



LET IT FALL
Los Angeles: Riot to Uprising

by

John Ridley

Polish
March 21, 2007

BLACK

OVER THIS WE HEAR THE SOUND OF POLICE SIRENS, OF GUNFIRE. WE HEAR THE SOUND OF PEOPLE WAILING IN ANGUISH AND SCREAMING IN ANGER.

What we hear are the sounds of a populace standing against the inequitable system that holds them down. We hear the sounds of the expression of people when every other means of expression - economic and social and political - has been forcibly stripped from them. This, then is the only manner in which the oppressed can communicate with their oppressors.

This is the sound of people rising up.

NEWSREEL

We see now the pictures that accompany the sounds. Yes, it is people rising up, buildings burning down... However, it is not - as one would expect coming into this film - footage of the 1992 Rodney King beating trial aftermath. What we see is newsreel footage of the 1965 WATTS RIOTS.

SUPERIMPOSE: THE WATTS AREA OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
AUGUST 1965.

There is carnage and death and destruction. It is all a fairly powerful statement regarding the reaction of people who are stripped of dignity and recourse, and the only voice that remains is one of rage.

SUPERIMPOSE: OVER FIVE DAYS OF RIOTING: THIRTY FOUR PEOPLE WERE KILLED. ELEVEN HUNDRED PEOPLE WERE INJURED. FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED. DAMAGE WAS ESTIMATED TO TOTAL MORE THAN \$35 MILLION.

The following VO is from ACTUAL NEWSREEL FOOTAGE OF THE DAY, and puts what's happening on screen in context.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Thirty four people were dead by what will always be known as insurrection by hoodlums. The degree of communist influence in these riots has been subject of much discussion and controversy. For a solution to this controversy, let's review the events of recent years both at home and abroad in light of the communists' own plans for world conquest.

As we see RESIDENCE OF WATTS - all black, all who look very downtrodden - cueing up to get aid packages, WE HEAR:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

As inquiries into the motivation of the five day rampage continue the Federal Government announces an allocation of one
(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
million seven hundred seventy thousand
dollars to the area. Not for relief, but
for job training and other projects to
lift the desperation of these citizens.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - DAY

WE SEE SOUTH CENTRAL LOS ANGELES CIRCA 1988. We see tenement
buildings and vacant lots. We see a good deal of garbage and
structures in disrepair.

SUPERIMPOSE: IN THE TEN YEARS BETWEEN 1980 AND 1990 THERE WAS
A "CATASTROPHIC" ECONOMIC DOWNTURN IN LOS ANGELES.

We see liquor stores and 99 cent stores... We don't see any
Starbucks or GAPs or Home Depots.

SUPERIMPOSE: WITH THE LOSS OF MORE THAN 150,000 MANUFACTURING
JOBS, THE HARDEST HIT AREAS OF THE CITY WERE THOSE THAT'S
POPULATION WAS MORE THAN 80 PERCENT BLACK AND HISPANIC.

We see the elderly sitting on stoops and porches, all who
look as though they rarely get the medical care they NEED or
DESERVE.

SUPERIMPOSE: AMONG THOSE COMMUNITIES, 13 PERCENT WERE
UNEMPLOYED, 29.7 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION WERE IN POVERTY,
21.1 PERCENT WERE RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.

We see YOUNG MEN - not gang bangers, young men - with no
recourse, no direction.... Young men who should be in school
and who should have opportunities - hanging on street
corners, sitting on bikes, rolling in cars... Doing much
except rolling ahead in life.

We see YOUNG GIRLS with babies. No fathers in sight. Just
girls trying to be women.

SUPERIMPOSE: NEARLY 30 PERCENT OF PERSONS 25 YEARS AND OVER
HAD LESS THEN AN EIGHTH GRADE EDUCATION. ONE-HALF HAD NOT
COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL.

BLACK

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING, OF COURSE, SHOULD BE CUT VERY HARSHLY.
A VIDEO AND AUDIO JUMBLE. THE FOLLOWING IS FOR REFERENCE,
HOWEVER, AND LAID OUT FAIRLY SUCCINCTLY.

SUPERIMPOSE: MARCH 3rd, 1991

We hear the sound of sirens, the sound of tires squealing as
they rip against asphalt. We hear the sound of car engines
pulling major revs as they race near their red-lines. And we

see a CHP car chasing a white Hyundai along Foothill Blvd. in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles County. MELANIE and TIM SINGER are driving the CHP squad (they're a married CHP couple). This ain't no slow-speed pursuit. The cars are topping 85 M.P.H. on residential streets. Both cars are cornering hard, weaving and dodging traffic...

An LA Unified squad joins in the chase which has slowed none, become more dangerous. The Hyundai running a red light and nearly crashing into cross traffic.

LAPD units now join in the chase, as well as an LAPD police copter which bathes the car in a blinding white light.

As the chase reaches a crescendo, a PICK UP TRUCK, trying to move out of the way of the approaching vehicles, ends up blocking the road.

The Hyundai brakes hard, comes to a SKIDDING HALT. The CHP car, the LA Unified and the LAPD cars stop behind it.

In the CHP car, Tim Singer begins to scream orders to the occupants of the Hyundai over his car's PA system: "Get out, get the hell out of the car. Put your hands up!"

Three more LAPD units arrive. In them are, OFC. LAURENCE POWELL and TIMOTHY WIND. THEODORE BRISENO and ROLAND SOLANO. Sergeant STACEY KOON is in the last car by himself.

The Singers exit their CHP squad and verbally order the occupants of the Hyundai to get out.

The two passengers, BRYANT ALLEN and FREDDIE HELMS, comply with the order and lay face down on the ground.

The third person in the car, the driver, RODNEY KING, remains in the vehicle.

Melanie Singer focuses on the driver - King - and continues to order him to exit the vehicle, which he finally does. King is disoriented. Seemingly happy - smiling and laughing - despite the circumstances. Singer orders King to put his hands on the top of the car. Finally, King does so. But, a moment later, as Melanie Singer is trying to get control of the situation, King puts his hands on his butt and wiggles his ass at her.

KOON, SEES THIS. From the look on his face, we can tell he doesn't care for King's actions. Koon quickly goes to get a Taser from his vehicle.

As he does this, Melanie Singer orders King to lay face down on the ground. He gets down on all fours, but does not lay flat on the pavement. Still, thinking the situation is under control, Melanie Singer begins to move toward King with her gun at the ready. Though it's clear she's trying to cuff King, it's a maneuver Koon doesn't seem to care for.

KOON
Stand down! Put your gun away. I got
this! Stand down!

Singer hesitates a moment, then does as told, but doesn't really look that happy about turning her arrest over to the LAPD.

Quickly, Koon orders DAVID LOVE - the ONLY black cop on the scene - to watch the two occupants of the car.

KOON (CONT'D)
Watch those two. You hear me? Keep an
eye on them!

Koon seems intent on keeping Love away from the action. Love moves off to guard the occupants of the car.

Koon then orders Powell, Wind, Briseno and Solano to try and subdue King. There are maybe 15 other cops standing around "doing nothing" as the four LAPD officers move in. They try to get King all the way down by taking hold of his arms and legs... Not only can they not do that, King actually manages to toss the cops back and off of him.

Koon now steps up with his Taser. Fires the darts into King. King grunts, but he does not go down.

POWELL
He's dusted.

WIND
Hit 'em again.

BRISENO
Get down, now!

Koon fires the Taser again. Again King is hit, and he groans, but he does not go all the way down.

KOON
Anybody else got a Taser?

The cops all indicate "no."

KOON (CONT'D)
Get your batons out. Let's go. Put him
down.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SIMULTANEOUS

We are interior of an apartment in the Foothill Section of LA. The noise, the lights from the police helicopter all conspire to wake GEORGE HOLLIDAY, white guy, thirty-one - who sleeps next to his wife MARIA.

Holliday goes to his balcony, looks at the scene on the street two stories below him; the cops, the chaos...

HOLLIDAY

Maria... Hey, Maria. Go get my camera.

MARIA

What is it?

HOLLIDAY

I don't know. All these cops out here. Get the camera, I want to try it out.

MARIA

It's almost one o'clock.

HOLLIDAY

Just get the camera!

Maria pulls herself out of bed. She quickly gets a brand new - era-appropriate - video camera that is still sitting in its box. She takes it over to her husband.

He turns the camera on, starts taping.

AS HOLLIDAY TURNS ON THE CAMERA, WE CUT AMONG FILM, RECREATED VIDEO AND THE ACTUAL HOLLIDAY VIDEO OF THE RODNEY KING BEATING. WE SEE THE BEATING FROM ALTERNATING PERSPECTIVES: Holliday's camera, on ground level, King's POV of the cops, the cop's POV of King... It's all very jumbled, confusing.

Just as Holliday starts taping, King moves very rapidly. Maybe he's moving toward the cops, maybe he's trying to run from them. Whichever, the resulting action is a devastating blow from officer Powell with his baton which sends King to the ground.

From there, it's on; the images that were played over and over again: the Rodney King beating. FIFTY-SIX BATON BLOWS DELIVERED TO THE MAN WITHIN LESS THAN A MINUTE AND A HALF. Through most of it, King is on the ground, rolling from the blows. Too stunned, too beaten to even defend himself. Powell, in particular, just flails away at King. Beats him the same way he would beat an animal. IT IS BRUTAL, VICIOUS, VIOLENT AND UGLY - THE BEATING GOES FROM BEING ABOUT SUBDUING KING, TO PUNISHING HIM. King fairly BEGS FOR MERCY, but none comes. The beating will not stop, nor do the cops seem interested in giving King an opportunity to surrender; to lay still.

Finally, finally the horror ends with a "stomp" to King's head from Briseno.

EXT. CEMENT YARD - DAY

We are in a cement yard in the LA area. A lot of dirt, a bunch of cement mixers. WORKERS doing the loading, the mixing. None of it looks particularly fun, but it is good, solid, honest work.

Among the workers, we see BOBBY GREEN - 29, black - driving one of the cement mixers. Backing it into position for a fill. Again, no big thing. It's not brain surgery, but he clearly does a very good job of handling what is a large and unwieldy vehicle.

I/E. CAR - LATER

We are now in a car with Bobby. Day done, he's driving home, driving the streets of South Central LA.

INT. CORNER MARKET - DAY

A small, mom and pop-type market you'd find on almost any corner in the city. There is a young KOREAN man - a guy in his twenties - working the counter of the store. By a door to the backroom there is an OLDER KOREAN MAN - a guy in his fifties, most likely the younger man's dad.

Bobby enters the store, makes his way around, gets some bread, some milk... Staple items. As he collects them, he looks at the price, shakes his head in mild disgust.

As he's getting the last of his food, the door to the joint opens and a few, young BANGER-LOOKING BROTHERS roll into the space. Bobby doesn't pay them much mind as they enter.

Bobby crosses to the counter, sets down his food and starts to go for his wallet. As he takes it out, he mutters absentmindedly:

BOBBY

Planning on bringing down your prices at all? What I'm paying for milk, most people pay for a steak.

The young Korean working the counter doesn't respond. Bobby, finally, looks up. He sees that the young man isn't even paying attention to him, but rather his attention is fixed on something behind Bobby. Bobby looks behind himself. The Banger-Looking Brothers are all standing behind Bobby toward the back of the store. One of them has his hand at his waist, under his shirt. All of them look like they might mean trouble.

Bobby looks back to the young man at the counter. Bobby notices that the young man's hand is below the counter,

perhaps gripping something. Something like a gun, but we can't tell for sure. The guy's got a nervous look to him, like if he's got a gun he might be too jittery to shoot straight.

Bobby now looks to the older man standing at the back doorway. He too grips something JUST BEYOND THE FRAME OF THE DOOR. We can't see what it is, but if you guessed shotgun, you'd probably be guessing correct.

And standing at the heart of this triangle is Bobby. If things got hectic, he would definitely take a bullet.

There is a long, tense moment as everybody eyes each other. They're like a bunch of gunfighters waiting for the toll of the noon bell. Waiting.... Waiting...

And just then, the door to the store opens. A couple of uniformed cops - DAN NEE and LISA PHILLIPS (BOTH WHITE) enter the store. If they at all notice the tension, it doesn't show. They go to the cooler, get some bottled water. Nee takes the water to the counter while Phillips hangs back, eyes the Banger-Looking guys.

PHILLIPS

You gentlemen shopping or you're just hanging out? 'Cause if you're just hanging out you're done for the day.

At the counter, the Young Korean man reaches for Nee's water. Indicating to Bobby:

NEE

You can finish ringing him up.

The Korean man finishes with Bobby as the Banger-Looking guys exit. Throughout all of this Nee and Phillips remain cool, professional. We get the idea, at their best, cops really do keep the peace.

I/E. CAR - EVENING

Bobby driving home. The framing is similar to when he was driving to the store, only now Bobby owns a vacant empty stare. He knows what kind of shit he just about got in the middle of, and it's an ugly, ugly feeling.

Bobby pulls into the drive of a house in South Central. Small but nice. Evidence that some people are trying to make South Central an area worth living in. Bobby sits a long beat, takes a few deep breaths. Tries to relax.

Suddenly there is a loud BANG as a B-ball hits the side of the car. Bobby gives just the hint of a shudder, but recognizes what it is right away.

Bobby EXITS the car and greets a few YOUNG BOYS who are shooting hoops just off to the side of the drive. One of the boys, Mr., is Bobby's son. As Bobby approaches the boys, he seems agitated.

BOBBY
What are you doing, Mr.? What are you doing?

MR.
...shooting hoops...

BOBBY
(brightening)
You call that shooting the ball? Lemme have it.

Mr., now with a matching smile, tosses his father the ball. Bobby, holding the groceries in one hand, takes a shot at the basket and misses badly. Lightly teasing:

MR.
You missed.

BOBBY
One hand. You see I'm only using one hand. Two hands, I could make that shot from Santa Monica. Where's your mom?

MR.
Inside.

As he heads inside:

BOBBY
You don't go off the block, alright Mr.? And when I say it's time to come in, you come in.

INT. HOSPITAL/ER - DAY

We are in a hospital ER. We see JOSEPH DU - a Korean man in his early thirties - being examined by an ER NURSE who puts the final touches on bandages and wrapping which dress Joseph's wounds. To say the least, Joseph looks real bad. I'm not talking about the cuts, the bruises, the drying blood... The guy looks like he's got a hole in his soul. He looks as though, even though the gun pointed at him was never fired, part of him was shot dead. There are TWO DETECTIVES with him from the 77th ST Station who attempt to question Joseph. Joseph's so beat up, drugged up as to be barely coherent. In the BG, close, but not really the center of attention, are Joseph's parents HUNG and SOON JA DU.

77TH DETECTIVE
How many of them were there?

JOSEPH

Ten. Twelve. ...At least ten.

77TH DETECTIVE

All black guys? None, uh, Hispanics or--

JOSEPH

They were black. All of them.

77TH DETECTIVE #2

All twelve of them come into the store?

JOSEPH

Three or four. Like they were going to buy something... Just walked around. Then, one of them goes to the door and he... Then a bunch more of them come running into the store...

77TH DETECTIVE

And then what?

INT. EMPIRE LIQUORS - FLASHBACK

Coming into this scene, it seems as though we're shooting AGAINST A WALL. We see Joseph's face - beaten and bloody - slamming into the wall. Or so it seems. But then a foot presses against Joseph's neck. THE CAMERA ROTATES and we see now Joseph is actually on the floor and a YOUNG MARKET BANGER has got his foot pressing Joseph down.

THE FRAME WIDENS and we see we are actually in a smallish corner Korean market, the kind you find all over Los Angeles. THIS IS EMPIRE LIQUORS.

POV - JOSEPH

He looks up, sees the Market Banger towering over him. Market Banger's got a nine mil gun in his hand pointing right down at Joseph. To Joseph's eye, it looks like a canon.

MARKET BANGER

Stay down. Motherfuckin' choon! Stay the fuck down!

Joseph starts to raise his head. He gets it shoved down by Market Banger's foot.

MARKET BANGER (CONT'D)

I ain't fuckin' around. Move, I take your goddamn fish head right the fuck off!

There are SEVERAL OTHER BANGERS in the store. They're not just robbing the place. They're tearing it apart. This

isn't just about stealing money. This is about committing violence for the sake of violence.

INT. HOSPITAL/ER - CONTINUOUS

The conversation continues among Joseph and the Detectives.

77TH DETECTIVE

Lemme tell you something about your neighborhood, about where you're at; highest crime rate in the city. In the entire city of LA. It's sick with bangers.

77TH DETECTIVE #2

Main Street Crips.

77TH DETECTIVE

Almost a thousand felonies...I'm talking in one year: a thousand felonies, five murders, nine or ten rapes, two hundred robberies... That's in thirty two blocks. Thirty two blocks around your liquor store.

INT. 77TH STREET STATION - DAY

We see Joseph at a police line up. Joseph still shows the signs of a beating, BUT HE DOESN'T LOOK NEARLY AS BAD AS HE DID IN THE HOSPITAL. The point being, WE'RE FLASHING FORWARD A BIT IN TIME. Joseph stands with the Detectives looking through a TWO WAY GLASS at a line of young black guys of a similar build and look. Among them is the Market Banger.

In the BG, identifiable, but not readily so, BRUCE HAGERTY, head of detectives for 77th St. He's a white guy, forties. Seems a decent sort.

77TH DETECTIVE (V.O.)

We're trying to put a hurt on these guys. If you could ID a few of them, that would get us to the rest of them. We're talking about an opportunity to put down maybe a dozen bangers at one time. That's...that's serious street cleaning.

INT. HOSPITAL/ER - CONTINUOUS

We are back in the ER. The conversation continues among Joseph and the Detectives.

77TH DETECTIVE

How many times has your place been hit up? Eight times? Ten times?

JOSEPH

Maybe...maybe thirty.

The Detective looks to Hung and Soon Ja.

77TH DETECTIVE #2

That your Mom and Dad? They work in the store, too? Look, these thugs; they're coming back. You testify or not, they're coming back around. Maybe you can handle 'em. You're young. You're tough.

JOSEPH

I'm...I'm not tough.

77TH DETECTIVE

Your father, your mother; if it had been one of them instead of you...

The thought hangs with Joseph.

INT. KTLA/LOS ANGELES/NEWSROOM - DAY

We are in the very active newsroom of KTLA, a Los Angeles television station.

As we come in we see KTLA newsman STAN CHAMBERS talking with ROSALVA SKIDMORE. They are approached by WARREN CEREGHINO, the station's News Director. Warren looks concerned as hell.

CEREGHINO

Stan, got a minute? I want you to look at something.

CHAMBERS

What is it?

CEREGHINO

Do me a favor; just take a look.

INT. KTLA/EDIT ROOM - LATER

We are in an edit bay at KTLA. On a monitor plays the Holliday tape - the tape of King being beaten by the cops. In the room are Cereghino, Chambers, Skidmore an EDITOR and a FEMALE PA who are all watching the tape. None can quite believe what they're seeing.

CHAMBERS

Where'd you get this?

CEREGHINO

Guy called up. Caught it with his home video camera. Looking to make a buck.

CHAMBERS
CNN pays better.

CEREGHINO
He tried them. They didn't pick up the phone.

SKIDMORE
Look at the guy on the ground. He still has Taser wires in him.

FEMALE PA
They Taser him, they beat him...

Briseno delivers the kick to King's head that keeps him still.

EDITOR
...Jesus...

CHAMBERS
Anybody count how many--

FEMALE PA
Twenty. I see about twenty cops--

CHAMBERS
How many times the guy gets hit?

SKIDMORE
At least forty.

EDITOR
It's closer to sixty.

CEREGHINO
Roll it back to the top and count.

FEMALE PA
I've seen enough. I'm done.

As the Editor rolls back the tape, the PA exits. The tape starts to roll again. At the head the focus slips in and out.

CHAMBERS
What's going on there?

EDITOR
Camera's got an auto focus. Low light, from a distance; takes a second for the picture to lock.

CHAMBERS
What was the black guy...the African American guy; what was he doing?

The editor rolls it again.

EDITOR

Looks like he's rushing the cops.

SKIDMORE

He's just stumbling. He's drunk.

EDITOR

Or high.

CEREGHINO

I think we need to give the department a chance to comment.

CHAMBERS

(to the editor)

Can you break off a copy?

EDITOR

Yeah. Warren, how much of this do you want for broadcast?

CEREGHINO

I can't tell what's going on up top. Give me everything after focus locks.

EDITOR

That's about...ten seconds in.

CEREGHINO

Cut it. Get it ready.

INT. EMPIRE LIQUORS - DAY

We see Joseph Du working at the store, stocking shelves... Something innocuous. The phone rings, and with little thought he answers it.

JOSEPH

Empire Liquors.

BANGER (V.O.)

Nobody told you to get in our shit, motherfucker. You want trouble? Now we gonna fuck your bitch ass up! You dead, bitch!

Very abruptly, as if anything could be more abrupt than the previous one-sided conversation, the phone hangs up. And Joseph, well, he looks as if someone just walked on his grave.

INT. DU'S HOUSE - EVENING

We are in a modest house in the valley. Nice, but hardly grand. We come in on the Du family - Joseph, Hung and Soon Ja in the middle of a heated fight. Really, it's Joseph and Hung who do most of the fighting. Soon Ja kinda keeps to herself as the argument rages around her. Hung slips in and out of English and Korean.

JOSEPH

Sell it! Sell the store!

HUNG

I've tried. I've tried for how long, and nobody wants to buy it.

SOON

Stop it!

