

SUMMER IN THE CITY

A PRISONER PUBLICATION FOR MISSOURI AND BEYOND
SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2014

A POEM
FOR YOU

BLANKETS OF BLOOD BY ARTHUR RIMBAUD

Blankets of blood, coalfires, a thousand murders,
Endless howls of rage, and all harmony undone
By every hellish tear: would any of this matter,
O heart of mine, while the Aquilon still stirs debris...?

But vengeance? Never! And yet we crave it.
Industrialists, princes, senators: die!
Power, justice, history: kneel! We're due.
We want blood. Blood, and golden flames.

My soul wants war; vengeance; terror! To war!
We writhe in its Bite: Enough republics!
We've had enough: of emperors,
Regiments, colonists, peoples - enough!

Who will stir the fiery whirlwinds' fury
If not ourselves and those we call our brothers?
It's our turn! Romantic friends: our fun begins.
O waves of fire, we'll never work again!

Europe, Asia, America - vanish. Our march
Of vengeance spreads across cities and over hills!
-And yet, we will be crushed!
Volcanoes will explode, oceans boil...

Oh my friends! -My heart knows its own brothers!
Dark strangers, what if we were to leave? So leave! Leave!
O misfortune! How the earth melts upon us,
How I shake as it melts on me and you,

But no matter: I'm here; I'm still here.



THOSE PRISON
WALLS CAN'T
KEEP US
APART

HELLO

As the summer heat intensifies here in St. Louis, we are slowly readjusting to life after the swell of uncontrollable nights spent on the streets of Ferguson expressing our rage and discontent with countless others. Many of you have probably heard on the T.V. or radio or read in a newspaper that on August 9th, an eighteen-year old named Mike Brown was shot and killed by police in Ferguson, Missouri.

We are not unfamiliar with police shootings, but in this case people mobilized their rage to meet in the streets and for ten consecutive nights, people fought and held space that the police could not contain. They did not give it to us. We took it. Moment after moment we realized our power and the possibilities seemed endless. It felt as if time ceased to exist and that nothing else mattered because this disruption of commerce and police control broke the normalcy of everyday life.

We spent many days and nights in Ferguson, and we want to tell you our stories of what we experienced. As is most often the case, the media reports the voice and perspective of the politicians and police. We hope to give you a glimpse into what it was really like on the streets in the autonomous space that we all created together. Most of us never experienced anything like the past two weeks. These nights of revolt created possibilities we have hoped for but have barely thought were tangible. Our minds are spinning about what is possible. The streets may have seemingly calmed for now, but the refusal of police violence and control will continue. A worldwide anti-police uprising is palpable and realized here in our

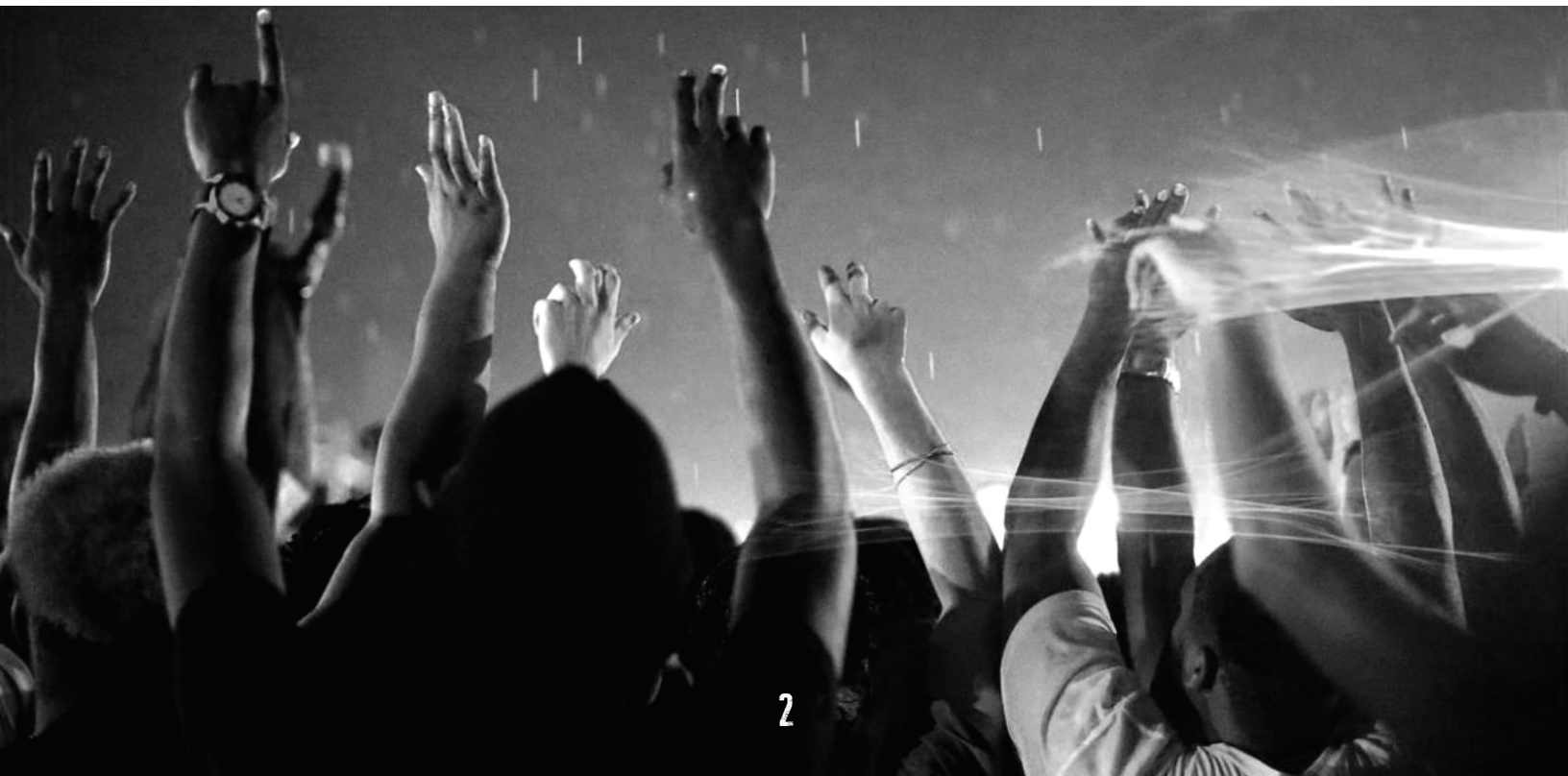
city. We can still taste it in our mouths and feel it in our bones.

