, the Oakland Police Department [OPD] has had to conform to what he called "the Federal Consent Decree," the provisions laid out in *Delphine Allen vs. The City of Oakland* following the infamous "Riders" case (Russo 2003).

The Riders, taken from the "Rough Riders," Theodore Roosevelt's army regiment that helped defeat Spain in the Spanish-American War and led to the annexation of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines—is the name four rogue cops gave themselves as they terrorized suspected African American drug addicts and dealers in West Oakland between 1996 and 2000 (DeFao 2003b). These officers were accused of "false arrest, planting evidence, excessive use of

force, falsification of police reports, and assault and battery (Russo 2003)." Delphine Allen was a victim of their beatings.

According to his trial testimony, he was ambushed by Riders, tackled and handcuffed outside his family home (Lee 2005). When he "started calling for his mama," come witness their actions, one of the officers became enraged and offered to remove the handcuffs so that they could have a fistfight, *mano-a-mano*. Refusing, the cops dragged him into the patrol car and beat the soles of his feet with their batons. Then they drove him to a remote area under the freeway overpass, pepper sprayed him, put him into a choke-hold headlock, pulled him by his eye sockets, threw him to the ground and continued to kick and knee him in the chest and face (Lee 2005).

Comprised of two Pilipino Americans, a Mexican American and a white officer, the Riders' rein halted only after they mistook a white, rookie officer as an ally. Assigned to their beat, this type of police behavior did not comply with his idealized, "suburban" view of law enforcement and he "snitched," risking his own life by testifying against his police brethren (Lee 2004b). This case received national attention when three of the officers were acquitted after two trials over a four-year period resulted in hung juries (the fourth cop, the apparent "ringleader," fled to Mexico and as of this writing continues to remain a fugitive) (DeFao 2003a; DeFao 2003b; Garon 2003; Lee 2004a). All of the charges were dropped and the defendants unsuccessfully sued to get their jobs back (DeFao 2003a; DeFao 2003b; Garon 2003; Lee 2004a). To stifle a political and financial avalanche threatening the City of Oakland, a "blue ribbon panel of experts with national reputation," was convened under the guidance of Mayor Jerry Brown and his City Attorney John Russo, immediately following the allegations but prior to the trials. This panel was made up of a former member of the federal Department of Justice,

civil rights attorneys from Oakland and Berkeley who were representing the victims, a former president of the Black Police Officers Union as well as police chiefs from urban forces throughout the United States, (Russo 2003). Two years later, the City Attorney, flanked by the Mayor, the Oakland Police Chief, the plaintiffs' attorneys, the City Council President, the Chair of the Council's Public Safety Committee, and the City Manager, announced in a press conference the "global settlement of the Riders civil rights cases (Russo 2003)."

Officially known as the "Negotiated Settlement Agreement," (NSA) Russo described the "two parts" of the agreement, the monetary payout and [a] package of institutional and operational reforms [for] the Oakland Police Department (Russo 2003)." The monetary payout was designed "to avert the potentially devastating financial impact of a lawsuit of this magnitude {Frontline, (Russo 2003; Reston 2009; Russo 2003). Further distancing themselves from the likes of Los Angeles as well as to appease a relatively progressive liberal, political sentiment, the City Attorney pointedly expressed, "Unlike many other cities which have faced similar allegations of police misconduct, Oakland did not deny, hide or retreat from these serious allegations. We did not, so to speak, bury our heads in the sand (Russo 2003)."

They did seek, however, to inter the Oakland Police Department's institutional culture. Fundamentally, the NSA, as stated in Delphin is:

> …To promote police integrity and prevent conduct that deprives persons of the rights, privileges and immunities secured or protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States. The overall objective of this document is to provide for the expeditious implementation, initially, with the oversight of an outside monitoring body…of the best available practices and procedures for police management in the areas of supervision, training and accountability mechanisms,

and to enhance the ability of the Oakland Police Department… (Hereinafter "OPD") to protect the lives, rights, dignity and property of the community it serves (United States District Court 2003).

Everything from their record keeping, to police academy training, to their community relations, to their ways of interrogating, to making arrests, to their conditions for promotions, to their self-monitoring through Internal Affairs, to their treatment of each other, in essence, all that defines being a police officer in Oakland--must change. If the OPD fails, it will be placed under the receivership of the United States Department of Justice (Berry 2003; DeFao 2003a; Garon 2003; Lee 2004a; Russo 2003).

OPD was given five years to comply with the "51 provisions" that would achieve these lofty goals vis-à-vis a process monitored by the mutually agreed upon federal judge, Thelton Henderson. Judge Henderson is a 78 year-old African American who was appointed to the bench in 1980 by President Jimmy Carter and whose distinguished career as a fair champion of civil rights is peppered by the droll anecdote that he was fired from his first job as a lawyer in the U.S Justice Department for loaning his car to Martin Luther King Jr. (Levine 2012). As of this writing receivership is immanent as Judge Henderson "remains in disbelief" over OPD's lack of progress and failure to reform (Associated Press. 2012; Levine 2012).

For Sergeant Jackson, the NSA has "tied the hands of officers." He finds that he now "plays the role of politician more than a cop." If the sergeant as much as "steps on a toe," of an arrestee, he must file a three page incident report and offer to the victim the opportunity to request an Internal Affairs investigation. Prior to the Riders case, Sergeant Johnson portrayed police work in the spirit of a 1970's cop show filled with cat and mouse chases, with the players' actions blurred by which side of the blue-line on which they fall. Similar to the testimony by

Allen, the sergeant describes hiding in bushes with binoculars, spying on "bad guys" as their criminal antics unravel before his eyes, waiting for the right moment to "pounce." With fists raised like a boxer, his voice rising in a blend of disbelief and reminiscence, he explains: "In the late 80's and early 90's, you could easily 'lump' a guy, get into a fistfight without their being any repercussions. In fact it was expected *and* respected! The bad guys would say 'Damn, I didn't know you was that fast.' And after being lumped they'd tell me, 'We cool, I know I had that coming.' And if they run? They knew not to run because then they'd really get their ass-whooped. Guys would never file complaints but because of the Riders, we now have a hands off approach."

Barry, my neighbor who used to be involved with Antoine's mother and whose niece was killed by her boyfriend in front of his mother's house, has been fighting crack addiction since the eighties and ran the streets during the sergeant's recollections of crime fighting. Barry however, has a less sanguine opinion. He does not remember if he encountered the sergeant, but he does have vivid recollections of other officers:

> Barry: Cops used to just sit there in their cars with baseball bats. This is when they set-up the Narcs (narcotics officers). Posses of 'em. They acted like they were just guys together, a gang. Didn't have nothing to do with uniforms. You never knew when they would jam up on you.
>
> There was this one cop. We called him Dirty Dave. Who boy! He used to just ride around and throw stuff down, set you up. One day he drove right by me with a pill bottle in his hand and kept saying [holding his thumb and forefinger two inches apart and up to his eyes], 'Am-ph-e-ta-mines…am-ph-e-ta-

mines.' Smiling and singing it, 'Am-ph-e-ta-mines.' I was like, huh? I didn't even mess with that stuff, but he knew he could get me anytime he wanted.

He's still out there. I only see him once in a while. He just busts the big boys now. He rides in an Escalade [a Cadillac S.U.V]. When you see him you know something big is going down.

And then there was this cop, DJ. Short, white dude. Man, he really had it for me. Like white on rice. [Laughter].

I always had a case for crack because I'd always come back dirty when they tested me. I could never get off probation. He antagonized me. White on rice! I swear it got so bad that I got so fed up we had a fist fight right out there [pointing] on Winslow Street. I was ready to die. Ready to die! I mean it. I just had enough. One day I just lost it. We duked. He took off his belt and everything. Went at it! I felt good lettin' off steam. He didn't arrest me or nothin'. Actually, he quit bullying me after that

When both the sergeant and DJ turned their police work into a street-level scuffle, a boxing match with the possibility of an ending whose worst-case scenario was a bruised ego, they attempted to shed the muscle the law provided and even the playing field. A *mano-a-mano* competition sends the message that the opponent has the freedom to win, and with it the possibility of redemption, at least in the moment (Foucault 2007:48). Delphin Allen's refusal of the offer to fight actually revealed the aggressiveness of the police apparatus. The NSA, as both a legal document as well as an expression of the power behind it, such as the civil rights discourse and economic and political necessity, is an attempt to inject deeper into the flesh of the police the

invisible application of disciplinary practices in order to hide the security apparatus well behind the curtain in a *better way* than they had (Foucault 1995).

Despite the theatrics of the rumble and the playground bonhomie between the good and bad guys, what Young refers to as "police culture ['s]…melodramatic inflection" relations between OPD and much of the community, particularly the black West Oakland community, has never been sweet (Comaroff and Comaroff 2004). Police abuse orients many residents of the Lower Bottoms to violence as usual.

Going back one hundred years, as mentioned in Chapter XXX, the boxer Jack Johnson claimed racism when arrested for speeding. During the second Great Migration, OPD recruited white police officers from the Southern Jim Crow states in reaction to the masses of African Americans populating the City (Hilliard 1993; Spencer 2005). In 1949, after numerous abuse complaints lodged by blacks were unanswered, and a local race relations committee had been ignored and forced to disband, the State of California finally ordered its first investigation of OPD.

Amidst hundreds of allegations of abuse and widespread racism in the OPD, including the mysterious shooting of an unarmed African American man by a white officer, Governor Earl Warren appointed a retired Bakersfield police chief to lead the investigation. Robert Powers, a self-described "racist bigot," had been the investigator into the murder of Warren's father when Warren was the Alameda County District Attorney headquartered in Oakland. Powers fought a bitter and dangerous battle with the powerbrokers of Oakland. He declared the Mayor "the most bigoted racist that I'd ever seen (Powers 1971:59). Both the Oakland Police Chief and the City Attorney denied any major problems (Powers 1971) When Powers questioned the police chief as to "why he didn't have any Negro officers, or very few," the chief responded, "none of them can

pass the (Powers 1971:61).” The battle became especially pernicious when Powers aligned himself with two investigators from Berkeley. Attorney Bob Truehaft and his wife, the writer Jessica Mitford were members of an organization called the Civil Rights Congress, “a Communist-front organization,” and soon allegations of communist sympathizing were applied to Powers (Powers 1971:56).

The three day hearings were attended by upwards of 200 blacks a day (San Francisco Examiner 1950) The first witness was C.L. Dellums, then the head of the local NAACP. He told the story of a 14 year old “Negro [who] was held by two policemen and pummeled by a third (Powers 1971:104).” He continued:

> Over the years, we have had any number of complaints of what we refer to as police brutality. We have submitted them to the chiefs of police but we cannot find out if anything is ever done about them. I have had complaints of illegal search and seizure. Generally, Negroes regard the police as their natural enemies (Powers 1971:104,).”

Recommendations were made for the OPD to undergo training sessions in race relations. There were also recommendations that those who committed acts of police misconduct be held accountable. Hines instituted a lawsuit against the City of Oakland for 150,000 dollars. After the hearings Powers declared:

> I was sick spiritually on leaving that place because I had plumbed the depths of degradation, not only in the police department, but in the political atmosphere. Well, that was Oakland (Powers 1971:62).”

These hearings publicized a discourse that would put West Oakland in the cross hairs of race relations in the United States. For the children who travelled in tow with their parents

during the second leg of the Great Migration, police abuse would become an explosive stage for challenging the script of racist oppression in the United States. The deeply carved antagonism between the police and its citizens in West Oakland is most dramatically revealed through its historical middle child, the Black Panthers, whose publicized, racialized battles with OPD are nationally, if not world, renown.

Police Abuse and the Black Panthers

The Black Panthers made police brutality against African Americans a centerpiece of their resistance against racist oppression in the United States. Point seven of their "Ten-Point Program," the Panther manifesto written in 1966 by founders Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale states:

> We Want An Immediate End To Police Brutality And Murder Of Black People. We believe we can end police brutality in our Black community by organizing Black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our Black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all Black people should arm themselves for self- defense (Newton and Seal 1966).

The Panthers moved beyond local, disciplinary challenges and confronted directly the forces of sovereign power through armed self-defense, the perceived American birthright, born out of the American Revolution (Pearson 1994; Spencer 2005). Ironically, the Panthers' first real insertion onto the national stage occurred during their armed march on the California State Capitol (however without ammunition) to protest the passage of the Mumford Act. The Mumford Act, called colloquially the "Panther Bill" made it illegal in California to carry a loaded weapon. Signed by Ronald Reagan (a staunch National Rifle Association supporter

whose image was based on his own B-movie portrayals of Gary Cooperesque, white-hatted cowboys), it was written to address the Black Panther Police patrols. The patrols were organized sorties of the OPD by the Panthers, who, while monitoring the police on a short-wave radio, would "rush to the scene of the arrest with law books in hand and inform the person being arrested of their constitutional rights;" all the while "carrying loaded weapons (Barillari; Hilliard 1993; Spencer 2005; Tyner 2006)." These efforts on the part of the Panthers to exploit their legal rights to their fullest continued to promote their being hailed into the status quo of racialized inequality, highlighting the limits of who is trusted with the law.

Therefore, when the Mumford Bill passed, the Panthers were dealt another blow and these limits where challenged. Instead of staying within the ethic of the law, the Panthers, under the leadership of Huey P. Newton, placed their gestures at its outskirts.

David Hilliard, former Chief of Staff of the Black Panthers and childhood friend of Newton recounts in his autobiography the events of October 28, 1967. Newton and another friend, Gene McKinney left his girlfriends house to "cruise," West Oakland to search for "hookers " and smoke some marijuana (Hilliard 1993). "On a dilapidated, dirty street in the heart of the Negro slum," as the New York Times put it, a police officer named John Frey recognized Newton's car and immediately called for backup (Hilliard 1993:130; Turner 1968). At the corner of 7th and Willow Streets, only a few doors from the Shorey House, the officer orders them through his radio, to pull over. The officer awaits for backup in his car and when his colleague arrives, they approach on foot. As McKinney tells it, Officer Frey looked in the window:

> 'Well.' 'We have the great Huey Newton. I'm sitting there and it dawns on me they're trying to kill us. Then the cop says, 'Give me your license.' Huey

hands him the license and I say to myself, 'Oh shit! There's gonna be some shit! The cop tells Huey to get out of the car. Huey opens the door. 'Gene,' he says, 'stay here.' 'Stay right here.' I don't argue cause Huey calls the shots. He's in the lead. What he was going to do was up to him….

I'm in the car, waiting. They start walking back. All of a sudden I hear this shot—BOOM!

Oh man! Huey's out there! I jump out of the car. I don't worry about anything—I don't worry about the weed or stuff. Huey's out there! I run back towards the police car, going by my instincts, seeing about Huey. Huey and one of the cops are entangled; the other cop is shooting. I grab Huey and he's hit. I think, Hey! I got to get Huey out of here! (Hilliard 1993)."

Officer Frey lay dead in the street while the other officer, who had also been shot a number of times, was able to call for help. Newton was initially taken to Hilliard's house but they soon realized he needed hospitalization. A picture of Newton-- his eyes closed and his arms stretched beyond his head, shackled to a metal gurney on which he lays with a life-threatening gunshot wound to his abdomen, a uniformed officer lunging at the photographer to block his camera--would run in the papers the next day from coast to coast (Barillari)." This incident led to the famous "Free Huey Campaign…rocketing Newton and the Panthers to national prominence (Turner 1968)." For three years, as Newton sat in jail, "Free Huey" became a rallying cry against police brutality in the United States as well as galvanizing the Panthers as a legitimate voice against racial oppression (Barillari; Hilliard 1993; Pearson 1994). This incident also made even more brazen the Panther's stance against OPD, as exemplified by a botched ambush in West Oakland by fourteen Panthers on a police patrol car that left three officers

wounded in April of 1968, two days after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Coleman 1980; Gates 1995). Co-founder Eldridge Cleaver organized the ambush:

> So we saw it coming while the police were acting so we decided to get down first. So we started the fight. There were 14 of us. We went down into the area of Oakland where the violence was the worst a few blocks away from where Huey Newton had killed that cop so we dealt with them when they came upon us. We were well armed, and we had a shootout that lasted an hour and a half. I will tell anybody that that was the first experience of freedom that I had. I was free for an hour and a half because during that time the repressive forces couldn't put their hand on me because we were shooting it out with them for an hour and a half. Three police officers got wounded. None of them got killed; I got wounded. Another Panther got wounded (Gates 1995).

The freedom that Cleaver expressed was quickly exterminated. When police back-ups arrived, he and the seventeen-year-old Black Panther Party treasurer, Bobby Hutton, escaped into a basement (Coleman 1980). The police discovered their whereabouts and extracted them with a firebomb (Coleman 1980). Hutton emerged first with his hands in the air. He was hailed with a volley of bullets. Twelve were found in his corpse. Cleaver emerged a few seconds afterwards and was stripped to the waist. Twenty years later, the officer who apprehended him vividly recalled the moment as though it was just unfolding: “You know I was already squeezing the trigger…I was pulling the trigger to blow your head off, and something told me not to do it (Gates 1995)." Interestingly enough, Oakland was one of the few cities with such a large African American population where rioting did not occur after the assassination of Dr. Martin

Luther King, Jr. Cleaver credits this to the fact that the Panthers were successful in extinguishing any attempts, corralling the violence through their organization (Gates 1995).