JOSEPH

What does that say? Nobody else wants to be down there, but you want to stay. I'm not going back. I'm not going back to get robbed again, to get beaten again.

SOON

Nobody's going to beat you. Don't argue. Please!

HUNG

That store gives us everything. And everything we have here is better than where we came from. ...If you don't work, we'll lose it. We'll lose all this. You don't care what happens to us?

JOSEPH

You don't care! You don't care what happens to me!

SOON

I'll work at the store. We'll close for a few weeks, and then I'll work there--

JOSEPH

So the blacks can come and beat you, kill you?

SOON

It will be okay. It will. I'll work at the store, you rest some... Then we'll decide something after. No more fighting. I don't...I don't want this. Okay?

Soon, pleading, looks back and forth between her men.

SOON (CONT'D)

Okay?

JOSEPH

You going to let her do it?

Hung hesitates, but there is no way he's closing down. Joseph gives a look, and if looks could kill his father would be little more than a stain. Joseph leaves the room. Hung and Soon Ja remain for a moment. Finally, Hung turns to Soon Ja. Accusatorially:

HUNG

You see? You see how you raised him to be?

INT. PARKER CENTER - EVENING

We're in a meeting room in Parker Center, the LAPD police headquarters. In the room are Chambers, Lt. and ASSISTANT CHIEF ROBERT VERNON - leader of the infamous LAPD God Squad - and DEPUTY CHIEF MATTHEW HUNT. There seems to be some competitiveness between Vernon and Hunt, Vernon continually asserting himself over Hunt. They've all just finished watching the tape.

VERNON

It looks shocking, I admit. But I want to stress we don't know anything about the, the circumstances--

HUNT

This is the first we've--

VERNON

I'm making that point. It's impossible to say if the force used was appropriate or excessive.

HUNT

Stan, the environment you're dumping this tape into can't absorb it. I know you're doing us a favor--

VERNON

Quite the favor; broadcasting a tape like this out of context.

HUNT

South Central, Compton, Watts, East LA; people there already think the PD is nothing but a hit squad, if we deserve it or not. You want to report this, I understand. But you show this tape--

CHAMBERS

The tape's the story.

VERNON

What's the story? Do you know what happened out there? Do you know what the perp did to the cops?

CHAMBERS

Do you? Do you know if he was a perpetrator, or a victim?

VERNON

That's your version of being objective?

CHAMBERS

We counted fifty-six blows over a minute and half. This man was apparently Tasered prior to that, and a kick to the head finished things off. Unarmed, on the ground; none of that's excessive to you?

HUNT

We'd like a chance to rebut the tape in the broadcast.

CHAMBERS

Absolutely. On camera, if you want.

HUNT

We're going to investigate this, Stan. We're going to take this all the way. Wherever it goes, it goes. I mean that.

VERNON

And when it comes back to clear our boys, I expect equal play.

VIDEO

We see the KTLA 10 PM news broadcast from March 5th, 1991. We've got Stan Chambers showing the Holliday tape and commenting on what's being shown.

INT. MARK FABIANI'S HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

We are in the house of MARK FABIANI, the Deputy Mayor. We see him coming out of his living room, TV ON IN THE BG. He takes the phone from his WIFE who then floats back into the room to check out what's playing on the news.

On the other end of the line is one of Fabiani's AIDES.

FABIANI

This is Mark.

FABIANI AIDE (V.O.)

Mark? Scott. Did you see it?

FABIANI

Just the tail end; the department giving denials. What's, what was the--

FABIANI AIDE (V.O.)

Cops, at least fifteen of them; they got this guy on the ground--

FABIANI

Black guy? He was black--

FABIANI AIDE (V.O.)

They're beating him. He's on the ground, and they're going at him...it's like target practice.

FABIANI

Does the--

FABIANI AIDE (V.O.)

Goes on for almost two minutes, Mark. All on video, start to finish.

FABIANI

Has the mayor seen it?

FABIANI AIDE (V.O.)

We're trying to get a copy for him.

FABIANI

Get some copies, get them down to City Hall. We've gotta start putting together a response...

Mark checks his watch.

FABIANI (CONT'D)

It's going to be wallpaper talk show and there's going to be hell to deal with.

FABIANI AIDE (V.O.)

I'll call you as soon as I've got something.

FABIANI

Call me at the office.

The Aide hangs up. Fabiani literally holds the phone for a long beat. He knows the next move is going to be a difficult one. Then, calling off to his wife:

FABIANI (CONT'D)

I've got to head downtown.

I/E. FABIANI'S CAR - LATER

Fabiani is driving through the night for Downtown LA. As he does, he FIDDLES WITH THE CAR RADIO. There is a quick wash of music, sports... No talk of Rodney King. For the moment that seems like a good thing. Then he switches to AM radio. Again, some music. Then as he surfs, we hear a Tavis Smiley-type radio talk show IN PROGRESS.

CALLER (V.O.)

I think this is a good thing. Nothing good, you know, about a brother getting beat. But we know this stuff is happenin' all the time. The police are doin' it, and the police ain't doin' nuthin' about it. Then you got that Oriental chick that got killed in Westwood...

HOST (V.O.)

Karen Toshima.

CALLER (V.O.)

Whatever. She took a bullet and the cops are all over that. But a brother; they will beat him in the street and not care nuthin' about it. This been goin' on and goin' on and what not, now they got it on tape.

HOST (V.O.)

Uh-huh.

CALLER (V.O.)

Now they ain't gonna be able to say it don't happen.

HOST (V.O.)

I think the bigger thing is; now that we have this visual evidence...as you said we know. People in the community know this happens all the time. Now the police have to admit it, Darryl Gates has to admit it. Tom Bradley has to admit it. We elected him to be our Mayor, you know what I'm saying? Now we are going to see if he's up to the job. And if he's not up to it...maybe he needs a new job.

Fabiani turns off the radio. He keeps driving, looking very vexed as he goes.

VIDEO

We see Rodney King giving an interview as he's released from a hospital.

KING

They beat me so bad I couldn't pay attention to what they were saying...they struck me across the face with a billy club. I was scared, scared for my life.

We see LAPD POLICE CHIEF DARYL GATES standing before reporters commenting on the events of the beating.

GATES

I recognize it is your policy to come down out of the hills and shoot the wounded, but... What really disturbs me is that you sound like a group of foreigners. I read your editorials and it tells me you don't know anything about this fine department.

We see an angry CITY COUNCILMAN going off on the beatings.

CITY COUNCILMAN

We demand that those policemen be fired, but not only fired but sent to jail. Prosecuted and sent to jail!

We now see MAYOR TOM BRADLEY talking with the press.

BRADLEY

I can promise that there will be appropriate action taken against the officers. This is something that we cannot and will not tolerate in this city.

INT. DA'S OFFICE - DAY

We are in the office of DISTRICT ATTORNEY IRA REINER. With him is DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY ALAN YOCHELSON. Fabiani is also present.

There is a quick knock on the door, and it is opened by a SECRETARY. Shown into the office is another DDA; TERRY WHITE - a black man in his mid-thirties.

REINER

Terry. Come on in. This is Deputy Mayor Mark Fabiani. Terry White.

FABIANI

Terry.

REINER

You know Alan?

WHITE

Yeah.

REINER

Alan's going to second you on this Rodney King thing.

(to Fabiani)

Terry's new to SID, but he's good. I want him in front of this. Got us a conviction on that Priest of Porn. He learns to button down his emotions he might end up sitting in this chair one day.

White takes this as the backhanded compliment it is.

FABIANI

Did you see the Mayor's comments this morning?

WHITE

See him promise the city we're going to get a conviction? Might as well have promised we're going to get rid of earthquakes and traffic on the four-oh-five.

FABIANI

The Mayor meant what he said. I didn't see anything in that tape to convince me this was anything but a beating. We cannot allow the, uh, the people who did this to just--

REINER

Agreed. The question is... This is out there, now. It's out there in a big way. We've got to decide how we're going to--

WHITE

Gates is opening up an inquiry. He's got Internal Affairs investigating.

INT. FOOTHILL STATION/ROLL CALL - DAY

The COPS are coming on shift and meeting for their roll call. Among the cops is Officer Powell. An IA investigator, comes around. He IDs Powell, pulls him from the roll call.

WHITE (V.O.)

They're taking a hard look at four of the cops in particular. Laurence Powell...

EXT. PARKER CENTER - DAY

Tim Wind heads into Parker Center, is approached by IA COPS.

WHITE (V.O.)

Timothy Wind...

I/E. PATROL CAR - DAY

Briseno is pulled to the side of the street, sitting in his patrol car. Another car pulls up. IA COPS are in the car.

WHITE (V.O.)

Ted Briseno...

INT. FOOTHILL STATION/OFFICE - DAY

We see Stacey Koon in the Watch Command office, going over some paperwork. Yet another IA COP enters.

WHITE (V.O.)

And Sergeant Stacey Koon. All out of Foothill Division. They're pulling the officers, doing interviews with all of them.

INT. DA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The conversation continues.

WHITE

Beyond that, the FBI's already opened an investigation on the civil rights end.

FABIANI

The Mayor sees this as a city issue. He is not going to allow for a, a whitewash by the police department. This has got to be ours, Ira. We can use this and finally get that son of a bitch Gates out of his post.

WHITE

I'm not getting into politics. I'm not building a case so that somebody else--

REINER

I think the only intention here is to not let these cops walk.

WHITE

This is about Rodney King.

FABIANI

This is about taking control of the police department. We can't vote Gates out of office, we can't pull him out. It has become a goddamn hit squad over there. You know this. There's a, there's an element that is targeting African-Americans--

WHITE

All the more reason not to turn Rodney King into politics.

FABIANI

And the only way Gates goes is if we force him out.

WHITE

You want to settle scores, settle them. I'm trying to get a conviction.

YOCHELSON

I think going into this we need to decide which cops we can make the best case against. This can't be another 39th and Dalton. And I can promise you whatever defense the officers involved put up is going to be an attack of the victim. What do we know about this Rodney King...

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

We see a quick, RAPID CUT MONTAGE of Rodney King robbing a small, Monterey Park grocery store using nothing but a tire iron - AS WITH THE VIDEO OF KING BEING BEAT, WE SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO COMPLETELY MAKE OUT THE INDIVIDUAL PORTRAYING KING. We see King threaten the CLERK with the tire iron, and try to grab money from the register.

YOCHELSON (V.O.)

...He's got a past.

Now we see the CLERK BEATING KING BACK with three foot rod. We get the idea that as a crook, King isn't a very good one.

YOCHELSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He's not necessarily going to help himself if he has to take the stand.

INT. DA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The conversation continues.

FABIANI

Figure something out. The Mayor doesn't want the FBI ahead of this, and he damn sure doesn't want Gates. People expect justice done, Terry.

WHITE

Yes, sir.

FABIANI

It's yours now. Get it done.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE showing Daryl Gates announcing indictments of the four cops.

SUPERIMPOSE: March 15th, 1991

GATES

We will today or tomorrow at the latest request the DA of this county to file criminal charges against three of our officers. We believe those will be felony charges and we will work with the DA to determine what the charges will be.

EXT. EMPIRE LIQUORS - DAY

We see LATASHA HARLINS - a young girl about fifteen year old - walking the street. She's got a backpack slung over her shoulder. She's in her own space, lost in her own thoughts. She walks INTO Empire Liquors.

SUPERIMPOSE: MARCH 16th, 1991

INT. EMPIRE LIQUORS - CONTINUOUS

We are inside the store. Soon Ja is at the counter. She is helping, young black children - a BOY, 9, and a GIRL, 13 - who are buying a thing of hair gel for their mother. When Latasha enters, Soon Ja gives her a wary, slightly nervous look. We get the feeling Soon Ja is perhaps making some pre-judgements concerning Latasha.

No matter what Soon Ja is thinking, her opinions are solidified when she sees Latasha go right to the back of the store, open a cooler, take out a SMALL CONTAINER OF ORANGE JUICE and stuff it into the side pocket of her backpack.

Latasha then heads toward the front of the store. She moves at a brisk pace, but to get to the counter or to make her way from the store? The question really can't be answered because as soon as Latasha gets near the counter Soon Ja says to her quite harshly:

SOON

Are you trying to steal my juice?

LATASHA

No.

SOON

You trying to steal my juice!

Latasha demonstrating the money in her hand:

LATASHA

I'm trying to pay for it!

Soon Ja doesn't seem to notice or care a thing about the money. She grabs Latasha by her sweater.

LATASHA (CONT'D)

You better let me go, Bitch!

SOON

Bitch? You're bitch! Trying to steal my orange juice!

Soon Ja pulls Latasha's backpack free. In response Latasha PUNCHES Soon in the face. Hard. A couple of times. Soon Ja, calling off:

SOON (CONT'D)

Hung! Hung, help me! Hung!

Soon Ja grabs up a chair from behind the counter, throws it at Latasha. It's a rather inept throw and Latasha easily sidesteps it. Latasha moves again for Soon Ja.

From behind the counter Soon pulls a gun.

Latasha, being very wise, starts to move away. Move away from Soon Ja and out of the store. And at almost the instant Latasha turns her back, Soon Ja FIRES THE GUN. Once. But one BULLET TO THE BACK OF THE HEAD is all that's needed to do the job. Latasha falls to the ground. Lifeless. Money still in her hand.

Soon Ja looks dazed, confused. The Boy and the Girl take the opportunity to run the hell away as Hung enters.

Soon Ja speaks as though she's lost in a fog:

SOON (CONT'D)

Where is the girl?

Hung stares at the body on the floor, blood now just beginning to pool, but doesn't reply.

SOON (CONT'D)

She was just here. The girl was here.
Where is the girl?

HUNG

(in Korean)

(What happened? Tell me what happened?)

SOON

The girl...she was just--

HUNG

(Soon Ja!)

SOON

(The girl tried to steal the money. She hit me. She hit me...)

Soon slumps back behind the counter. Hung stumbles to the phone, dials...

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)

Nine-one-one. What's your emergency?

HUNG

We got a hold up. My wife shot the robber lady.

INT. GREEN HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

We see Bobby Green watching a news broadcast on TV of the Latasha Harlins shooting. VERA is sitting next to him - Bobby's got his arm around her. And Vera needs to be held. What she sees on TV repulses her. Their son wants to know:

MR.

What did they do to that girl?

VERA

Go in the other room.

BOBBY

Stay here, Mr.

VERA

What?

BOBBY

I want him to stay.

VERA

Go to your room. Go now!

Mr. looks confusedly from his mother to his father.

VERA (CONT'D)

Your mother says go, you go.

Mr. moves quickly out of the room.

BOBBY

What is that; "your mother says go, you go?" I still have some say in this house.

VERA

He doesn't need to see that.

BOBBY

The hell he doesn't. He needs to be aware.

VERA

He is ten years old.

BOBBY

This girl Latasha Harlins was fifteen. When trouble comes it don't ask for an ID. I am not going to raise a black man who does not know what he's up against every single--

VERA

You are going to raise a boy who is going to be scared to death of everything around him.

BOBBY

Aware. Not scared, aware. That girl walked into a store to buy some juice, they shoot her in the back of the head. Do you know...

Bobby grabs up a copy of the *Times*.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Did you read this? That girl's mom--

VERA

Latasha. She had a name.

BOBBY

Her mom was shot same as she was; right in the head. Latasha wanted to go to school, be a lawyer--

VERA

I read it.

BOBBY

She wanted to be a lawyer so she could put thugs and killers in jail. She ended up laying face down on some dirty floor in her own blood.

VERA

I read it! Our son doesn't need that. He will get that for the rest of his life. He doesn't need it now; he doesn't need to see more blacks getting killed, or Rodney King getting beat, or black men in handcuffs or black men; the only way they can get ahead is rapping or dancing or putting a ball in a hoop. He needs--

BOBBY

What? What does he need?

VERA

To turn on the TV one time and see something...something positive.

Bobby picks up the remote, makes a big show of switching channels..

BOBBY

What? What are we supposed to show him? What the hell is there? Want to see some happy, pretty black people? You got the Cosby Show. That's it. And they're getting ready to take that off TV.

Vera grabs the remote out of Bobby's hand and tosses it down. She's not messing around.

VERA

Our son needs to see something real.

BOBBY

It's LA. Blacks getting beat, getting robbed, getting killed... That's real, baby. That's real.

I/E. CAR - DAY

We see PAUL JEFFERSON, a black man wearing a white T-shirt, driving his car. Just driving, minding his own business. As he drives, a POLICE CAR with TWO COPS pulls up behind him. It doesn't close on Jefferson, just maintains a relative speed and distance. But even in that, in the shadow it casts, there is some menace. Jefferson both takes note of and ignores the police car. His attitude toward them, it seems, is: if you're going to do something, do something. Otherwise I have things to accomplish. But it is in ignoring the police car that Jefferson seems to court greater enmity from the occupants. We get the sense they are almost waiting for Jefferson to make the slightest of infractions so that they can pull him over. Is this another Rodney King in the making?

Then, the PASSENGER COP in the COP CAR picks up the mike of the car's radio, talks into it - WE CAN'T HEAR WHAT HE'S SAYING FROM OUR POV. The driver hits the LIGHTS AND SIRENS and pulls off. Jefferson just watches them go with as little concern as he'd previously displayed.

Jefferson PULLS INTO THE PARKING LOT OF THE FOOTHILL POLICE STATION. He gets out of the car, goes around to the back and takes a shirt which is laying on the back seat. The shirt is the top of a police uniform. As Jefferson puts it on, we see that Jefferson is actually a CAPTAIN WITH THE LAPD. Jefferson begins to move toward the station house.

INT. FOOTHILL STATION/HALLWAY - DAY

Hunt is outside of McBride's office along with Jefferson,. Both look a touch aggravated as if they've been left cooling their heels a bit too long. As the men wait, UNIFORM COPS pass. White Cops. They throw Jefferson a wary look. Jefferson doesn't acknowledge them. He's used to stares. CAPTAIN TIM MCBRIDE who is in command of Foothill Division opens the door. To both men:

MCBRIDE

Sorry to keep you waiting. How are you, Matt.

HUNT

Good, thanks. Tim, this is Captain Jefferson.

MCBRIDE

Captain.

The two men shake hands. As they do we make a HARD CUT TO:

INT. FOOTHILL STATION/OFFICE - DAY

We are in McBride's office. At the moment he, along with Jefferson, are listening to Hunt. McBride puts up a game face, but we can tell he doesn't care for the subject of the conversation.

HUNT

Changes need to be made; it's that simple. We have to show the people it's not business as usual.

MCBRIDE

Well, I think the thing--

HUNT

Paul being brought in isn't a reflection on you, or what happened with your cops--

MCBRIDE

I think it's about perspective. All the media and the activists; they're calling for this thing and that. And when you start second guessing procedure because of some talk--

JEFFERSON

Twenty cops, they can't arrest one man without it turning into a lynching? A cop like Powell never should have been allowed on the streets--

MCBRIDE

You look at his record over the last eight months, Powell had led this division in arrests--

JEFFERSON

Excessive force, unprofessional conduct complaints... You think I'm going to come up here and not read the jackets?

MCBRIDE

And you're cop enough to know; write a parking ticket you're asking for a lawsuit.

JEFFERSON

The night of the King beating Powell was tested on proper use of his baton. He failed. Two hours before he used it on King, he couldn't use it in a controlled environment. And you let him go back in the bag? And I'll tell you the same as I told Matt; I'm not coming here for photo ops the Department can point to and say problem solved; we've got one of them up there.

HUNT

Tim, this transfer is coming from the Chief.

MCBRIDE

I understand that. And appreciate your suggestions--

JEFFERSON

They're not suggestions. I've got command of patrol, and I've got the backing of the Chief. We've got to make changes to the way we do policing while we've still got any credibility left with the civvies. Work with me, or watch it happen, so you can...well, that's all the choice you get.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

We are in the office of MARK FABIANI, the Deputy Mayor of the City of Los Angeles. Only, he's not in the office right now. Vernon is there. He looks quite impatient as he sits and waits. Finally, Fabiani breezes in.

VERNON

I asked for a meeting with the Mayor, not his deputy.

FABIANI

Gates doesn't want to talk with Bradley, what makes you think Bradley wants to talk to you?

Beat. Fabiani gives a look like "what?"

VERNON

What is all this crap Bradley is throwing around on TV; he's lost confidence in Gates? The Mayor promised the Christopher Commission would be an independent inquiry into the Department. How is there--

FABIANI

It's the Mayor's opinion--

VERNON

How is it going to be independent when the Mayor is passing judgements?

FABIANI

His opinion is his own, not the Christopher Commissions. And in his opinion, for the good of the city Chief Gates needs to step aside. He doesn't have the confidence of the people, he doesn't have the confidence of his own rank and file--

VERNON

You and the Mayor are stabbing him in the back. You are planting lies about the Chief to take away the focus from your own culpability.

FABIANI

How do you link the Mayor to a...a lynching by a gang of cops--

VERNON

You cut the budgets, you nickel and dime us, then we're to blame for not having the tools to keep the peace. In the name of the Lord, Mark, have some dignity. Let the Commission do its work.

Fabiani, getting hot around the collar:

FABIANI

Seventeen choke hold deaths in six years, thirteen of the victims black. Let me tell you something, Vernon: I've had it up to here with all the goddamn excessive force complaints, and all the litigation against the department... You all do what

(MORE)

FABIANI (CONT'D)

you please at Parker Center, we get stuck writing the checks.

Fabiani goes to his desk, snatches up some papers.