When out and about walking past both familiar and unfamiliar faces it is not uncommon to hear someone say to you, "Hands up" and instantly you reply, "Don't shoot". A social connection is made, an instant understanding of a shared desire for a completely different world.

Although these events may seem distant, others around the world who feel the same way have responded with solidarity—marches, actions and attacks on your home turf are a way to express support to those resisting other places and to spread the resistance beyond the confines of place. Police do not only ruin our lives in Ferguson and St. Louis, but everywhere.

Race has been a major factor in the events of the past weeks in Ferguson. A majority black city with a majority white police force, another young black man murdered by a white cop, generations of white supremacy and racial violence coming to a head. The streets of Ferguson were screaming with racial tension, and those of us who are white often had to justify our hatred of the police to black rebels who had never heard such a thing out of a white mouth. Luckily, confronting a line of riot cops shoulder to shoulder with black and brown people and refusing to back down, our actions replaced the need for words. "We All Bleed the Same Blood" is an attempt to address some of these racial tensions and a call for racial unity against the police and prisons.

It has been several months since the last issue of this newsletter. We have enjoyed corresponding with you and sending out reading material. May these stories inspire connection and collaboration amongst you against the enemy and not each other.



WE ALL BLEED THE SAME BLOOD

"This ain't about black and white, it's about the people against the government. If I cut you open it looks the same as me. We all bleed the same blood."

- An anonymous rebel on W. Florissant in Ferguson, MO

In 1968 when Martin Luther King was assassinated, a wave of protests and rebellions known as the "Holy Week Uprising" swept across the country. Major riots broke out in Washington D.C, Baltimore, and more locally in Kansas City, Louisville and Chicago. This outpouring of rage was eventually contained by local police, the promise of legislative reforms and most importantly, the mobilization of the National Guard and the Army. The deployment of the US Army and Marines on American soil was especially significant in the nation's capitol where riots advanced within two blocks of the White House.

Urban centers weren't the only sites of this powerful revolt. In St. Louis prisoners in the city jail fought back against a system of lethal racism and brutal poverty by attempting to destroy the jail in which they were caged and set it on fire.

In 1971, prison rebel George Jackson was shot down while allegedly attempting to escape from San Quentin Prison in California. In response, 1,000 prisoners on the other side of the country in Attica, New York took control of the prison there and held 42 guards hostage in an effort to win amnesty and needed reforms in the prison system. Acting in solidarity, rebels on the outside held demonstrations in support of the Attica rebellion in an effort to put pressure on the authorities and prevent the massacre of the revolting prisoners. Tragically this effort was not enough to keep the authorities from crushing the prisoners with brute force.

What are the lessons we can learn from this history? What are the limits of rioting on the streets and struggling within prison walls? How can we spread revolts across those walls while still being able to live and fight another day? What are the differences in taking action in the streets and inside prison and how do those differences effect what we can do?

This society of extremes (poverty and wealth, access and exclusion, the concentration of power in the hands of an elite few) is upheld at all times through force. The police, the prison system, the courts and the racism which is an important part of them all, serve to maintain the imbalance between those who have and those who ain't got. By pitting poor, dis-empowered whites against poor, dis-empowered blacks, latinos, asians and natives, racism serves to keep us divided, fighting among ourselves in-

stead of seeking common cause against the ruling class, the politicians and their servants.

This distinction between privileged and targeted races is made real by the differences in policing seen in poor neighborhoods which are predominately black and latino and the policing seen in rich neighborhoods which are predominately white. It can also be seen in the differences in prison sentences for similar crimes given to people who fall on either side of whiteness. On the streets, repressive racism is carried out through racial profiling, police harassment and the use of lethal force. In the prisons, racism comes in the form of rural whites being hired to guard a mostly urban, mostly minority prison population. It can also be seen in the gang and racial divisions among prisoners which are fostered and encouraged by prison administrations in order to keep prisoners divided.