Many of my neighbors have strong memories of the Panthers. Terrence, who lived a few doors from me, grew-up directly behind a Panther house. He remembers how his father, a mechanic, a preacher (the church was in their basement), and a community leader (he has a park named for him), used to host C.L. Dellums for lunch. Like Dellums, he arrived during the first Migration in the 1920's, except from Arkansas. He and Dellums had long conversations about the harmful example the Panthers were providing in the neighborhood.

> Anthony: They had these loud parties and because our houses are so close, we'd hear everything. See, my dad grew up in a small town in Arkansas. He knows what violence brings—more violence. My dad wouldn't let any of my nine brothers and sisters join, although we did go to the breakfast program. That was a good thing. My dad was almost seven-feet tall and what he said goes. But like me, none of those cats saw our people being lynched and burned and murdered in the South just for looking at a white person. Now I'm not saying the police aren't abusive to African Americans. I'm just saying it was different down there. It was nothing here compared to the South.
>
> Look at Bobby Hutton. I was there just after he got shot. We could all hear the shooting. It was right by the park. There were bullet shells everywhere and cop cars all shot up with holes. What did they expect to happen?

Barry too remembers the Panthers. In fact, he was one for a bit:

> Barry: Yeah, I used to be a Panther. I'd wear the black pants and the black shirt and a hat on my head. [Raising his fist in the air and laughing]

> "Power to the People." But I didn't do much. I was little. I may have gone to a meeting or something but I had a crush on this little sister who used to live at Huey's house, just over on 10th street, over on the next block. I'd go over there just to see her. Huey, he was buff from lifting weights. Really buff.

When I asked JM and his crew what they knew of the Panthers, they had very little to say. JM had knowledge of the fights with the police and the breakfast program. Instead, they referred me to the house directly in front of their dealing spot. The man who lives there continues to show allegiance to the Black Panther Party and when I said I wanted to interview him, they all laughed. "He'll tell you all you want to know and then won't stop. Just don't talk to him over here."

Big Johnnie went to the house and shouted his name. When he came out I asked if he'd be willing to talk to me. Despite the fact that JM vouched for my integrity, he said he'd need to do a background check. After his contact returns with the information and he has proof I'm not FBI, we can talk (we never did).

In fact, JM shares a surname with one of the more prominent members. When I asked him over drinks one night if he was related, he said, "No, everyone always thinks that but I'm not." However, another longtime West Oakland resident, an activist preacher who rents space on Saturdays in the old Liberty Hall built for Marcus Garvey's UNIA organization just a few doors from JM's dealing spot, told me otherwise. It was the first time I'd met the preacher and he and another neighbor were talking about watching a confrontation JM was have with a police officer. The preacher has connections to some jobs through the City and offered to try and help JM but he declined. When I mentioned I'd thought JM was very smart, the preacher said, "I know he's smart. I remember when his uncle used to run around here. He was smart too but look what

happened to him." When I told the preacher he was not related, the preacher said, "Oh yes he is!"

Many of my neighbors' memories of Huey Newton revolve around his drug problems and his death. This may be why JM was so adamant to distance himself from a namesake. Newton was killed on August 22, 1989 around the corner from my house on Winslow Street, barely a half-block away, during a crack cocaine transaction. His killer admitted to shooting him, hoping it would move him higher up the ranks of the Black Gorilla Family [BGF] prison gang that had some dealing operations in the Lower Bottoms. BGF and Newton were at odds. Former Panthers turned to the BGF in jail because they believed Newton abandoned them once incarcerated; and Newton ordered Panthers to rob dealers on the streets, a tax for the destruction their business wreaked (Dixon 2012). The Panthers had always promoted a radical anti-drug program. A member of the New York chapter of the Panthers published a widely disseminated pamphlet entitled "Capitalism+Dope=Genocide;" while they violently quashed dealing and dealers on the streets of West Oakland (Dixon 2012; ttravis 2011). However, according to a "Captain," in the Panther militia, Aaron Dixon, when Newton took exile to Cuba, fleeing charges for murdering a prostitute and pistol-whipping a tailor, drugs such as heroin and cocaine began to proliferate on the streets. Yet upon Newton's return to face the charges, instead of fighting the scourge, he negotiated.

Dixon tells how he and another Panther, fully armed with automatic weapons, were made to wait outside an Oakland bar as Huey Newton sat with the two rival drug dealers who controlled the trade in Oakland--Mickey Mo and Felix Mitchell, Jr. He told them either it was "all out war," or pay Newton "$50,000 a week" to be left alone (Dixon 2012).

Felix Mitchell and the M.O.B 69

Following the Black Panther's acts of resistance against the police, the story of Felix Mitchell Jr. is arguably the second most spectacular event symbolizing African American oppositionality to law enforcement and authority in Oakland. Felix Mitchell Jr., was originally born in the Acorn projects but moved as a youth to East Oakland. He monopolized the heroin trade in cities throughout the United States as the founder of the M.O.B 69 gang. M.O.B stood for, "My Other Brother" and 69 is the avenue of his housing project apartment in East Oakland where his empire was headquartered (Rowland 2007). It is reported that Mitchell earned anywhere between $400,000 to close to a million dollars per month; and in true Mafioso fashion, supported his community through free food giveaways, funding athletic clubs and taking kids on field trips. He is recognized as revolutionizing the modern, inner-city drug trade—a sort of Ray Kroc of the underworld. He created a highly structured and disciplined network. He has been credited with inventing the enforcement and intimidation tactic known as the "drive-by;" as well as employing juveniles and paying them well as lookouts and runners, opening this niche as a fiscally opportunistic, employment option (GangsterBB. 2012; Oaklandish 2007; Rowland 2007). Mitchell was eventually arrested and sentenced to life at Leavenworth federal prison in 1985. He had such a grip on the trade that after his incarceration, violence spiked around the city and the price of drugs plummeted while others jockeyed for power. Instead of deterring crime, the "effective law enforcement followed by incapacitation stimulated serious random violence (U.S. 1994:7)." Criminologists call this phenomenon the "Felix Mitchell Paradox (U.S. 1994:7)."

Mitchell was stabbed in prison in 1986 over what was reported as being the result of a ten-dollar loan (GangsterBB. 2012; Oaklandish 2007; Rowland 2007). No one was arrested for the murder. Soon after, he would gain national notoriety. His family applied for a parade permit from the city for his funeral. The city had no legal recourse to deny the request. A horse drawn carriage carrying his bronze casket, four Rolls-Royces and a number of limousines led the eight mile

procession that crossed from East to West Oakland for the funeral service in a church in Emeryville, the small city sandwiched between Oakland and Berkeley (GangsterBB. 2012; Oaklandish 2007; Rowland 2007). Huey Newton sat close to the family during the service (GangsterBB. 2012; Rowland 2007). An estimated eight thousand lined the route to bid farewell. Not all were out to wish him Godspeed, (Oaklandish 2007; Rowland 2007). However, plenty did. Every national news network ran the story, and they flashed faces of African American's cheering the procession, highlighting young, black children who claimed him a hero, one even comparing him to Martin Luther King Jr. (GangsterBB. 2012; Oaklandish 2007; Rowland 2007) Many others expressed envy for his wealth (GangsterBB. 2012; Oaklandish 2007; Rowland 2007).

Earl, Antoine's father, knew one of the men from the 69 M.O.B. that "snitched," on Mitchell. Although in the Federal Witness Protection program, people could easily find him. The witness "was more feared" than Mitchell. There was logic behind Mitchell's actions. The snitch however, knew he would get away with it because, "he was crazy, a ruthless killer without any concern for anybody and everybody knew that."

Dealing Mobs

The half-block long James Street ends in a cul-de-sac. 4th Street and James is where Jack Johnson was arrested and claimed racial discrimination for speeding. 4th is also the street where the Fish Gang members, the crew that used to bully Jack London and whom he enshrined in his book, the *Cruise of the Dazzler,* used to steal from the stores and tie the ponytails of Chinese immigrants to the railcars. The backyard of James Street borders with the backyard of the former Black Panther headquarters and my neighbor, whose father, the 7' tall preacher, used to complain about the Panthers' ideology with C.L. Dellums over the noise of their bar-b-ques.

From their dealing spot on 4th street, a half-block walk to the west takes us to the chain-link fence of the elementary school playground across the street to the liquor store where Antoine was shot. Neighboring the elementary school sits the Campbell Village housing project,

the first of the public housing projects resulting from the Residential Security Maps of the 1930's. Equidistant to the east, a half-block away from the corner of my street, Winslow, sits the old UNIA headquarters. Another half block away is Middle Street, one of the original streets, (along with Winslow) of John Ziegenbein's housing development discussed in the Chapter 1. Middle borders Mandela Parkway, prior to which had been the Cypress viaduct. Continuing to the east about 1/10th of a mile along 4th street, but on the other side of Mandela, is the Cypress Village housing projects, mentioned in Chapter 4, and built as a segregated development during World War II to house black workers. Continuing another tenth of a mile along 4th Street is the Acorn project. Middle Street to Campbell Street along 4th is also a mere 1/10th of a mile. Although the physical distances are short, they can also be felt as a lifetime away.

There are neither Crips nor Bloods in my neighborhood and, in fact, people on the street claim that any attempt by them to infiltrate would immediately, and violently, be suppressed (Bee Greezy. 2007) However, there are gang-like organizations, which are at times referred to as gangs, and the police sometimes call "groups," but among their constituents are called "mobs," following the precedent established by Felix Mitchell. People claim loyalty to mobs, develop hand signs and graffiti, as well as locate alliances with other groups. They are always associated with drug dealing and the dealing spots almost always define them. They locate allegiance to a neighborhood, such as the Lower Bottoms, however this allegiance does not always create solidarities, although, not all of those who may claim these alliances, such as little brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, deal drugs. I notice these connections mostly during gatherings and parties, when hand signs are flashed at my camera. Or they will wear memorial t-shirts emblazoned with tag lines. In general, those who claim loyalty to a specific mob were born after 1975. Therefore, their parents do not show any affiliations. They see mobs as an affliction

of the "youngsters." Housing projects have their own group identity, and they create some of the strongest of bonds.

In the Lower Bottoms, my neighborhood to the west of Mandela Parkway, there are approximately eight groups. Within a half-block from my house on Winslow Street, there are—the 12th Street and Middle Street mobs; expand another block and there are two more groups—4th Street and Campbell Village. Campbell Village provides 4th Street with most of their young dealers. None come from Middle Street, despite the fact that it is equidistant. Expand the range another two blocks and we find the other four mobs. Utilizing the original designation from the early 20th century, "West of Market Street," an area approximately five-square mile, there are roughly twenty mobs situated in the other distinct neighborhoods that make up West Oakland (Schaff and Jordan 2012). The borders of these neighborhoods and hence, mob affiliations, were all created through the sectioning off of streets through the development of the freeway system discussed in Chapter 3.

Antoine's introduction to dealing

Antoine's mother Malia fled with her four kids from East Oakland after her husband Earl "busted her jaw." She and Earl were crack addicts and alcoholics and as mentioned above, Earl had been involved in the East Oakland drug trade. Earl was arrested for his abuse and Malia was offered the opportunity to get clean or else risk losing her four kids to foster care. Earl's uncle "a man who had nothing, no house, no job, nothing," agreed to foster the children while she attended a treatment program. He got an apartment and took "beautiful care of my children." Ten months later she was clean. Antoine was a one year old when they reunited.

Malia knew the Lower Bottoms and the risks of living there. As a kid, she accompanied her mother into this neighborhood on her trips to purchase heroin. Yet Malia felt she had little choice but to move there. She was a single, African American woman with six kids and (luckily)

a Section 8 voucher, allowing her to find a detached house instead of living in a project such as Acorn ("Hell no was I going to live there). In the Lower Bottoms, it was still possible to find a place spacious enough in an old Victorian. She required distance from East Oakland to protect her eldest son, Will, who had been getting into trouble. While through her treatment program, she held two on-call temporary jobs, one at a concession stand at the Oakland Coliseum in East Oakland, where the Oakland Raiders and A's played, (and in whose shadow Felix Mitchell ran his empire); and at the main Postal hub on 7th Street as a mail sorter during the holidays.

She found a house on Winslow Street willing to take her voucher. Her landlord had just completed expanding a 1904 Victorian to include two other apartments and decided that the guaranteed money from the housing authority was enough to maintain her investment. She also bought the building next door and rented it to a Head Start preschool. She was, as Malia says, a "nice woman who cared about people."

Directly across the street from Malia's new place was a low-income housing project run by a local community based organization. Two dealers ran their business from the parking lot. As Malia tells it:

> Armani and Troy used to hang out in the parking lot across the street, where those Jubilee West projects are. They were beasts and everyone looked up to them. They were real gangsters. Both of them be dead now, killed. Armani was the one who got into that shootout with the doctor in Berkeley. It was all over the news. He tried to rob the doctor's office, tried to get the doctor's codeine and the doctor pulled out his gun and Armani pulled out his gun and they shot each other dead.

Armani and Troy were friends with another young man named "Baby." Antoine met Baby through his friendship with Adrian. Adrian is the youngest brother of both Baby and JM.

Adrian and Antoine met in elementary school. The school, a mere block from Antoine's house, was a treacherous walk:

> At first Antoine wanted no part of dealing. He seen someone get shot right off their bike. The killer had one of those silencers on his gun. When he would walk to school, the dealers tried everyday to recruit him. Everyday someone would try to jam him by shoving a baggie of drugs in his hand, telling him to go sell it. One day he threw the baggie down the street and just ran and ran. The dealer shot at him and he ducked behind a car.

But Armani, Troy and Baby eventually seduced him into dealing. Armani and Troy would take Antoine to arcades to play video games. Baby drove him around in his muscle car. Soon, Malia said he was under "their spell," especially Baby:

> Baby is a beast! He is cold. He is icy. He had my son, excuse my French, as his bitch!" He's now in San Quentin prison for raping Barry's niece, Mahogany, when she was only fifteen. He was almost thirty. And I had a tug of war with Baby. A girl told me a lot about Baby and Antoine—I can't talk about it, they done some really bad things—but Baby had this Camaro and he used to ride Antoine around with him in it. Antoine is 10-11 years old. And this one day Baby was calling for Antoine and I told him he couldn't go out with him and Antoine ran to Baby and he didn't know what to do and then right in front of me he slapped my boy in the face, Bam! He told him, 'Get in the motherfuckin' car!' And he did and that was that. He took off with my son."

Antoine sold drugs with Baby, JM, Adrian, and another brother, Edwin, at 4th and James Streets. They call themselves the 4th Street Mob. And although Antoine aligned himself with

this crew, he had a reputation for independence. He was nicknamed the "General" because, as JM states, "all the youngsters looked up to him;" and according to his mother, the reason the youngsters looked up to him is: "You gotta put in work [commit crimes] with a name like that. Some of that stuff is unspeakable. That's a part of my son that I can't deny. " After his death, some kids had tattoos of his portrait painted into their bodies. He was also known as kind and loyal:

> JM: Antoine never thought of himself, always caring for everyone else. He just cares for his family. [In an excited whisper], Antoine, he took $18,000 from the check-cashing store (pointing down the block). $18,000! He took nothing for himself! He givin' me money—"here, give this to your family." He's the only one bringing anything to his family. One time when he went in for a pack of cigarettes, he comes out with $350. He do that shit all the time. Just a pack of cigarettes. He again handing it to me and I'm like, "Blood, spend some on yourself." So I took him to Frisco to the strip club. He goes in the back with a girl and gives her $200—Just to talk! I'm like [shaking his head], blood, for $200, don't just talk.

Independence also meant danger. His robberies at both the check cashing store and the corner shop were reckless. As a minor, he did a number of stints in juvenile detention. At one time, he had been picked-up for a crime he did not commit, but, according to his mother, he used this arrest as an opportunity to "confess to holding-up white people in broad daylight, to two of them," (I have three close friends that were victims of Antoine). He wanted to get away from the street, and in particular, Baby:

> Malia: One day, Antoine was trying to get out of the mob, to stop selling drugs and they kidnapped him. They stripped him butt naked and locked him in the

back of the van. But he escaped and was butt naked on this white lady's porch. He was crying on her porch, butt naked and she got him a blanket and they called the police. He signed a statement that Baby and Troy did it and the white lady made a statement too. He confessed because he said it was the only way for him to escape from Baby."

Earl told me this same story but added that Antoine refused to give him any details. He tried to get them from his older brother but Antoine had refused him, too. If, Earl stated, he had learned from his child's mouth that his son had been forced, "to suck Baby's dick," as was floating in the rumor mill, he would have been obliged to kill Baby and Troy. Antoine's silence protected his father, and Earl, although expressing some guilt for not avenging his son, was "grateful."

He was not grateful, however, for the legacy he believes he provided for his son. Earl also was a stickup artist and specialized in robbing other dealers. His son followed in his path.

The police and the Mob

It should come as no surprise that the young men and boys dealing drugs on the corners are the most frequent recipients of police encounters. As I mentioned in the Introduction, the first time I had made plans with JM to go out for a drink, one of his teenage spotters tried to "out" me as a cop. Here is a continuation of that moment:

Jeff's Fieldnotes:

The youngster rides to the far corner and returns a few minutes later, "He's on his way." A young woman then approaches me. She is a familiar presence along these streets and I think I recognize her from Antoine's funeral. She lifts her gold-eyelinered eyes from her texting, glances for a bare second at me and returns to her phone. She is tiny, about 4'11," and wears jeans so tight

they meld into skin with an 80's style oversized t-shirt to the knees with an open neck that drapes from her shoulders. "He'll be here soon. You took the pictures at Antoine's. I remember you, I was nine months with my baby." Now I too remember her—so tiny and so pregnant.