FABIANI (CONT'D)

We got six months of transcripts of police messages. Seven hundred of them are filled with racist, sexist, homophobic filth.

VERNON

Out of how many thousands of communications--

FABIANI

Cops talking about raping underage girls, cops talking about committing torture...

VERNON

You come up with a couple of problem cops--

FABIANI

How many does it take? Only took four to beat Rodney King. Now, the Mayor called the Chief in here and gave him a graceful way out. Retire. Step aside. Gates didn't want to take it. That was his mistake. We're taking this to the Police Commission. Those are our boys. You better tell the Chief things are about to get worse.

VERNON

It gets worse when the thugs and the bangers come to realize the only thing that's been standing against 'em lost its nerve. When that happens you'd do best to load your family on the first thing heading east.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICES/WHITE'S OFFICE - DAY

White is present along with Yochelson. The pair are pouring through transcripts.

YOCHELSON

"Gorillas in the Mist...?" What's he--

WHITE

That Sigourney Weaver movie. She's a, a naturalist living with gorillas in the jungle.

YOCHELSON

I know the movie. What's Powell talking about in this transmission?

WHITE

A disturbance call he'd just been on. A party. All black people.

Reading from a transcript:

YOCHELSON

"Sounds almost as exciting as our last call. Right out of Gorillas in the Mist." He's calling blacks Gorillas?

WHITE

It's a smoking gun; it demonstrates his racial attitudes toward blacks.

YOCHELSON

Powell sees King, as far as he cares King's nothing but a, a...

WHITE

An animal that needs to get beat into submission. I mean, Jesus, Powell; after the King arrest, he calls into dispatch:
(reading)

"I haven't beaten anyone this bad in a long time."

YOCHELSON

He admits it.

WHITE

He admits he beat King, he admits he's done it before, you can hear him laughing on tape while he's confessing. He's got a jacket full of excessive force complaints, civil suits...

YOCHELSON

You talk to Ira about dropping the charges against Briseno?

WHITE

He won't do it. Bradley wants blood. Not a little, a lot, and he wants it from all four cops.

YOCHELSON

And you?

WHITE

...I don't know. Koon and Powell; Koon was in charge. He ordered the beating, and Powell's the bad lieutenant looking for a black man to give one to.

YOCHELSON

So we'll get some blood from them.

WHITE

I'd be all right if all we got was a little justice.

INT. DU HOUSE - DAY

With the Dus - Joseph and Hung - is their attorney CHARLES LLOYD; black, gregarious and a sharp and expensive dresser. Lloyd remains relatively cool through out. Joseph and Hung are obviously stressed. Despite the fact that Lloyd is black, Joseph and Hung are very plain with their racial perceptions.

LLOYD

The prosecution isn't going to accept a plea agreement.

HUNG

You told them she would plead guilty?

LLOYD

What they're looking for--

HUNG

Soon Ja will say she is guilty! She will say she did it!

LLOYD

The deal we offered was a guilty plea with no time served. The prosecution won't accept a plea lesser than Second Degree murder. That has a mandatory prison sentence.

HUNG

Soon Ja can't go back in jail.

LLOYD

It's not my intention to allow that.

HUNG

You know what they did? Ten days she was in jail when they arrested her, and those...they assaulted her. They, they--

JOSEPH

They're going to make an example out of mom. Because of that black man that got beat, now they're going to use mom to make blacks happy. That thug girl beat my mother. Nobody even cares. We've been robbed, maybe, thirty, forty times. I've been beaten.. They come into the store, they take things without paying. I see it every day.

LLOYD

And you go around telling that to the papers, it makes it sound like you have a problem with African Americans.

JOSEPH

Blacks have the problem. They steal what they can't pay for, and they can't pay for anything because they're always drinking and getting high. This guy Rodney King; you all go on and on like he's a victim. He robbed a store just like ours. He's out drinking, he's doing drugs, then gets in a car and speeds... Could've killed somebody, and all you talk about is he got roughed up some by the cops.

HUNG

He doesn't mean that.

JOSEPH

We're the minorities down here. Not the blacks. But we work hard, we don't cause trouble... So we get pushed around because the "minorities" think we're weak. We're not weak. People are going to find that out.

LLOYD

Know something? All your "those people" nonsense; you need to keep that to yourself. You're paying for me, but you didn't buy me. And I'm not standing between you and my race just so I can take your crap. This isn't about you. Understand? This is about getting your mother a fair trial. Because she deserves that. Fair. Right now you got the goodwill of the DA on your side. I guarantee the city wants you to testify more in that gang trial more than they want to put your mother away. So you keep your mouth shut, you listen to me, and maybe your momma gets to come home. You got that?

Joseph gives a hard stare to Lloyd, but then he softens. As human as we've ever seen him:

JOSEPH

Everyday we think we're going to die. Just for selling food and milk and fruit... Everyday, and we're just trying to work. White people won't do it. They won't go down there. We do. But they don't care. Every person who walks in I think; are they going to pay and leave, are they going to pull a gun and kill me?

(MORE)

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Everyday. And every night I go home
and...and vomit because I'm so scared.
And every morning I get up, and go back to
work, and every person... Are they going
to pay, or are they going to kill me?

Lloyd absorbs this for one moment, then:

LLOYD

That's what you say on the witness stand.

I/E. BOBBY'S CAR - DAY

We see Bobby Green driving along a street in South Central.
We see all the tale tell signs of poverty and decay. Boarded
up buildings, refuse on the sides of the streets. YOUNG,
ABLE MEN out of work. It is a representation of little or no
opportunity.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)

It's not much. I admit that. But right
now, the economic environment... Hell
there isn't one. Nobody's hiring,
nobody's got jobs, nobody can afford to
buy anything, so business are shutting,
so...

INT. TRUCKING COMPANY/OFFICE - DAY

Bobby is now sitting, talking with his SUPERVISOR - a white
guy in his late forties. The Supervisor seems a sympathetic
sort as he lays out the realities of the situation for Bobby.

SUPERVISOR

So, nobody can afford to hire. A snake
going at its own tail. I'm being honest
with you.

BOBBY

...Yeah...

SUPERVISOR

You haven't missed a day of work, you do
your job good. If there was one man
around I'd pay better it'd be you. I'm
not trying to, not trying to beat you down
on a salary. Just saying; if I could
offer more, I would. But all I can offer:
another couple of months work at the same
rate.

BOBBY

If it was just me... I got a family, a
new baby now that's only a couple of
months old. I can't--

SUPERVISOR

You can't take what's not fair. You're only worth what you say yes to. If you didn't take what I was offering, I'd understand that.

BOBBY

Sure.

SUPERVISOR

But you've got to understand if you don't take it, the next guy will.

I/E. BOBBY'S CAR - DAY

We again see Bobby driving, taking in his surroundings. They remain bleak. Bobby, ambivalent. In light of the previous conversation we now know why.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)

So, what do you want to do?

INT. DA'S OFFICE/HALLWAY - DAY

White is walking down the hall, reading through papers. Yochelson runs to catch up with him.

YOCHELSON

Terry...! Verdict came back in the Latasha Harlin's trial. Voluntary manslaughter.

WHITE

Manslaughter? It was murder. There's no way in hell she should be--

YOCHELSON

It's still a felony count. Max sentence eleven years.

WHITE

That was not an accidental shooting! Latasha Harlins was executed.

YOCHELSON

Terry, they got the conviction. Soon Ja's going to prison. That goes a long way to calming people down. Be happy for that.

Yochelson starts to walk away. White gets his attention with:

WHITE

When's the sentencing? I want to be there.

INT. DOWNTOWN COURTHOUSE/COURTROOM - DAY

We are into the sentencing phase of the trial.

The courtroom is packed with observers. Many are PRESS and Media. They tend to be WHITE. Beyond that, the court is ALMOST EVENLY SPLIT between BLACK and KOREAN, and they are seated on opposing sides of the court. Terry White is also present, observing.

Sitting at the defendant's table is Soon Ja along with Lloyd. Soon Ja is looking like a woman defeated. Sitting behind her in the gallery are Hung and Joseph. IN THIS SCENE WE FAVOR THE DUS. IT IS VERY MUCH TOLD FROM THEIR POV.

At the bench is Judge JOYCE KARLIN - a woman in her forties, but who looks to be in her late twenties. As we come into the scene, Karlin takes a moment, then addresses the court.

KARLIN

Justice is never served when public opinion, prejudice, revenge or unwarranted sympathy are considered by the sentencing court in attempting to resolve the case. Soon Ja Du will be punished for the rest of her life. She will have to live with the memory of the crime every day. No matter what sentence is imposed. . . Mrs. Du will not be able to make up for the loss of Latasha Harlins.

There is an unease which passes among the assembled. At least those who are black. There is a feeling from Karlin's tone the sentence will not go the way people thought. Terry White can hardly believe what he's hearing.

KARLIN (CONT'D)

There is no need to have Mrs. Du incarcerated in order to protect society. Soon Ja Du is not a danger; a criminal. She is the lawful owner of a gun kept for her own protection. Her participation was one of circumstances of great provocation, coercion and duress. I am sentencing Soon Ja Du to a suspended ten year term in the state penitentiary and five years probation. In addition the court seeks four-hundred hours of community service, a \$500 fine--

That unease now turns to shock and outrage. A BLACK MAN in the assembled can't contain his disgust.

BLACK MAN #1

What the fuck?

KARLIN

And the cost of Latasha Harlins's funeral
and medical expenses.

BLACK MAN #2

Five hundred dollars?

KARLIN

These proceedings are closed.

The Koreans begin to applaud. The Harlins family weeps.
Blacks become enraged.

BLACK WOMAN

Where's the justice? You call that
justice?

JOSEPH

Didn't go your way, doesn't mean it's not
justice!

BLACK MAN #2

It's a lynching! We're not getting
lynched any more!

Pushing and shoving breaks out between the SOME blacks and
SOME Koreans just ahead of an actual brawl. Joseph is very
much in the thick of it.

BLACK MAN #3

Where's the motherfucking justice!

The court goes crazy even as POLICE and BAILIFFS try to
separate the factions. It's a mini-riot. A harbinger of
what's to come.

EXT. EMPIRE LIQUOR - DAY

Under the watchful eyes of some UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS who
keep dozens of shouting, taunting, jeering PROTESTERS at bay,
Hung, Joseph and a few other KOREANS load boxes into a VAN.
The store is boarded up. Clearly it's closing down and the
Du's are getting the hell out of Dodge.

CU - BOBBY GREEN

We come in fairly tight on Bobby. As he talks, it's almost
as if he's musing to himself. THE CAMERA WIDENS as he
speaks.

BOBBY

I hate myself. Almost do. Hate myself
for getting so damn twisted up. The pay's
just okay, no benefits, the hours are
hell... But I sit there waiting for the
(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

supervisor to tell me if they've got enough work to keep me on for another month. Two months. And while I'm waiting, that's when I go to hell inside; am I going to be able to make ends? Am I going to be able to support us? Then I think: what am I tripping over? Better I didn't have the job. Little as I get out of it, it's plantation work as much as real prospects.

A HAND SLIDES INTO FRAME, runs along Bobby's shoulder. AS THE CAMERA WIDENS, we see the hand belongs to Vera. It is to her Bobby is speaking as he sits on the couch IN THEIR HOUSE. Vera slides in next to Bobby, holds her man tight.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

If I got put out of the job, I could go look for something somewhere else.

VERA

Go where?

BOBBY

Somewhere that's not LA; not South Central.

VERA

You're not going to leave. You were born and raised here.

BOBBY

Un-uh. It wasn't like this. Now you can't even go outside for fear of getting it from the Bloods, the Crips, from the police, the Koreans you're trying to buy groceries from... This what we want for our kids?

VERA

What do you want to do?

BOBBY

I don't know.

VERA

I tell you what I don't want; I don't want to get run off. That's not how it should be. We pick to leave, then that's our deciding. But this is our home, our neighborhood.

BOBBY

Nobody else cares. All the "blacks" move out, and they leave it to the "niggas."

VERA

That's what I'm saying. We go running...then there's really nothing left.

EXT. PARKER CENTER - DAY

It's change of watch. UNIFORMED COPS are heading into the building ready to start their tours of duty. Coming from the building are Vernon and Jefferson. Vernon's got a real paternalistic manner as he talks down to Jefferson.

VERNON

I think we can all agree your transfer was well intentioned, but good intentions don't always solve problems. Tim McBride is a good man--

JEFFERSON

McBride needs to go.

VERNON

It's a matter of the best way forward. And right now Chief Gates feels your presence would be more affective at 77th Division.

JEFFERSON

Foothill's where the problem is. Gates wanted me at Foothill.

VERNON

The Chief, God bless him, is sometimes removed from realities on the ground. I've provided him with a, a reality check.

Jefferson takes a beat, then very plainly:

JEFFERSON

You're a son of a bitch. You, the whole command...

JEFFERSON

You're going above your stripes. You don't have the meat to deal with things, and the bad cops you give a pass to are just putting a gun to the head of everybody in the bag who's trying to do the job right. And you can't even give a damn about them; about your own cops?

VERNON

(cool)

You'll want to check in with Mike Moulin at 77th. South Central; that's your area. You should do fine down there.

I/E. POLICE CAR - DAY

Phillips and Nee are out on a casual patrol in the South Central area. As they cruise, a few YOUNG BLACKS on the sidewalk throw out their set, openly taunt the cops. They are not overly belligerent, they don't do anything illegal, but they make their disdain of the cops felt.

NEE

That's pleasant.

PHILLIPS

Just blowing off steam.

NEE

Hell they are. Know what that is?

PHILLIPS

According to our sensitivity training, disgruntled African American youths.

NEE

That's Koon, and Powell and them; they beat a black man, and we gotta ride around eating their shit every mile.

(Re: the black guys)

Oughta roll on those guys.

PHILLIPS

And do what? Write a note to their homeroom teacher, let 'em know they've got no manners?

NEE

Let 'em know they can't get away with that crap. Throwing up gang signs right in our faces? They need to get respect; they learn it, or we lose it.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

White talks with Reiner and Yochelson. White is clearly distress by the turn of events. He displays much passion. This man truly wants to earn a conviction. He wants justice, and he sees it slipping away.

WHITE

This is crap, Ira. It's bullshit.

REINER

I cannot have a discussion if you--

WHITE

It's an unacceptable change of venue. Simi Valley is Copland. That's where they

(MORE)

WHITE (CONT'D)

go to retire and die. A jury packed with white suburban ex-cops, or family members of ex-cops will not--

YOCHELSON

The issue is all the media covering, being able to seat a jury pool that hasn't seen wall to wall Rodney King coverage.

WHITE

It's twenty minutes outside of LA. How is Simi Valley going to have any less media bias than the rest of the goddamn city?

REINER

Terry--

WHITE

Do not tell me to check my emotions. That line about a tainted jury pool is crap. Judge Weisberg is moving the trial because his wife is sick, he wants to be home at night, and Simi Valley's got the easiest commute. Ira, justice is about to get subverted because of traffic.

REINER

That's speculation. You know what that buys me in an appeals court?

WHITE

You've got the media. What's going to happen when you start doing the rounds hollering miscarriage?

YOCHELSON

What is going to happen? After this Latasha Harlins debacle do you want to throw fuel on the fire?

WHITE

The fire gets lit when those four cops get acquitted in Simi Valley.

REINER

They will not be acquitted.

WHITE

You can guarantee that?

REINER

Not all four of them. You look at that tape...I don't care who you are; you cannot look at that video and say Koon and Powell acted within the color of the law.

WHITE

Those ten seconds at the top, when it looks like King is charging the cops--

YOCHELSON

Compared to the eighty seconds of the beating?

WHITE

The jury will never have seen that ten seconds. Everything they've been wallpapering the news with is just the beating. The jury gets into the court, sees maybe King did charge the cops, then they come off as thoughtful officers instead of badge heavy thugs.

REINER

Christ, Terry. You want me to wrap the case in a bow for you?

YOCHELSON

I think we're getting ahead of things. Let's seat the jury first, then see what we've got.

INT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - DAY

IN SUCCESSION, we will see a number of the JURORS who were seated in the Rodney King trial.

CU - A TIGHT SHOT OF JUROR NUMBER THREE.

JUROR NUMBER THREE

I'm a fifty year old white male. A park ranger and a member of the NRA. I think cops have a hard job, but they do it well. I'm Juror number three.

CU - A TIGHT SHOT OF JUROR NUMBER TWELVE.

JUROR NUMBER TWELVE

I'm a sixty-five year old white woman. I'm also a member of the NRA. I'm Juror number twelve.

CU - A TIGHT SHOT OF JUROR NUMBER EIGHT.

JUROR NUMBER EIGHT

I'm a forty-nine year old white male. I'm also a member of the NRA. I've got nothing but respect for the hard jobs cops do everyday.

CU - A tight shot of juror number two.

JUROR NUMBER TWO

I'm a forty year old Latina Female. I'm a hospital worker, but I used to be a security guard, and I really like the police. I have a twelve year old son who wants to be a policeman one day. I'm juror number two.

CU - A TIGHT SHOT OF JUROR NUMBER NINE.

JUROR NUMBER NINE

I'm a fifty-nine year old white male. I'm a retired Air Force military police officer. I think the police try to do a good job in difficult times. I'm juror number nine.

CU - A TIGHT SHOT OF JUROR NUMBER SIX.

JUROR NUMBER SIX

I'm a sixty-five year old white male. I'm a retired Navy vet and a member of the Shore Patrol. I think cops have a hard and demanding job, and I think the LAPD is a fine organization. I'm juror number six.

CU - A TIGHT SHOT OF JUROR NUMBER ONE.

JUROR NUMBER ONE

I'm a forty-two year old white male. My brother is a retired sergeant with the LAPD. I love cops. I'm juror number one.

CU - A TIGHT SHOT OF JUROR NUMBER FIVE.

JUROR NUMBER FIVE

I'm a fifty-four year old white female and the daughter of a police officer. I know it takes a special kind of person to make a good officer. I'm juror number five.

The CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see all twelve jurors seated in the jury box. We see ten white faces. One Latina One Filipino-American. There is not one single black among the jurors.

INT. CITY HALL/FABIANI'S OFFICE - DAY

MARK FABIANI - the Deputy Mayor - is on the phone with Robert Vernon. Fabiani seems a bit anxious as if he's starting to realize, down the road, there could be trouble for the city. Vernon, as always, is aloof.

FABIANI

I've been talking with the DA's office. The jury that's been seated is not...favorable. The Mayor's concerned...he wants to know there's a plan for the city. If there's trouble should the verdict in the King trial come back negative--

VERNON

The Mayor's got no faith in Reiner?

FABIANI

He's preparing for all eventualities. Is the department?

VERNON

We are constantly ready.

FABIANI

That's nice for the recruiting ads, but do you have a plan? Politics and bullshit aside--

VERNON

I don't care for that kind of--

FABIANI

The Mayor heads up the EOO. He's got a right to be briefed. Yes, or no; do you have a plan.

VERNON

We were ready for the Olympics.

FABIANI

The plan you're using; it's the Olympic plan? That was for a terrorist attack. Something Munich style.

VERNON

Yes.

FABIANI

So, you've got an eight year old plan to protect the city from twelve crazies with guns. What happens when the whole city goes crazy?

VERNON

As long as your people do their job, Koon, Powell, Wind and Briseno are going to jail, and you've got precious little to worry about.

INT. DA'S OFFICE/WHITE'S OFFICE - EVENING

As we come in White and Yochelson are in the middle of an argument.

WHITE

We can't put Rodney on the stand.

YOCHELSON

He wants his day in court.

WHITE

He's going to hurt himself more than help.

YOCHELSON

If we don't put King on the stand it looks like were hiding something.

WHITE

We are hiding something. If he's on the stand, the defense can open a line of questioning that will go to his past. Putting him on confirms everything that jury's been taught to fear in blacks. He cannot go on the stand.

(beat)

I want you to take Koon on the cross.

Yochelson gives an incredulous look.

YOCHELSON

I'm second chair on this.

WHITE

It's not an ego thing.

YOCHELSON

Terry, far as I care, Briseno, Wind; they shouldn't even be part of this. Powell was the attack dog. Koon was the one who snapped his fingers and let him do work.

WHITE

And I go in there, a black man in a position of authority and I'm trying to put four white men in jail; you think that jury's going to return guilty verdicts? I want Koon, I want that son of a bitch. But I want him bad enough to know if we

(MORE)

WHITE (CONT'D)
got any chance of getting one conviction,
then I need to step to the side.

White then tries to make a joke, but it comes off more as gallows humor:

WHITE (CONT'D)
Besides, when he does get acquitted you
can take the blame.

INT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - DAY

The gallery of the court is filled. There is PRESS and there are SPECTATORS; THEY ARE ALMOST ENTIRELY WHITE.

AMONG THOSE IN THE GALLERY IS MARK FABIANI. WE WILL SEE HIM THROUGHOUT THE TRIAL. The cops - Koon, Powell and Wind - all sit together with their counsel. Briseno and his counsel sit separated from the others.

As we come in, White is questioning LAWRENCE DAVIS, the head nurse at Pacifica hospital where Rodney King was first treated following his beating.

DAVIS
My name is Lawrence Davis. I'm a nurse at Pacifica Hospital.

WHITE
The night that Mr. King was brought to your emergency room; you were on duty.

DAVIS
Yes. Mr. King was brought in by several police officers. He was demonstrating signs of severe trauma. Broken bones, contusions, lacerations. Mr. King was very anxious. I was trying to relax Mr. King, talk with him. He mentioned he was an usher at Dodger stadium.