In 1992, gangs in LA had negotiated a truce in the weeks before the Rodney King verdict was announced. This gang and racial unity helped contribute to the largest uprising in the US since 1971. And despite a few regrettable and widely-reported instances of black on white violence, the Rodney King Rebellion contained a remarkable amount of cross-racial unity and cooperation. Some Koreans were the targets of looting precisely because they as individuals ran exploitative and parasitic businesses in poor black neighborhoods. Other Koreans chose to stand with the rebels against the violence of the police. When we rebel against the system of police imposed poverty and unite across racial or ethnic lines, we fight against the repressive strategy of racism. At the same time, unity across artificial divisions is a necessary condition for a revolt that cannot be easily contained. When we rebel, we redraw the lines that have been written on our bodies and in our lives. We decide for ourselves which side we are on.

In moments when privileged races stand with targeted races against a common enemy, the meaning and importance of racial differences begin to be blurred. This can be confirmed by experiences on the streets of Ferguson, Missouri where a relatively small number of white people have stood with black people against the terror of police violence and the occupation of the neighborhood by militarized police. What it means to be white and black in day to day life (relative safety and relative danger) begins to mean less when everyone is being tear gassed and shot with rubber bullets, when white rebels are coming to the aid of injured black rebels, when people are sharing experience and tactics, trusting each other despite a difference in color which is only skin deep.

This process of simultaneously overcoming internal and institutional racism is cut short by those who attempt to use racial tension for their own ends. From the police and the media to the self-appointed leaders of the "community" who are attempting to ride this wave of unrest into a political office, those who benefit from the continuation of racial divisions have painted a picture of outsiders and agitators that only serves to divide us. In an ironic flipping of the normal racial narrative, present and future politicians have singled out white rebels as scapegoats,

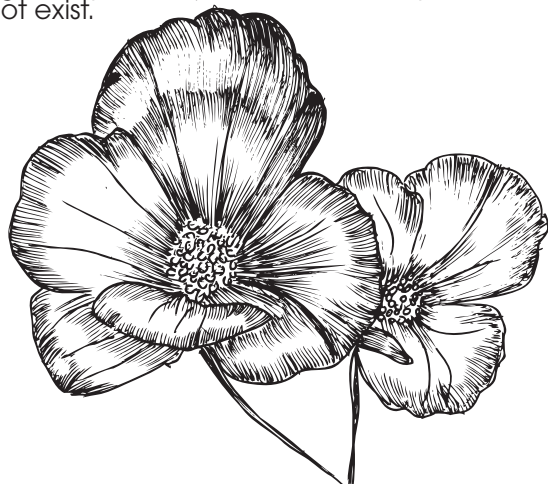


WRITE TO US

IF YOU WANT TO RECEIVE A ZINE CATALOG//BE ADDED OR REMOVED FROM THE MAILING LIST// TELL US WHAT'S GOING ON WHERE YOU ARE OR TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN FERGUSON!

**OAK ROOT PRESS
PO BOX 775006
ST LOUIS, MO 63177**

We do not know anything about the law so we cannot help with legal support. We are also not a dating service. So please do not ask us for those kind of things. If you are a rapist of any kind, and you don't think that is a problem, do not bother writing to us. We dream of a world where rapists along with prisons (and all forms of power-over), do not exist.



We All Bleed The Same Blood Continued from page 3

blaming them for the violence, looting and destruction which is out of their control and not conducive to their political agendas. This repressive operation provides an easy target for the police since white people on the streets of Ferguson are a visible minority, while at the same time it removes the power and agency from the hands of black rebels who in reality have initiated every escalation in the rebellion so far.

In order for the blurring of lines to become more complete, in order to actually erase racism, abolish poverty and disperse power, we'll need to create a situation from which there is no going back, a revolt which is so widespread and thorough that it cannot be contained and pacified. One way to work towards that is to see ourselves and our lives in the struggles initiated by others who may appear different at first glance. When some people over there start to move, others over here can move with them, distracting and dividing the attention of the authorities and all those who wish to hold on to their positions of power and privilege. From one side of the walls to the other, together we have the power to break them all down.



DON'T FORGET TO TAKE DEEP BREATHS.

WE HEARD FROM YOU

A LETTER *from a Missouri Prisoner*

I write this letter with a spirit ablazed with rage against the racist forces of oppression for murdering another young black male. 18-year old Mike Brown, in Ferguson, joins the long list killed by America's police/army, which includes my nephew. This is genocide and why we need a revolution. This system must be shut down -- totally, decisively and eternally.

As I write I am listening to the "news" station. I am appalled at not just how the "news" stations are focused on "looting", but at the so-called "black leadership" response toward the people's rage. It is way past time for the people to unleash their rage not just at the system, but also at their "leaders," at the Al Sharpton's who seek to control them on behalf of their masters. These slaves ("leaders") are more disappointed over the merchants "loss" of merchandise than the loss of black life.

If you know anyone connected with the enraged people/family, let them know that their brothers in Menard concentration kamp send their condolence and solidarity.

Thank you for staying connected, comrade.
In solidarity across the walls that divide . . .

OUR PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

My first experience with tear gas came during one of the many raucous nights in Ferguson, MO. I was with friends; I had a plan, and it still caught me off guard. I didn't panic. I've been around long enough to know that. But I did pull my mask up in a hurry and began to scan the area. I caught site of my protest buddy running through the haze with his gas mask on to help a fallen protester. Watching him helped me come to my senses: of course the very thing I needed to be doing right now was helping those that were in the middle of the poisonous gas. I ran around with a water bottle, the only tool at my disposal, pouring it into people's eyes to take away the worst of the sting. I watched the incoming canisters, judging where they would land, seeing the people who would be most affected. I think it was raining this whole time. It had been on and off all night. Maybe that's why the Molotov that was thrown at the Chop Suey didn't catch fire on the wooden boards blocking the spaces where glass windows had been broken the night before. I remember the feeling of triumph though. I remember thinking, "Oh...this is what it feels like to fight back."