I formerly introduce myself to Jimmy and DeDe. She offers me some of her Grey Goose vodka and orders Jimmy to get it. I take out the copy of *Righteous Dopefiend* I'd promised JM and they pass it around. When they see a few pictures of the abscesses they cannot believe I would spend time no less sleep in a camp with anyone so filthy.

Soon JM drives up in his black Lexus. It is the least conspicuous of his three cars—a tan van with high profile wheels and a candy apple red 1970's Chrysler convertible that Malia claims was Antoine's and should be hers. He wears a black polo shirt over a white t-shirt—we are dressed the same. We shake hands:

Jeff: You got some good security looking out for you

JM: A brother gotta be careful.

JM hands Jimmy the bottle to open for the two of us and hands me a cup. He pours some for me first, "say when." I let it pour halfway up the cup and he does the same.

By now about seven of his drug dealing crew has joined us. He does not offer anyone a drink. They range in age from Jimmy, who is the youngest at 15, to JM who is the oldest at 31. A majority is in their late teens. When I call JM an O.G., DeDe laughs, "What do you know about O.G.'s? What does it mean?"

"Old Gangster" I reply. She laughs, "Not old Gangster, *Original Gangster*." JM scolds her on my behalf, "It means the same!" When Big Johnny approaches he and JM strategize on how to "get out" of the dealing business. Big Johnny suggests they open a car wash. JM suggests a record label.

The police are trying to "stick a Federal" drug dealing case on JM. He is worried his phone is tapped. While drinking we are careful to keep the tequila bottle a few feet away in case a cop decides to bust us for an "open container." Undercover police recently approached Big Johnny to ask questions about JM's whereabouts. Big Johnnie made a point to mention he immediately called JM. As JM left the BART station a few days ago, an undercover officer approached and put out his hand to shake. "I was so shocked," he said, "that I just took it. If anyone seen that happen, I could get shot. The cop even asked me to have a drink with him."

They know all of the cops' names and the cops know them. The last time JM served any time in jail was a weekend for "mouthing-off" to a female officer:

"That bitch giving me shit for no reason. I ain't takin' shit from her. When I called her a bitch she take me in. I got six months probation and stay-away from here. Shit, I shouldn't even be here but I don't give a fuck. Jail ain't shit. Prison ain't shit. I did two years in San Quentin for slappin' some bitch after she talking shit to me. People say all this and that about Quentin but it ain't nothing. I did my time easy. They took care of me. It like being here."

While in San Quentin, JM had protection because of his connection to West Oakland. He was cocooned within a network that guaranteed not only his safety but provided him with an

environment of familiarity and one that permitted a smooth transition back into the contours of his social life. The schism of his arrest and imprisonment had been rectified, the continuity of his social world assured in what Wacquant identifies as the "link" between the "remnants of the dark ghetto and the carceral apparatus," through his extended West Oakland neighborhood relationship to the prison network (Wacquant 2000; Wacquant 2002).

When the suspect of Antoine's homicide, Charles, was arrested, he too found himself within the web of his life in the Lower Bottoms. Growing up only a block from both JM and Antoine's childhood homes, this weaving of his neighborhood and the carceral network was tied in a noose. As mentioned earlier, Antoine's reputation bordered on idolatry.

For Charles, there was more than Antoine's reputation to contend with—there was also Antoine's father's reputation. Earl had been a founding member of the black prison gang, Kumi 415 and showed me his tattoo. Kumi 415 is a subset of the Black Gorilla Family (BGF) prison gang. Earl was in the county jail on a drug charge when Walt arrived. He would see him every day and every day Walt seemed to have new bruises, the result of Antoine's alliances. Earl, however, was determined it would be his last jail stint and refused to authorize any violence. "My guy wanted to kill him," Earl tells me as we sit outside a coffee shop, the courthouse in our line of sight. "In the past, I woulda let it happen. Tell me to do it he'd say. Just give me the word and it is good as done. I'm tired, though. I'm fifty-years old. I've been doing this my whole. I'm ready for something new."

The first time I had really noticed JM, a few years before Antoine was killed, he had been arrested driving down Winslow Street. The police came out in full force, suddenly blocking all entrances and exits to the street, placing their cars at angles at the intersections. Their sirens were at full blast and the ruckus seemed to pull everyone on the block out of the house. Quickly

they snagged him and his partner from the car and cuffed them. Neither JM nor his partner struggled. To me it all appeared routine. I had seen dozens of dramatic arrests, including full phalanx's of S.W.A.T officers sneaking down the block with battering-rams to knock-down doors and social worker sitting in parked cars to pull-in kids. However, many of my neighbors African American neighbors were incensed at what they saw—yelling police abuse "to leave them alone," that the cuffs were cutting off their circulation, taking pictures and videos with their cell phones, declaring they had all of the evidence. Neither my wife nor I saw what we thought were abusive practices. It was a bold expression of intimate apartheid.

As a white homeowner, my interactions with the police have been nothing short of curious. The first time I'd been a victim of a crime in my home, my eldest son Zane was only a week old. While building a low, picket fence in my front yard, an anomaly when the majority of fences on my block are six-foot high wrought-iron fences with pointed caps, a raggedy-dressed man on a bicycle rode up and down my block a few times. I was sure he was cataloging my tools, specifically my miter saw, having accompanied a respondent from my previous project on similar reconnaissance sorties. I told my wife we were about to be robbed and, low and behold, early that morning, the siding and trim was ripped from around my basement door and the saw, gone. When I reported the crime to the police, the officer suggested I move, that there were too many "dopers" around for people like me. Another officer suggested the same after a stray bullet grazed my bedroom window, forcing my wife to take cover. When my car was stolen three days before my youngest son Sandy was born, I received the same advice. And the same following Danny's murder.

This was not the case for my El Salvadoran neighbors who lived directly across from me. The Sanchez's have three kids and almost lost one. When Adrian, JM's youngest brother and

Antoine's best friend was about twelve, he quickly galloped down my block, laughing and blindly shooting a pistol backwards over his shoulder at rival dealers on the opposite corner. As he did this, one of the dealers fired two shots in retaliation down the block, despite the fact that Marlon was already out of range with a host of obstacles in the way such as trees, cars, houses and of course, neighbors. As Marlon passed the Sanchez's, still shooting, a bullet pierced their fifteen year-old daughters' bedroom window while she did her homework. She heard the bullet ricochet about the walls before finally lodging into the sideboard. This family never received the flight advice; nor did Barry following his niece's murder. Malia however was always receiving advice to move as her children were under constant threat of being killed.

JM and his cohort do not dismiss all police officers. They have only praise for an experienced, African American officer who hails from the neighborhood. When they feel they are being "jacked for no reason," they believe this officer will either defend them or at least be sure the treatment is fair. This feeling is in line with supporters of police residency requirements—that officers should live in the cities that they serve so the police will know their populations and provide better policing with less abusive tendencies (Mehay and Seiden 1986; SMITH and HOLMES 2003; Smith 1980). In fact, this officer has a nephew who deals crack. JM's respect is enhanced by the fact that the nephew was given "six or seven chances to go straight." This detail is in line with critiques of residency, that officers will be more lenient and show favoritism towards their constituents (Mehay and Seiden 1986; SMITH and HOLMES 2003; Smith 1980). The local officer eventually arrested the nephew after he found a cache of stolen guns at the young man's house. JM sided with the cop—"What's he supposed to do?"

Chapter 5

The Earthquake and Murder

The Earthquake

On October 17, 1989 at 5:04 P.M, for approximately 15 seconds during the afternoon rush hour, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake trembled the Bay Area (California Department of Transportation. 1999). Millions around the country witnessed it on television as it disrupted the first ever "Bay Bridge" World Series between the Oakland A's and the San Francisco Giants, shaking the commentators from their seats. The National Guard was called out to patrol areas for safety.

Sixty-three people died as a result from the earthquake, a surprisingly low number given its magnitude. Of those sixty-three, forty-eight of them were crushed when the Cypress viaduct collapsed, a hundred yards from Winslow Street. Barry remembers the moment vividly:

> I was at Leo's house down the street and we was workin' on a truck. Suddenly there is this loud rumble and I saw the middle of the street open, just open down the middle! I didn't believe it. I could see down into the earth. And I ran home and all the plants and books and pictures and all other stuff had fallen.
>
> Everyone is now out on the block communicating to see if everyone was all right, trying to find out about relatives and people and stuff. When we was O.K. we went to the freeway. You could hear the sirens and people yelling. The top fell on the bottom. People are asking for latters. I was holding a ladder for someone to try and climb out.
>
> You could smell the bodies. I'll never forget that smell. People had been down there so long on the bottom.

When the immediate impact of the crisis settled, the California Department of Transportation began planning the viaduct's reconstruction. However, neighbors quickly mobilized, organizing against these efforts by tapping into West Oakland's history of resistance, in particular accessing the legacy of the efforts fighting the scorched earth policies of the previous thirty years. This time, however, instead of these efforts creating political inroads for the local organizations, they marked their establishment

The community based organizations that were created to insure local input following the dramatic spatial and ecological changes brought on by redevelopment, focused their efforts on reintegrating West Oakland with the rest of the surrounding neighborhoods and community. This was backed by a large, African American presence that had real political clout; a profound about-face from the days when the City backed desolation. And although the State resisted at first, a compromise was made to re-route the freeway around the Lower Bottoms neighborhood (California Department of Transportation. 2011; Costa et al. 2002; The Pacific Institute 2004). Caltrans, at least following their defeat, recognized the wrongs of the original violence. This not only served the desires of local residents, but also the transportation agency, who saw the rerouting as an opportunity to improve the freeway commute to San Francisco as well as increase accessibility of trucking to the port (Burt 2009). A plan was approved to:

> Provide a fully landscaped, tree-lined parkway and arboretum on Mandela Parkway in West Oakland Between 4th Street and 32nd Street. The project will beautify and enhance the parkway's overall appearance, as well as stimulate revitalization of the surrounding area. Plant materials will be derived from a wide range of locations from around the world (Caltrans. 2004).

Eighteen blocks and 1.3 miles long, Mandela Parkway, named after the South African anti-apartheid hero, was designed not just to beautify, but reunify. The parkway runs northerly from the bordering city of Emeryville, the big-box mecca and the future home of Pixar animation studios directly to the BART station, providing an easy and attractive path for commuters. Mandela also housed many of the shuttered factories, and plans were being developed for live/work lofts along this route.

Another thoroughfare would meet at the BART station to run further west and east. This was designed to connect Mandela, and therefore Emeryville and West Oakland, to Jack London Square, the jewel of the City's 1970's-era redevelopment projects on the Oakland estuary. Jack London Square boasts a marina, shops, bars, restaurants, hotels, live/work lofts and condominiums. Like its namesake, its identity has gone through various iterations, having foundered in its original design as a tourist attraction, and never living up to the expectations of the dollars invested. Despite this, Oakland had yet to give up, for, as a San Francisco Chronicle reviewer reported, s delivering it as an oasis in an otherwise toxic, combustible-engine dominated space (SF Gate 2012).

The forgetting referenced by the reporter was designed into the very nature of Mandela Parkway. For the first time since its inception, West Oakland appeared to finally be invited into the fold, like the family black sheep who shows potential for redemption. And the earthquake opened a number of new opportunities for those entities that have been perpetuating violence upon a people for a longtime to atone for their sins.

Environmental Injustice

The "West Oakland gray," of the houses of old discussed in the first history chapter had been resituated, yet now expectorated from the lungs of the neighborhood inhabitants. The

struggle over the Cypress replacement as a result of the earthquake unearthed how the neighborhood experienced the toxic excesses spilled from the nexus of industry, transportation and racial prejudice. The terms "environmental racism" and "environmental justice" passed easily from neighbor to neighbor, making so much sense, practically, rhetorically, scientifically and politically. The empire of biopolitical toxicity was stripped bare, and everyone could see it in its naked shame. Good versus evil and right versus wrong were cleanly discernable through the poisonous dust, especially since the community did not benefit from the most salient retort—that these industries had brought jobs. The public health sector documented the health disparities between those who lived in West Oakland and practically everyone else, while placing blame at the usual (and deserving) culprits, capitalism, corporate America and their political cronies. (Brower 1990; Costa et al. 2002; Fisher et al. 2006; The Pacific Institute 2004)}.

During the initial stages of the Cypress Freeway replacement project, employees from the utility company working at the AMCO site, according to a summary released by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

> …Encountered strong chemical odors while digging in the area.
>
> Preliminary sampling at the Site and on 3rd Street, south of the Site, indicated the presence of vinyl chloride and other chlorinated solvents in soil, soil gas, and groundwater… We determined that the Site did not pose an immediate threat to the public, but did pose a potential long-term risk. (Agency 2013).

The AMCO site was put on the National Priorities List of Superfund sites (Agency 2013). Coalitions between neighbors and activists groups secured the ear of the EPA, and plans to remediate the site and protect and compensate the neighbors have been drawn through intense

collaborations. The government entities, of course, were not easily rolling over and of this writing, continue a vicious fight, but community input has been both heard and implemented (Agency 2013)…

The odiferous emissions from Red Star Yeast did not resemble fresh baking bread. They were releasing:

> Illegal and dangerous levels of acetaldehyde - a carcinogen, neurotoxin, and developmental toxin produced when sugar is metabolized by yeast during fermentation. The factory had emitted 30,000 pounds of acetaldehyde annually under an exemption for businesses involved in food processing. (Morrison and Angel 2006).

The odors were not new but had wafted through the neighborhood for one hundred years. Despite this legacy, community activists and organizations, with support of the government, successfully closed the plant entirely.

The breeze that heads east of the San Francisco Bay from the Port of Oakland pushes the diesel fumes from both ships and delivery trucks towards the homes in the Lower Bottoms. Because of this, children in the Lower Bottoms are seven times more likely to be hospitalized for asthma than anywhere else in the State. Diesel particulates have been shown to dramatically increase risks for cancer.

The West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP), an organization led by a an African American woman instrumental in the movement against the rebuilding of the Cypress freeway, in collaboration with foundations and researchers, has been identifying port related health problems as well as forcing change (Costa et al. 2002; The Pacific Institute 2004). According to their report:

West Oakland residents are exposed to roughly five times more diesel particulates than residents in other parts of Oakland. West Oakland residents may have an increased risk of one extra cancer per 1,000 residents due to diesel particulate exposure over a lifetime…

There are 6 times more diesel particulates emitted per person and over 90 times more diesel particulates per square mile per year in West Oakland than in the State of California…The amount of toxic soot produced by trucks traveling in West Oakland in one day is the same amount produced by 127,677 cars—this is enough cars to cover all the streets in West Oakland, four cars wide and two cars deep (Costa et al. 2002). WOEIP has been successful in lessening risks by pushing for legislation to institute truck routes that limited the diesel fumes falling in the neighborhood; as well as enhanced enforcement of the legislation. It has also pressured the port to institute policies forcing truckers to adopt cleaner technologies (Costa et al. 2002; The Pacific Institute 2004)

Dotcom and the housing bubble

Along with the shifting of environment politics following the earthquake, parallel changes in other spheres of the political economy of my neighborhood also became obvious. The housing bubble that consumed the United States struck the Bay Area early. The new, "tech" economy, also known as the "Dotcom Boom" situated in Silicon Valley fuelled housing shortages for employees throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, outpacing the existing housing stock almost six-times over (Kroll 2000). Housing prices skyrocketed as potential buyers engaged in bidding wars to out price their fellow home shoppers. Real estate agents advised their sellers to purposely underprice their homes to muster interest. I know of a number of people who placed bids 30% higher than the listed selling price to still fail to win the house.

The influx of local capital occurred just as investors in growing, foreign economies sought places for their excess money. Countries such as the United Kingdom and Japan, and newly expanding economies in places like Brazil and China invested heavily in the United States, buying Treasury notes and keeping interest rates at historically, low levels. Subprime mortgages became easily accessible, allowing almost anyone with any savvy to purchase a home. (Harvey 2005; Holt 2009; Kroll 2000; Krugman 2009; Levitin and Wachter 2011). Concurrently, the neoliberal policies that encouraged laissez-faire trading practices dismantled the government oversight agencies that historically monitored the fiscal soundness of the mortgage lending industry (Krugman 2009).

The desirable areas of the Bay Area became available only to the millionaire or the hopeful-millionaire classes. Eventually, the boom trickled down to West Oakland. As it had been in the past, it was still the last stop before embarking towards riches. The financial district in San Francisco was only a nine-minute BART ride. While the new on-ramp to the 880-freeway heading south to Silicon Valley, situated just behind the BART station, made car commuting a snap. My neighborhood was no longer perceived as liminal by planners, but situated in permanence. West Oakland and the Lower Bottoms in particular, began to buzz as the next dot-com hub.