INT. PACIFICA HOSPITAL - FLASHBACK

We see Davis treating King. As before, we don't hang on, and can't really make out King that well. This is more about Davis and his anxiety around the COPS, several of whom fill the space. Powell among them. Their attitudes are very cavalier.

POWELL
You're an usher? Boy, I sure hope we don't ever go to the game and you have to usher us down to the seats.

Laughs all around. Davis looks nervous as he works on King. I mean, cops laughing around a guy they beat the shit out of?

POWELL (CONT'D)

Well, we had a pretty good hardball game tonight, didn't we? Don't you remember? Don't you remember the team we were playing against?

King doesn't respond. Powell sneers.

POWELL (CONT'D)

We won that game, didn't we? We had quite a few home runs.

Again, more laughs from the cops.

INT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

White continues to question Davis.

WHITE

What was he talking about; hardball, home runs? Winning that game?

DAVIS

He was talking about beating Mr. King.

INT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - LATER

Koon is on the stand. The guy is the model of arrogance as he's questioned by Defense Attorney DARRYL MOUNGER.

MOUNGER

When you arrived at the scene of the arrest, what did you see?

KOON

I saw King surrounded by officers. He looked real buffed out. Very muscular.

MOUNGER

In your mind, what was the significance of Mr. King's size.

WHITE

You honor, approach?

Weisberg nods. White and Mounger approach the bench.

WHITE (CONT'D)

You honor, it's obvious where the defense is going with this. "Buffed out" is cop slang for guys who've got size from working out in prison yard. They're trying to interject Rodney King's past record.

MOUNGER

This goes to state of mind of my client.
He approached the situation believing Mr.
King could be an ex-convict.

WHITE

Because he was big and black?

MOUNGER

On cross you're free to debate with
Sergeant Koon about whether or not his
assumptions were correct.

WEISBERG

I believe the line of questioning says
more about Sergeant Koon than it does
about Rodney King. You may continue.

White's clearly not happy about this. He returns to his
table. Mounger goes back to questioning Koon.

MOUNGER

You talked about Mr. King looking buffed
out. What was the significance of that?

KOON

Buffed out is jargon I've come to
associate with being very muscular. My
initial response was that he was probably
an ex-con.

MOUNGER

And he was in fact an ex-convict.

KOON

Yes. He was.

MOUNGER

So, walk me through the arrest. As it
progressed, as you attempted to take Mr.
King into custody.

As the video ROLLS on a monitor:

KOON

I thought the suspect was under the
influence of PCP. PCP is a dangerous
drug, it's a kinda like a policeman's
nightmare that the individual that's under
this is super strong and they
exhibit...super strength. Like a monster.

Mounger points to the video monitor.

MOUNGER

You see the officers giving a tort of
blows to his body. Have you given any
(MORE)

MOUNGER (CONT'D)
specific direction to Mr. King at this time?

KOON
I've been yelling at him to get down, to stay down at this time. He continues to rise. So, I'm getting concerned, scared and a little frightened. This gentleman had been subjected to a multitude of blows from metal PR-24 batons, and there was no evidence he was going to comply. I considered using the choke hold on him, but in Los Angeles the choke hold is associated with the death of blacks.

MOUNGER
So really, you only had two options: you could try to get Mr. King to submit with the batons, or you could've shot him. You didn't shoot him. So, do you believe your officers did anything improper?

WHITE
Objection, irrelevant.

WEISBERG
Overruled, you can answer the question.

KOON
This was a managed and controlled use of force. It followed the policy and procedures of the Los Angeles Police Department and the training.

MOUNGER
How do you view looking at this videotape sir?

WHITE
Objection, irrelevant.

WEISBERG
Overruled.

KOON
I know what people see when they look at the tape. It's violent, it's brutal... But sometime police work is brutal. It's a fact of life.

INT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - LATER

Powell is on the stand. White, as we come in, is sitting at the prosecutor's table. He's like a fighter between rounds, waiting for the sound of the bell. THIS, FOR WHITE, IS LIKE THE MAIN EVENT. This is what he's been waiting for. He is sharp, he is shrewd... He very much uses his intellect to

cut through the BS and get to what Powell is all about. THIS IS THE MOMENT OF TRUTH. White rises, crosses to Powell and begins his questioning.

WHITE

Officer Powell, when you type something into the Mobile Digital Terminals, the MDTs, do you think about it before you type it?

POWELL

That's correct.

WHITE

Your fingers don't just go over that keyboard involuntarily do they? Your mind works before your fingers start working, is that correct?

POWELL

Yes....

WHITE

Now, this disturbance call which involved African Americans - the one you referred to in the MDT transmission as "Gorillas in the Mist;" was it in a jungle, or a zoo? Were there any gorillas around?

POWELL

I didn't see any.

WHITE

And the response: "let me guess who the parties be," that wasn't an attempt to mock urban dialect?

POWELL

No.

WHITE

Then why did you respond "good guess?"

POWELL

I don't know.

WHITE

You don't know? You sat at this keyboard in your police car and typed a message and you don't know where it came from?

POWELL

I don't recall.

WHITE

You remember details of the Rodney King beating. In the frenzy of an arrest, you say you remember exactly what happened,

(MORE)

WHITE (CONT'D)

but in a calm moment you don't know why you joined in some racist humor.

POWELL

It wasn't racist.

WHITE

How do you know? You don't recall. Officer Powell, after the arrest, why did you tell the dispatch officer: "I haven't beaten anyone this bad in a long time?"

POWELL

That's common police jargon. Kind of a professional jargon.

WHITE

Professional jargon? So you go up to another officer and say, "Hey, man. What's up? How many people did you beat today"?

POWELL

I don't do that, no.

WHITE

But you did it here? You used the word "beaten." And that's professional police jargon in your mind? In your professional police mind, is Mr. King a human being?

POWELL

Yes. Of course.

WHITE

Even though he is a suspect and even though he is suspected of committing a crime, this man is still a human being, isn't he? He wasn't an animal, was he?

POWELL

No, sir.

Pointing to one of the monitors playing the Holliday video.

WHITE

If that arrest was by the book, why in your police report did you exaggerate Mr. King's actions? Why did you leave out the fact that Mr. King was prone, on the ground during the majority of the beating?

POWELL

Sergeant Koon had asked that I do so.

WHITE

He tells you what to do, he controls you? You are a puppet on his hands?

POWELL

When he tells me to do things and I feel they're reasonable, then by all means you do them or you are in trouble.

WHITE

And you don't want to get in trouble. So when Sergeant Koon tells you to beat a man, you beat him!

POWELL

That is not a question that can be answered.

WHITE

That is not a question you want to answer, is it? If there was excessive force used that night, you wouldn't testify here in court in front of this jury that this man was responsible, would you?

MOUNGER

Objection! Badgering!

WEISBERG

Overruled. The question; you can answer it.

WHITE

If there was excessive force out there that night...

(pointing to Koon)

Is this the man responsible? Was he controlling it?

POWELL

He was in control, yes.

WHITE

This man was responsible for that force, wasn't he?

POWELL

Everybody out there was responsible for their own actions.

WHITE

So you're responsible for calling black people "Gorillas?" You're responsible for claiming to have beaten a man? You're responsible for failing to use your baton properly? You're responsible for laughing, laughing at your own violence? If you're responsible for your actions, how do you explain your actions?

POWELL

I don't know.

WHITE

You don't know, because you can't. No one could explain away, no one could justify what happened that night, and what you did to Rodney King. No one. Especially not someone who has sworn to protect us. All of us. I'm done with him, your honor.

EXT. GREEN HOUSE - DAY

We see Bobby outside playing hoops with his son. As he plays, WE HEAR A RADIO REPORT detailing the trial proceedings. The news reports says that the trial's going well, Terry White is pounding the defendants and convictions are expected.

EXT. JACKSON HOUSE - EVENING

MARK JACKSON is a young man of color, twenty-nine years old. He's trying to do right, trying to live right. Trying to be a father figure to his younger half brother. Right now he's working at a stereo repair shop and drives a beat up van with the company's name stenciled - poorly - on the side. He pulls the van up into the drive of the house, gets out, starts to unload his tools. ON THE VAN'S RADIO WE PICK UP THE NEWS REPORT ON THE RIOT TRIAL.

DAMIAN WILLIAMS, nineteen, is Mark's half brother. At the moment Damian is across the street from him talking to a banger in a pimped out ride - TRYNON JEFFERSON, AKA PSYCHO.

As Damian and Psycho talk, Mark throws a couple of looks in their direction. We get the feeling Mark isn't real happy about Damian hanging with the likes of Psycho.

MARK

Damian, C'mere.

Damian gives a look, but keeps talking with Psycho.

MARK (CONT'D)

Yo, Damian!

DAMIAN

I'm talking.

MARK

Didn't ask you what you were doing. Told ya to get ya ass over here.

PSYCHO

(to Mark)

What the fuck? You don't see I'm
conversing? Better shut your bitch ass
up, or I will go motherfucking--

Without hesitation, Mark pulls a PIPE out of the back of his
truck. He starts marching ACROSS THE STREET for Psycho.

PSYCHO (CONT'D)

Aw, shit!

Real, real quick Psycho turns over his car and PEELS AWAY.
Mark stares him off. When he's gone, turning to Damian:

MARK

That's a bitch. Don't ever let a bitch
fuck up your life, and don't you ever
chose a bitch like that over family, you
understand?

DAMIAN

...Yeah...

MARK

What'd you do today? You look for some
work?

Damian laughs.

MARK (CONT'D)

That funny? That funny to you?

DAMIAN

Yeah, that's funny.

MARK

You see my ass working you can't get a
damn job?

DAMIAN

Doing what? I ain't stocking shelves for
the choons. Ain't nothing else around
here pays.

MARK

Then you get your ass on a bus and you
ride until you find some shit. Shouldn't
even have to look for nothing. Had
yourself a football contract, could've
played, been something. And you fucked it
up.

DAMIAN

I played some motherfucking semi-pro, and
you act like there ain't nothing but
opportunities. There ain't shit else for

(MORE)

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

me to do. Whitey don't give us shit in South Central, you think he's gonna hand me something in, in fucking Sherman Oaks, or Calabassas or some shit? Gonna ride all the way out there so them fucking Okey-Dokes can tell me to get my ass back to South Central? Shit. Fuck that. There ain't shit out there for a nigga.

MARK

Then quit being a nigga. Nobody's gonna hand you shit. Go out and get it.

Mark moves away, turns back to Damian. Serious as cancer:

MARK (CONT'D)

I'm trying to keep you from being a thug, and getting dead like everybody else.

INT. 77TH STREET STATION/WATCH COMMAND - DAY

Moulin is at the command with his Assistant Watch Commander TERRY TATREAU - white female, thirties. Detective Hagerty enters. He seems just a bit anxious.

HAGERTY

Lou, got a sec? We've been tracking some...threats. A couple of calls, bangers probably. They're mouthing off how if the cops walk there's going to be trouble; they're going to try and hit us up.

MOULIN

You...you have leads on any--

HAGERTY

I think it's mostly bullshit, but I'm saying it's out there. So do we...is there any kind of a plan from the top if things get out of control?

Moulin thinks a moment.

INT. 77TH STREET STATION/JEFFERSON'S OFFICE - LATER

Jefferson is at his desk when Moulin enters.

MOULIN

Captain, we're getting some rumblings there might be trouble if the cops walk in Simi Valley. Does Parker Center have any plans?

Jefferson thinks a moment.

INT. 77TH STREET STATION/JEFFERSON'S OFFICE - LATER

Jefferson is on the phone with Hunt.

JEFFERSON

We've got intelligence that indicates gang bangers are planning to strike back against cops in response to the King verdict. Are you guys doing any riot preparations

Hunt thinks a beat.

INT. METRO DIVISION/HILLMANN'S OFFICE

Hunt enters. In the office is MIKE HILLMANN, the Command Lieutenant of LAPD's Metro division. The man is forthright. A good cop.

HUNT

Mike, I need to set a meeting with you, some of the other command staff. We need to review any plans that we have for...unusual occurrences.

HILLMANN

Earthquakes, terror attacks...?

HUNT

A riot.

HILLMANN

(beat)

Okay. How soon do you want the meeting?

HUNT

Now.

INT. PARKER CENTER/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

We've got Vernon, Hunt, Hillmann, Jefferson, A PD COMMANDER, ANOTHER DEPUTY CHIEF and Fabiani gathered. There is much factionalism going on here. On one side are Hillmann, Hunt and Lewis who seem to want to be proactive. Vernon and Frankle are cautious. Fabiani just doesn't want any trouble.

JEFFERSON

...In addition to the threats we're tracking from various gangs, we've got a group called the Revolutionary Communist Party calling for open revolt if there are any acquittals. Something called the Gay/Lesbian Action Network is planning demonstrations...

VERNON

What in God's name do the queers have to be upset about?

JEFFERSON

Are you asking a question, or are you answering your own?

HILLMANN

Look, from Metro's stand point the best way to handle a riot is to keep it from getting started.

HUNT

A city wide Tac alert on the day?

DEPUTY CHIEF

The Chief has already vetoed that. He thinks it will put people more on edge than ease tensions.

FABIANI

It's the Mayor and the city council's contention the Department do as little as possible to incite people.

HILLMANN

The incitement will be the verdicts. In response we've got to have a timely show of force. As the verdict approaches, Metro should be in hard patrols from ten hundred through eighteen hundred hours. Both the department's APCs should be deployed in South Central--

FABIANI

Armored personnel carriers; that's what we're... You're sending the wrong signal to the community.

JEFFERSON

Exactly how much time do you spend in "the community?"

HUNT

I think we need to defer to the uniforms on this. We've got cops on the street, they understand the mood of the people--

FABIANI

Your cops are the reason we're sitting here right now.

Reading from a memo:

DEPUTY CHIEF

The AR-15s you're requesting--

HUNT

What page are--

DEPUTY CHIEF

Putting your men on patrol with military hardware... I think we can agree that's unacceptable.

HILLMANN

You're asking our cops to engage in a situation where they're going to be at a severe statistical disadvantage.

FABIANI

Automatic rifles are not an appropriate--

HILLMANN

Hold on a second. They're going to be at a disadvantage, and the show of force has got to be...no one should question it.

DEPUTY CHIEF

We have just one cop pull one of those and start laying down fire...then we'll be talking about a riot.

VERNON

I think what would be the wise decision; keep the heavy weaponry at the Metro Vault downtown--

HILLMANN

So, if there's a situation, you'll have my Metro cops, my SWAT cops all drive downtown, sign out their weapons, drive in mid-day LA traffic back to the incident, and then start enforcing the law?

Long beat. Then Vernon starts to backtrack.

VERNON

I would allow the rifles in the patrol cars, but I want them locked in the trunks. I do not want them visible. I'm with the Mayor's office on that one. And deploying Metro before nineteen hundred hours...riots don't happen during the day. These people are cowards; they run around lighting fires at night when they think they can disappear back into the dark.

HILLMANN

We handle tactical emergencies; it's what Metro Division does. Crime suppression, SWAT... Why have us involved in the planning if you're going to blunt our

(MORE)

HILLMANN (CONT'D)

effectiveness and override us on every point?

VERNON

Metro is the plan.

JEFFERSON

The cops on the street need more than a chant for Metro. You bounced me down to 77th, so at least do me the favor of listening to what's going on down there. There is confusion, zero communication between the Division and Parker Center.

VERNON

Communication will be clear and direct. If there were an unusual occurrence--

JEFFERSON

A riot. Call it what'll be.

VERNON

Metro needs to keep the peace. They need to be a calming presence.

HUNT

They're cops. We need to use them like cops. Not, not like some--

JEFFERSON

A zen attack force?

VERNON

It's not a joke.

HILLMANN

It's goddamn not a joke.

VERNON

You do not use that kind of--

HILLMANN

Thomas, shut up! Shut up! I'm telling you, all of you: Soft tactics, trying to throw a hug on the problem; you're not putting off trouble. You're asking for it.

FABIANI

Who's in charge here? Is anybody running the show?

VERNON

Daryl Gates is in command. And I'll remind us all that we're here to offer opinions, not make demands. Bear that in mind, should it come to crisis, we'll avoid a world of confusion. Metro will be

(MORE)

VERNON (CONT'D)
in reserve until they're called up.
(pointed, to Fabiani)
I speak for the Chief when I say that's
how it's to be done.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

We've got Fire Chief DONALD MANNING on the phone with Hillmann. Hillmann is calm, but concerned.

MANNING
This is Manning.

HILLMANN
Chief, this is Mike Hillmann with LAPD Metro.

MANNING
Mike, how are you?

HILLMANN
Well, to be honest, Chief, I've got some concerns I want to share with the fire department. I think there is a very strong possibility if there's an acquittal in Simi Valley there could be...there's a real chance of some unrest.

MANNING
...All right...

HILLMANN
And I'm not sure that the PD's going to be in a containment position. Do you understand?

MANNING
Yeah, I understand. And I appreciate the heads up. But, if it comes to it, there's not much we can do except our jobs.

HILLMANN
I have no doubt. But I want you to be aware there's the potential for, uh, physical injury. If there's anything Metro can do to give your men support, anything we can do ahead of an event, I'll make sure you've got everything you need to do the job.

Manning thinks for a beat.

INT. FIREHOUSE - DAY

We've got firefighters - among them Captain CARL BUTLER, KELLY KILMARTIN, and ALONZO WILLIAMS (Williams is a black

man). At the moment Butler is opening one of several boxes that have been delivered to the house. From the box he pulls some body armor. A flack jacket. As the rest of the firemen stare at this disquieting delivery with much apprehension, Williams mutters:

WILLIAMS
...Oh, shit...

INT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - DAY

Terry White is delivering his closing arguments. He is full of passion which he allows to build as he speaks. He looks for, he seeks justice.

SUPERIMPOSE: APRIL 20th, 1992 - CLOSING ARGUMENTS IN THE TRIAL OF PEOPLE V. POWELL ET AL

WHITE
According to the defense everything Mr. King did was aggressive. We went through this video on cross-examination, every point aggressive, aggressive, aggressive, so they continued to use their batons. What could this man do not to be aggressive? Did he have to be unconscious? Did he have to melt into the pavement to not be aggressive? And at some point you have to look at that video and say enough is enough. Stop. This is not right. But they continued to hit him. I issue a challenge to the defense to play this videotape for you and to point out things in this tape that justify the continued use of the baton. I don't think they'll do it because they are afraid of the videotape. They're afraid because they know what that videotape shows. Now who are you gonna believe the defendants or your own eyes? Koon and Powell hid behind the very badges that they wear. What these officers say in here implicitly, if not explicitly, is that they are immune from prosecutions. And I'm here to tell them, and they should know that no man - not Rodney King, not Stacey Koon, not Ted Briseno, not Timothy Wind and not Laurence Powell...

Stepping from the podium, pointing directly to Powell, filled with righteous emotion:

WHITE (CONT'D)
This is the man! Look at him. This man laughed, this man taunted...

WEISBERG

Mr. White, get back to the podium.

WHITE

This man--

WEISBERG

Confine your arguments to the podium.

WHITE

This man laughed. What was funny out there? You don't need to be an expert to look at that video and say that is wrong. That is bad. That is criminal.

INT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - LATER

We now see Stone giving his summation.

STONE

There were many opportunities I suppose for these officers to avoid the risk and the threat to his own personal safety that was occasioned by the incident that they confronted that night. But they stood their ground. And as a result they are sitting here, as a defendants, before this jury. These are not Robocops, ladies and gentlemen, they hurt, they feel pain, they bleed and they die just like everyone else. And we leave it to them to take care of the mean streets. So that we can safely enjoy our lives. I decline the challenge to play the video again. You can play the video all you want. Backwards, forwards, slow motion... It'll be available for you as a piece of evidence. I've seen it enough and I think you have too.

MONTAGE

WE SEE THE SUN RISES to the east of downtown illuminating the city as it lights up downtown Los Angeles.

SUPERIMPOSE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29th, 1992

We see bits of life in and around Los Angeles.

We see COMMUTERS stuck in traffic on the 405.

We see STUDENTS unloading off a school bus, heading for class.

We see Bobby Green driving his truck.

We see a FILM CREW setting up for a shot.

We see RICHARD RHEE, a Korean store owner, opening his shop for the day.

We see Mark Jackson working at his stereo repair shop.

INT. METRO DIVISION/HILLMANN'S OFFICE - DAY

Hillmann's behind his desk, doing paperwork. A COP enters.

METRO COP

Just got the word from Simi Valley.
Jury's got a verdict. They're going to
read it at three this afternoon.

Hillmann just kinda nods. The cop starts to exit. Hillmann suddenly pulls him back with:

HILLMANN

I want to schedule a meeting with the
watch commanders. I want everybody on the
same page if we've got issues. Get it
together by five. I want the meeting
before sundown.

INT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - DAY

As we come in, the JURY FOREMAN is responding to the charges as they are read. Again, and again we hear the words: "not guilty" Emotion creeps into the cops' expressions, particularly Koon and Powell. They've beaten this rap, and they know it.

INT. 77TH STREET STATION - SIMULTANEOUS

COPS in the station watch as the verdicts are read on TV. And as they do, as they hear "not guilty" again and again, the cops get POSITIVELY GIDDY with themselves. Mike Moulin is there. He ain't happy about things. As the cops laugh, Moulin looks on with great apprehension. Finally:

MOULIN

What are you all yelling for? You think
there's one thing good about them getting
off? ...Shit!