I marched in with three torches, long heavy sticks with gas soaked rags tied to their ends disguised as signs. The signs said, "Avenge Mike Brown" & "Smash the police state." They were heavy and cumbersome, and it wasn't too long before I set them down next to the portable speaker system. When we walked up the march was leaving and headed toward us. It was an angry, energetic march of hundreds of closely walking people. They con-

fronted the police line set up just before Ferguson road. My friend was with the portable speaker system and playing Lil Boosie's anti-police anthem. He was surrounded by angry young men demanding him to turn it off. "We won't have anything like that here," they said. But as the hours became days and the days became weeks, the insurrection grew in force and energy and everyone would be playing that song as loudly as possible from their parading cars. He succumbed to their pressure and set the speaker system aside on the sidewalk. Later I put the torches nearby it. I stayed at the police line far too long. Mostly observing impassioned young men being held back from attacking the police by their friends or by self-declared "peace keepers" as they would later self identify. At one point I walked the length of the space between the police and protesters and felt the tension. It wasn't as great as it would become. There were men walking with bullhorns shouting orders at everyone near the police line. "Sit Down! Hands Up!" I watched. I walked along the east sidewalk to survey how deep the police line



A TIP FOR PROCESSING TRAUMA

One resource for processing trauma is to think about things that allow for escape or feeling better – a pet, the crossword puzzle, someone on t.v., a good friend, lifting weights, the moment before the day starts, an imagined place in nature or anywhere and so on. Notice how the body shifts when you think about that resource: does the breath get deeper? Bring curiosity to all the ways the physiology shifts in your body when you think about the resource, even if it only shifts for a second. Normalize any kind of shaking, twitching or other kinds of energy dispersal - heat rising, etc., as part of the body's way of returning to equilibrium.

Our Personal Accounts *Continued from page 5*

was. It was reinforced with cars and appeared to go on for 1-2 blocks deep. I found friends among the crowd. Eventually one said she was going to walk North on W. Florissant Road. I followed her and we met with four more friends. Two friends led the way and we walked behind the shops and tried to move the dumpsters to the street. But they were too heavy so we set them on fire. We looted liquor and oil out of a busted up shop. People were running every which way in and out of the shop. I couldn't carry much without dropping it all. I got a bottle of gin & juice and a bottle of whiskey that would fit in my pockets and would later cause me some serious worry. A friend used the oil to pour on a ground fire we started outside a dumpster. We ran. We headed to the busted up gas station, the Quick Trip (QT). Someone was using a sledgehammer to bust through the counter and get lottery tickets. I ran in and grabbed power bars, as many as I could grab. People removed the ATM and used a sledgehammer to try and bust it open to get the money out. I drank some of my friend's looted water. It was cold and crisp and delicious. A friend tried to disable the exterior camera off the side of the QT. Someone spray painted "Snitches Get Stitches" on the outside of the QT. A truck pulled up to load the ATM in it. We hurriedly walked away.



Approaching the QT shell, it is raining and I see many people gathered, intermittently conversing with each other - some sitting down, others standing up, people marching in the streets, cars riding by with people yelling "Hands up, Don't shoot" and playing music. It seemed joyous. As it gets later in the night, some folks leave because of the curfew. I found myself having more and more small conversations with folks. People telling me that the police know better than to drive up Canfield. It was clear everyone hated the police and was not going to back down. Together, everyone was brave. Friends were being sweet and checking in and seeing if I wanted to stay. I spoke with this lady who said to me "You out here, huh?" and I said "Of course I am. You out here too, huh?" We high fived she talked shit on the police; I agreed with her and then we asked each other if we were gonna run...both of us inclined towards running, but not without staying to the very last possible moment. It was beautiful. The police retreat, they bring out the tank that rapidly deploys tear gas - a lot of tear gas was thrown into the crowd, with a few return volleys. It made me smile that people were fighting back and figuring it out together. Then a lone cop from the other line pulls up, I turn to my friend and say "oh shit they're coming from behind" and we run. I hear gun shots; I run again...so on and so forth. The rest of the night you probably know. I haven't been the same. I'm angry. I'm sad. I want to be around people that were there that night. I'm happy that people were fighting back. if anybody asks me how it was, I'll give the general answer "It was good and beautiful, until it wasn't". It does however, excite me that this is getting big...it excites me when things get big, even if they get stomped down for a moment because every time a pig kills, it's going to get bigger and bigger.



Ferguson was a whirlwind, and I'm still a bit lost. It was like a molotov cocktail exploding all at once, within me and outside of me. When you are surrounded by hundreds (sometimes thousands) of people who hate the police, who just days before were taking the boot of the police, it's impossible to go back to feeling normal ever again. It's an absolutely beautiful thing to rebel against this prison society together. Usually when people lash out at their conditions, it's an isolated thing that can be quelled quickly, but when it's thousands of people the fuckers tremble in fear. The joy, the anger, the frustration, the power we realize we have is exhilarating.

Every night I went down there, I was amazed.

* The QuikTrip was a temporary autonomous zone. It was looted, burned, and people literally danced on its ruins. What was once a capitalist moneygrubber had become a gathering point that was free of police control. It was also a piece of land liberated from the normal confines of capitalism. No longer a place where you are screwed over, where the little money you have is being looted so that someone gets richer. Rather it was a place where you could gather and make a base against the police, conspire and party. Food was served. Graffiti adorned what was left of it, people danced, soapboxers soapboxed, gas pumps were decorated. QT became Mike Brown Plaza.