I purchased my house in April of 1999 for $92,000. By April of 2000, it was worth, judging by the homes sold around me, $150,000 (Paragon Real Estate Group. 2012). This price was significantly less than the greater Bay Area, whose mean price more than doubled this amount (Paragon Real Estate Group. 2012). Yet developers touted my neighborhood as the last affordable vestibule for young techies to the industry, both in where they could live and create their startups. I watched as bulldozers tore at potholed streets to lay miles of high-speed fiber-

optic cable throughout the neighborhood. One of my African American neighbors, whose family had come to the block in the nineteen fifties, taunted my white boarder with, "You must be one of them dot-com millionaires," his tattooed body more than revealing his twenty years as a heroin addict as well as his twenty years in recovery, not to mention being employed as a drug counselor to homeless youth at the time of the comment.

Lower Bottoms Reborn

The theme of the new and the old dominated the marketing strategies of development in my neighborhood. This is visible in the transformation of the factories, buildings and the houses rehabilitated to service new residents and convince new hopefuls to populate the area. The American Steel factory rents studio space to artists whose art utilizes the materials from this industry, creating fossils in whose irony memorializes the manufacturing past of the working class. A number of the factories were reborn as live/work lofts. The insides of these buildings were eviscerated and modernized with the most up-to-date styles and technology. Unlike the interiors however, many of the facades were nostalgically restored to appear as their original selves, their narrative also memorializing the working class, whose hero had since perished like a sea captain going down with his ship and whose story becomes one of legend.

A new hero, however, had risen. This figure took the form of the property developer, whose skills for morphing public and private fiscal and symbolic entities define the construction of many cities and neighborhoods with similar histories as mine (Cronin and Hetherington 2008). In my neighborhood the most celebrated of these is Rick Holliday. He is the former executive director of a non-profit housing development organization that developed properties for the poor; but he made his name as a "visionary" in San Francisco that spearheaded the live/work loft development in one of San Francisco's former industrial areas (Holliday). As a San Francisco Examiner article fawned:

When the dust finally settles, Holliday and others hope to have completely transformed a neighborhood. Their business in Oakland is rebirth." (The Examiner 2011).

Holliday purchased 27 acres of land less than a half-mile from my house along the original waterfront area owned by the Southern Pacific railroad. Included in his purchase was the 1902 Pacific Canning Company building and the Beaux Arts-style Southern Pacific train station from 1912. Built to replace the original platform from the 1870's, this architectural beauty had been abandoned, graffitied and squatted by itinerants since it was damaged in the 1989 earthquake. The station was the Ellis Island for many of the migrants that arrived by train from the American South in their search for promise in the West. It is where C.L. Dellums and the parent of Huey Newton disembarked.

These two buildings, like Acorn, were slated mostly for market-rate units with a percentage of them designated for low-income, a necessity for receiving city approval. When a developer friend of my sisters heard of my home purchase, he explained that I'd make a "killing" on my house since Holliday was invested in the neighborhood, "and everything he touched turned to gold." He also admired my gumption, praising me as a "pioneer," a word I abhorred for its hailing of colonialism and genocidal violence.

Holliday met massive pushback. Anti-gentrification forces descended on the project. Holliday did his homework, however. He canvassed barbershops, went door-to-door, and sponsored neighborhood meetings to garner community buy-in (Swan 2008). He also received the blessing of the local politicians. But his success had much to do with his anthropological capitalism approach, promoting and exploiting "culture" and "history" and the nostalgia they produced (Rosaldo 1989).

For example, a Chinese entrepreneur had founded the Pacific Cannery, closed during the U.S. industrial redaction of the 1960's. Artifacts and photos from the days of operation can be found at the development. He had the extended offspring participate in the festivities during the opening. (Holliday; Holliday). The website for purchasing lofts hosts a blog devoted to the legacy of this entrepreneur as well as the history of the Chinese in Oakland. It hosts a number of blogs on the history of Oakland Point (Holliday; Holliday).

The train station, however, had been highly contentious. Many from the local, African American community did not want its history, especially that of the Pullman Porters and their status as the first all-black union, the iconographic beacon of working class prosperity for this community, to be whitewashed. So Holliday sold the train station for a hefty profit to the non-profit housing entity he used to direct, calling for some to question the integrity of the deal (Gammon 2009). The non-profit, he argued, was better suited to manage the more community-based aspects of the project. The non-profit agreed to turn part of the train station into a museum to the porters, with the rest of the project possibly becoming a community center for the neighborhood. This allowed for a smoother separation between the private, the public and the political sectors. Soon, the entire 27-acre project, now entitled, "Central Station," was underway. And a few years later when the properties began to sell, it was reported that:

> …New homeowners are breathing life into what had been a no man's land … an area that until recently was better known as a repository for truck parking and illegal dumping. They are walking their pets around the neighborhood and establishing Neighborhood Watch groups and e-mail communities to cut down on crime (Holliday).

EARTHQUAKE AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Unlike the environmental justice movement that has such a clear-cut target for fault, the impact of an event such as the earthquake, and its relationship to interpersonal, physical violence is much less direct. In my neighborhood, the public health calamity of physical violence is buried deeply within violence as usual, and to extract it from structural defect requires effort.

Children in West Oakland experience a 250% greater chance of being victims of physical abuse or neglect than elsewhere in the county. The homicide rate is almost five times that of the rest of the United States. The (reported) incidence of rape is double that of the national average, (Alameda County Violence Prevention Initiative 2011; Witt et al. 2006). Both Antoine and Danny's murder, I argue, were deeply affected by the history of violence that I have traced to West Oakland; and it is the earthquakes' destruction along with its Phoenix-like raising that cracked the Pandora's box, leading to their murders.

I do not argue a larger sociological theory as to why so many killings of young men occur at such an alarming rate. Yet the event of the earthquake, and what it hails, are strongly implicated within the conditions of possibility that resulted in the tragic deaths of two young men from my street.

Antoine's Death

The Cypress freeway fell at the height of the crack cocaine epidemic. Prior to the earthquake, the Cypress isolated the battles for the dealing spots from permeating its border. However, when the freeway fell, this opened access and new fronts for fighting to gain drug territories, creating its own Felix Mitchell effect. Acorn attempted to extricate Campbell Villages' influence in the Lower Bottoms. It was a time of tremendous violence and soon, a vicious feud between Campbell Village/Lower Bottoms and Acorn, flourished.

Antoine was killed on a sunny, Palm Sunday afternoon on his way to the corner liquor store a few dozen feet from his dealing spot and directly across from the elementary school playground. His killer was a young man named Charles Tucker. According to Malia, Charles and Antoine first met at the elementary school across the street from where the murder took place. Over time, however, animosity grew as Charles' family lived in the Acorn projects. Antoine, coming from the Lower Bottoms, aligned with Campbell village.

Antoine and Charles' animosity stemmed from this feud. Charles "mean mugged Antoine", said Earl, and "I've seen Antoine threaten to kill strangers in different towns when he believes he flashed a mug. I just can't understand these youngsters today." Like the "evil eye" a mean mug is a look that signals violence and a curse that Antoine needed to eradicate. This mug led to Antoine shooting at Charles and, missing his target, he hit an elderly woman, killing her. This is the murder for which charges were dropped due to the police not performing a proper Miranda notice.

Four months prior to his homicide, Antoine's mother moved her family to a house in East Oakland specifically with the hopes of saving her son. Her plan almost worked. Malia located organizations designed to "keep kids off the streets" and away from the places where they were vulnerable. He joined a youth radio organization and a dance troupe in which he won a first prize and a chance to participate in the national championships in Florida. However, he never got to make the trip. He continued "wasting his loyalty," as his father said, on his relations in the mob, spending his days on 4th Street.

The timing of Charles' revenge, according to both Earl and Malia, was not random. Malia told me she was approached on a bus a few weeks following her son's death. The young man was in his twenties and, unsolicited he stated, "Grown men feared your son." When she

pressed him for more information the young man said, "your son is heavily involved in organized crime." He sat beside her and explained that Antoine had been trying to bring three powerful neighborhood mobs together-- Campbell Village, North Side Oakland, (a mob that had been the target of the City of Oakland's highly publicized and controversial "gang injunction" placing curfews and limiting contact between "identified" gang members); and Crack Team, a South Berkeley mob that feuds with North Side Oakland (Rayburn 2010). Again, all of these territories are a result of the "freewaytization" of the space.

The Acorn mob somehow got wind of Antoine's plan. According to Earl, "the head of Acorn threatened to kill Charles if he didn't kill my son." Charles had never avenged the attempt on his life that killed the elderly woman. Therefore, it was his obligation. He had no choice. Charles was arrested a few weeks after the murder.

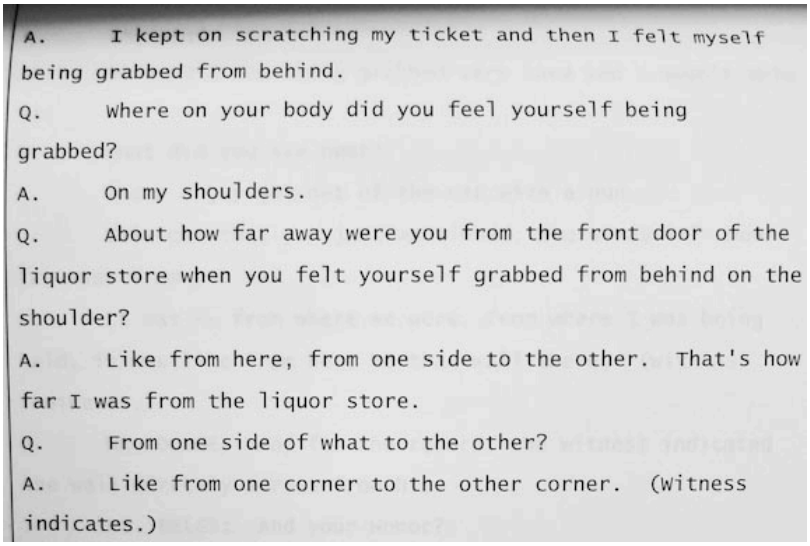
Violence as usual is all too evident in Antoine's homicide. Some neighbors spoke of it as though he had it coming. Some even went as far as to say he deserved it. When I asked JM if he would ever revenge his friends murder he answered, "Naaah. Antoine knew what he was doin'." Antoine fit right into the statistical demographic for the year of his killing. Out of the 125 deaths identified by the Oakland coroner's office: 9 out of 10 were male; 8 out of 10 were African American; 2 out of 3 were under the age of thirty; 9 out of 10 died from firearms; and 3 out of 4 were killed on a public street; and finally, 7 out of 10 were killed in three Oakland districts, including the Lower Bottoms (Alameda County Violence Prevention Initiative 2011).

Pretrial for Tucker vs. the People

To show the impact of the usual, I include the following testimony from Charles Tuckers' pre-trial hearing during the cross-examination of the lone witness, a twenty-three year old, undocumented worker from El Salvador. The account supports the statistics above, yet not just in the final "result," as in the case of a murder demographic. The testimony below vivifies the

details in the statistics, illustrating how violence as usual expresses itself during its most pernicious, and most banal moment, of extreme intimate and physical violence in the United States--during the murder of an African American man by another African American man with a firearm, both under the age of thirty, and on a public, city street. These court proceedings, from the postured jousting of the attorneys; to their loaded questions directed at the witness; to his bewildering answers hail the statistics, and the banality. I present the material directly from the official court transcript in an attempt to de-emphasize my authorship as much as possible in the presentation of this history.

In this first excerpt, "A" refers to the witness and "Q" is the prosecuting attorney. The witness had previously described walking into the liquor store to purchase a "scratchable," lottery ticket. He has heard a "bang," but paid little attention to it. He has since exited the store, focused on his lottery ticket:



A. I kept on scratching my ticket and then I felt myself being grabbed from behind.

Q. Where on your body did you feel yourself being grabbed?

A. On my shoulders.

Q. About how far away were you from the front door of the liquor store when you felt yourself grabbed from behind on the shoulder?

A. Like from here, from one side to the other. That's how far I was from the liquor store.

Q. From one side of what to the other?

A. Like from one corner to the other corner. (Witness indicates.)

Q. And it appears to me, [redacted]jada you're pointing to the corner in the courtroom where the doors are and -- and the corner here where another door is?

MS. BELES: Not the in custody door but the back halls door.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

MR. DOLGE: For the record, diagonally in the courtroom.

Q. How hard were you grabbed on your shoulders?

A. Very hard.

Q. Did you respond at all when you felt yourself being grabbed?

A. Yes, I turned to the side to free myself.

Q. Were you able to free yourself right away?

A. No.

Charles, who had stopped his car along the curb, began shooting at Antoine from outside the drivers-side door. Antoine grabbed the man from behind to use him as a shield from the bullets…

standing when he fired the second shot?

A. He was in the place where cars park along the side.

Q. In the street but kind of near the curb, is that fair to say?

A. Yes, next to the sidewalk.

Q. And at the time the second shot that you saw was fired, were you facing the gunman?

A. Yes.

Q. Was there still a person behind you grabbing your shoulders?

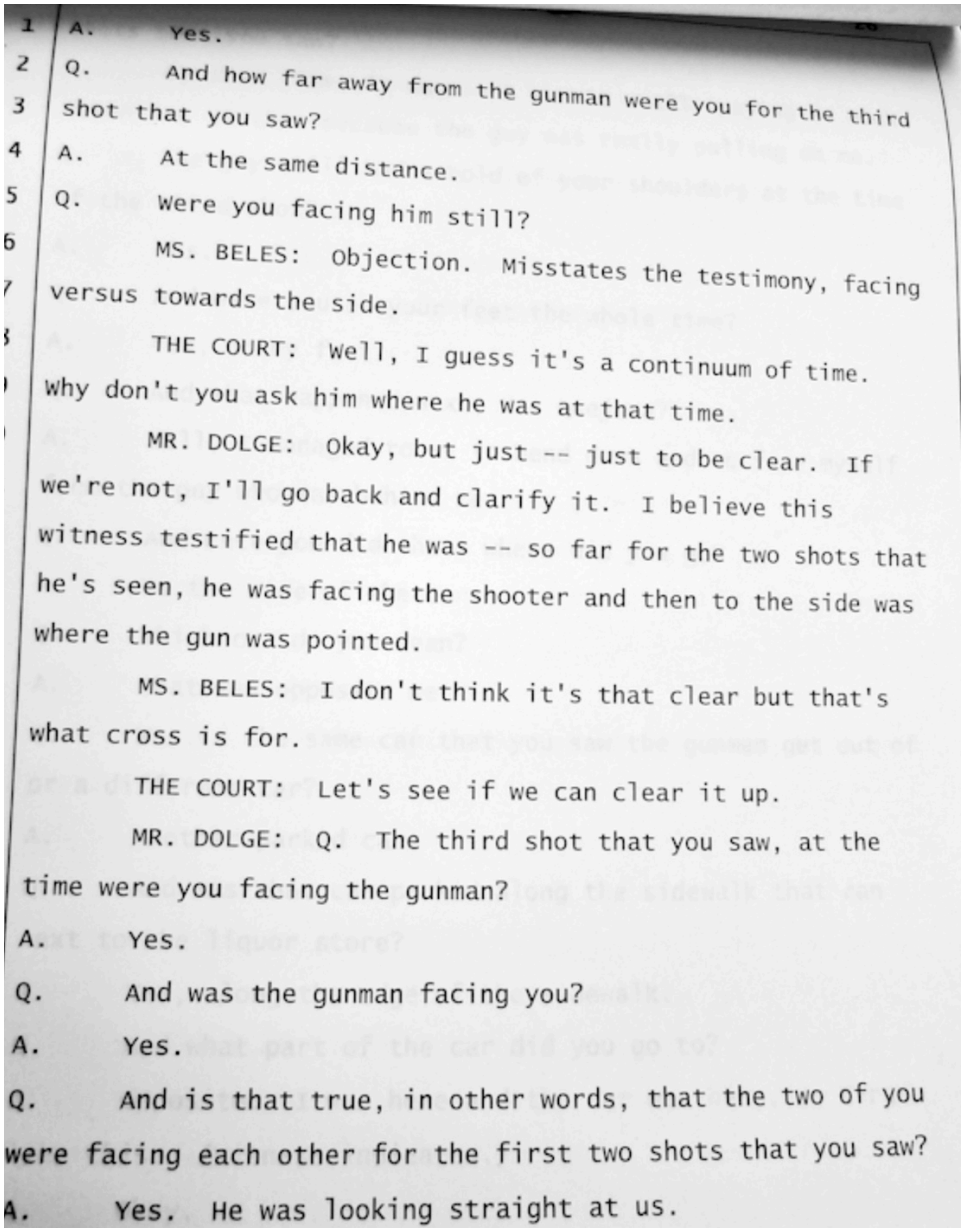
A. Yes.

Q. When the second shot that you saw was fired, how far away were you from the gunman?

A. Really close. Like from here to where he is. (Witness indicates.)

Q. By "he," do you mean me?

A. Where that thing is.



A. Yes.
Q. And how far away from the gunman were you for the third shot that you saw?
A. At the same distance.
Q. Were you facing him still?
MS. BELES: Objection. Misstates the testimony, facing versus towards the side.
THE COURT: Well, I guess it's a continuum of time. Why don't you ask him where he was at that time.
MR. DOLGE: Okay, but just -- just to be clear. If we're not, I'll go back and clarify it. I believe this witness testified that he was -- so far for the two shots that he's seen, he was facing the shooter and then to the side was where the gun was pointed.
MS. BELES: I don't think it's that clear but that's what cross is for.
THE COURT: Let's see if we can clear it up.
MR. DOLGE: Q. The third shot that you saw, at the time were you facing the gunman?
A. Yes.
Q. And was the gunman facing you?
A. Yes.
Q. And is that true, in other words, that the two of you were facing each other for the first two shots that you saw?
A. Yes. He was looking straight at us.