EXT. TRUCKING COMPANY - SIMULTANEOUS

Bobby, along with CO-WORKERS, is listening to the verdicts being read on a small television. Among the mixed employees there is a muted reaction. No one is sure what to say, or

what to do. Except for Bobby. He starts to head off with alacrity.

INT. JACKSON/WILLIAM'S HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Mark watches with Damian and OTHER YOUNG BLACK MEN. None of them can believe what they're hearing. They mock the TV, but Mark is most pointed. Most direct:

MARK
That shit is fucked up.

INT. PAY-LESS LIQUOR - SIMULTANEOUS

We are inside one of the many Korean groceries in South Central. The owner, MR. LEE, watches the as the verdicts are read on TV.

INT. DA'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Reiner watches the verdicts being read along with a few other STAFF in the DA's office.

REINER
...Jesus Christ...

EXT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

We see Terry White, with Yochelson just over his shoulder, giving a post-verdict press conference. Though he tries to control himself, we see more passion in him than we have seen previously. The time for being objective has passed. White needs to speak his mind.

WHITE
My reaction is shock first, then disappointment. We feel the evidence warranted a conviction of the defendants. The jury disagreed with us.

INT. 77TH STREET STATION - SIMULTANEOUS

Moulin is starting to get tense. We can read it on his face, by his body language. He crosses to Tatreau.

MOULIN
Did Gates put out a tactical alert?

TATREAU
Not yet.

EXT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

White continues to speak to with the press.

WHITE

The jurors chose to ignore and disregard the fundamental issue: The issue of a brutal, vicious felonious assault against Rodney King, and the defendants are walking out as heroes.

INT. PARKER CENTER - SIMULTANEOUS

An anxious CPD LIEUTENANT crosses to his superior, the PATROL COMMANDER.

CPD LIEU

Should we delay shift change; maybe hold some cops over. Keep 'em on duty?

PATROL COMMANDER

Did the Chief say anything about it?

CPD LIEU

Gates? No, he's getting ready to head to a fund-raiser in Brentwood.

PATROL COMMANDER

Hell, if Gates is going to eat dinner, let 'em go.

EXT. SIMI VALLEY COURTHOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

White continues his address.

WHITE

The fact that maybe 12 white jurors are not going to convict four white cops; it may be as basic as that.

INT. PARKER CENTER - SIMULTANEOUS

Vernon and Hunt watch Bradley's address. Vernon shakes his head.

VERNON

He might as well just start singing "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," eh? Well, best to you.

Vernon starts heading off.

HUNT

Where are you going?

Vernon continues on without a word, just WHISTLING "PRAISE THE LORD AND PASS THE AMMUNITION." Hunt stands in total disbelief.

INT. PAY-LESS LIQUOR - SIMULTANEOUS

Five young, BLACK KIDS are cruising the store.

WHITE (V.O.)

All I can say for sure: This sends out a message that whatever you saw on that tape was reasonable conduct.

The kids start grabbing up a bunch of Malt liquor bottles, they walk for the door. Clearly with no intention of paying. Lee steps up, blocks the door.

DAVID LEE

Hey, you gotta pay for those. Somebody's gotta pay.

One of the youths takes a liquor bottle, swings it, smacks Lee in the HEAD with a sickening thud. It sends Lee to the floor with a bleeding gash on his head.

Another Teen - SEANDEL DANIELS - hurls a bottle at the glass door and yells:

DANIELS

This is for Rodney King!

Then it's on. The Teens start jacking up the joint, throwing around and kicking over and smashing everything in sight. It's so old fashioned wilding as Lee lays on the floor bleeding from a gash to his head.

INT. GREEN HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Vera is watching a news summation on the verdicts. As she watches she HEARS the honking of a car horn outside. Quickly, she goes to the door. Opens it.

BOBBY IS OUTSIDE IN HIS CAR. He yells to Vera:

BOBBY

Where's Mr.?

VERA

He's up the block playing with Marcus.

Before she can say another word, Bobby races off up the block.

I/E. POLICE CAR - LATER

We've got two LAPD COPS driving on patrol when they get the call for assault going on Pay-Less liquors.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

All units in the vicinity: possible 211
with injuries at Florence and Dalton.

Into his mike:

PAY-LESS COP

Two-three victor to dispatch: rolling on
the 211.

They hit their lights and sirens and roll on the call.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Bobby rolls up on Little Mr. And his FRIENDS who are hanging out on the street.

BOBBY

Mr. get in the car. The rest of you, go
on home to your folks.

The kids just sit for a moment, not sure what to make of Bobby. He explodes at the young men:

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Go home! Go!

The boys run off for their homes. Mr. heads for the car.

MR.

Why'd you do that?

BOBBY

'Cause there's gonna be trouble. Get in
the car!

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The Cops arrive at the scene of the disturbance which has spilled out of Pay-Less into the streets. What they see is Daniels standing on top of a car beating it with a metal pipe. He is surrounded by OTHERS who just cheer him on.

PAY-LESS COP

You believe this fucking guy?

He blips the siren. Daniels keeps on swinging with his pipe. Finally, Ayala starts to get out of his squad.

PAY-LESS COP (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey!

Now the groups disperse. Daniels drops the pipe and takes off running. The first cop runs after him. The second gets on the Mike.

PAY-LESS COP #2

Two-three victor to dispatch, be advised;
we are in foot pursuit heading west on
Halldale.

He takes off running after the two.

INT. SOUTHEAST STATION - LATER

Hillmann arrives for the briefing. The meeting room, large enough to hold dozens of people, is nearly empty. A FEW COMMANDERS - among them a JUNIOR GRADE COMMANDER - are in place, but that's it. Hillmann looks around with incredulity.

HILLMANN

What's going on? Where is everybody?

JR COMMANDER

Ventura. A training seminar. It's been on the books for months.

HILLMANN

They announced the verdicts were coming in at one o'clock. They read the verdicts at three. It's five o'clock now. It takes four hours for Command to get on post?

JR COMMANDER

Four hours, Mike. Nothing's going on.

HILLMANN

Get 'em back!

COSTAS

Half of them are going from Ventura straight home. If we need them--

HILLMANN

Get every one of the Commanders back now!

EXT. STREET - LATER

The foot chase of Daniels continues until he's finally caught by converging COPS at the corner of Seventy-first St. and Normandie - just blocks from Florence and Normandie. In all, there are maybe TWENTY-FIVE police officers - black, white,

Hispanic, male and female - who arrive at the scene of the arrest.

Also present a WHITE PHOTOGRAPHER for the NY Times.

The cops get Daniels down on the ground. One puts a knee in his back as he cuffs him. Daniels screams:

DANIELS

I can't breathe. Hey, yo, I can't breathe!

ALL DURING THE ABOVE, a crowd of ON LOOKERS - Black people who live in and around the area - has gradually gathered. By the time Ayala completes the arrest, there are perhaps one-hundred people or more surrounding the cops. And following the King verdict, they are none too happy and plenty vocal.

ON LOOKER

Don't do him like that! Hey, you don't gotta be like that with him!

Among the crowd, but for the moment being fairly cool, are Mark Jackson and Damian Williams. One of the BLACK COPS yells to the arresting officers:

BLACK COP

Get off him. Don't make this another Rodney King!

ON LOOKER #2

Get the fuck out of here!

ANGRY TEEN

Kiss ass niggas!

The cops, not in the mood to take shit from the crowd, step up and bust the ANGRY TEEN. The Teen, screaming at the cops - playing up being roughed up:

ANGRY TEEN (CONT'D)

Kill me! Why don't you just kill me?

Looking to make peace, Mark Jackson steps up, tries to get the cops to back off. They don't care for Jackson getting into things.

As this is happening, Moulin arrives on the scene with his DRIVER.

MARK

He didn't do anything.

ARRESTING COP

Back off.

MARK

C'mon, man. Let him go!

ARRESTING COP

You need to step away.

MARK

And you need to get off him.

ARRESTING COP

You telling me what to do? You don't tell me what to do!

The Cop grabs Mark, starts to cuff him.

MARK

What the fuck? I didn't do nothing.

ARRESTING COP

You want to back your homie, you can take a ride with him.

The cop is none to pleasant as he secures Mark. He's downright harsh. Far rougher than he needs to be. Mark grunts in pain. That only serves to incite the on lookers all the more.

ON LOOKER #3

Cop's gonna die tonight.

ON LOOKER

It's Uzi time!

A GIRL in the crowd, one who has a figurative big mouth on her, starts yelling at Damian. Begins to taunt him:

BIG MOUTH GIRL

Damian, that's your brother! That's your brother and you gonna let them do him like that? You a bitch! You a straight up bitch, Damian!

We see the girl's words begin to work on Damian like a fist full of razors.

BIG MOUTH GIRL (CONT'D)

You a bitch! Nothing but a goddamn bitch!

That's it for Damian. Moving like he's fueled by fire, Damian grabs up a rock, hurls it. It smashes the a police cruiser windshield. With that, with that bold move, the crowd begins to feel its collective balls. THE TAUNTING OF THE POLICE IS ELEVATED. It is joined in physical ferocity by rocks and bottles and...and anything that can be thrown or hurled. Or spat, from saliva to invectives. This group is getting real, real nasty.

The COPS... You can see the growing nervousness among them. They are surrounded. They are out numbered. They have no riot gear.

Moulin looks around him. Things are devolving very, very quickly. They are going from ugly to horrendous. Believing he has very little choice, speaking in a slightly trembling voice:

MOULIN
...We need to pull out.

DRIVER
We turn our backs, they're gonna go crazy.
We can handle 'em.

MOULIN
We don't have the numbers, we don't have
the equipment. Pull back!

The driver doesn't move. Basically, he's saying "no." Well, then, fuck that. Moulin goes for his car, for the PA. Using it to call out to the cops:

MOULIN (CONT'D)
I want everybody out of the area! All
personnel, get out of the area!

The Cops can't believe what they're hearing. So Moulin tells 'em one more time:

MOULIN (CONT'D)
Let's go, let's move!

Moulin gets in his squad car.

I/E. MOULIN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Moulin grabs up the radio, puts in a frantic call to Tatreau back at the 77th St. Station.

MOULIN
Terry, it's Moulin. You copy?

TATREAU
It's Tatreau. I copy.

MOULIN
We've got a situation developing. Get on
the phone to Metro. We've got...hundred-
fifty, two hundred civvies down here, we
got more coming in and it's getting ugly.

TATREAU
Will advise.

MOULIN
Terry, make it clear to them: It's going
real south, real fast. We don't have the,
the equipment to...we're not going to--

TATREAU

You want a transfer of equipment? You want riot gear?

MOULIN

I want Metro! Metro needs to deal with this. Get Metro down here.

TATREAU

I'm on it.

EXT. STREET - SIMULTANEOUS

Cops are loading into their cruisers and RACING off. They can't get away fast enough. And the crowd is happy to send them on their way with a shower of rocks and glass as a farewell salutation.

But in the exodus the WHITE PHOTOGRAPHER is left behind. A sole white face among a hostile group. He realizes the situation is substantially less than good. He starts to move calmly, but with alacrity to his car. As he does, he's surrounded by anger members of the crowd. They taunt him, they taunt him... Then the Photog gets hit in the face with a two by four. After that, the crowd fairly attacks him.

ON LOOKER #4

Gimme the camera. Hey, white boy, gimme the fucking camera!

The Photog hands over the camera. Rather than quell the crowd it just incites them. THUGS start dancing on his car, start trying to tear the vehicle apart with their hands.

Before things can get too much uglier a black man, a SAMARITIN, intervenes; shields Bart from the rest of the crowd.

SAMARITIN

You need to keep moving, understand? Get in your car and get out of here.

The Photog does as told, gets in his car and moves off.

But the crowd is now emboldened with the taste of blood, and Damian is their defacto leader. He whoops them up, whoops them up. Drives them to a near frenzy. FOR THE MOMENT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN WHO KNOWS HOW LONG, IF EVER, DAMIAN IS A PLAYER AND HE RELISHES HIS MOMENT. With his troops at his back, Damian moves with the crowd to Florence and Normandie.

DAMIAN

Get the Buddha heads and the white boys! We gonna fuck some people up!

VIDEO

It's 5:40 PM. We see NEWS VIDEO of Chief Daryl Gates speaking to reporters.

GATES

...If we have disturbances, we're prepared...

EXT. FLORENCE AND NORMANDIE - SIMULTANEOUS

We are at the infamous corner of Florence and Normandie. Damian and his troops are now in full effect. They surround the corner, clock the passing cars. Any car which is driven by non-blacks becomes the target of vicious fusillades of rocks and bottles...store front signs. Anything that can be used as a projectile is thrown. And with each strike there are the requisite whoops and hollers of minor victory.

INT. METRO/HILLMANN'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Hillmann takes the phone.

HILLMANN

It's Hillmann.

TATREAU

Lieutenant? Sergeant Tatreau, 77th. We've got a major four-one-five developing. We're requesting immediate deployment of Metro.

HILLMANN

C platoon's forming up now. We can have them down there within the hour.

TATREAU

Lieutenant, I got an urgent call from the Watch Commander who's at the scene. He was real clear that we need Metro now, and we need more than a platoon.

HILLMANN

Who's the Watch Commander down there?

TATREAU

Mike Moulin.

HILLMANN

This is what I want you to tell Moulin: SWAT is short by two squads. One Platoon is what I can give, and he's going to have to hold the line until they get there. And you tell him for me Daryl Gates and
(MORE)

HILLMANN (CONT'D)

his crew are the reason cops are facing
down a riot with no back up.

INT. 77TH STREET STATION - SIMULTANEOUS

6:00 PM - Cops move around like ants with their anthill on
fire. There is chaos, but no control. In the middle of this
a shell shocked Moulin crosses to a panicked Jefferson.

JEFFERSON

What happened? Why did you pull out?

MOULIN

They had us three to one, we're gonna hold
the line, how? You need to declare a
tactical alert.

JEFFERSON

I can't do that.

MOULIN

You're the ranking officer on the scene.

JEFFERSON

We activate the entire LAPD...we don't
know what else is going on. We're
responsible for what's happening down
here.

MOULIN

We don't have the men, or the gear to
maintain.

JEFFERSON

What the hell is on the side of your hip?
You're telling me your men can't maintain
order with those?

MOULIN

We start shooting, it's a massacre. You
want to authorize that?

Tatreau crosses over.

TATREAU

Mike...

MOULIN

You sure as hell aren't going to hang it
on me!

TATREAU

Mike!

MOULIN

You talk to Metro?

TATREAU

C Platoon's assembling. It'll take them an hour to get here.

MOULIN

Christ... I want to start marshalling at the command post.

JEFFERSON

I want you back at the scene--

MOULIN

We'll see what kind of numbers we've got, then we'll decide what to do.

JEFFERSON

Go back there now! Get your cops and handle things. Set up the command post, but take back that street!

EXT. 77TH STREET STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Moulin is exiting the meeting with Jefferson. He looks downright scared. His driver waits near a squad.

DRIVER

What'd he say?

MOULIN

He...he wants me to assess the situation, then get the command post operational.

DRIVER

Assess? Stand around, watch people go crazy? What good is that?

MOULIN

That's what he wants, let's just do it.

EXT. FLORENCE AND NORMANDIE - SIMULTANEOUS

Back to Florence and Normandie. The attacks against passing motorists intensify. We see NEWS FOOTAGE of a particularly vicious, early attack. This is followed by the attack on the VACA FAMILY - Manuel, his wife and brother. Their '73 Buick is pelted with rocks and bottles as they try to navigate the intersection. Manuel, driving, loses control of the car. Crashes it into a pick up truck. Damian and his crew pulls them from their car and beats them ALL OF THEM. Vicious. Blood. Nasty.

I/E. MOULIN'S CAR - SIMULTANEOUS

Moulin is doing a very quick drive by of the scene. Very quick.

MOULIN

Keep going.

DRIVER

Those civvies are getting beat.

MOULIN

The two of us are going to do what? We'd need a thousand men to take that corner. Keep going.

Moulin picks up a radio.

MOULIN (CONT'D)

Dispatch, this is a priority from seventy-seven watch command. We've got a major 415 in the area of Florence and Normandie with approximately five hundred males assaulting vehicular traffic.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Say again, five males--

MOULIN

Five hundred. Five-zero-zero!

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Are you requesting back up?

MOULIN

Goddamn it, yes, we need back up!

DISPATCH (V.O.)

All available units to the area of Florence and Normandie.

MOULIN

No! Negative! Disregard all responses to Florence and Normandie. We're setting up a command post at fifty-fourth and Arlington.

EXT. STREET - SIMULTANEOUS

6:03 PM - We are just outside Tom's Liquor. Yet another of the liquor stores which flood the South Central area. A kid in a MALCOLM X T-SHIRT SMASHES THE WINDOW. PEOPLE flood into the joint, take whatever they can.

Before they can get much looting in, COPS pull up in their squad car. The moment they hit the scene, people scatter. What's apparent is that, at least for the moment, a show of force can still carry the day.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
All units of the 77th are to assemble at
Five - four and Arlington post haste.

TOM'S LIQUOR COP
Dispatch, say again?

DISPATCH (V.O.)
Repeat, all units are to assemble at five-
four and Arlington.

TOM'S LIQUOR COP #2
That's two miles from here. This is where
the shit's going down.

TOM'S LIQUOR COP
Dispatch, where's the order coming from?

DISPATCH (V.O.)
77th Watch Commander.

The Cop takes a beat, considers things, then:

TOM'S LIQUOR COP
Let's go.

TOM'S LIQUOR COP #2
We go, they're gonna be right back on
this.

TOM'S LIQUOR COP
We've got orders. Let's go.

The second cop takes a look around. On the fringes of the street remain LOOTERS who look as if they are just waiting for the cops to leave so they can get back to...looting. He doesn't believe for a minute pulling back is the right move. He mutters:

TOM'S LIQUOR COP #2
...Shit...

The cops get back in the squad and pull out. The moment they're gone, the looters are all over Tom's again.

EXT. COMMAND POST - MOMENTS LATER

We are just outside of a large bus yard in the South Central area. A big lot where the city parks its buses when they're not running. Moulin's arriving at the CP. As he does, there is already a loooong, line of police squads stacked up,

trying to get into the lot. Cop's just sit in their cars, wait...

Moulin ain't waiting. Moulin gets out of his squad and marches to the front of the line where he crosses with a COMMAND POST OFFICER.

MOULIN

What's going on?

CP OFFICER

Not enough room for all the squads.

MOULIN

It's a bus yard.

CP OFFICER

It's full of busses.

MOULIN

Move the busses.

CP OFFICER

The squads are blocking up the drive.

MOULIN

Then move the fucking squads, move the buses, get the squads in there!

EXT. STREET - SIMULTANEOUS

6:07 PM - We see a gray car driving. The driver - a KOREAN WOMAN - moves unaware toward the heart of the growing riot at F&N. As she does, her car is suddenly thrashed by rocks. They smash into and THROUGH the windshield, showering her with broken glass. Blinding her, and leaving her with lacerations.

The woman, locked in her car, is set upon by a GANG OF YOUTHS, who try to break in, but failing they continue to pelt the car with rocks.

HELICOPTER PILOT

Air three to Dispatch: we've got an ADW; single occupant trapped in a gray vehicle. There are about fifty males throwing rocks. Normandie and 71st. Any 77th unit, respond.

I/E. POLICE CAR - SIMULTANEOUS

NEE and PHILLIPS are in their squad when they hear the call.

PHILLIPS

Five-five Charlie. We're in the vicinity, and responding.

EXT. COMMAND POST - SIMULTANEOUS

Moulin, hearing the call come through at the command post, quickly grabs up a radio and countermands the request.

MOULIN

Negative Five-five Charlie. Assemble at the command post. I don't want anybody chasing rocks!

HELICOPTER PILOT (V.O.)

Command, this is air three. It's bad down there. This isn't a mugging, they're assaulting the occupant. Do you copy?

MOULIN

We are not going into that area for anybody. Do not break ranks. I want all my units at Fifty-fourth and Arlington!

PHILLIPS

Moulin? It's Phillips. Do you hear what's going on? We're close. We can retrieve the occupant.

Moulin takes a long, hard moment of thought.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

Mike, they're killing 'em! We can get them out of there!

MOULIN

(relenting)

Code three. Roll on it.

EXT. STREET - SIMULTANEOUS

Nee flips the car around, starts heading for Florence and Normandie racing through the streets full tilt boogie. Phillips gets her gun out, has it down, but at the ready. For the cops, it's like running a gauntlet. Nothing but ROCKS and BOTTLES, PIECES OF CONCRETE coming from everywhere. People actually start chasing the car. That's how empowered this crowd is.

As Nee and Phillips roll up on the gray car, as they see the angry mob surrounding it, Nee floors the accelerator. He literally RUNS PEOPLE OFF WITH THE POLICE CAR before coming to a skidding halt.

NEE

I get the vic, you back me up. And let 'em know you'll kill em.

Like a couple of marines hitting a hot landing zone, Nee and Phillips are up and out of the car. Phillips sweeps her gun before her in an arch ready to put a bullet in any aggressor.

PHILLIPS

Back off, get back! I will blow your fucking head off! Get the fuck back, now!

Nee moves quickly for the gray car and rips open the door. Inside is the Korean Woman. She is a BLOODY MESS. Head wounds, cuts all over from the trauma.

NEE

Aw, shit...

Nee grabs her up and moves her from her car as Phillips continues to give cover. But armed or not, the crowd shows more caution than actual fear of the cops and Phillips cannot keep a gun on all of them at all times. And the moment she looks away from one section of the crowd, ROCKS and BOTTLES begin flying in.