* For most of the days, large majorities of people were wearing masks. It felt like it was a fashion statement, but

Continued on page 10



CHRONICLES '92-NOW

Los Angeles, CA 1992 - After the acquittal of four police officers of assault and excessive force for the beating of Rodney King, South Central Los Angeles explodes into six days of rioting. Residents of LA fight police, loot and burn stores, with damages estimated at over one billion dollars. Rioting spreads to many other American cities. The rioting in LA ends after the National Guard and Marines are called in.

Cincinnati, OH 2001- The police shooting of a 19 year old black male sparks five days of rioting and disturbances in downtown Cincinnati. Tensions were already high before the shooting, after a series of incidents of brutality and racial profiling by Cincinnati Police. Protests quickly turn against the police, as people attack a police sub-station in the neighborhood of the shooting. The next three nights see looting and arsons in various areas of the city. The riots are effectively stopped after a city-wide curfew is put into effect. The rioting is the largest unrest the United States has seen since the Rodney King riots.

Oakland, CA January 1st 2009 - Bay Area Transit police shoot and kill 23 year old Oscar Grant as he lies face down on the ground of a transit station. Police rapidly try to cover up the execution, taking phones with footage of the shooting and beginning to formulate a lie to excuse the shooting. By January 7th, no charges have been pressed against the officer. A demonstration is called for that day, at the BART station where Grant was murdered. As the demonstration ends many are left unsatisfied by the promises of a future investigation, and take to the streets. That night police cars are destroyed, businesses looted and cars burned. People riot again, after the police officer is charged with "involuntary manslaughter" months later.

Seattle, WA September 2010 to March 2011 - On August 30, Seattle cop Ian D. Birk shoots and kills John Williams, a 50-year-old Native American man, sparking general outrage

in Seattle. Over the next week, in the surrounding area of Seattle, police kill four more people, adding to the anger. In the days following the murders, protests and demonstrations are organized against the police. Instead of fizzling out, demonstrations and attacks last for months, continuing into March of 2011.

San Francisco, CA July 2011 - San Francisco MUNI (the local transit system) police shoot and kill 19 year old Kenneth Harding for fair evasion. Quickly people gather around the scene upset at the blatant racism and disgusting display of valuing money over a young man's life. The next day a demonstration is held in the Mission neighborhood. 150 people march through the area attacking a local police station and banks.

Nationwide February 2012 - Trayvon Martin, a Black 17-year-old from Miami Gardens, Florida, is fatally shot by George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer, in Sanford, Florida. At the time of the shooting Zimmerman is not charged by the Sanford Police, who say that there was no evidence to refute his claim of self-defense and that Florida's stand your ground law prohibits law-enforcement officials from arresting or charging him. Immediately following his death numerous cities around the country organize "hoodie marches" and protest in response to the killing.

In July 2013, Zimmerman is eventually charged and tried in Martin's death. A jury acquits him of second-degree murder and of manslaughter. The response to the acquittal is immediate with demonstrations in dozens of cities. In cities where calm had once prevailed, the anger over the verdict boils over into generalized anti-police violence. St Louis, Oakland, and LA are among some of the cities that see brief unrest after the verdict.

Many other cities such as New York, Chicago and Seattle see large demonstrations in response to the verdict; students walk out of high schools and universities, and community organizations hold vigils.

Anaheim, CA July 2012 - Police shoot and kill Manuel Diaz as he flees after they approach him. Manuel's 16 year old cousin explains that he ran because, "He never liked them [police] because all they do is harass and arrest anyone." The community takes to the streets, burning dumpsters and throwing rocks at officers as the police respond with attack dogs and "less than lethal" bullets.

Flatbush, Brooklyn, NY March 2013 - Police shoot and kill 16 year old Kimani Gray. Police spokespeople quickly begin to feed the usual lies to the news, about how he was a member of a gang, and how a gun was recovered at the scene, and how when they arrived he suspiciously reached for his waist. For anyone who has ever been on the receiving end of police violence, it is easy to see through these lies. Two nights later people organize a rally in protest against the murder. Organizers preach for calm, but as the night goes on anger and frustration exploded into street battles lasting for hours.

Durham, NC November 2013 to January 2014 - On November 19, 17 year old Jesus "Chuey" Huerta is arrested and shot in the back while in the back of an officers patrol car. Over the next months friends, family members and others who feel the anger, sadness and frustration from another police murder, gather in the streets to express their rage. The first round of protests ends with people attacking a police station, the second, ends in scuffles with police after they attack a vigil with dogs and mace. The streets of Durham still have graffiti refusing to let the memory of Chuey and the response to his murder disappear.

Albuquerque, NM March 2014 - Online activists release footage of police shooting and killing a homeless man in the foothills of the Sandia Mountains. After the 23 fatal police shootings over the past four years, people have "reached a boiling point." Protesters take to the streets in the early afternoon and hold a presence in the streets late into the night. Protesters throw rocks at police, attack police vehicles and throw gas canisters at police headquarters. At one point a protester pulls a rifle out of his car declaring he is "ready for war".