It has now been established that the witness made direct visual contact with Charles

For these next excerpts, the defense cross-examines the witness. The "Q" is that of the defense. The "A" still represents the witness.

Charles has since moved around the car and is across the curb. Antoine ducks and dodges behind the witness as Walt takes aim, moving his gun with his target. There is no doubt that he is trying to kill Antoine. He fires a second shot…

Q. Before the man grabbed you, had you noticed the car?

A. No.

Q. Did you hear the car's engine before the guy grabbed you?

A. No.

Q. When the shooter starts walking towards you, how fast is he walking?

A. Long steps.

Q. How fast?

A. Not running but stepping lightly.

Q. When the shooter was running, did he have baggy pants on?

MR. DOLGE: Objection, assumes --

MS. BELES: I'm sorry. I apologize.

Q. When he was walking towards you, did he have baggy pants on? I apologize.

A. Yes.

Q. Was he holding his pants up?

A. No, he had them kind of up.

Q. What do you mean kind of up?

A. No, they were like at this level. They walk kind of with their legs open so that the -- their clothes don't fal down. (Witness indicates.)

Q. "They" meaning the shooter?

A. The people -- I mean the people of that race, most them walk like that.

Q. Most black men walk like that?

A. Yes, that's what I've seen. They wear that kind of clothing and then they walk that way.

Q. Do you see a lot of black men in -- did you see a lot of black men that -- who wore baggy pants back in March of 2006 -- of this year?

A. That's how they always dress.

Q. And so you saw a lot of black men in West Oakland, fair?

A. Yes.

Q. And you saw a lot of black men with braids, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. And you saw a lot of black men with -- well, strike that.

Do you feel that you can tell the difference between the way black men look?

A. Yes, quite a bit with the color.

Q. Do you think a lot of black people look the same?

MR. DOLGE: Objection, vague.

MS. BELES: If he understands it.

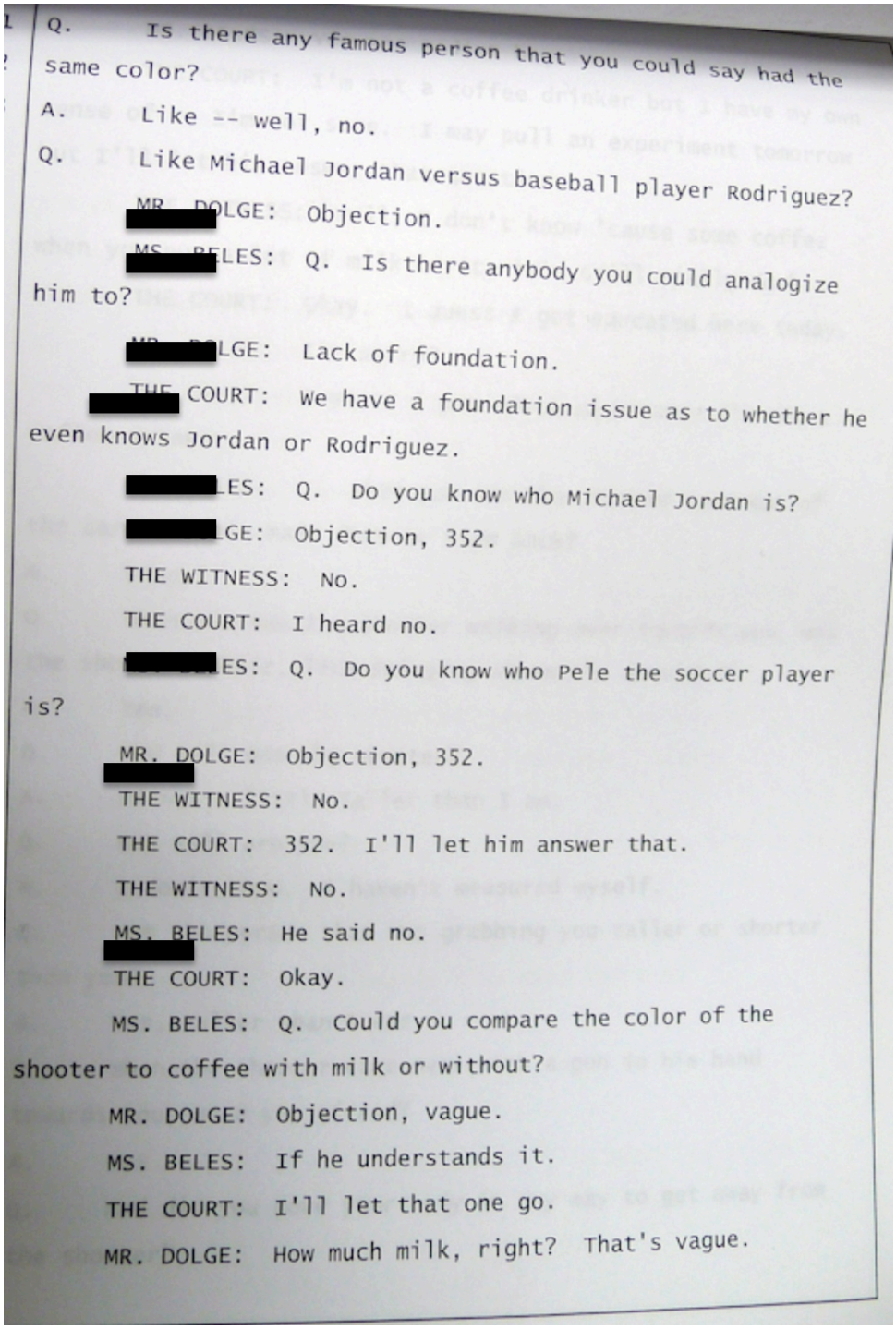
THE COURT: I do think it's vague. "Same" brings up all sorts of characteristics, so sustained.

MS. BELES: Q. Do you think that a lot of black men look similar to one another?

MR. DOLGE: Objection, vague again.

THE COURT: Same. I agree.

MS. BELES: Q. In March of 2006, did you see a lot o black men with shoulder-length dreads? (sic)



Q. Is there any famous person that you could say had the same color?

A. Like -- well, no.

Q. Like Michael Jordan versus baseball player Rodriguez?

[redacted]: Objection.

[redacted]: Q. Is there anybody you could analogize him to?

[redacted]: Lack of foundation.

[redacted] COURT: We have a foundation issue as to whether he even knows Jordan or Rodriguez.

[redacted]: Q. Do you know who Michael Jordan is?

[redacted]: Objection, 352.

THE WITNESS: No.

THE COURT: I heard no.

[redacted]: Q. Do you know who Pele the soccer player is?

MR. DOLGE: Objection, 352.

THE WITNESS: No.

THE COURT: 352. I'll let him answer that.

THE WITNESS: No.

MS. BELES: He said no.

THE COURT: Okay.

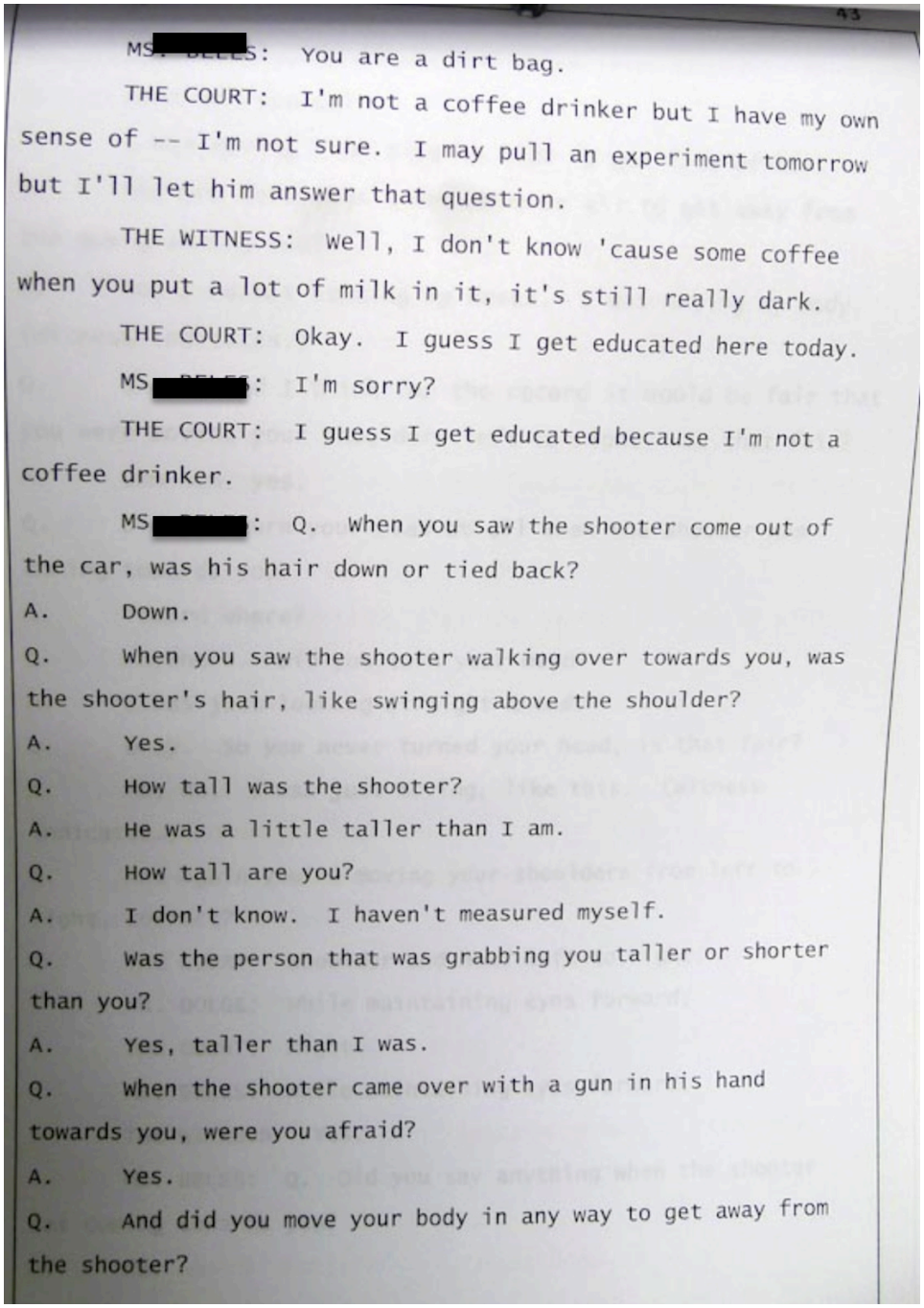
MS. BELES: Q. Could you compare the color of the shooter to coffee with milk or without?

MR. DOLGE: Objection, vague.

MS. BELES: If he understands it.

THE COURT: I'll let that one go.

MR. DOLGE: How much milk, right? That's vague.



MS [redacted]: You are a dirt bag.

THE COURT: I'm not a coffee drinker but I have my own sense of -- I'm not sure. I may pull an experiment tomorrow but I'll let him answer that question.

THE WITNESS: Well, I don't know 'cause some coffee when you put a lot of milk in it, it's still really dark.

THE COURT: Okay. I guess I get educated here today.

MS [redacted]: I'm sorry?

THE COURT: I guess I get educated because I'm not a coffee drinker.

MS [redacted]: Q. When you saw the shooter come out of the car, was his hair down or tied back?

A. Down.

Q. When you saw the shooter walking over towards you, was the shooter's hair, like swinging above the shoulder?

A. Yes.

Q. How tall was the shooter?

A. He was a little taller than I am.

Q. How tall are you?

A. I don't know. I haven't measured myself.

Q. Was the person that was grabbing you taller or shorter than you?

A. Yes, taller than I was.

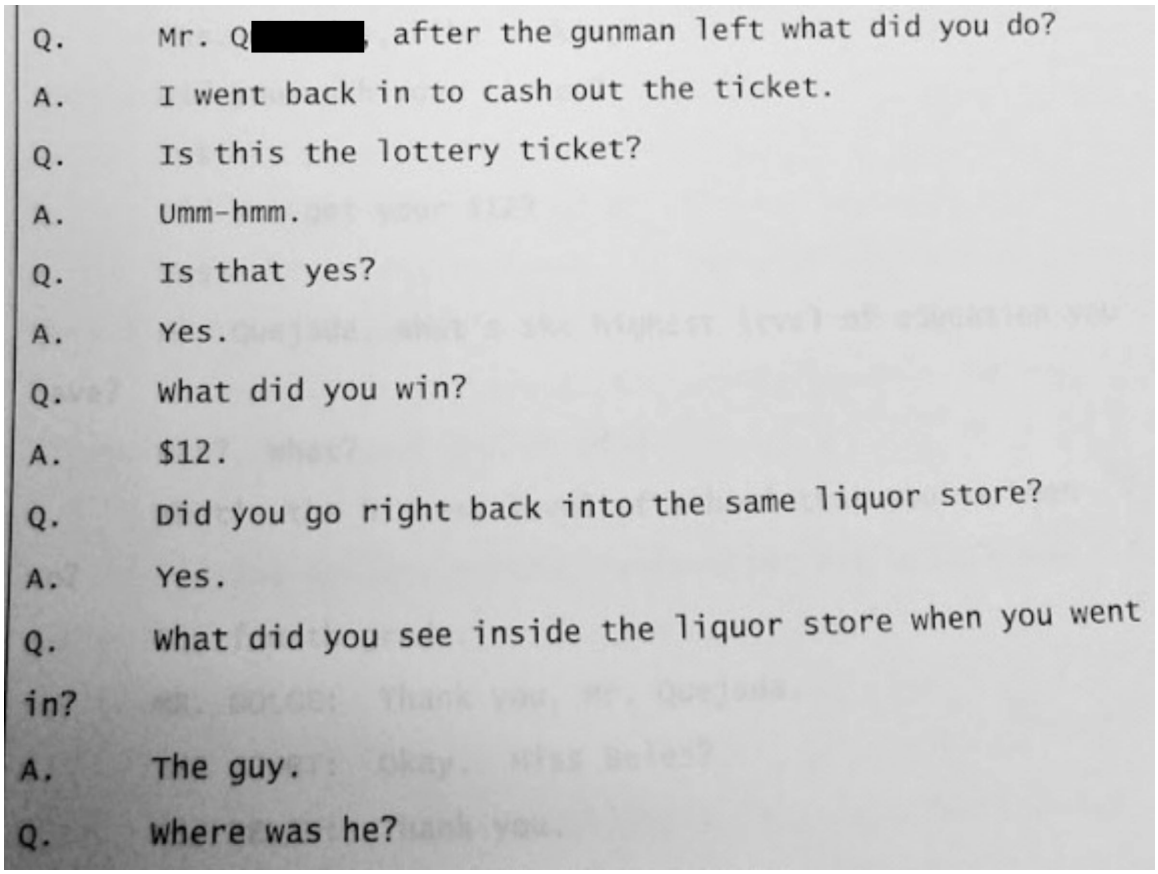
Q. When the shooter came over with a gun in his hand towards you, were you afraid?

A. Yes.

Q. And did you move your body in any way to get away from the shooter?

In the trial, both attorneys concentrated on ethnicity to either credit or discredit the witness. The prosecuting attorney first attempted to compare skin colors through sports heroes, most likely because of his age and gender. Unsuccessful on a number of different possible levels—Michael Jordan is an American basketball star; "Rodriguez" is probably the famous baseball player Alex Rodriguez, born in New York, raised in Miami and of Dominican descent--

El Salvador does not have a big baseball history; and finally he mentions Pele, possibly the only black soccer player he could think of and although world famous, was 57 years old during the year of the trial. He next referenced the trope of cultural competence through the metaphor of coffee to unsuccessfully trigger a description of Charles' skin color. For her part, the defense failed to exploit the "all blacks look-alike" trope, despite his comment that "people of that race, most of them walk like that," when describing the defendants walk as a result of his sagging, baggy pants. The El Salvadoran man, never more than twenty-five feet away, looked directly at Charles, locking eyes, as he shot towards both of them. And there was never any doubt in his mind when he pointed him out in the courtroom. After this piece of testimony, the prosecutor asked to reconvene the witness, he had forgotten something in his cross-examinations…



Q. Mr. Q[redacted], after the gunman left what did you do?
A. I went back in to cash out the ticket.
Q. Is this the lottery ticket?
A. Umm-hmm.
Q. Is that yes?
A. Yes.
Q. What did you win?
A. $12.
Q. Did you go right back into the same liquor store?
A. Yes.
Q. What did you see inside the liquor store when you went in?
A. The guy.
Q. Where was he?

A. In the hallway of the liquor store.

Q. And the man who was injured was on the floor, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you have -- did you have to step over him to go collect your money from your lottery ticket?