Nee gets HIT BY A ROCK or a piece of concrete. It catches him in the leg landing with a hard blow. Nee stumbles, goes down, but maintains his grip on the vic. Phillips hesitates a second. Does she keep her gun on the crowd, or does she go to help her partner?

INT. GREEN HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Bobby and Vera watch this most horrific reality show on TV.

INT. CALIFORNIA MARKET - SIMULTANEOUS

Richard Rhee also watches.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Phillips holsters her piece. She lifts Nee, who in turn is still holding on to the vic and gets them both to the car. All the while, the crowd stands ready to strike, but they do not.

Phillips gets behind the wheel and tears off. Nee takes up the mike.

NEE

Five-five Charlie to dispatch. Be advised we have recovered one female vic from Normandie and Seventy-first. En route to DFH.

MOULIN

What's the situation?

NEE

It's gone, Mike. We lost the intersection. Somebody needs to call a Tac alert.

MOULIN

We're, uh...we're going to make that decision. Soon.

EXT. HELICOPTER - SIMULTANEOUS

A NEWSCOPTER is over the F & N intersection recording the growing insurrection, the lawlessness: rocks, bottles, metal signs being thrown at passing cars. The cars swerving to the flying debris, only to crash. And after they do, the occupants are hauled out and beaten.

And leading all this, at the head of the uprising, is Damian.

NEWSCOPTER PILOT

There's no police presence down here. They will not enter the area. This is murder! Tell LAPD to shut Florence Boulevard down!

EXT. PARKER CENTER - SIMULTANEOUS

We see an ANGRY CROWD forming outside of Parker Center. Different from the assembled at Florence and Normandie, this crowd is mixed: black, white, Hispanic. They are angry; chanting, lighting fires...

EXT. FLORENCE AND NORMANDIE - SIMULTANEOUS

6:46 PM - A eighteen wheel gravel truck turns toward the intersection. It moves slowly as it tries to navigate the debris and stopped cars that clog the road before it. Damian sees the truck approaching, sees that a WHITE MAN is driving. He incites with the cry:

DAMIAN

No pity for the white devil!

A young guy, ANTOINE MILLER, runs for the cab of the truck, pulls open the door and yanks out the driver - REGINALD DENNY. HENRY WATSON holds down the prone Denny with his foot. Malcolm X guy, the same one who looted the liquor store, throws a piece of metal at Denny's head. The impact is violent and ugly. He then takes a hammer and hits Denny in the head three times.

INT. GREEN HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Bobby and Vera watch in a certain sick rapture. Can people really do this to other people in the name of justice?

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Now Damian moves in for the kill. As a beaten and confused Denny attempts to crawl to some kind of safety, Damian raises a chunk of concrete into the air. He holds it up for one nasty moment... He hurls the chunk dead at Denny's head. It hits, hits hard. HITS SO HARD IT LITERALLY BOUNCES OFF OF DENNY'S HEAD. Williams then does what appears to be an "end zone" dance over the prone Denny. And following that, various members of Damian's band begin to spit at the downed Denny, shower him with bottles and debris as he lays bleeding.

INT. GREEN HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Bobby, has seen all he can stomach. He can not sit by and do nothing no longer.

BOBBY

That's enough.

VERA

Bobby...

BOBBY

You stay here, all right? Don't leave the house!

In a near daze, BOBBY GIVES VERA A HUG, A DEEP KISS, then heads OUT OF THE HOUSE. He gets into his car and starts to drive. THE CAMERA STAYS WITH HIM AS HE DOES, AND STAYS WITH HIM AS HE DRIVES.

Bobby heads from his relatively quiet street, through the streets of South Central. Every block traveled, he sees more and more PEOPLE outside. At first there are just people standing, looking around. Then there are people running, both to and from the heart of the action. Then there are people screaming, yelling whooping and hollering until there is a certain mob mentality that surrounds Bobby. The situation is beyond queer, as a black man he gets a free pass from the crowd, but as a man on a mercy mission we get the sense the crowd could turn on him in an instant.

Finally, Bobby arrives at Denny's truck. He slams on the brakes of his car, gets out, runs passed screaming, taunting ON LOOKERS for the truck... FOR A BEAT, BOBBY AND DAMIAN SHARE A COLD HARD STARE. A thug who wants to kill and a man set on being a savior. Bobby continues for the truck. Only,

Denny is no longer there on the ground. Bobby looks to the cab of the truck. Denny is slumped inside with a black woman - LEI YULLIE - cradling Denny who is bleeding profusely from his head.

Screaming at Bobby like she would kill him if he laid a hand on Denny!

LEI

Leave him be! Don't touch him!

But Bobby slides behind the wheel of the truck, get the vehicle into gear. He starts driving the truck, but he CAN'T SEE VERY WELL out of the shattered front windshield. As he drives, Lei prays over Denny.

LEI (CONT'D)

Lord, Jesus, protect this man. I ask you,
Father God; save your child...

Just then, a car comes skidding up in front of the truck. There are two people in the car. A woman - TERRI BARNETT - drives. A sizeable black man - TITUS MURPHY - gets out of the car, heads for the truck. For a beat, there seems as if there might be TROUBLE. But Murphy merely climbs onto the fuel tank of the cab and stands at the window. To Bobby:

MURPHY

C'mon, brother. Follow her. She'll take
you to the hospital.

And Barnett drives on. She zigzags, she flashes her light and honks the car's horn doing all she can to clear a path. Bobby, driving as hard as he can, follows.

Denny, semiconscious, mumbles. Lei, as best she can, comforts.

LEI

It's all right. You're going to be all
right. You're with God's children now.

EXT. HOSPITAL - LATER

We come in on a couple of EMS hanging out around their bus, having a smoke with an RN. Suddenly, there is a LOUD HONKING. The EMS and the RN look, see the Terri racing up the drive with the truck, being driven by Bobby, right behind. Titus jumps off the running board, waves the EMS and the RN over to the truck.

MURPHY

Hey... Hey, we need help!

Bobby comes down out of the cab, starts to lift Denny down from the truck. The EMS see this. As experienced as they

are, they nearly start to freak out at the sight of the battered man.

EMS

Ah, God...
(to the RN)
Get some doctors out here!
(to Bobby)
Bring him over!

As Bobby and Titus carry a limp Denny, the EMS guys pull a gurney from their bus. As Denny is laid on the gurney, the EMS guys begin to stabilize him. THE FOLLOWING HAPPENS VERY QUICKLY, AND IS VERY HECTIC.

EMS #2

Carotid artery pumper. Need a C-collar.

EMS

Go ahead and intubate.

At that moment, an ER DOCTOR comes running from the hospital with the RN and a couple of ER STAFF.

ER DOCTOR

What happened?

EMS

Massive head trauma. Multiple fractures.
Looks like bone incursion into the cranial cavity--

Just then, Denny begins to convulse horribly.

ER DOCTOR

He's going into Grand Mal. Move him,
let's go!

All the medics move the gurney with deliberate speed for the hospital and into a waiting ER.

And just like that, Denny's four rescuers are left alone outside standing in an eerie quiet.

EXT. COMMAND POST - SIMULTANEOUS

7:00 PM - Moulin, who at this point is stressed, overwhelmed, moves for a group cops who are making plans. Among them are Jefferson and Hillmann who's arrived with Metro - the METRO COPS putting on Tac gear in the BG. Moulin goes directly to a COP WITH A RADIO and takes it from him.

ON THE OTHER END OF THE LINE IS TATREAU BACK AT THE 77TH.

MOULIN

Moulin, over.

TATREAU

Mike? Terry. It's going to hell out there. What are you doing?

MOULIN

We're, uh...meeting. And planning.

TATREAU

What's Metro doing?

MOULIN

They're here. They're getting dressed.

TATREAU

They need to be out! They're killing people at Florence and Normandie! Do you understand? They are killing people!

MOULIN

Metro is going out. They're getting dressed.

AT THE 77th, Hagerty enters the watch command office. He looks quite panicked. Mostly, because he is.

HAGERTY

Where's Moulin?

TATREAU

He's at the CP. I've got him on the line.

HAGERTY

What's he doing?

TATREAU

Meeting. They're planning.

Hagerty grabs the radio from Tatreau.

HAGERTY

Moulin, it's Hagerty. What's going on?

TATREAU

We're, we're talking. Jefferson's here, Hillmann, and we're putting together a plan right now.

HAGERTY

I got my wife calling me on the phone in tears because people are dying at Florence and Normandie. Fuck your plans, Mike. Get people out there! You need to call a tactical alert.

MOULIN

I don't have the authority.

HAGERTY
Shut streets down! Keep civvies away from
Florence and Normandie.

MOULIN
Chief Gates has to--

HAGERTY
Gates is AWOL! Call a goddamn tactical
alert!

MOULIN
...I think you need to talk to Captain
Jefferson.

Moulin hands the radio over Jefferson.

MOULIN (CONT'D)
It's Hagerty.

JEFFERSON
This is Jefferson.

HAGERTY
Captain, you need to call a tactical
alert.

JEFFERSON
I don't have the authority. Who's in
charge of South Bureau?

HAGERTY
Is it Frankle?

The following comes as a CONFUSING OVERLAPPING CONFLUENCE
OF...CONFUSION among the assembled cops. It's nearly as much
babble as it is a conversation.

MOULIN
Command gave South to Hunt.

JEFFERSON
(into radio)
Can you get Deputy Chief Hunt?

HAGERTY
(to Tatreau)
Find Deputy Chief Hunt. We need to call a
Tac Alert.

HILLMANN
Hunt's not in charge of South.

JEFFERSON
Yes, he is.

HILLMANN

Hunt is at that...that rally at the church. He gave command to Banks.

MOULIN

Banks is here. Isn't he?

JEFFERSON

Hagerty, are you there? I think we figured out who's in command.

HAGERTY

It doesn't matter who's in charge! Get out on the street. They're killing people!

JEFFERSON

She's okay. We got her.

HAGERTY

What?

JEFFERSON

The girl in the car, we got her.

HAGERTY

The girl? This isn't just one girl. Are you watching TV?

JEFFERSON

Where's the TV?

MOULIN

We don't have one. It's a bus yard, we don't have a TV.

JEFFERSON

Get one!

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

We make a hard cut to a couple of UNIFORMED COPS running down the street to beat the devil, looking for a TV.

INT. 99 CENTS STORE - MOMENTS LATER

It's a little shop selling a whole lot of junk. Goods and sundries, all for under a buck. The cops run into a store. They do a quick look around. A GUY working a counter. A couple of CUSTOMERS. A radio playing. No TV. Real quick the cops head out.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Again we see the cops hauling ass down the street.

INT. SOUL FOOD JOINT - MOMENTS LATER

The cops now run into the joint. A few CUSTOMERS eating as they watch a TV on the counter.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

We now see the cops running with the TV back to the command post.

EXT. COMMAND POST - LATER

The TV has been set up on the trunk of a squad car. Cops - DOZENS AND DOZENS OF THEM - stand several deep and in silence as they watch the TV. Watch as the city of Los Angeles begins to fall apart. Begins? Hell, it's already on its way.

HILLMANN

We need to deploy--

JEFFERSON

You were supposed to stop this. I told you to go, to take back the street.

MOULIN

You told me to go assess the situ--

HILLMANN

Are you listening? Lock off streets, keep fresh bodies from feeding into that mob. Move in, rescue any vics--

MOULIN

The Chief is not going to risk individual action--

HILLMANN

You're a cop and you're talking about risk?

MOULIN

I'm not putting unequipped men on the street to get killed. This is going to blow over. They throw some rocks, some bottles. They get it out of their system--

JEFFERSON

We've gotta talk to Gates, find out what his plan is for--

Pointing at the TV.

HILLMANN

That's his plan. Just let it burn while he's off eating chicken and slapping backs until there's nothing left.

Hillmann starts to cross off.

MOULIN

Michael...Mike--

HILLMANN

We're up to our asses in alligators, and you want to sit and hope they go away? Metro is forming up, we're going out. You don't want to do anything, then give back the goddamn uniform!

EXT. STREET - FIRE

7:30 PM - We've got a FIRE CREW driving fast and hard for one of any number of fires burning in the city. As the lead truck moves, the driver SCOTT MILLER, spots a mob of people up ahead in the street. He pulls the trucks air brake. The beast comes skidding to a stop. He looks to his Captain, FRANCIS HOWARD, who can clearly see that things are not good.

MILLER

What do I do?

HOWARD

Take it around. Get us out of here.

Miller, working hard, turns the truck and pulls off. Into his mike:

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Ladder fifty-one to dispatch, we need to notify LAPD. Requesting escort.

FD DISPATCH (V.O.)

Ladder fifty-one. LAPD is not responding. Be advised, a command post is established. Five-four and Arlington.

HOWARD

(to Miller)

Fifty-four and Arlington. Go!

INT. CITY HALL/FABIANI'S OFFICE - EVENING

Fabiani comes breezing into the office. An AIDE is waiting for him..

FABIANI
What line's he on?

AIDE
Two.

Fabiani turns on speaker phone.

On the other end of the line, in his office in Sacramento, is GOVERNOR PETE WILSON (WE SEE WILSON. THIS IS AN ACTOR, NOT A VOICE PORTRAYAL).

FABIANI
Governor...

WILSON
Tom?

FABIANI
No, sir. This is Deputy Mayor Mark Fabiani.

WILSON
Good to talk to you, Mark. Where's Tom?

FABIANI
The Mayor is at a rally with African American leaders at a church in South Central. It's, uh...Operation Be Cool, it's called. And they're hoping to--

WILSON
I appreciate his show of faith, Mark, but does he know what's going on?

FABIANI
Mayor Bradley has a cell phone, yes. We're in constant communication.

WILSON
Well, who exactly is minding the store down there? I can't get a hold of Gates, I can't get Tom--

FABIANI
We're...again, the Mayor and I are in constant contact.

WILSON
Mark, I've been around long enough to have seen politics and ego let situations like
(MORE)

WILSON (CONT'D)

this get out of control. Let's not let it get beyond you; I think that's the, that needs to be the primary concern right now. I'm ready and willing to mobilize the Guard if that's going to help stabilize things.

FABIANI

I don't think at this time the Mayor's requesting the National Guard.

WILSON

He's not requesting, I'm offering. Do you want the Guard?

Fabiani hesitates. He doesn't know what he wants, he doesn't know what to do.

FABIANI

I'm going to talk to the Mayor and we're going to determine the exact next course of action.

WILSON

You do that, because it seems to me somebody down there needs to start making some decisions, and goddamn it, you better start making 'em quick.

INT. CITY HALL - EVENING

We've got Manning with his deputy, DAVIS PARSONS.

DFC PARSONS

The first fire was reported about an hour ago. We're up to nine fires now, but most are in a thirty block radius right here. The burns we can handle. But every call we've been out on personnel's encountered mobs. They don't care we're trying to put out fires. They want blood.

MANNING

We getting escorts from the police?

DFC PARSONS

South Bureau is marshalling at a command post. Every call, all the fire units are heading there first, getting escorts before heading out. But it's insane down there. The cops can barely get themselves out on the street let alone protect us.

MANNING

Here's what I want: hit and run tactics; Fire responds to a call, they knock it down best they can. Soon as a crowd

(MORE)

MANNING (CONT'D)

starts to form, load up and move on to the next.

DFC PARSONS

. Yes, sir.

MANNING

If we can't put them all out, we can slow the burns down. But we're not targets. Head down to the command post, get the cops rolling. If they're going to sit on their asses they can do it while they're watching us do work.

I/E CAR - NIGHT

Inside the car are a couple of black men. Some very regular, hard working guys trying to make a life in South Central LA. MICHAEL BELL drives. DWIGHT TAYLOR RIDES. They're heading home at the end of the day, listening to news radio as they travel. THE NEWS, OF COURSE, IS OF THE GROWING DISTURBANCE AROUND THE FLORENCE AND NORMANDIE AREA. The two men talk, but have a difference of opinion about the escalating violence.

BELL

That's messed up.

TAYLOR

What they did to Rodney King; that was messed up.

BELL

So the brothers start doing what? Burning our shit, start beating each other up; that's gonna do what?

TAYLOR

Doing nuthin' ain't got us nuthin'. I say burn all this shit down. Them Santa Monica fake ass liberals, their hearts'll start bleeding, they'll come down here and build it all back up again. This time maybe they'll build the shit right, like they shoulda done after them Watts riots.

Pulling up at a corner grocery:

BELL

Just get your stuff. Serious, get what ya gotta get, and let's go. I ain't fixin'ta be out in this mess all night.

Taylor goes into the store. As he waits, Bell gets out of the car to light a cigarette. As he does, he looks to the sky. Sees smoke rising in the near BG. Fires burning. Burning close..

Then comes the sound of GUNFIRE from outside of a swap meet across the street from Bell.

People run, scatter. Bell looks, sees LOUIS WATSON - eighteen - a young, black man who is trying to escort a couple of ELDERLY WOMEN from the swap meet to a bus stop.

BELL (CONT'D)

Yo, young brother; you good?

Watson SIGNALS that he's okay, continues to walk with the two women until they are at the stop.

WATSON

You gonna be okay, here, alright? First bus that comes, I want you to get on it. Doesn't matter where it's going, you just need to get out of here. Okay?

ELDERLY WOMAN

You're so good to help us.

WATSON

This ain't no night for anybody--

Right then another shot rings out. A BULLET STRIKES WATSON IN THE HEAD, rendering a violent cranial defect as a result of the impact. It is not pretty. It is a representation of violence, and should feel such as Watson drops to the ground very dead.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Jesus. Sweet Jesus!

Bell is of course, stunned. A young man's just been shot before his eyes. Bells starts to cross the street to help.

Taylor exits the store, sees Bell crossing the street.

TAYLOR

Hey! Where you going? Michael?

Another shot echoes through the streets. Taylor takes a SHOT TO THE CHEST. As with Watson, this is a violent end. Taylor's kicked back, down to the ground. But he is not instantly dead.

Bell runs back to his friend who bleeds profusely from his wound.

BELL

Oh, shit. Oh, shit, man...

TAYLOR

Fuck...messed up...this shit's...

BELL

Just be cool, okay...? Somebody help me!

TAYLOR

You tell her...you tell my kids...this
shit's...you gotta get the milk home. You
gotta get the milk home, okay?

EXT. COMMAND POST - NIGHT

8:17 PM - We've got a group of FIRE FIGHTERS standing around. Yeah, just standing around as the city burns. Parsons, having finished conferring with Moulin, crosses back to his men. Among them are Howard, Miller, TOM CARROLL, ALONZO WILLIAMS - a black man - and KELLY KILMARTIN among MANY OTHERS.

DFC PARSONS

As soon as they figure out how they're
going to respond to the mobs--

WILLIAMS

You serious?

DFC PARSONS

Then they can start supporting us.

HOWARD

Two hundred cops standing around not doing
crap, and we've got how many fires burning
now? Fifteen? Thirty?

DFC PARSONS

You want to help 'em with the math, go
try. It's like explaining blue skies to
the blind.

HOWARD

Hell with them. Just give us the go.
We'll do our job.

Parsons takes a half a beat. As he considers things, a
MOLOTOV COCKTAIL comes sailing over the bus yard fence, hits
one of the buses and immediately SETS IT ON FIRE.

Cops scatter out of the way, run to catch the attacker...

DFC PARSONS

Damn...!

WILLIAMS

We're targets one way or the other. Might
as well be moving ones.

Parsons gives a shake of his head. Half laughing, half
dismissive.

DFC PARSONS

Your crew has vests, they wear 'em. Chief says hit and run: you see any people forming up, you go.

The fire fighters start heading out.

DFC PARSONS (CONT'D)

That is no joke. You see a crowd, you go.

INT. STATE CAPITAL - NIGHT

10:13 PM - We are Pete Wilson's office. He's sitting at his desk, talking on a speakerphone. On the line are Bradley, Gates and General ROBERT THRASHER of the National Guard (THRASHER, AS WITH WILSON, IS AN ACTOR AND NOT A VOICE PORTRAYAL).

WILSON

Tom, you're there?

BRADLEY (V.O.)

I am, Governor.

WILSON

Chief Gates?

GATES (V.O.)

Yeah, I'm here.

WILSON

We also have General Thrasher who's in command of the guard. General?

THRASHER

Yes, sir. I'm here.

WILSON

I appreciate everyone could get together on the phone. I understand the situation is, uh...fluid right now. The purpose--

THRASHER

Sir, I'm having trouble hearing...

WILSON

The purpose of this call...I think what we want, we want to be on the same page concerning activating the guard. Tom, at this time you're requesting guard presence in the city, yes?

BRADLEY (V.O.)

I think the situation...it's definitely moving in that direction.

WILSON

Chief Gates, do you agree?

GATES (V.O.)

Quite frankly, no. I don't. The Los Angeles police department is the single finest police organization--

WILSON

Chief, no one is questioning the integrity of your officers, just their capabilities. The Guard will not be supplanting your men, just supporting them. General Thrasher, you have how many--

THRASHER

Two-thousand troops already mobilized. We just need the okay to deploy, they can be in the city within the hour.

WILSON

One hour. So, again, the question is are we at a consensus; is this the move we want to make? The mayor wants to make it, Chief.

GATES (V.O.)

As I said I believe this...this insurrection can be put down by the cops here in Los Angeles. Clearly, on some comfort level, people feel they need the Guard on the street. I'm willing to accept that.

Wilson does everything short of rolling his eyes.