FERGUSON

Saturday 8/9/14 - Michael Brown is shot and killed by police officer Darren Wilson. Brown was walking home from a convenience store to his grandma's house, when the officer stopped him for jaywalking and a scuffle ensued. Witnesses say that the officer shot Brown as he fled with his hands up in surrender. A crowd quickly grows, shots are fired into the air and a dumpster is set on fire. Police respond with an armored riot vehicle, a helicopter, dogs and assault rifles. As anger on the streets grows, the police are forced to retreat from the scene. Later accusations are thrown against Brown that he was a suspect in a robbery earlier in the day.

Sunday 8/10/14 - In the evening crowds gather for a prayer vigil held at the site of the shooting, in the Canfield apartments. The crowd starts a march down to W. Florissant where police have massed. The protesters confront the police line, yelling insults and throwing things at the police. Three or four police cruisers attempt to drive through the crowd. Quickly they are surrounded and people kick and smash out the windows of the cars. After the police make it out of the crowd, the street is free of police and people begin to celebrate. The mood is incredibly festive. Some people march down to the Quick Trip, while others attempt to march to the police station, but are met by a wall of police. The QT has its windows smashed in and people flood in to loot the store. Quickly the outside is covered in "RIP MIKE MIKE", and anti-police graffiti. A few celebratory shots are fired into the air. People openly drive cars onto W. Florissant and fill them with looted goods. Police respond with tear gas, but for the most part remain clear of the crowd. The festive crowd remains in the street late into the

night. By the time things dwindle down the looting has spread to twelve businesses, multiple dumpsters are on fire, the QT has a fire in the back of the store and two police have been injured by rocks and bottles.

Monday 8/11/14 - Crowds attempt to gather at the looted and burned Quick Trip. As soon as people begin to block the street they are attacked by riot police with armored personnel carriers, tear gas, rubber bullets and a variety of "less lethal" weaponry. The cops set up static lines on either end of W. Florissant while neighborhood residents and others yell and throw stones in an effort to force the police to withdraw. Neighborhood residents come to the aid of those from outside the area, giving them directions and leading them through the surrounding neighborhoods. Mild street fighting continues late into the night as protestors discuss the need for continued determination, more supplies (gas masks, molotov cocktails), and a mutation in tactics such as strikes and walkouts.


Looting threatens to spread as smash and grabs occur or are disrupted in South St. Louis and the Gallaria Mall in West County. Police are pre-emptively deployed in dense commercial districts downtown (Washington Ave.) and in University City (the Delmar Loop).

Tuesday 8/12/14 - Again people attempt to stage a protest at the QT and are attacked by militarized riot police. Some of the crowd marches to a rally at a local church where Al Sharpton is speaking. Outside the mood is tense. Hundreds of people are milling around the yard of the church, the side walk and the street, holding signs, yelling, and talking amongst each other. Cars drive up and down the street honking their horns in support. Without the presence of a visible enemy, some protestors turn on each other increasing the underlying racial tensions. Fueled by a vocal minority, white protesters are scapegoated for the conflicts of previous nights though later in the week the individuals involved reconcile their disputes. Late in the night, five people are shot, one by the police.

Wednesday 8/13/14 - A familiar scene plays out on West Florissant. Crowds gather and are attacked by police. This time some protestors come prepared. A small number of molotov cocktails are thrown at the police lines along with rocks and tear gas canisters. This change in tactics (the use of firebombs) represents a dramatic escalation that threatens to push the situation past a tipping point.

Thursday 8/14/14 - As President Obama references the events in Ferguson, Missouri Governor Jay Nixon removes the County Police from control of the protests and puts the State Highway Patrol in charge, led by Ron Johnson, a black officer. Johnson promises a less heavy handed approach to dealing with the demonstrations. Protesters fill W. Florissant early in the day with cars, barbecues and bodies. Since the QT was burned, it has been a gathering point, but today is the first day it feels like the epicenter of a movement. It has transformed from a gas station, to a burned building, to a thriving park where people exchange ideas, make friends and prepare for the coming fight once the sun goes down. The mood is incredibly festive, cars blast music, some loaded down with people screaming and shouting out of the windows or on the hoods. The half mile strip of W. Florissant is transformed into a victory parade ground.

Three separate times the police attempt to enter the crowd and are chased out. Even the commanding officers are surrounded, aggressively shouted down and chased to their cars and out of the demonstration. One can smell the fear from the officers and see the sweat pouring from their foreheads. Despite to efforts of wannabe politicians, the presence on the streets lasts long into the night while people celebrate winning the streets from the police.



Friday 8/15/14- The Ferguson Police Department releases surveillance footage of the “robbery” Mike Brown allegedly participated in at Ferguson Market. During the day, the scene on the street is incredibly festive again. By evening the mood has shifted as a confrontation unfolds between protesters and police guarding the store. Tear gas and flash bang grenades are used by the police in an effort to disperse the rowdy crowd. Instead of running away, protestors fight back and shoot into the air. Ferguson Market is the epicenter of renewed looting.

Saturday 8/16/14- In response to the looting the night before, Governor Jay Nixon declares a curfew in effect for Ferguson from the hours of midnight to five in the morning. Almost immediately there is a public call by activists to resist the curfew. The QT quickly fills up with people, eating, giving out water and talking about what to do next. Although the crowd largely seems intent on resisting the curfew, a few “leaders” from the New Black Panther Party and the Nation of Islam successfully scare most people from staying in the streets past midnight. As the clock hits midnight, the NOI, NBPP and even the activists that put out the call to resist the curfew are nowhere in sight. The only people left, while relatively small in number, are determined and defiant.