A. No.

Q. Was he leaning up against a wall?

A. No, he was on the floor but he was a little bit ahead of the window.

Q. Did you speak to him?

A. No.

Q. Did you -- you then went up to the counter of the liquor store?

A. Yes.

Q. And there was a clerk there who helped you with your lottery ticket?

A. Yes, the owner.

Q. Did the owner seem to notice that there was a man on his floor?

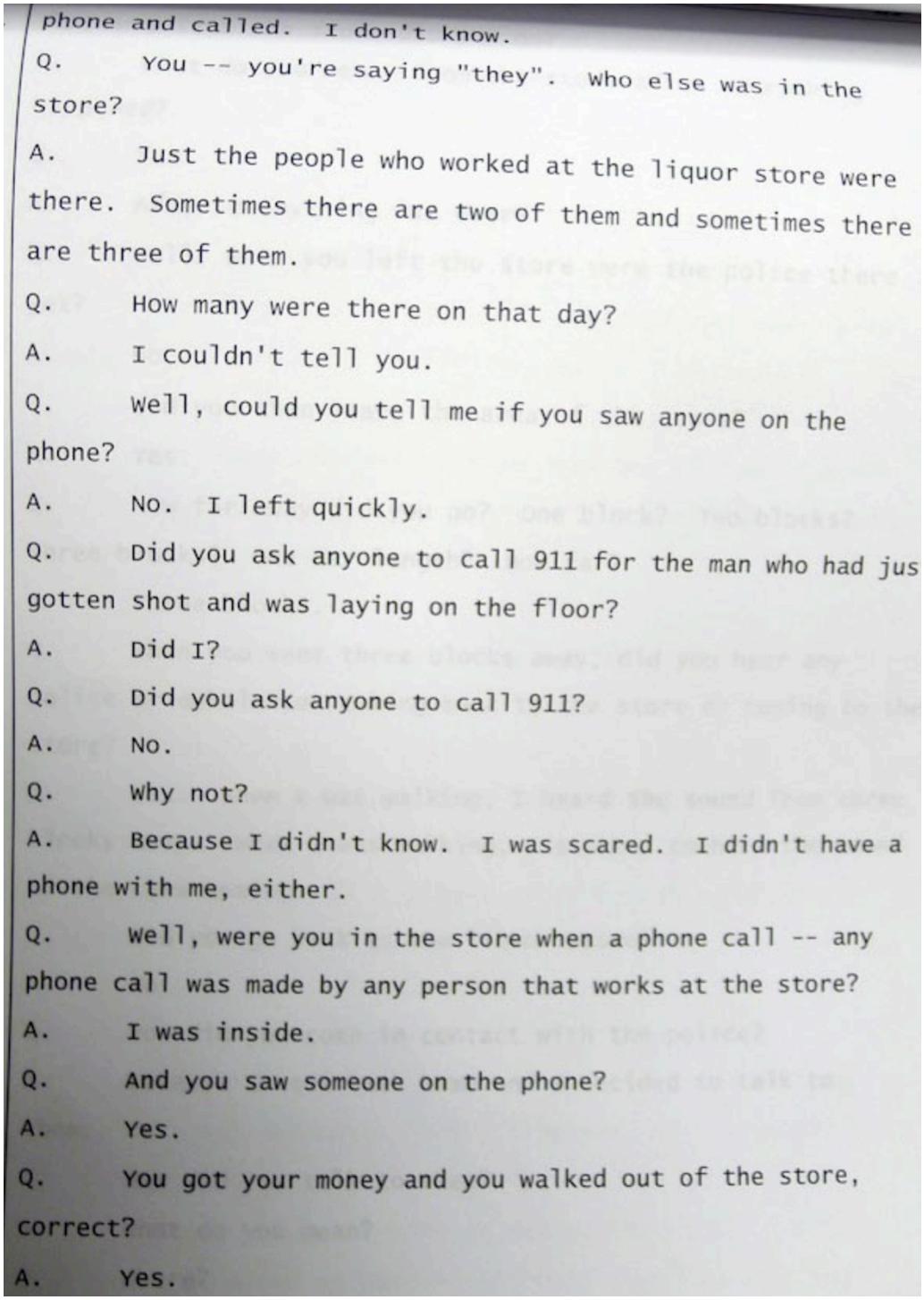
A. Yes.

Q. Did you hear the owner making a phone call?

A. I heard that they made a phone call but I don't know if it was for that.

Q. You heard that they made a phone call when you were in the store or sometime later?

A. No, I was there when I saw that they picked up the



phone and called. I don't know.
Q. You -- you're saying "they". Who else was in the store?
A. Just the people who worked at the liquor store were there. Sometimes there are two of them and sometimes there are three of them.
Q. How many were there on that day?
A. I couldn't tell you.
Q. Well, could you tell me if you saw anyone on the phone?
A. No. I left quickly.
Q. Did you ask anyone to call 911 for the man who had jus gotten shot and was laying on the floor?
A. Did I?
Q. Did you ask anyone to call 911?
A. No.
Q. Why not?
A. Because I didn't know. I was scared. I didn't have a phone with me, either.
Q. Well, were you in the store when a phone call -- any phone call was made by any person that works at the store?
A. I was inside.
Q. And you saw someone on the phone?
A. Yes.
Q. You got your money and you walked out of the store, correct?
A. Yes.

After three unsuccessful shots at Antoine, the witness finally broke free. Antoine ran towards the

liquor store and was struck in the jugular vein of his leg with the fourth shot. He managed to stagger into the liquor store, collapsing in the aisle.

The witness followed. He had a winning lottery ticket, and as Antoine lay bleeding to death, the owner preceded to hand him his $12 just prior to picking up his phone, presumably to call the authorities. The witness was obviously scared and quite possibly, in shock. He would eventually return to his room and also call the police. Again, shocking, but not surprising.

The young, El Salvadoran man spent the next year in a federal witness protection program somewhere in Colorado. However, when the case came to trial he was nowhere to be found. The District Attorney had no choice but to offer a generous plea deal to Mr. Tucker—second-degree manslaughter. The prison sentence would last a total of six years, including the three years and twenty-five days time served while awaiting trial. From the moment of sentencing, Charles Tucker had less than three more years of incarceration for the killing of Antoine. Malia felt as though she had no choice but to permit it.

At the plea hearing, Malia, Earl, their twenty-two year-old daughter, Earl's brother and I all sat together behind the District Attorney's table. About two -dozen of Tucker's family sat behind him at the defendant's table including the grandmother who denied his alibi at the time of his arrest. Everyone in the courtroom was African American except the judge, the defense attorney, the bailiff, and me.

Malia passed me a note stating how disappointed she was with the D.A. She felt he was too quick to offer a deal and end the case. He even suggested they not come on this day. She then gestured towards Tucker's family and whispered, "I feel really sorry for them. I know what its like to see your son on trial for killing someone else. I've been on that side. I've been in their shoes."

The Earthquake and Danny

As mentioned above, when the earthquake tore apart the Cypress, it also opened what would be considered new possibilities for the neighborhood. The successful battles to stifle the rebuilding of the Cypress in order to reintegrate and renew West Oakland eventually coincided with the rapid rise of Silicon Valley and the housing boom. This collision of events helped create the conditions, materially and discursively, that would bring Danny and Kimberly to Winslow Street. By this time, the hype around gentrification, although not as strong as during the technology boom, continued at a steady pace. The housing bubble had since burst and sales had slowed at the condominiums but now, young white renters were snatching homes bought by speculators on the foreclosure market.

Urban Farming

A group organized around an art collective, called the Black Dot began espousing a Black Nationalist rhetoric to stave the gentrification underway and create an "African American cultural district" centered on the musical legacy of 7th Street. (Runge et al. 2009). The charismatic leader, an artist named Marcel Diallo whose aunt and uncle lived in the neighborhood since the 1950's made national headlines —appearing on CNN, and interviewed on National Public Radio (Gonzalez 2007; Obrien and Diallo 2009) He had art openings and gatherings featuring the likes of Amira Baraka and famous, Bay Area rappers. Holliday, the white developer whose name was synonymous with gentrification, supported him. Holliday held the mortgage on Diallo's house as well as prevented his aunt and uncle from facing foreclosure (Gammon 2009). Holliday also gave Diallo storefront space in one of the condominiums to showcase his art (Gammon 2009).

This relationship was not lost on some of the more aggressive, pro-gentrification forces that saw it as proof that Diallo was nothing more than a self-serving, hypocrite (Gammon 2009). Both he and the developer, however, saw it as both pragmatic and progressive (Swan 2008).

Besides art, the Black Dot engaged in community-based support projects, tapping into the movement around food security and urban farming. Since the scorched earth of the 1950's, West Oakland, and in particular, the Lower Bottoms, had become a "food desert. (McClintock 2011)." A number of community-based organizations, stemming from the environmental racism movement, targeted the desperate need for access to healthy food. Neighbors depended on the corner liquor stores to provide them with groceries. These organizations mined the southern legacy of the African American population, urging them to return to their roots as farmers and gardeners as a way to enrich their diets with fresh, healthy food while locating a cultural foundation in the very soil of their community. A close friend of mine, a white woman whose hippy parents raised her on a fruit orchard north of San Francisco, was instrumental to this movement by creating a "backyard garden program." Her organization paid for and assisted low-income people in building and maintaining their own vegetable gardens (my wife was a Director on their board). They also started their own small farms, buying up a few empty lots in the neighborhood while leasing others, selling the locally grown produce on a sliding scale to low-income residents.

The arts collective followed their model (and fought them for funds). They teamed with an internationally renowned non-profit sustainable growth organization to turn a number of empty lots into working farms to sell vegetables. They also made plans to develop an aquaculture program, created by an African American urban farmer (and MacArthur "genius grant" recipient) from Chicago. The storage containers on the farm would feature scenes from

West Oakland's history, including portrayals of the Black Panthers and the WWII shipbuilders (Runge et al. 2009).

The price for houses in West Oakland was still way below the market, especially for rentals in the Bay Area that were heading skyward with the housing bust and the freezing of home loans--an about face from the times when I received mine. However, despite a continuing crime and homicide rate far beyond the norm, West Oakland remained an attractive option for young people, especially those looking for an iteration of the industrial garden, such as Danny and Kimberly:

> Jan (Danny's mother): Danny and Kimberly's place in Berkeley was too expensive and small. They didn't have steady jobs and they had two dogs. Dogs have a lot to do with where you can live and where you can't live. Those factors that are considered normal family life have a huge determination on where your family can live. How can this happen in the US that people are not protected and don't have a safe place?
>
> When they told me that their friend had lived there for two years, doing what he was doing [growing marijuana], undisturbed by anybody that made me feel much better. We thought that "Oh, they probably just leave people alone who have nothing to do with gang activity." We were all very naïve. For Danny, I saw this excitement in him.
>
> Danny said, "Mom, come and see the house, just come and see the house!" You guys [looking at Kimberly across the table] saw the potential of having a garden and fruit trees in the backyard. And there were all the community gardens and the new food cooperatives opening up.

Kimberly: We looked in the neighborhood and y'know, when I came here, Oakland had such a bad reputation, but it is really diverse. There was a musician next door, a saxophone player. And there was the house with the piano in the window. Then, next to our friend David there was that woman in the restored, pretty blue house with the stained glass. Then I met our neighbor and her husband and they showed me their new baby and said their parents lived above them. And then I saw you and your family across the street in your beautiful home. Things were changing, just like everyone said. I musta been blind to everything else.

My raising rent in Berkeley combined with the amount of available space had also been my original motivation to move to West Oakland. It was also based on the recommendation of a friend that had experience in the neighborhood.

Kimberly's comment reflects the phase in which the changes in my Lower Bottom community was undergoing at the time. The musician next door was Earl, one of the few remaining African American homeowners on the block and one of the few West Oakland residents with full-time employment at the post office. Besides a nighttime mail sorter, he was a saxophone player and a preacher. When Danny was killed, Earl witnessed much of the incident. I know this because both my wife and I saw him on his porch. He hid when approached by the police and the police detective had told me the same.

The woman with the piano is Linda. Linda is a middle-aged white woman that bought her house two years after I. She used to own her own flower stand in San Francisco but was evicted when that city revitalized the Embarcadero section of the waterfront, building new restaurants and high-end stores. She has two houses in the neighborhood. Linda teaches piano

and does physical labor by working for a company setting-up corporate events. She also boards roommates to help defray the costs of her home.

The woman in the blue house is Evka. Originally from the Czech Republic, she is an artist *cum* massage-therapist-turned registered nurse. Evka bought her house a year before I did and restored it in the fashion of its original design, except for the duplexing completed during the 1940's. She rents the other unit. She had recently married an elderly white gentleman named Francis. In a previous life, Francis had been one of the original designers of the hedge fund on Wall Street. Now, however, he was a Buddhist monk.

Francis rigged a webcam on his porch to record the criminal activity in front of his house, mostly in the form of trading pirated movies and music. The older men who did this were ostracized children of two families that had been on the street since the 1950's and spent their entire days outside their cars, drinking beer and smoking weed. One of these is the gentleman who fireman carried Malia back to her car on the day her son was killed. On the day of Danny's murder, the webcam was broken. The movie sellers disappeared and Francis ran into the street when he heard the shots but did not get a good look at the killers. He is confused as to why the police have not interrogated him despite his contacting them.

Lidia is my El Salvadoran neighbors' middle child, and the elder sister of the fifteen year old that eventually went to UC Berkeley and was almost killed by the bullet ricocheting in her room. She was raised on Winslow Street. At the time of Danny's shooting, she and her husband, a Guatemalan of German decent, had just had a baby. She works at a catholic preschool across from Acorn while her husband works as a bank teller at Wells Fargo. Lidia and her husband had been trying to save money for many years, and imploring her parents to do the same, so that they can leave Winslow Street. She finally left a few months after the homicide.

At the time of the homicide, my co-authored first book had just been published. I was now in the third year of my PhD in Medical Anthropology. Besides being supported through a fellowship, I also worked as a harm-reduction counselor in a local, public high school. My wife worked part-time for the City of Oakland in a program to integrate art into the public school curriculums. Our kids were two years old (as mentioned in the prologue), and six years' old, his seventh birthday only nine days away.

Three white families, one Latino family, and one African American family do not portray a correct cross-section of my blocks' ethnic make-up. It does I believe, reflect the very near future. What Kimberly did not see, or at least mention, were the dealers unmistakably occupying almost every corner on route to the house. And Jan's comment, that "they probably just leave people alone who have nothing to do with gang activity" was positively correct. But Danny *was* participating in "gang" activity, evident in the 61 marijuana plants carted off by the police. And when dealers confront other dealers to rob them of their product and money, especially in mob territory, they come full-throttle and heavily armed (Contreras 2013).

Just as the housing boom and bust had brought many of us to the neighborhood, so had it brought at least two of the suspects. Cheryl, the mother and girlfriend of the two in police custody, had been the victim of a common foreclosure scheme. Speculators that made bad investments and that were being foreclosed-on rented their houses cheaply for a quick buck before losing it to the bank. She was the victim of this scheme in Antioch, a suburb to the south with a growing black population. Many in Antioch were displaced from their homes in places like San Francisco and Oakland because of skyrocketing. She was a victim of the same scam in the home she found in the Lower Bottoms and they were on the verge of being evicted when her son and boyfriend and two others embarked to Winslow Street.

The Vigil

On the one-week anniversary of Danny's murder, Jan held a vigil on the sidewalk at the spot where her son was shot. My wife and I invited Malia and she met us at my house for a brief minute before we headed across the street. We also made a point to invite Brenda. She is the mother of LaToya, the young woman I had mentioned in the Introduction killed on my corner exactly one-year and a day prior to Danny's homicide and whose life we had been celebrating 24hrs before Danny was killed. She refused, shaking her head back and forth emphatically, explaining that she could not "go there," to the memory of her daughter's death in that context.

About thirty people gathered in front of the house around a small shrine my wife had built the night of the homicide. All were white, or in the case of Jan and my wife (who are both ethnically Latina), looked white. Jan wore a casual, flowered blouse and like most of those attending, jeans. Only Malia seemed to dress for the occasion in a pretty green satin dress, silver jewelry and her hair pulled tightly back in a bun.

Jan passed out candles poked through paper cups to keep the flames from blowing out. She spoke about her son's love for life. She discussed the need to create a 911 emergency cellphone policy. As the perpetrators broke into their house, Danny was desperately dialing 911, only to be connected to the highway patrol in North Carolina, the place where he had purchased the phone while caring for his dying father. She spoke about the need for this West Oakland community "to heal," and believed that the "sacrifice" of her son along with the "energy from this vigil" would begin that process. Malia then, spoke up. She offered her condolence and explained that she too had a son killed "on these streets." She then added that it must be recognized that, "these murders happen all the time to African-Americans and every house on these blocks has buried a young person in their family." The group seemed to nod their head in deferential agreement.

After Jan spoke, she asked the mourners to join her in singing Danny's favorite tune, the Bob Marley hit, "Every Little Thing is Gonna be Alright." As they sang I noticed a stocky young African American man in a baggy, red sweat suit, walking brusquely down the sidewalk. He then goose-stepped straight through the vigil, and when he reached the end of the line of people, he turned and repeated this action, staring ahead at no one, but with conviction.

I was dumbfounded. Nobody said a word until afterwards where some expressed incredulity. Most of us, however, they we were scared. It is why I pulled my camera from my eye.

After the ceremony, Jan approached Malia and they hugged. Brenda then came over. I returned my camera to my eye as the three mothers, all of who lost a child to Winslow Street, embraced.

A few days later Malia came to lunch at my house. She began to laugh as we discussed the influx of white people in the neighborhood. She asked rhetorically, "Why do they always have to have dogs? You see them walking up and down the street, and now that Mandela Parkway is all done, they up there with their little baggies picking up the doo-doo." She even commented that she was with her kids and some friends and they saw "white people on Mandela parkway playing croquet." Where the hell do they think they are? Young kids be tripping off of that. It disturbs them. Like they are trying to take over."