WILSON

I appreciate your being understanding of other people's feelings, Chief. General, I'm going to ask you to go ahead and deploy your men as soon as possible, and give what support you can to the chief.

THRASHER

I will, and I will remain in constant contact, your Honor.

WILSON

Thank you gentlemen.

Wilson hangs up the phone.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Gates acts like he's blessed. The SOB better hope he is.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

We've got a fire truck racing down an LA street. Full tilt boogie. Lights and sirens... Fire fighter shooting. As before, Miller is driving. Howard rides next to him.

As they drive on Western, a CAR WITH ITS HEADLIGHTS OUT sallies up alongside the truck on the driver's side. A hand juts from an open window. The hand holds a GUN. The gun fires. Miller takes a BULLET TO THE FACE. He slumps over the wheel, bleeding badly, but still alive.

HOWARD

Shit!

With Miller down at the wheel, the truck starts to do a severe skid for the side of the street, some parked cars. This is shaping up to be a nasty wreck. But Howard reaches over, pulls the airbake. The ladder truck SKIDS TO A STOP just moments short of wrecking.

Once the truck has stopped, Howard yells to his men:

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Get up here. I need help!

One of the Firemen - TOM CARROLL - rushes up, rushes into the cab and starts putting pressure on the wound. Howard grabs up the radio:

HOWARD (CONT'D)

We have a fireman shot! We need a rush on a RA at thirty-first and Western!

DISPATCH (V.O.)

EMS is advised and are en route.

HOWARD

Dispatch, ETA?

DISPATCH (V.O.)

ETA twelve minutes.

Howard takes just a moment to think about things, then gets real decisive.

HOWARD

Fuck it, we're not waiting. Hold on to him!

Howard maneuvers behind the wheel of the truck, jams the accelerator, drives that bitch as hard as she'll go.

INT. CALIFORNIA MARKET - NIGHT

In a backroom of the market, Rhee has assembled about a dozen KOREAN men of varying ages around a table. On the table is a blanket. Rhee flips back the blanket displaying a collection of guns. Handguns, a few revolvers, automatics. Most are kinda cheap looking. Among them, however, is a very impressive looking assault rifle.

The men stare at the weapons.

RHEE

Go on. Take one.

One of the men does as told; picks up a gun. As he looks over the gun.

RHEE (CONT'D)

They're coming, okay? Those black niggers out there are coming, and the police are doing nothing. Everything I have is here. Fifteen years. They're not taking it from us.

KOREAN GUY

What do we...what do we do?

RHEE

You see somebody moving for the store, you shoot their black nigger asses.

EXT. NICKERSON GARDENS - NIGHT

Nickerson Gardens is a low-end government housing project in South Central. Gangs, drugs... All that. Cops - among them JOHN ALVIANI arrive at the scene in response to a looting call. Once there, they are greeted by a CROWD. One of them - a YOUNG BLACK GUY whips out an assault rifle and starts shooting at the cops. Bullets rip around the squad, blow out a tire. Alviani returns fire, wounds the shooter.

BUT SHOTS KEEP COMING FROM THE BUILDING AND PIN THE COPS DOWN. Alviani yells to another COP:

ALVIANI

Call dispatch! Get back up!

INT. HOSPITAL/ER - NIGHT

Howard and his fire crew sit and wait. Dejected. Broken. One of theirs is down, and they've got no idea if he is dead or alive.

Also present, outside the ER is Bell. He, too, sits. His shirt is covered with blood. Bell looks up from his stupor, looks to the firemen.

Howard looks to Bell. The two men hold each other's gaze for just a beat. 'Not a word spoken, but we know there is some bad, bad shit they have BOTH FELT and only they can SHARE.

EXT. NICKERSON GARDENS - NIGHT

As Alviani and his men hunker down, lights and sirens approach. It's a squad of Metro - led by SGT. RICHARD BEARDSLEE along with JIM MOODY, JOHN PUIS and OTHERS - and a FIRE CREW. Alviani can't believe what he's seeing. As Dublin gets out of his car.

ALVIANI

Get down! Down! Get those lights off.

Beardslee makes his way over.

ALVIANI (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

BEARDSLEE

We're escorting FD. What's going on?

ALVIANI

We're in the middle of a fire fight!
Command didn't send you to back us up?

BEARDSLEE

We didn't even know you were here.

Beardslee looks, sees Harrison's on the ground.

BEARDSLEE (CONT'D)

...Shit. Puis, break out the AR-15s.
Jim, take your squad flank the side of the building.

Alviani watches as the cops struggle to get their rifles from the trunks of their cars without making themselves targets.

ALVIANI

You got your guns in the trunk?

BEARDSLEE

I'm following orders. Know what you're working against?

ALVIANI

Couple of bangers. Three at most, not counting the one we dropped. They've popped off a few, but they've been quiet for awhile.

BEARDSLEE

Puis, roll the squad in. Give 'em a target, but keep your head down.

Puis turns on the lights, rolls the squad close to the building. The car gets SHOT at. Puis scrambles out as the vehicle is ripped with bullets.. Cops return fire. For several minutes - THE ACTUAL FIRE FIGHT LASTED TWO HOURS - the gunfire coming from the building is HOT AND HARD. More like what you'd find in a war zone than an urban area. The cops, with their AR-15s, give as good as they get. After a few more rounds are exchanged, the Metro cops seem to take the upper hand. They lay heavy fire at the windows where the shooting seems to be coming from. There is a BREAK from the shooting. Then the GUNFIRE comes again, this time from a forward entrance to one of the buildings. Again, the Metro cops lay down a fusillade at the front of the building, and again they are answered with silence.

Then Puis sees two armed BANGERS trying to make their way along the side of the building. The Bangers start shooting at Beardslee's position. Puis steps up, empties a clip at one of the Bangers, drops the guy dead. But as his clip clicks empty, the OTHER BANGER starts shooting at Puis who's gotta go for cover. Beardslee and his men shoot at the Banger, but the banger takes off running. Disappears into the night.

As the dust quite literally settles, an OLD MAN - as if unconcerned of the goings on - steps from the building, then addresses the cops who hold their guns on him.

OLD MAN

There's two bodies inside. You all can come get 'em now. And hurry up, I'm trying to get me some goddamn sleep.

Alviani, with a bit a disbelief...

ALVIANI

Yes, sir...

And with that, the old man goes back inside the building.

INT. GREEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Vera is sitting in the near dark, lit only by the soft glow of the TV. She clutches herself as she waits nervous. Finally, she hears the front to start to open. She gets up, turns for the door. Bobby enters. His expression is blank. Empty. The guy is spent. Vera stands across from him for a long beat, then Bobby falls into her. Clutches her. Vera, somewhere between anger and extreme pain:

VERA
What in the hell did you think you were
doing?

BOBBY
...I don't know...

VERA
Stupid. That was...

BOBBY
They were killing him.

VERA
Stupid...

Bobby continues to hold Vera.

CARD:

BY THE END OF APRIL 29th, THE FIRST NIGHT OF RIOTING:

EIGHT PEOPLE ARE DEAD. MORE THAN TWO DOZEN ARE CRITICALLY
INJURED. NEARLY THREE HUNDRED STRUCTURES ARE BURNING WITH
ARSONISTS SETTING NEW FIRES AT THE RATE OF THREE PER MINUTE.

VIDEO

SUPERIMPOSE: THURSDAY, APRIL 30th, 1992

We come in on an AERIAL SHOT of the city. By the plumes of
smoke that rise over the city - number, the thickness of the
smoke, the geographical spread of the fires - just how vast
an area of destruction the uprising has cut to this point.

We now see daytime NEWS VIDEO of the rioting. And at this
moment it is a riot, having devolved from an uprising into
wild looting. This is no longer about Rodney King. This is
people going crazy. This should be cut in a VERY HECTIC
manner. Really getting at the craziness of the moment. We
get the sense things have not calmed down one bit

EXT. CALIFORNIA MARKET - DAY

Ringling the parking lot of the market - like wagon's circled
against "invaders" of the old west - is an eclectic mix of
vehicles. Fairly new Cadillacs and era-appropriate SUVs.
Station wagons... Richard Rhee, along with his collective of
men, is standing guard.

A low rider pulls up, stops just up the street. Several
THUGGY LOOKING GUYS spill from the cars, move for the market
displaying much braggadocio as they move.

LOW RIDER BANGER

You see me comin' choon, bitch? You better move the fuck out my way.

The Koreans surrounding the store heft their weapons. More show themselves on the roof of the building. The Low Rider Banger takes a look around. Acting tough, but backing down.

LOW RIDER BANGER (CONT'D)

Ariite, that how you wanna play it?
That's cool. But we be back.
Motherfuckin' straight we gonna be back.

The banger and his crew get back in the car, they peel out.

VIDEO

We see news video of Mayor Bradley and Gates holding a joint press conference, reassuring the city that all is well.

INT. CITY HALL/MAYOR'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Fabiani is on the phone. He's more than a little anxious as he talks with Gen. Thrasher. He's like a guy trying to track on very important package he never received.

On the other end of the line is AG Thrasher.

FABIANI

We were promised two thousand guard troops last night. Twelve hours ago. The Mayor's about to ask for two thousand more and we don't have the ones we were supposed to get yesterday.

THRASHER (V.O.)

The troops are in place at their designated armories.

FABIANI

Unless there's some looting going on at the armories that doesn't help much.

THRASHER (V.O.)

We are following procedure. We technically cannot put troops--

FABIANI

Technically?

THRASHER (V.O.)

We cannot deploy them until the police have utilized and exhausted the services of the Sheriff's department and the Highway patrol.

FABIANI

We had you on the phone, last night, and you didn't say a goddamn thing about using Sheriff or CHP.

THRASHER (V.O.)

You all down there have mismanaged the situation from the beginning. Do not snap at me because we can't ride in and save your hides on cue. Do your job, hold the line and we will be there.

Thrasher hangs up the phone. Fabiani gets an earful of dial tone, takes a beat... To the Aide:

FABIANI

Get Gates on the phone. And, try to get someone from Governor Wilson's office. And I need to talk to someone from SOES.

AIDE

I've been trying Gates all morning. I can't get him.

FABIANI

He was just doing a press conference with the Mayor.

AIDE

I understand, but I can't get to him and if anyone in the PD knows where he is they're not saying.

Fabiani, resigned to the fact that Gates probably isn't going to be a factor in saving the city.

FABIANI

Look for him. Keep looking until you find him.

EXT. CALIFORNIA MARKET - DAY

We come back to the market in the middle of CHAOS. As promised, Thugs looking to agitate have returned. Rhee, his men; they are doing all they can to hold them off. They fire their weapons just over the heads of the looters.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

As he sits in his room EDWARD LEE, a young, Korean-American college student, is watching the shoot out on TV. Watching other Koreans hold the line as best they can. For Edward, it's like he's been sent a vision from on high.

EDWARD

That is so fucking cool.

Real quick he picks up a phone, dials...

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Tony, it's Ed. You watching TV? ...I know, that is so fucking cool. Yo, call around. Get some guys together. ...We're gonna go down there, man. Gonna help our own out. Kick some ass.

(beat)

Hey, you got a gun?

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

We are interior of a low end apartment in East LA. ROSA - a mild mannered woman in her forties or so - is watching TV, watching people loot at will. She looks around her place. Sees all the little bit of anything that she has to call her own. Other than her CRYING CHILDREN, all very young, it's not much. Rosa says a few words to her SISTER in Spanish, then heads out.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

We see Rosa out walking along the street. She comes to a large grocery store that is absolutely being ransacked. Despite that, Rosa moves very casually as if out doing her normal shopping.

INT. VONS - MOMENTS LATER

Rosa has a shopping cart. As PEOPLE wildly loot around her, Rosa goes through the aisle picking out whatever she pleases as if she's out shopping on a Sunday.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Rosa is walking the street with her cart. She stops. She looks to something which catches her eye.

We see that to which Rosa is looking: ACROSS THE STREET is an automotive repair shop which is being looted much like the grocery store was. Outside of the shop is a pile of TIRES.

Rosa stares at them for a beat.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Rosa is walking with her cart, struggling to push while pulling a SECOND CART brimming with those tires she was just previously eyeing. Clearly, all this has turned from rioting to crimes of opportunity.

EXT. COMMAND POST - DAY

Jefferson and Moulin are talking. Both looked hacked up from lack of sleep. Hunt is present as well. The men are looking over a TACTICAL MAP of the city.

JEFFERSON

Right now all of the area between South Central and the Harbor are under alert. South Central, Watts, Compton; those are the areas with the most activity. But we've got flare ups in Culver City, Hawthorne, as far east as Pomona.

HUNT

They're so damn mad at whitey, why don't these people go burn Beverly Hills?

JEFFERSON

These people?

HUNT

I'm not talking about you.

JEFFERSON

You're talking out your ass. You haven't done one damn thing--

MOULIN

Hey!

JEFFERSON

You're command! Where the hell is the plan?

MOULIN

Hey! C'mon!

Moulin must nearly physically restrain Jefferson who's ready to let loose all of his frustration directly to Hunt.

Jefferson takes one angry beat to let himself cool a bit, then:

JEFFERSON

We need to start making arrests.

HUNT

We've got no field detention.

JEFFERSON

Dispersing people's not doing it. We have to get them off the streets.

HUNT

And do what with them? Three thousand people looting and burning, where do we put them? We wait for the guard. When they're in place, they can sit on the arrests.

JEFFERSON

How come every plan you've got involves waiting?

HUNT

Activity should be falling off. Rioting is supposed to subside during the day.

JEFFERSON

How did you all let this happen? And all of you up top, you're going to start closing ranks, pointing fingers and us down on the street; we get the blame.

Pointing to the smoke in the distance.

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

That's you, that's the Chief... You got exactly what you wanted.

HUNT

The hell we did.

JEFFERSON

How do you know what Gates wanted? Nobody can find him.

EXT. CALIFORNIA MARKET - DAY

During a respite between the running gun battles, Rhee and his men hunker down, rest as best they can. They look worn. THE ASPHALT OF THE PARKING LOT IS LITTERED WITH SHELL CASINGS giving an indication as to exactly how many rounds have been fired. Quite a lot from the looks of things. They have been at this for awhile. And by the looks of it, it doesn't seem they can stand guard much longer.

As they wait, one of the men standing guard on the roof calls to Rhee.

ROOF GUY

Hey... Hey!

Rhee gets himself ready to fight off another round of attackers. Instead, it's a police squad which goes whipping past the parking lot. Rhee tries to flag them down.

RHEE

Hey, we need help here. Hey!

The driver of the squad slams on the brakes, stops, then rolls the car back and brakes again hard. The FOUR WHITE COPS in the squad get out. Using the car for cover, they draw out on Rhee and his men.

MARKET COP

Weapons down! Put the weapons down!
Hands over your heads! Now!

Rhee and the others cautiously do as told. No sudden moves, thank you.

The cops advance. When they get close, they see that Rhee and his men are Korean.

MARKET COP #2

They're not blacks, they're Koreans.

The cops take a beat, holster their weapons. Without a word more they start to head out.

RHEE

Wait! They're trying to burn the building down! They keep coming back!

The cops get in their squad and start to pull off.

RHEE (CONT'D)

Hey... Wait! Help us!

No good. The cops are gone.

INT. CITY HALL/MAYOR'S OFFICE

Hunt is in the office talking to an agitated Fabiani. Hunt's at about the end of his wire as well. If one thing has gone right with managing this crisis, it'll be the first thing.

HUNT

We are stretched to the limit. We can hold the line, but we cannot start being proactive until we get the guard in place and start getting rioters off the street.

FABIANI

We don't get the Guard until you start using CHP and Sheriff's deputies.

HUNT

"Start using?" We've got every man in every department deployed.

FABIANI

General Thrasher is telling me--

HUNT

You've got a Guardsman telling you about municipal procedure?

FABIANI

(to his Aide:)

Get the General. And have the Governor's office standing by.

(to Hunt)

You used the deputies and CHP? You deployed them?

HUNT

There was a miscommunication last night...

FABIANI

That's a fucking understatement.

HUNT

The EOC asked for deputies but the field command post countermanded the request before they could be deployed. But I was just down there. Everything is worked out.

FABIANI

When did the Chief make the second request?

HUNT

This morning. Ten O'clock.

FABIANI

So while Gates was standing next to the Mayor talking about how he was going to do everything he could to protect the city, he hadn't even asked for additional support yet?

HUNT

...I can't say...

AIDE

The General's on.

TURNING ON THE SPEAKERPHONE:

FABIANI

General, Mark Fabiani. We've got, uh, a communication issue I want to clarify. It's my understanding the LAPD hasn't--

HUNT

General, this is Deputy Chief Hunt. Is it correct you're blaming your lack of deployment on the PD?

THRASHER

We are not playing the blame game. Right now we're looking at multiple issues. My God, we're seeing unrest spread to Oakland, San Francisco...we've got reports coming in from Seattle, Las Vegas, Atlanta, New York... There was an incident in Toronto, they've got one dead there. Also, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin--

FABIANI

General, my sympathies to the folks in Wisconsin, but I don't give a good goddamn about Milwaukee. What the hell does any of that have to do with us?

THRASHER

My point is how quickly these things can spread, and we need to make sure we follow procedure.

HUNT

We have followed procedure. We have made all the appropriate requests. Twelve hours ago you told us in one hour we'd have bodies. If you're saying there is something that we did not do, let's all get on the phone with the Governor and the SOES and find out what the problem is, because it's not down here.

(a long, quiet beat)

We have people dying, General. What is the problem?

THRASHER

We don't have ammunition. We cannot distribute live ammunition at this point.

HUNT

You've got two thousand men, and no bullets.

A POLICE SIREN GOES OFF IN THE BG, then fades off into the distance.

FABIANI

Where are the bullets?

THRASHER

Camp Roberts. About...two hundred miles north of the city.

HUNT

It's more like two hundred and fifty.

THRASHER

We're sending trucks now to get the ammunition

A POLICE OFFICER slips into the office, hands Hunt a NOTE.

FABIANI

After the bullets get loaded...

THRASHER

They're going to the central armory in Los Alamitos.

FABIANI

South of Los Angeles. So, three plus hours travel time just to get the ammo to Alamitos, then you've got to get it distributed, get the men on the streets... You're talking half a day before we see troops.

(beat)

You have access to helicopters, General?

THRASHER

Yes.

FABIANI

Maybe you should use a couple of those.

Fabiani hangs up the phone.

HUNT

We've located Chief Gates. He's at the hospital. His son overdosed on drugs. He's in intensive care.

A pall hangs over the group. It's as if they are cursed, and they know it.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

Ed talking with TONY and a couple of other guys - KIPP and ERIC; KOREAN AMERICANS. They're looking at a gun Tony's brought over.

EDWARD

That's cool.

KIPP
That's fucking cool.

EDWARD
It's loaded, right?

TONY
I brought the bullets. My dad doesn't think it's safe to keep it loaded.

ERIC
But he leaves the gun and the bullets laying around unlocked?

TONY
What the fuck? I brought something. What'd you do?

EDWARD
Okay, let's go.

TONY
I don't know. There's a lot of shit going on down there.

EDWARD
Man, they're trying to fuck with us. Those people're always trying to fuck with us 'cause they always get away with fucking with us 'cause we always let 'em fuck with us. One time we got our own standing up for themselves, I'm not gonna let that pass. You want to stay here, you want to be the black man's bitch--

KIPP
Man, shut up.

EDWARD
Stay here. But give me the gun.

Tony takes a beat.

TONY
It's my dad's gun. I'm going.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SIMULTANEOUS

We've got an ANGRY WHITE GUY - in his late thirties - sitting in a parked car with a HISPANIC GUY who is about the same age. Both guzzle beers as they listen to radio reports of the uprising.

ANGRY WHITE GUY
They're going crazy out there, huh? Those niggers've lost their goddamn minds.

HISPANIC GUY

Knock off the "nigger" shit.

ANGRY WHITE GUY

Hey, I ain't blamin' 'em none for this; robbing and stealing and whatever. I'm serious. How you gonna blame niggers for living like God made 'em. Might as well get mad at a bird for flying.

HISPANIC GUY

We got no more beer?

ANGRY WHITE GUY

People do like they're supposed to do. That's why whites are where they are, and niggers are where they are, and your kind are where they're at. At least you all can get your asses across the border. You think niggers would even be here if we wouldn'ta brought 'em over? And that's the ironical thing of it all.

HISPANIC GUY

We gonna do this, or what?

ANGRY WHITE GUY

The only problem with them is they got a good deal and they don't know it. They can't just play ball and do rap music and be happy about that. And I don't get that shit...

He downs the last of his beer, gets out of the car. The Hispanic man does as well. They cross to a mini-mart.

ANGRY WHITE GUY (CONT'D)

If I could make money and get pussy I wouldn't be rapping about killing cops. I'd just take my money and fuck my pussy and be glad about it.

HISPANIC GUY

La verdad, brother.

ANGRY WHITE GUY

If anything that's all I got against 'em; they can't be happy just being niggers.

As they cross, the Angry White Guy pulls a gun from his waistband, as does the Hispanic Guy. They move into the mini-mart with authority.

INT. MINI-MART - CONTINUOUS

Inside the mart a black man - DONALD JOHNSON - works the counter. There are a couple of other CUSTOMERS in the joint. They are white and/or Hispanic. They begin to rob the joint.

ANGRY WHITE GUY

Don't nobody move! Don't move, you black
fucking piece of shit!

The Angry White Guy knocks over some display racks as they ransack the joint. The pair grab some beers. This crime seems far more haphazard than planned. Donald looks pissed but does nothing. Angry White Guy doesn't like the look he's getting from Donald.