Armed with pistols and molotov cocktails, some of the crowd has assembled under the awning of a boarded up barbecue restaurant and are preparing to attack the police when they advance. Around 45 minutes after midnight the police begin to slowly clear the streets. When protesters refuse to disperse, the cops rapidly fire tear gas and smoke grenades into the crowd. Defiantly people pick up the gas canisters and throw them back at the advancing police line. Multiple protesters collapse in the street and are quickly carried to relative safety by others. Some people rip up chunks of asphalt from pot holes while others grab rocks from storefront landscaping but they are no match for the heavily armored police vehicles and the crowd is pushed back.

Out of nowhere a lone cop car with its sirens on screams down W. Florissant from the opposite direction of the advancing line of riot cops. In the ensuing panic, protestors run down side streets as a heavy burst of gunfire rings out from people posted up underneath the awning. Chaos ensues as the police car loops back and more protesters flee, running straight into the crossfire of the people under the awning and the advancing police line. One protester is hit twice by gunfire, either by the cops or by friendly fire. Quickly he is loaded into a car and rushed to the hospital.

Sunday 8/17/14 - Looting and conflicts with the police continue and spread as protestors refuse to give up and go home. Hours before the curfew is imposed violence breaks out, in what is called the worst night of rioting by the media. The past few days have only increased the audacity of the crowds. This time protestors attempt to march on the police command center located in a nearby strip mall. Molotov cocktails are thrown at police, and gunshots are reported. The police respond with heavy amounts of tear gas and rubber bullets. Eventually pushing the crowds back down the street. The looting becomes more dispersed and wide spread. With looting being reported in multiple locations miles away from the QT.

Monday 8/18/14 - After the unrest Sunday night, Governor Nixon declares a State of Emergency and calls in the National Guard to protect the police command center. The police state that they will not allow crowds to assemble and that all protesters will be forced to continue moving along the street or be arrested. The curfew, however, is lifted from the city of

Ferguson. Police block off W. Florissant to cars and set up checkpoints at both ends of the strip. Many of the side roads through the neighborhoods that lead down to the strip are blocked off as well. This new police tactic is a blow to protesters who had previously used the side roads to flood onto W. Florissant and escape once the evening got too hot.

In the afternoon Nelly arrives on the scene, telling people they have options, someone in the crowd shouts back “you have options, you’re rich!”.

As darkness approaches the crowd swells and people begin to defiantly march in the streets. As a standoff with the police line develops, rocks and bottles fly through the air. In response peace marshals link arms and form a line between the march and the police, attempting to push people back off the streets. Despite the efforts of the “peace police” some continue to confront the police throughout the night.

One woman rips a “DO NOT ENTER” street sign from the ground and carries it into the road to face off with the police, occasionally dropping it to walk back into the crowd and check on her baby. In response to a rumor of shots fired, the police fire a barrage of tear gas into the streets. Fearlessly people throw the gas back, but the amount of gas in the air makes it nearly impossible to stay on Florissant and protesters fall back towards Canfield. More shots are fired, more tear gas fills the air, and some in the crowd work together in an attempt to set the barbeque joint on fire with molotovs and bottles of gas. Others attempt to create a small burning barricade to block the street and disperse the tear gas that fills the air. An armored car forces a further retreat into the neighborhood as people attempt to create barricades in the streets and defend the neighborhood.

Tuesday 8/19/14 - For the first time in over a week, police and their political counterparts succeed in imposing order on W. Florissant. Despite a large and intimidating police presence people continue to demonstrate their anger and sadness by marching up and down the street. Members of the Nation of Islam, church leaders and liberal activists urge, shout and push people onto the sidewalks and away from police lines. Some small conflicts erupt, but they do not get out of control. This trend continues for the next few nights.

SOLIDARITY

Philadelphia, PA 8/11/2014 - A police substation was vandalized in solidarity with Ferguson Rioters. “RIP MIKE BROWN” is painted on the door of the station.

Chapel Hill, NC 8/14/2014 - Police headquarters are attacked in solidarity with rioters in Ferguson, and also with a man recently imprisoned for defending himself against a homophobic attack. Three police cruisers had their windows smashed out.