We had yet to talk about the murder or the vigil. I commended her for her comment and she said people all over Oakland were talking about the homicide. She had heard about it the day it happened as word quickly hit the streets that a young white man was killed in the Lower Bottoms. And it was not just any homicide, but one executed with audacity:

People is saying they made a statement when they killed him. That's why they was so bold, in the middle of the day in the street, with no mask, nothing. They saying, "You came here but this is still our hood, would always be our hood and this is where it's at. You think you came down here and changed shit? This is where you are and who you are. You in the damn hood! There are no exceptions! And that was the purpose of doing what they did.

So, you buying up the houses and what are they doing to us? We dying for help and you just pushing us away! I got lots of sympathy for that family but not a lot of others do. It's been happening to us forever, but now that it happened to you [white people] things are going to change? That feeling must be widely felt. Oh well, goes with the territory.

Conclusion

Consecrating the usual

One of my African American neighbors, a successful plumber who was born and raised on Winslow Street but moved his entire family to Sacramento once he could afford to leave, speaking of the young dealers on our corners, told me that incarceration was a "rite of passage" for them. For them, incarceration made complete their subjectivities as "thugs." He then needed to clarify, stating, "They are what you call, niggars."

I have not had the opportunity to speak to the individuals arrested for Danny or Antoine's deaths. I discussed prison with JM, Antoine's friend and head of their mob (JM knew both Antoine's killer and the men arrested for Danny's homicide), who, I argue articulated Wacquant's "link" between the "remnants of the dark ghetto and the carceral apparatus," extending a history of racialized oppression in the United States, and specifically, in West Oakland, to today. None of the guys involved in this research has ever tried to go to prison or discussed looking forward to that day. They do *almost all* that is possible to stay out. As of this writing, and to my knowledge, none of them, surprisingly, given the Sergeant's assessment have "snitched." This, of course, provides them with credibility (and safety), both inside and outside of jail—the passage my neighbor mentions. Yet none of my informants ever spoke of jail or prison with pride. It was more of a nuisance in their everyday lives.

Therefore, instead of a rite of passage, I see the court proceedings revealing as a rite, following Bourdieu, as one of "institution… in the active sense of the word" of the consecration of violence as usual. (Bourdieu 1991:117). Here, within the courtroom, the space that declares justice blind to the influences of race, class and power, intimate apartheid is clearly visible through the fold and throughout the process.

As Victor Turner so famously expressed, certain types of social rituals are created to "heal" a social breach (Turner 1967; Turner 1996). In the case of murder, among a number of other things, the courtroom ritual sanctifies society's declaration of the illegality of killing, stitching the breach with *objective* truth and punishment. In theory, it is also designed to sanctify the process of objectivity itself, the courtroom as a ritual space purified of polluting, human subjectivity that ultimately, can only be overseen by the spirit world: "I swear to tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God."

After watching the proceedings, I believe the court ritual does accomplish these goals. Yet in addition, a social breach that is "healed," or better yet, hailed, is the objectivity of the blindness itself. What I see, and will reveal in the following pages is not the magic of coincidence (Frazer 1951; Taussig 1992). For all of those involved in the ritual, the trials show how these rites hail the racialized oppression I've discussed throughout this dissertation; and it is why I offer it as a conclusion. Before I present the trial, however, I would like to offer a short summary of this dissertation.

The historical event:

The social historian William J. Sewell, Jr. defines an "historical event" as:

> (1) A ramified sequence of occurrences that (2) is recognized as notable by contemporaries, and that (3) results in a durable transformation of structures. (Sewell 1996: 841, 1996).

Throughout this dissertation, I adopt his definition. The sequences of occurrences span almost 150 years and branch-off in a plethora of different lives, experiences and epochs, but that which I hope I have shown, have a logical connection to a history of racialized violence in the United States that manifest in multiple ways of being and formed of (disciplinary) power, eventually revealing its face in West Oakland. I discuss such events as the Gold Rush and the

Emancipation Proclamation; the never ending wars, from the Civil War to the World Wars to the Wars on Poverty and Drugs; events such as the Great Depression, Jim Crow violence, eminent domain and blight clearance; suburbanization and slumification, the Dotcom and the housing booms; and natural disasters such as the earthquakes of 1906 and 1989; just to name a few. All of these occurrences promote a hailing of some sort of racialized violence as usual.

Many of the events that I have written about, as I stated in my Introduction, have been written about before and are highly noted by contemporaries as part of the popular, cultural narrative of the United States. The experiences of such people as Jack London, Jack Johnson, C.L. Dellums and Huey P. Newton—four men who many American's are aware, figured largely in this dissertation because they walked the same blocks as those with lesser names that I discuss, such as Antoine, Danny, JM, and Barry. However, it is not only the ground under our feet that we have in common, but also a history of orienting towards a usual steeped in a racialized social, political and cultural U.S. economy that materialized in my neighborhood as a result of those occurrences mentioned above, as well as the many more I discuss throughout this work. All of these men lived within conditions in my neighborhood that made it not just possible, but necessary to negotiate this violence.

And finally, although Sewell had a more expanded definition of the term structure, nothing can define a more durable transformation on the structures that define ones life than the murder of ones child. In West Oakland, this happens a lot. Living in West Oakland means finding a way to absorb it, for it to shock into orienting towards the usual so that life can go on.

Looks like Jim Crow: Prelude to Baines vs. The People

A white, middle-aged woman, wearing a black sweater combination and feathered hair is the first juror to enter through the oak-paneled doorway. She is also the first jury member to

encounter the defendant, the thirty three year old African American man, Jamarcus Baines on his first day in his trial for first-degree murder in the death of Danny Fanning.

Baines stands approximately two feet away. He is wearing an oversized, navy blue suit in a cut that borders between a hip-hop sag and a more traditional fit (I could not tell whether the suit was too big or if this was intended). His proximity signals an abrupt introduction to the next two weeks, greeting the fourteen men and women (twelve jurors plus two alternates) as they walk single-file in ritual procession—everyday in the same order, to sit in the same seats in the jury box on the opposite side of the room.

Laying eyes on Mr. Baines for the first time, in his suit, the jury will create their own first impression based on this upgraded appearance and is all part of the "innocent until proven guilty" instructions in which they, as well as the rest of us in the United States, are to abide. The prisoner is not supposed to be seen as a prisoner, despite the fact that he has been locked-up for the last year without the possibility of parole.

As the jury enters, Mr. Baines follows the procession with a calm yet rapid back and forth of his neck, his eyes darting to keep pace with each jury member as they first, sweep past him, and then his attorney, Thomas Broome, and finally the prosecutor, Mark Jackson, before taking their places on the other side of the courtroom closest to the prosecutors table.

As they enter, all conversation stops. The legal participants in the trial stand in deference behind their tables in recognition of the jury's power over a life, turning their shoulders towards the opening door with hands solemnly clasped behind their backs.

None of the members of the jury looks at Baines as squarely as he does them. All of them seem in a self-conscious, unselfconsciousness. Some bow their heads, with a quirky, pinched-lipped grimace of subtle awkwardness. Others stoically fix their gaze towards their destination; while

all of them take extreme care not to touch him, their bodies bending in an arc the way two of the same magnetic forces oppose one another; or avoiding something tremendously noxious. (Douglas 1970; Douglas 1990). The distance between the jury and the defendant is uncomfortably tight.

That there is not a single, African American on the jury is vividly evident as they file in their line to the box. And when they take their seats in the jury box, it is vividly evident that the courtroom is segregated by race in a way that evokes the Jim Crow south.

The courtroom is divided into a number of zones. At the front, about four feet high, up on the bench sits Judge Hurley, "a self-described pro-life conservative (McCullough 2009). He is a plump, white man in his mid sixties who resembles the former Vice President Dick Cheney, with balding grey wisps of hair above his ears and wire rimmed glasses

Just to the right of the judge, about three feet away is his clerk. A dark-skinned African American woman, she sits in the middle of an enclosed desk, surrounded by piles of manila folders. A three-foot high by ten foot wooden cabinet is just to her right, and it too is stacked with a number of files and other items familiar in an office, for that is what this courtroom is for her. A 30" flat-screen television is centered above, tacked to the wall. At the end of the file cabinet, approximately ten feet from the judge is a red and yellow plastic candy dispenser featuring the M&M cartoon figures standing hand in hand. This is the only other bright color that is part of the courtrooms daily decor. The proprietor of the candy dispenser and sitting at a small, square table is the bailiff. She is a deputy of the Alameda County Sheriff's department, her star unobtrusively pinned to her drab brown and beige uniform. She is a tall white woman in her mid thirties who seems quite affable, not as abrasive as other bailiffs when admonishing a visitor in the gallery for their cellphone not being off; or for too much chatter or for confiscating

an audio recorder. To maintain safety in the courtroom her gun holster on her belt is empty so that if a defendant were to engage her in a scuffle, he would have no access to a weapon. However, there are weapons accessible at the blink of an eye in places she cannot reveal. Like the clerk, this courtroom is her office. On Valentine's Day, a large bouquet of a dozen red roses stood high in a vase upon her desk. The roses sat there throughout the remainder of the trial.

Across the desk of the clerk and to the left of the judge, in front of the gap that separates him from the witness, sits the stenographer, a middle aged white woman.

If the judge were to look directly ahead, his gaze would cut the distance between the prosecution and the defense in two.

Finally, directly behind their tables is a two-foot high oak fence, *the bar.* It spans the courtroom end-to-end with a gate in the center for which those involved in the trial may pass. Like the proscenium on a stage, the bar separates the actors in the unfolding drama from the audience, where the general public, friends and families sit to observe the proceedings. Technically, the symbolic force of the proscenium is meant to be strong, especially close to the defendant to prevent any interaction with the gallery such as intimidating glances aimed at witnesses. The gallery is made up eight rows with approximately eight seats per row. The rows are equally divided by a passageway that leads from the gate to the exit doors at the point furthest from the judge.

In both the trials of Danny and Antoine, the families and friends of the victims sat behind the prosecutor while the family and friends of the defendant sat behind him. Mr. Jackson prosecuted both cases. In the case of Antoine, everyone in the courtroom except the judge, the defense attorney and me, were African American, including the bailiff and the court reporter. During the Baines trial, all of those sitting on the prosecutor's side of the room were white,

Latino or Asian, including the jury and except the prosecutor. Except the enforcer of security, the bailiff, who is granted the right by law to either physically sequester or shoot to kill in the courtroom, everyone on the left side of the room behind the defendants' table, is black. The thought pops into my head, that one person, or society's poison is another's loved-one.

As is customary, the prosecutor opens the trial. He steps towards the jury and addresses them directly, his baritone projecting confidence. Without notes, he presses his remote control and upon a screen attached to the wall furthest from the jury we see "The People vs. Jamarcus "Roadie" Baines"—the PowerPoint framed in the organized chaos of orange, yellow and red, in a style of what guitar designers call "sunburst."

The pretrial hearings

The other times I'd laid eyes on Mr. Baines, he had his ankles shackled in stainless steel and wore a mustard-yellow pajama-like pantsuit with the words "Alameda County Jail" boldly stamped on the back. Dulled by a life of industrial laundering, the outfit swam on him, as though the one-size-fits all designer considered the "all" to be an extra-large. On his feet were pilled, terrycloth socks slapped into sooty plastic sandals the color of rusty water; they strangely resembled the little girl slip-ons known as "Jellies." He had also always appeared with another suspect, the eighteen-year old, Samuel Clayton, the other one of the four suspects in police custody connected to the crime. Only seventeen years old at the time of the murder, he too wore yellow pajamas, the slippers and steel shackles, but in his hand was a soft bristled brush that he constantly swept along his shorn scalp for tender comfort.

They appeared together throughout the administrative and preliminary hearings during the first year of their sequestering in the county jail. These procedures took place in the crowded Monday courtrooms where fiercely fought constitutional matters, such as the waiving of the right to a "quick and speedy trial," are ensconced in bureaucratic banality. Also common during this

time were the appearances by parolees to assure the judge that certain court-ordered mandates as the search for drug treatment programs were being met; or for the judge to impose a negotiated sentence for a minor felony. The court was a revolving door of panoptic entrenchment and rights fortification, as the judge processed over fifty cases, one after the other with hand-over-hand rapidity, dictating rote legalese and simplified instructions pursuant to some statute or law. It was impressive, and despite the calamity of the room, the judge appeared familiar with each case, and was able to project to every accused that they were the only ones on her docket for that day.

The judge overseeing these procedures for Baines and Clayton had a unique lineage within the milieu of power that went beyond her gavel, providing an even more trenchant face for this disciplinary apparatus. A white woman in her mid forties, she sits behind a nameplate that is all too familiar in political and military circles in both the Bay Area and the United States. A quick web search reveals that Judge Carrie Panetta is none other than the daughter-in-law of the United States Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, who only just recently left his position as the head of the Central Intelligence Agency (Richman 2009). The judge's husband, the son of the Defense Secretary, is the supervising District Attorney to the Oakland Police Department's Narcotics Task Force (Honegger 2009). He is also a recent recipient of the Bronze Star medal, awarded for his valor in the line of duty while deployed as a Navy reserve "intelligence analyst identifying and tracking high-value al Qaeda targets," for his "... diligent development of pattern-of-life analysis of key enemy personnel" in Afghanistan during a six month tour during 2007(Honegger 2009). Again, as revealed throughout this dissertation, there is a seemingly oblique, yet real connection between war and the military and power that has a direct effect on the lives of black men and women from my West Oakland neighborhood.

Sheryl Shore introduced Baines and Clayton to each other. She is Mr. Baines's girlfriend and Mr. Clayton's mother. During the first year of their initial incarceration, I met with Ms. Shore on a few occasions.

Jeff's Fieldnotes:

When I arrive at the courthouse, the street in front of the courthouse steps is lined with television news crews. I find chair in the courtroom next to the reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. I recall that he had once declined the offer from my wife, a former Chronicle photographer, images of the aftermath of a murder of an African American man on our block for a possible story, with the quip, "No thanks, those killings are a dime a dozen." On his lap is a stack of crossword puzzles. I interrupt his play to ask about the ruckus.

It turns out that the two young African American men, ages 17 and 20 are also being arraigned on this day for the well-publicized incident for what some are calling the "sucker punch murder," of a 53 year-old Asian American man shopping with his son in downtown Oakland (Angry Asian Man Blog. 2010). Many in the Asian American community were calling for the filing of a hate crime (Angry Asian Man Blog. 2010; Bay Area News Group. 2012; Lee 2010). The two young men were brought into the courtroom and the reporter shoved his puzzles into his notebook and dashed to get closer. The lawyers quickly entered "not guilty pleas," and soon an exodus of journalists followed out the door to file their stories.

Over two hours had passed when Judge Panetta finally called "The People vs. Jamarcus Baines and Jamarcus." A bailiff turned to the doorway and brought them from the prisoners' dugout outside the purview of the courtroom. Mr. Baines

and Mr. Clayton shuffled into the court, with Mr. Baines in the dock close to the entryway while Mr. Clayton was escorted to the jury box on the other side of the room. As he passed I noticed a discreet but easy smile arise between his smooth, young cheeks, his head remaining twisted in the direction from where he had passed just long enough for his gaze to clip a small section of the gallery. Zero interaction between visitors and prisoners is tolerated and when his head turned forwards towards his destination, his smile remained, as though he was stretching the trace of the moment before it came to rest in memory. Having decided to make the families of the accused a part of my project, I tried to figure out with whom he connected, but the crowd was too large.

Different attorneys were representing Baines and Clayton, but Mr. Clayton's attorney, a white, grey-haired man named Laurent, was representing the two at this moment in the others' absence. When the judge asked that they enter their plea, he announced with gusto, "Absolutely and categorically not guilty!" He stood a few steps away from his client, his theatricality somewhat lost in the shuffle of the crowd. Upon the judges' dismissal, he offered the young Clayton a raised hand for a big high-five.

After the prisoners' escort back to the county jail, I watched the crowd to see who had also left and I headed to the courthouse exit. The first few people I approached to inquire of their possible relation to Baines and Clayton had none. I then asked an elderly African American woman in a smart dress and striking silver streaks in her black hair. Terse, yet polite, she nodded and said her daughter was Clayton's mother. I asked if she was waiting for her and she responded no, for her

husband. A few seconds later a very elderly gentleman approached, stick thin and wearing a black, southern-style three piece church suit complete with a bolo tie. He did not talk and the elderly woman turned and pointed to Clayton's mother. They left without saying goodbye.

When Sheryl Shore responded that Clayton was her son, I introduced myself as a resident of West Oakland interested in writing a book on the trial. She was small, about five-feet tall, with dark skin and high cheekbones on an oval, soft and pretty face that belied her nervous desperation. She wore gold eye shadow, jeans and a black leather jacket. On her neck were a few tattoos in a cursive script and one that looked like a diving swallow. She was immediately friendly and eager to talk.

Cheryl swears on her son's innocence. Because she has twelve children, she says she is forced to pay close attention to them and therefore none of them are ever in trouble. The youngest is three, the same age as my youngest, and I tell her as much and this makes her smile. There are three different dads. Despite the recent rape and kidnapping of one her daughters, she insists all manage to stay away from the law. She has never been visited upon by Child Protective Services. Her son was in school the day of the murder and she has the attendance role to prove it. She said teachers were willing to testify. He was only weeks from his high school graduation in Emeryville, which she qualifies with, "That's a nice place, where Pixar is!" tapping into the reputation of this successful, high-tech animation company as though someone who goes to school where such an esteemed corporation resides is hardly the type to commit murder.