ANGRY WHITE GUY (CONT'D)

Fuckin' coon! Fuck Rodney King!

The Angry White Guy starts to swing his gun around. But Donald shoots first, BLASTS OUT THE COUNTER TOP. He lifts his gun from hiding - a .357 Magnum. He shoots again. Angry White Guy takes the bullet. Drops dead on the floor. The Hispanic Guy takes off running.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of Bradley announcing a city-wide curfew.

BRADLEY

...At this time I'm calling upon people of
this city to cooperate, asking that if you
don't have to be on the streets of Los
Angeles tonight after dark, please don't
go.

VIDEO

As we come out of the Bradley video, we go into NBC LOCAL NEWS. PAUL MOYERS is going on about the riots, how bad the riots are, how much property is burning...

Then he announces the station is going to cut to the SERIES FINALE OF THE COSBY SHOW. Yes. They are cutting away from the burning of LA to the Cosby Show.

COSBY/UPRISING MONTAGE

CROSS CUT with each other, we see SCENES FROM THE COSBY SHOW, and NEWS FOOTAGE OF THE UPRISING now in full flower.

We see buildings burning in South Central, in Compton, in Fairfax... Hell, in most of LA.

We see Cosby joking and mugging for the cameras.

We see people looting, grabbing and stealing all they can carry.

We see the Huxtables yucking it up on TV.

We see in Los Angeles the city on fire, the police trying to bring back order. Trying, but, for the moment, failing.

We see a sitcom full of beautiful black people espousing family unity.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A building is burning. Truly, yet another building is burning. A fire crew pulls up. Among them are Williams, Captain CARL BUTLER, Kilmartin and RICK REYES. Immediately they're out of their rigs, hooking up hoses... They start putting water on the fire, beating it down.

As they work, a CROWD begins to gather. Some of the firemen start to get a little anxious.

REYES

What are we doing, Captain?

BUTLER

Keep on it.

They hit up the fire a moment longer, but the crowd isn't looking any friendlier.

Then, a car pulls up. We've seen the car before. PSYCHO gets out. He's toting a very nasty-looking assault rifle.

Psycho puts the gun to Butler's head.

PSYCHO

Yo! Yo, what the fuck you doin'?

The firemen freeze. Best not to move too quickly around an unstable individual.

PSYCHO (CONT'D)

Motherfuckers, let it burn! Better let that shit burn, or I'll blast you.

Turning toward Kilmartin.

PSYCHO (CONT'D)

What? What, bitch?

Now Psycho moves toward Butler. All the while he chants:

PSYCHO (CONT'D)

The roof, the roof, the roof, is on fire.
We don't need no water, let the
motherfucker burn. The roof, the roof,
the roof, is on fire. We don't need no
water...

Psycho presses the muzzle of the rifle against Butler's head.

PSYCHO (CONT'D)

Let the motherfucker burn!

WILLIAMS

Don't do it, brother.

Now Psycho turns his attention - and by extension his rage
and weapon - to Williams.

PSYCHO

Brother? I look like your motherfucking
brother, bitch? Try to nigga me up like
you know me?

WILLIAMS

We're not taking sides. We're just trying
to put out the fire.

PSYCHO

You ain't no motherfuckin' Smokey the
Bear. You ain't gonna do shit, nigga, but
stand there and let the bitch burn the
fuck down.

Butler's radio goes off. Again, Psycho returns his attention
to Butler as the radio crackles.

PSYCHO (CONT'D)

Lemme have that shit. Give it over!

Butler holds out his radio. Psycho pretty much rips it from
his hands.

WILLIAMS

Trying to help, man...

Psycho screaming into the radio:

PSYCHO

You hear me all you motherfuckers? You
better let that shit burn you all better
let that shit burn!

WILLIAMS

Just trying to save our city...

PSYCHO

You want to do somethin', bitch? Run!
Run, Motherfuckers!

All the firemen take off running as PSYCHO STARTS SHOOTING UP THE FIRE TRUCKS.

The firefighters race down the sidewalk running like they're trying to beat the devil. In a very real sense they are.

As they run, at a small house up ahead of them, they are waved over by BERTILA POZO, a Hispanic woman in her late thirties.

INT. POZO HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The fire crew is sitting huddled and scared in the smallish house as Pozo and her daughters give the firefighters water. They sit scared. Finally, from Butler:

BUTLER

Shouldn't've handed over my radio. Those things are, like, three grand a pop. Gonna get my ass chewed for that.

The firemen sit for a long beat.

I/E. CAR - NIGHT

Tony is driving. Ed is riding, as are Kipp and Eric. A KOREAN LANGUAGE STATION PLAYS ON THE RADIO. THE ADDRESS OF A STORE BEING LOOTED IS GIVEN.

EDWARD

Hey, listen... Western and Olympic.
Let's go man. Let's hit it up.

TONY

This is gonna be cool.

EDWARD

Gonna be fucking cool.

Tony DRIVES ON A BIT until he comes to the address he's heard on the radio. A mini-mart. They pull up well short of the mini-mart, but they can see shadows moving around it.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Yo, there they are.

Edward flashes the lights, honks the horn. He screams out of the car window.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Hey... Hey! Get away from there! You hear me?

There is movement up the block, but hard to tell what's happening.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Give me the gun.

As Tony hands over the gun:

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Gonna go kick the Brother Man out of here.
This is Koreatown--

Real suddenly, A COUPLE OF SHOTS RING OUT, SMASH THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD OF THE CAR. They slam into Edward's chest leaving him dead right there in the driver's seat. As before, there is nothing pretty about this. Edward is bleeding out from his massive wounds.

Tony, Kipp and Eric; they go nuts with fear as the MEN IN SHADOW, start running up from the dark toward them.

TONY

Don't shoot! Don't kill us!

When they reach the light of the car, we can see the men running up from the shadows are KOREAN, with guns in their hands. When Tony sees that they are brothers of the skin, he yells at them with full rage:

TONY (CONT'D)

You killed him! He was coming to help!

SHOP OWNER

Thought he was a looter. Thought he was going to burn the store.

CARD:

AT THE END OF THE SECOND NIGHT OF THE RIOTING:

AT LEAST 25 PEOPLE WERE KILLED. FIVE HUNDRED SEVENTY TWO PEOPLE WERE INJURED. MORE THAN 1,000 FIRES BURNED. PROPERTY DAMAGE WAS ESTIMATED BETWEEN 200 AND 250 MILLION DOLLARS.

EXT. CALIFORNIA MARKET/PARKING LOT - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: FRIDAY, MAY 1st, 1992

Richard Rhee gets out of a sleeping bag. THERE ARE NOTHING BUT SPENT CASINGS ALL OVER THE GROUND. He starts to head inside. To one of his MEN he says:

RHEE

I gotta go to the bathroom.

As Rhee heads inside, a guy calls from the roof:

ROOF GUY

Richard!

Rhee looks, sees LOOTERS moving for the store. Harder-looking, more determined to burn these guys out than the last bunch of looters we saw. Day three, and it's not letting up.

RHEE

...Shit...

Rhee again takes up position with his gun.

INT. CITY HALL/FABIANI'S OFFICE - DAY

Fabiani, Hunt and Hillmann are slumped in chairs. All look wasted as though they've been days without sleep.

FABIANI

It's slowing down.

HUNT

Yes.

FABIANI

But it's not under control?

HILLMANN

The Guard are being used to secure areas that have already been pacified by the PD.

FABIANI

We didn't call them in to stand watch over burned out buildings.

HUNT

They're caught up in legalese. The military's not supposed to perform law enforcement duties. They're reviewing every request we make. It's easier to have them stand on street corners than do anything of substance. Even at that we need more bodies.

FABIANI

Everything but the locust, huh? I think the thing to do...we need to start thinking about bringing in Federal troops.

HUNT

I think the Chief--

FABIANI

The Chief's not part of this anymore. No more than the Mayor is. From here on, for them, it's face time, ass covering and finger pointing. It's politics.

HILLMANN

But you're better than all that, are you?

FABIANI

Just realistic. I'm guessing being number two in command of a city that's gone to riot isn't going to do much for my resume. Same as I'd say your chances of ever being Chief are about done.

HUNT

Vernon left on vacation. The day the riots started, he picked up and left for Florida. He called once from the beach to see if we needed a hand.

FABIANI

What'd you tell him?

HUNT

Fuck off.

HILLMANN

You think the Governor'll go cap in hand to the President for troops?

FABIANI

I don't know. But if we start asking now we're likely to get them by next week.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of Rodney King speaking to a slick of REPORTERS.

KING

People, I just want to say...can we get along? Can we all get along? Can we stop making it horrible for the older people and the kids?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

We see HOWARD'S CREW, out knocking down a fire. As they work, they are approached by a large group of HISPANIC GUYS wielding machetes. This fire crew's already seen much violence, so Howard's reaction is as to be expected.

HOWARD

...Shit...

MACHETE GUY

Hey... Hey!

There is a tense moment, then:

MACHETTE GUY

You go on and do work. Anybody tries to mess with you, we gonna fuck 'em up!

Howard let's out a long, deep breath. A bullet's just been dodged. Cautiously but firmly to his crew as the Hispanic men stand guard:

HOWARD

Come on. Come on, let's go; let's knock this fire down.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A car drives toward a police road block. The COPS wave the car down. The car stops, sits for a beat, then the driver guns the car dead for the cops. The cops start shooting.

The car - taking hits - swerves, smashes into a light post... It sits for a beat.

The door swings open. A man gets out. He fires at the cops with an automatic weapon. The cops fire back, shoot the guy, then move cautiously for the body.

As they move, they HEAR A FIRE BAND RADIO. As they get close, they see the radio on the floor of the car. The driver, the dead man: IT'S PSYCHO.

EXT. CALIFORNIA MARKET - NIGHT

Rhee and his men are still standing guard. Lights come up in the distance. Vehicles are moving for the market. There's a tense moment as Rhee and his men get ready to repel yet another attack.

But as the vehicles move closer, we can see its not looters, but a small convoy of NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS. The troops draw close to the market, stop. A NG LIEUTENANT gets out of a Humvee, crosses to Rhee and his men.

NG LIEUTEANANT

Everybody here all right? Anybody need help?

Rhee can't believe this. Three days; now help arrives.

VIDEO

We see President G.H.W BUSH addressing the nation in regard to the "rioting" in Los Angeles.

BUSH

Tonight I want to talk to you about violence in our cities and justice for our citizens, two big issues that have collided on the streets of Los Angeles.

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of LAPD COPS - now back in control of the streets - rounding up looters. They're not being pleasant about it.

BUSH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What we saw last night and the night before in Los Angeles is not about civil rights. It's not about the great cause of equality that all Americans must uphold. It's not a message of protest. It's been the brutality of a mob, pure and simple.

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of National Guard road blocks set up. Blacks, Hispanics are being pulled from their cars and searched. We also see the MASS DETENTION of minorities.

BUSH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The wanton destruction of life and property is not a legitimate expression of outrage with injustice. It is itself injustice.... To the good people of Los Angeles, caught at the center of this senseless suffering: The violence will end. Justice will be served. Hope will return. Thank you, and may God bless the United States of America.

CARD:

BY THE END OF THE THIRD DAY OF RIOTING:

AT LEAST 40 PEOPLE ARE DEAD. MORE THAN 1,419 PEOPLE ARE INJURED. THERE HAVE BEEN 4,393 ARRESTS. SOME 4,536 FIRES ARE BURNING

CARD:

OFFICIALLY, THE UPRISING WOULD CONTINUE FOR ANOTHER TWO DAYS. AT ITS CONCLUSION:

AT LEAST 51 PEOPLE WERE KILLED. MORE THAN 2,328 PEOPLE WERE INJURED. OF THEM, 228 OF THOSE INJURIES WERE CRITICAL. NEARLY 10,000 PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED. CLOSE TO 6,405 FIRES

WERE SET. THE TOTAL ESTIMATED DAMAGES WERE \$717 MILLION DOLLARS.

EXT. COMMAND POST - MORNING

We've got Moulin, Jefferson and Tatreau walking for a police squad car, one of many that is lined up in a bit of a caravan. The three get in the car along with a DRIVER. The Driver pulls the car out, and the caravan heads off.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

We now see the caravan driving through the streets of south central. No lights or sirens. The group is out cruising, taking a damage assessment tour of the area. The area itself is mostly quiet now thanks to the NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS who are spiked on just about every corner. And, sadly, the area does look like a war zone. There are burned out buildings, wrecked and burned cars, shops that have been looted, what remains of their wares spilled out on to the street.

I/E. CAR - CONTINUOUS

We are now in the car with Moulin, Jefferson and Tatreau. The three cops look around them, see all the damage and destruction... For the first time they can see just how badly the LAPD failed the people of the city.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of Chief Daryl Gates personally leading the arrest of Damian Williams.

INT. 77TH STREET STATION - DAY

We see a DETECTIVE talking with Bobby Green. The speech he gives is vaguely similar to that given to Joseph Du at the top of the show.

77TH DETECTIVE #4

You were right there when it happened. You saved Reginald Denny's life. You, those other folks; far as the riots go you're as close to a hero as the city's got. And you saw who beat him. Saw them up close. You help us, these thugs are going to jail for a long time. A long time.

GREEN

They're going to know who I am? I would have to go to court, right?

77TH DETECTIVE #3

Would you have to testify? We would, we would need you to testify, yeah. Yes. We're not gonna just throw you under the bus. The department'll give you all the protection it can.

77TH DETECTIVE #4

Look, Reginald Denny and every other victim of this...this riot deserves justice. If you testify, they'll get it.

I/E. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The tour with Moulin, Jefferson and Tatreau continues.

We see SIGNS ON BUILDINGS THAT READ: BLACK OWNED, yet still the buildings are burned.

We see PEOPLE - people of all colors - out cleaning up, TRYING TO GET THEIR LIVES BACK TOGETHER.

We see DISPLACED FAMILIES little better than refugees in their own city.

INT. GREEN HOUSE - DAY

The phone is ringing. Vera answers it.

VERA

Hello?

NASTY VOICE (V.O.)

Nobody told you to get in our shit, Motherfucker. You want trouble? Now we gonna fuck your bitch ass up! You dead, bitch!

Vera is straight scared, and who wouldn't be by such a call.

INT. 77TH STREET STATION/WATCH COMMAND OFFICE - DAY

We are again in the rather cramped and unimpressive watch command office of the 77th St. station. The Watch Commander is talking with Bobby and Vera. Again, this scene plays similarly to the scene with Joseph Du at the top of the show.

WATCH COMMANDER

Threat and intimidation. They're thugs; they know what it means if you testify, so they lash out the only way they can. I think the thing you want to do is not make yourself a target.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

We are in the middle of the trial of Damian Williams and the rest of the LA 4. At the moment, Bobby Green is on the stand being examined by the DDA.

WILLIAMS DDA

You'd never met Reginald Denny before.
You didn't know him.

BOBBY

No, I did not.

WILLIAMS DDA

But you left the safety of your own home,
your risked your own life to save his.
Why?

BOBBY

It's the same as I tell my son: colors on
the outside, not the inside. I see this
man getting beat, he's a truck driver same
as me. I felt like I was getting hurt.
The man was already down, and they kept
hitting him.

WILLIAMS DDA

Weren't you upset about the Rodney King
verdicts? Weren't you upset about Latasha
Harlins?

BOBBY

Yeah, I was pissed. It was like there was
no justice.

WILLIAMS DDA

Then why not beat a white man in the
street. It's what other black people were
doing.

BOBBY

It's what some black people were doing.
And I'm know I'm different from the ones
who were out there doing murder. I saved
a man's life because he was another human
being who needed help.

WILLIAMS DDA

That's why you went to help Reginald Deny.

BOBBY

Yeah. I went to turn justice around and
showed them all black people aren't the
same as you think.

WILLIAMS DDA

The man who led the assault; is he in the courtroom? Can you point to him.

Bobby points to Damian.

WILLIAMS DDA (CONT'D)

I want you to be very careful. This man is facing seventeen felony counts. He could go to jail for the rest of his life. Are you sure he is the one who led the assault on Reginald Denny.

Bobby stares at Damian.

BOBBY

Yes.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE announcing the verdict in the "LA 4." Trial. The gist of things: shockingly, Williams is only convicted of simple mayhem and misdemeanor assault, the least serious of the charges he faced.

INT. DOWNTOWN COURTHOUSE - DAY

We are in the courtroom as JUDGE OUDERKIRK passes sentence on Damian Williams. Williams - sporting a coat and tie - looks nothing like the gang banger who led the uprising.

As the sentence is read, the CAMERA PUSHES IN ON Bobby Green who's in the gallery with Vera.

OUDERKIRK

Based on the convictions returned, the court sentences Mr. Williams to a term in an appropriate institution for ten years.

FAAL

Does your honor recognize time served?

OUDERKIRK

I do. It's noted that Mr. Williams will be eligible for parole in three years and eight months.

As the BLACKS in the gallery CHEER the brevity of the sentence, THE CAMERA MOVES IN TIGHT ON Bobby, who sits with Vera, shaking his head in disbelief.

BOBBY

...Three years...

VIDEO

We see VIDEO FOOTAGE of Daryl Gates.

SUPERIMPOSE: ON JUNE 26th, 1992, AFTER DOING ALL HE COULD TO DELAY THE INEVITABLE, POLICE CHIEF DARYL GATES RETIRED FROM THE LAPD IN DISGRACE.

READER (V.O.)

This is our basic conclusion: Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white. Separate and unequal.

VIDEO:

We see VIDEO FOOTAGE of Mayor Bradley.

SUPERIMPOSE: ON SEPTEMBER 24th, HIS APPROVAL RATING AT AN ALL-TIME LOW, MAYOR TOM BRADLEY ANNOUNCED HE WOULD DECLINE TO SEEK A SIXTH TERM IN OFFICE.

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Reaction to last summer's disorders has quickened the movement and deepened the division. Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of President GEORGE BUSH (I) touring the burned out areas of South Central. He looks stiff, ill at ease. He looks like a guy out on a photo op.

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This deepening racial division is not inevitable. The movement apart can be reversed. Choice is still possible. Our principal task is to define that choice and to press for a national resolution. To pursue our present course will involve the continuing polarization of the American community and, ultimately, the destruction of basic democratic values.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of Governor Bill Clinton out meeting with Black and Hispanic activists. Different from Bush, Clinton seems as though he really relates to the plight of the people he meets with.

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The alternative is not blind repression or capitulation to lawlessness. It is the

(MORE)

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
realization of common opportunities for
all within a single society.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of the partial conviction in the Federal trial of two of the four Rodney King cops.

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
This alternative will require a commitment
to national action. Compassionate,
massive and sustained, backed by the
resources of the most powerful and the
richest nation on this earth. From every
American it will require new attitudes,
new understanding, and above all new will.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of the infamous slow-speed chase of OJ's white Bronco.

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Violence cannot build a better society.
Disruption and disorder nourish
repression, not justice.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of Detective MARK FUHRMAN on the witness stand of the OJ trial denying he ever used the word "nigger."

F. LEE BAILEY
At some time since 1985 or six you
addressed a member of the African American
race as a nigger; is it possible you have
forgotten that act on your part?

FUHRMAN
No, it's not possible.

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They strike at the freedom of every
citizen. The community cannot - it will
not - tolerate coercion and mob rule.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of JOHNNIE COCHRAN:

COCHRAN
If the glove doesn't fit, you must acquit.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of the jury acquittal of OJ Simpson, OJ dipping his head in relief as the verdict is read.

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Violence and destruction must be ended in the streets of the ghetto, and in the lives of people. Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans.

VIDEO

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of Howard University Law Students jumping for joy and screaming as OJ is acquitted.

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What white Americans have never fully understood, but what the Negro can never forget, is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain, and white society condones it.

INT. GREEN HOUSE - DAY

We are inside the Green house as Vera - who's carrying their BABY - moves wistfully through the space. Taking it all in with a bit of melancholy as if in requiem for her surroundings. As she moves to, and through the front door:

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It is time now to turn with all the purpose at our command to the major unfinished business of this nation. It is time to adopt strategies for action that will produce quick and visible progress.

EXT. GREEN HOUSE - DAY

Bobby's in the drive shooting hoops with Mr.. Vera slips out a little camera, takes a picture. Bobby sees her.

BOBBY

You ready?

VERA

No.

BOBBY

Two o'clock now. We need to get a move on.

VERA

Bobby, I'm not ready. I'm...scared.

Bobby realizes he didn't get Vera's meaning. Handing the B-ball to Mr., he crosses to Vera. Takes her in his arms.

BOBBY

How you gonna be scared? You've got us. We're going to be together. Only thing you're scared of is losing what you shouldn't be holding onto in the first place. Let it go. Just let it fall away. And everything you're afraid of is gonna drop away with it.

Bobby gives Vera a kiss, then they start to walk toward their car parked on the side of the street. The car itself is weighted down with boxes and luggage. WE SEE NOW, OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE IS A FOR SALE sign. It's obvious that Bobby has had quite enough of South Central. Calling to his son:

BOBBY (CONT'D)

C'mon, Mr.. Time to go.

Mr. puts the ball down, starts for the car.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

No, hey, bring the ball. We're gonna need that.

Mr. gets the ball, heads for the car. Bobby drives off leaving his home, the city and the uprising behind him.

READER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It is time to make good the promises of American democracy to all citizens...every minority group.

CARD:

FROM THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMISSION ON CIVIL DISORDERS.

Then added it to the above:

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 29th, 1968

FADE OUT.