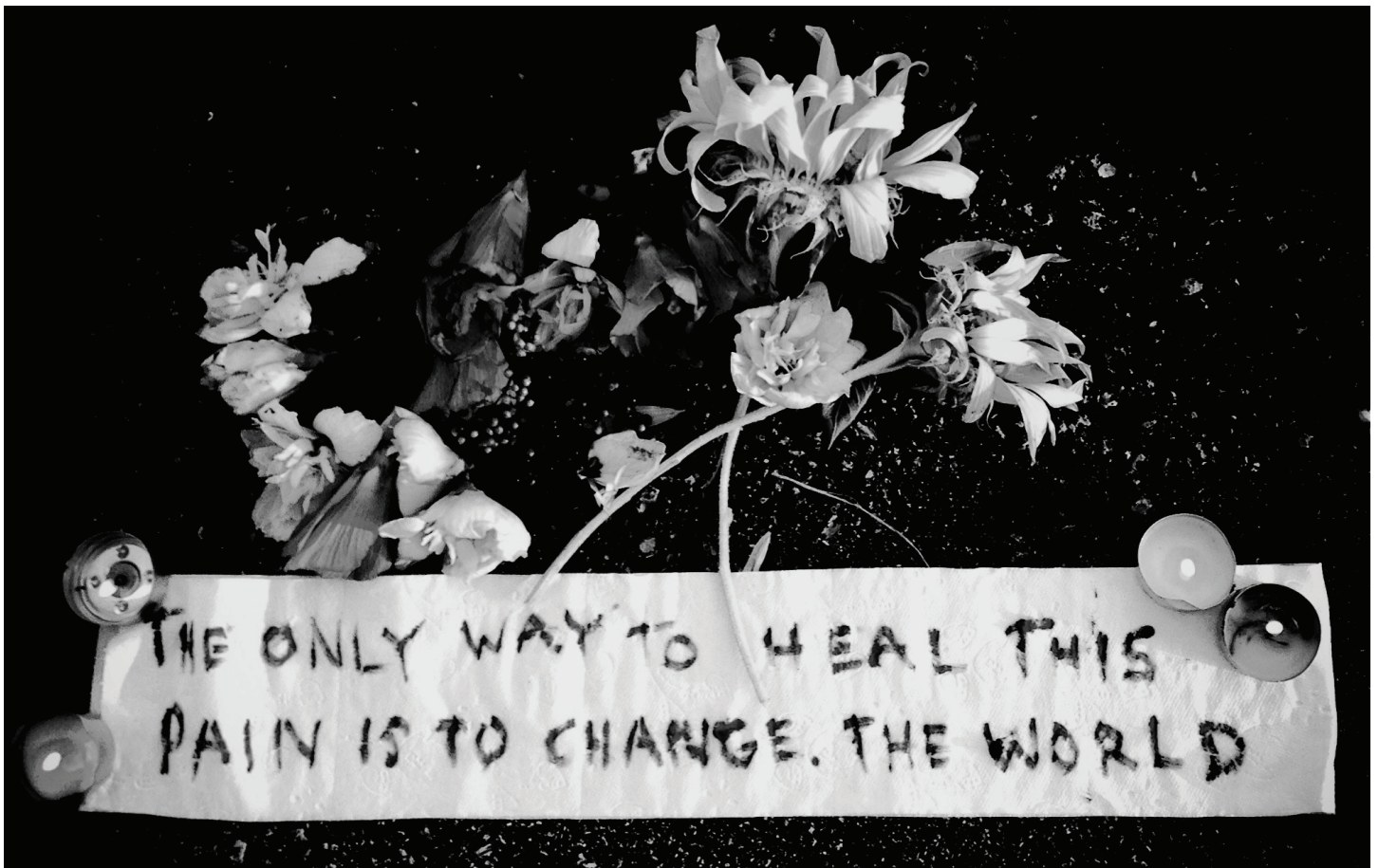
Tucson, AZ 8/15/2014 - Two banners are dropped off a highway bridge expressing solidarity with the rebels in Missouri.

Phoenix, AZ 8/15/2014 - Graffiti goes up around Phoenix in support of the rebellion in Ferguson.

Bloomington, IN 8/18/2014 - A solidarity demonstration is held in support of the Ferguson rebels, after Governor Nixon declares a state of emergency and curfew in Missouri.

Bloomington, IN 8/21/2014 - Over the night thirteen police and private security vehicles are vandalized. Tires are slashed, cars are painted and windows are coated in glass etching fluid. The attack is claimed in solidarity with the “fighters in Ferguson, and as an attempt to reclaim our own lives from the state and its dogs.”

Philadelphia 8/23/2014 - A “FTP, Solidarity With Ferguson” march is held. The march calls for attendants to wear black, both to mourn those who have died by state violence and to combat the forces that kill on a daily basis.



it was practical. People were out there to fight back, to loot, to stay anonymous from the prying eyes of police surveillance and to look good. The anonymity and intelligence of this is very useful. Black people, especially men, are already catalogued in police mug shots, so it's incredibly smart to cover one's face. Plus it's good to normalize anonymity in revolt in general, as police document troublemakers so that they can be neutralized later.

* The combativeness towards the police was outright and it was prolonged. People wanted war; they wanted to fight to win against the cops. There were conversations I was a part of and overheard where people were talking about how to keep this up. How do we neutralize the tear gas, how do we keep the cops away?

* It was extremely common to see people flipping off the cops, yelling at them, throwing things at them. There was one night where a large portion of the crowd sang Lil Boosie's, "Fuck the Police" word for word. For nights there were parades of cars loaded down (inside and out) with people blasting music, dancing. At one point, a car loaded to the brim inside and out of 15-year olds privately serenaded some friends and me. There were many times where cars were revving their engines and spinning out their tires right in front of lines of riot police.

* At some point it was 3am. One of the guys was lamenting having to return to work. "Man, I wonder what time it is. I got to work tomorrow at 7! Fuck." I start to check my clock and he jovially yells at me "Wait, don't tell me the time! I can't even hear that right now!" I laugh; the banality of work and time has no place in a rebellion.

Now the voices rise, outraged, demanding more than desolation - a social desert! economic attrition! - Howling against political travesty and back stabbing! The old miser never saw the faces, which subsequently lift up with dogged hopefulness for an answer. The faces are met, with cutting laughter from the Right, and condescension from the Left, or tear gas! And, now, must listen, nauseated, having already swallowed so much blood, to their own echoes, or the hellish drone of the police order to: Keep moving! Don't congregate on the sidewalk, or you will be arrested!

From the depths of the tumult, with hands now joined, comes the decisive reply: These streets will burn.