Sheryl Shore and I failed to meet that weekend or any other. Something always interrupted our plans. Each time I found myself alone at our agreed upon location. She was always in crisis, whether it was her car breaking down or an emergency surrounding her children, such as her daughter getting beat-up with a bat by a boyfriend. However, we would see each on occasion over the next year at the courthouse, oftentimes sitting with one another during the proceedings. She would always immediately inquire about my children and smile when I say they are well. On one occasion I gave her a copy of my book on homeless, heroin addicts. Leafing through the pages, the photos elicited a stream of recollections from her own experiences with homelessness and poverty. She knows well what life is like to live under a freeway, revealing that one of her kids' grandmother lives under Interstate 880 and she's visited her many times. She becomes excited when she recognizes other spots, triggering a list of the places she grew-up in San Francisco, a veritable history of the City's housing projects.

My participation in the pretrial process, and my relationship with Cheryl faded when my wife was called by the DA's office to review her initial interrogation. It appeared she had penned a question mark next to an image in a photo lineup of a possible crime suspect. That person was Jamarcus. At that point I stopped attending the hearings, more or less cutting off my fieldwork; and my relationship to Cheryl. Yet when Danny's mother, Jan texted me to ask if I would accompany her to a hearing, I said yes.

Jan, had just moved back to the Bay Area, having finally "gotten to that point" where she could cope living both on her own and in the same region where her son was murdered. She had yet to attend a hearing and wanted to see the two accused men.

I arrive early at the courthouse and took seat in the gallery. A few minutes later, Jan arrived wearing close-fitting blue jeans, a flowing blue blouse and carrying a purse decorated

with Sanskrit calligraphy. Her white skin looks gaunt but her black hair flows in a polished coif. Her best friend Ellen and a court appointed therapist accompany her. They sit next to me. The gallery fills up and the courtroom alights with its usual energy.

I don't see Cheryl enter the courtroom until she takes the seat directly behind Jan and whispers over my shoulder. She apologizes to me for never getting in touch but both her stepson and nephew had recently been murdered in two separate and unrelated incidents in San Francisco. Her stepson's case was high profile. Only a few years ago the *San Francisco Chronicle* named him high school football player of the year (Berton and Lee, 2011). I'd read about his killing in the paper.

As Cheryl and I converse, I see Jan passing notes to her friend and see she is wearing a ring inserted with a picture of Danny on her wedding finger. And when a seat opens up next to me, Cheryl arises from her place. She scootches down our aisle, excusing herself as she shuffles past the court therapist, Jan's friend, and then Jan, in that unfathomably tight space between knees and the row in front of us. Jan says nothing. Cheryl takes her place and I am now sitting between the two mothers. On my right is the mother whose young son was (possibly) murdered by the young son of the mother on my left, whose son has and will probably vanquish from Cheryl's' everyday by a social killing. And when Mr. Clayton's name is called and he enters the courtroom, the woman on my left beams an explosive smile out to him who captures it with his own while the face of the woman on my right explodes into tears.

When the suspects are led away, Jan and her entourage quickly exit. I follow and find them at the elevator. I say to Jan, "I want you to know that was Jamarcus' mother." She responds, "I thought so, and she is right behind you now." I had told both of these women of my intention to contact all the parties entwined in the murder case. I turn and Cheryl is there. She

walks to the elevator and pushes the button while saying something to me, to which I am oblivious. Then, as I stand between the two mothers, the unimaginable happens--two elevators open at the same time. Cheryl steps towards the car to the left and Jan and her entourage to the right. I hesitate.

I tell myself that I'd made plans to meet Jan that day. As I pivot to the right while saying goodbye to Cheryl, a shadow suddenly shrouds her face in a hail of recognition and insult. I too am hailed to these symbols scurrying like ants upon my skin.

Baines trial continued

The trial of Jamarcus Baines lasted two weeks. Cheryl did not attend but her sisters and children to make sure he did not snitch on their kin. Baines's family and friends filled the seats behind his table. Jan, her family and friends also filled their side of the gallery and throughout the trial complained that members of the Baines party had been intimidating them with glances. Some in Jan's party said they were worried for their safety. Through the DA, they lodged a formal complain with the judge. I sat with Jan's party, feeling solidary with their trauma and my own. Yet despite this, I noticed no intimidating stares, even while they alerted me to them. Cheryl and her family had been nothing but kind and maybe this is what allowed me to cross the intimate apartheid line. And conversations with some of those on the other side of the aisle during breaks revealed zero hostility to Jan's family.

The evidence against Baines was overwhelming. The juvenile who initially found Danny's marijuana plants admitted to telling him the information. Both a WWII era machine gun and a semi-automatic pistol, found in the house occupied by the family, matched the ballistics removed from Danny's body. A cellphone picture of Samuel holding the machine gun was also found. Two automatic bullet cartridges, duct-taped together top-to-bottom for a quick change, had been confiscated. In their van was a box of bullets.

Kimberly flew from North Carolina to testify. She did not remember the face of the killers, just her boyfriend Danny telling her to leave while he would fight them off. But she did not leave. Instead, she held onto Danny's back, recalling someone coming from behind the house and shooting from above her head into her boyfriends' skull. Upon their initial arrest, Baines and Clayton were placed alone in a room together. With hoodies and jackets pulled tightly over their heads, they whispered to each other corroborating alibis. The entire conversation was recorded. They both admitted to taking part in the robbery but not participating in the killing. Baines said that he went first to the back of the house and when he could not enter through the back door, heard the shots and left the scene, heading north on Winslow. The coroner testified that a bullet entered from the back of his skull. Just his being at the scene of the crime made him an accessory for first-degree murder, a mandatory 50 years to life.

My wife Sofia was asked to testify, but for the defense. She did not recognize the defendant from the homicide. After her testimony, she and I left to smoke a cigarette. She confided to me that she immediately recognized Baines as the one who trampled through the memorial ceremony-- the criminal returning to the scene of the crime. Neither I remember nor did others mention this, but my wife has a good memory for faces.

The jury sequestered for a full day to come to a verdict, a very short period for such serious charges. They found him guilty of first-degree murder, including a special circumstances charge for willfully killing with a firearm. The mandatory sentence was life without the possibility of parole. The judge ordered the court to reconvene in sixty days for the sentencing hearing, when he will officially assign this punishment.

Two months later, all of the parties re-assembled for the sentencing. As is custom, the judge provided the victims' family the opportunity to address the court. For the first time,

Danny's grandparents, Jan's parents, were in attendance. The victim's supporters were numerous but the perpetrator had far fewer. None of Clayton's family was there.

The judge opened by reading a letter written by his grandmother. Although she sat in the galley, she could not deliver the words herself. She spoke of Danny's kindness and all of the friends that have gathered at the various memorials in both Northern and Southern California to remember her son.

Next came Jan. Through tears, she too spoke of his kindness, that he had a "heart of gold" providing detailed anecdotes from his life, including moments of humor and embarrassment, allowing both she and others in the audience to laugh through their mourning. She related her experience of her pregnancy and his birth. She spoke of his caring for his dying father, of his "knack" for helping "the downtrodden, the underprivileged and the homeless." She spoke of his lack of desire for material consumption.

She also addressed her son's killer. Barely able to get the words out, short of breath, she wanted to offer an opportunity "for healing," citing the South African Truth and Reconciliation hearings, "where victims and perpetrators can find a way… and therefore, I offer you my love…whatever can help heal." She closed by dismissing the idea of the death penalty and then in public told him what she had told me in private, not more than six months after his death. That she "forgave" him and all the others who did this to her son.

Jan's sister was less forgiving. She offered thanks, "grateful to the court and to the jury and grateful to my brother for taking this monster off the street," and that he had destroyed her faith in humanity.

Danny's grandfather, Jan's father spoke next. A self-made entrepreneur and political activist, he spoke of his love for his daughter, his family, and "humanity."

Baines never turned around throughout their speeches, staring straight ahead towards the bench. And when the judge asked if he would like to address the court, he simply said, "no sir."

The judge spoke next. He spoke of the loving family, of the crime, about the shame of the suffering that all, including Baines's family, are enduring. He then expressed his own opinion that:

> "Unlike the family of the deceased, I do not advocate that we do *not* have the death penalty here…I would have a much broader application for this murder… I have listened to the dead man's mother say she forgives you. I don't know if that gives you any comfort, but it is not my job to forgive or forget. I am here for justice…"

The judge read the charges and the sentence. He banged his gavel and declared the case over. Then, as the court stirred I noticed for the first time a large, young African American stand up behind me. I watched as he quickly raised a small digital camera in the direction of Baines, and the flash signaled he took a picture. Then as Baines was being approached by the bailiff to be led out in cuffs, he turned to the young man behind me, and meeting his eyes, clenched his fist and vigorously pumped his chest two times above his heart.

Epilogue

Broken Windows and Quality of Life Policing

In October of 2011, the Mayor of Oakland, Jean Quan and the interim Police Chief, Howard Jordan announced "The One Hundred Block Plan (Cruz-Rosas and Waheed 2011; Walter 2012; Quan 2011)." With a police force at only 55% of the recommended staffing due to budget cuts and violent crime increasing 14% over the previous year, Quan's strategy aimed to concentrate resources on the most "difficult" blocks, the "hot spots" where "90 percent of the shootings and homicides reported in last 10 years have happened (Cruz-Rosas and Waheed 2011; Zimring 2012)."

By this time much of the hype around gentrification had calmed. The housing bust pushed home prices back to levels not seen in ten years. Holliday's loft project was having difficulty locating buyers and he eventually left the neighborhood to take a position with a another project in San Francisco. The non-profit agency that owned the train station actively shopped around for investors to keep the project afloat. They were desperate. They sponsored events at the train station, with hipster food-trucks and neighborhood kids performing acts as a way to promote it as a magnet for the community. And of course, they promoted the history—posters of Pullman Porters lined the outside; photo booths were created for guests to don early 20th century period clothing, including porter wear; even a historian was there, recording oral histories of the experiences of older residents who first came to Oakland through the station. However, the neighborhood was still changing. Speculators bought houses on the foreclosure market. They were easily renting them to the young, single, childless, white and hip population flocking to the Bay Area and unable to afford the higher priced neighborhoods. The African

American population in Oakland had shrunk 25% in Oakland alone since I'd moved there: but as I stated earlier, had diminished by 50% on my street (JRDV Architect 2011).

Quan's plan was a smorgasbord of police tactics, community interventions and anti-violence projects from throughout the United States. Paramount to her plan was a reliance on new computer tracking surveillance and data collection. She called for the increased cooperation between various agencies with law enforcement units such as the Oakland Unified School District, the Oakland Housing Authority (the body in charge of public housing), the probation department and the California Highway Patrol. She promised more support for street outreach organizations and other non-profits that work directly with "at risk" groups. But mostly, she promoted what looked and sounded just like "broken windows theory," and zero-tolerance policing.

Broken window theory posits that the physical effects of disarray in the urban environment, such as vandalism and graffiti, literally broken windows that have not been fixed, lead to the worsening of the malady as well as promotes environments for criminal behavior (Kelling and Wilson 1982; Cruz-Rosas and Waheed 2011; Walter 2012; Quan 2011). New York City promotes broken windows as part of the success of its "zero-tolerance" for drugs and crime that has brought its rates to historic lows (Bratton et al. 1998; Quan 2011; Zimring 2011; Zimring 2012). There is much debate in the social sciences over the success of the broken windows theory and the zero-tolerance approach to crime (Corman and Mocan 2005; Harcourt and Ludwig 2006; Kelling and Wilson 1982; Zimring 2007). Social justice advocates declare that it promotes racial profiling and the grossly unequal incarceration rates of non-white people.

Quan's plan does not actually use the terms broken-windows or zero tolerance. On my street and the surrounding blocks, however, it had become obvious that they now included this approach, especially following the shootout in the liquor store parking lot.

Jeff's Fieldnotes

It is about 6:00 in the evening and Sofia and the boys have just returned from swimming at the YMCA. They scamper up the steps, hair wet and scraggly. I had been on my way out to the post office, a few blocks down the road on 7th street. After a quick peck hello, the kids drop their stuff in the hallway and skip to the kitchen, hungry for the dinner I had prepared. Just as Sofia reaches the landing, the night awakens with the sounds of snaps. Quizzically, we look at each other in a way that communicates, "gunshots?" but they continue for so long and in such a strange pattern that I break the silence telling her, 'It sounds to me like a hammer on plywood.'

Sandy volunteers to join me on my errand. We drive down 7th street and see a single police car parked at a strange angle on the sidewalk. I make the necessary U-turn to enter the parking lot, swinging past the boarded-up, Esther's Orbit Room, the last remaining club from the Harlem of the West, which closed in 2010. Now the only business open in that building is the liquor store that shared the parking lot with Esther's. I let Sandy drop the letter into the drive-up box. We were home a minute later.

As we eat, the familiar sound of helicopters grows louder with the Doppler effect. Sirens follow. I ask to be excused and leave the dinner table and repeat my route to the Post Office. Now I cannot get near it. Yellow police tape cordons off

three blocks. I ask a young adolescent in a hoodie if this was a result of gunshots, recalling what I had heard earlier. He nods yes. I park and walk to the scene. There are no bystanders except a mass of television cameras aimed at the shared parking lot. Police lights turn night into day. Small triangular pylons stamped with numbers littered the lot like confetti. Each number represents a bullet or a fragment. There appears to be no less than fifty.

News reports filled the airwaves that evening but it was not until the next that the details of the tragedy emerged. A rap video filming had just ended and those who attended were celebrating in the parking lot outside the store. Suddenly two young men dressed in hoodies opened-fire on the partygoers. People scrambled out of the lot. A few dove for cover under a van and a taco truck, pulling out their weapons. A shoot-out lasted about 20 seconds. Then the boys fled.

When I first drove to the post office with my son, no more than five minutes after the event, the scene was blank, except for the lone cop car. All of those involved had quickly dispersed. Most of them have yet to be heard from, except for a man who was rushed to the hospital with his baby. When the shooting erupted, he cloaked his eleven month old son's head in his hands for protection. Unfortunately, it was not enough. A bullet pierced his hand and then the little boy's skull.

Much of this scene was captured on the liquor store surveillance camera. For weeks the choppy and grainy sepia toned footage broadcast throughout the country. The little boy did not die immediately but lay in a coma. Doctors declared him brain dead but the family refused to remove him from life support in the hopes that more could be done. The press camped outside the hospital. The family finally

relented after a week to let the boy die after consulting with other doctors, ethicists and their clergy.

While watching this tragedy unfold on my computer, the boys' father spoke in front of the press corp. As tears streamed off of his cheeks, I kept looking closer at his face. I texted JM if it was Big Johnnie. He texted back, no, it is his brother.

At the funeral I found my friend Dionne who I'd met at a birthday party for JM. A twenty-two year-old aspiring rapper, I photographed him for various publicity materials and the cover of his newest mix tape. He is a cousin of Big Johnnie and the little boy. He missed the filming because his girlfriend's water broke and she went into labor for his third baby. He had planned on inviting me to photograph the rap shoot.

Dionne stood with about three-dozen other family members. In a sea of white outfits in the California winter sun, they were awaiting the casket at the front of the funeral home. On the other side of the entrance stood the press corp. And when the casket arrived, preceded by the solemn click of horses' hooves, a few photographers broke their ranks and approached. Reminiscent of Felix Mitchell, whose empire was headquartered only a few blocks from this church a horse drawn carriage, ornately carved with Victorian splendor, arrived with a small yellow casket nestled in white satin behind etched-glass doors,. A limousine pulled up behind and out stepped six gentlemen dressed in white tuxedos with tails, their dark skin plush against the silk fabric. The carriage driver, who wore a 19th century style black jacket with tails and a tan vest, descended the steps, handing the reins to the woman riding "shotgun" next to him. The driver stepped towards the back to open

the glass doors to facilitate the process for the pallbearers. It was not smooth, as the men negotiated the photographers as the horses switched from one leg to the next, rocking the carriage. Two men reached in and got hold of the small box, leading the others with Big Johnny carrying up the rear. I began to speak and he nodded in my direction, cutting me off.

A month after the funeral, a sticker was attached to my primer-red painted, beater of a truck, 1980 Chevy, parked in my driveway. The sticker warned that if I did not move or dispose of my truck, it would be towed at my expense and destroyed. The sticker also provided a number to lodge a complaint. I was not alone—a number of my neighbors also received these stickers. In addition a letter arrived telling me to hide my garbage cans behind a fence or wall or face a $50 a day fine.

I had tried to dispose of my truck through a state anti-pollution buy-back program, but it had run out of money. I ripped off the sticker and immediately called the number only to get a voicemail. I left a message about the legality of my truck. I never received a return call.

The week before receiving the sticker, Sofia had testified in the Baines trial murder case for the killing of Danny. When the City came to tow my truck, the police service technician claimed she had sent a certified letter but nothing ever arrived, but she apologized for not returning my call and I was able to negotiate another two weeks. She then lectured me on how the cleaning of the neighborhood "would help stop crime." I bit my tongue.

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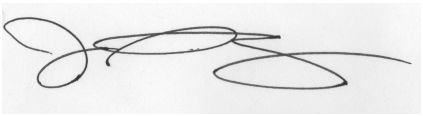

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