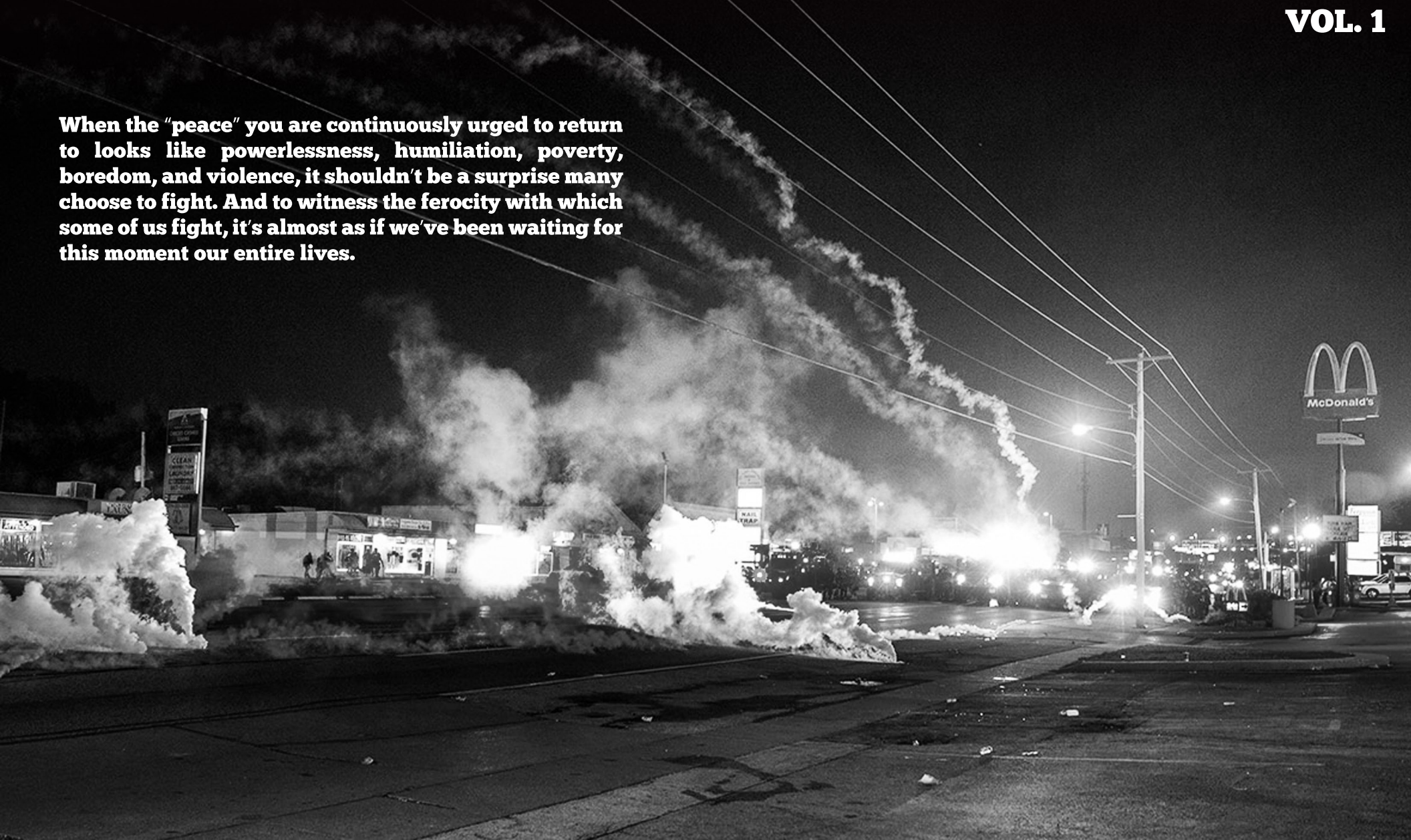


# DISPATCHES FROM FERGUSON

VOL. 1

**When the “peace” you are continuously urged to return to looks like powerlessness, humiliation, poverty, boredom, and violence, it shouldn’t be a surprise many choose to fight. And to witness the ferocity with which some of us fight, it’s almost as if we’ve been waiting for this moment our entire lives.**



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but with endless love and solidarity.

Mike." Still they continuously call for the boys to grow up and be men and for the young women to go home, because the streets aren't safe for them.

## **Peace and Quiet**

There are some indications that the liberal groups are distancing themselves from the city of Ferguson. They are beginning to organize rallies and civil disobedience in Clayton and Downtown St Louis. Maybe they're giving up their campaign to control the angry elements. Maybe they're trying to put a more peaceful media-friendly face on the movement. Maybe they're trying out new strategies for getting justice. Only time will tell.

The situation in Ferguson is scary. It's easy to understand why some, especially those who live near the activity, want a return to normal: bullets, tear gas, sound cannons, check points, fire. But despite all this, there are a sizable number of us who don't want a return to normal. We descend on West Florissant day and night to figure out how to avoid it. To us, the struggle is not limited to justice for Mike Brown and the conviction of a single cop of murder in a court of law. We are doing this for ourselves, our friends and family, as well as Mike Brown. We've already found this system guilty- the racism, the class structure, the government, the police. When the "peace" you are continuously urged to return to looks like powerlessness, humiliation, poverty, boredom, and violence, it shouldn't be a surprise many choose to fight. And to witness the ferocity with which some of us fight, it's almost as if we've been waiting for this moment our entire lives. Two nights ago people took a run at the police command post forcing the authorities to call in the National Guard. Previously this would have been unthinkable, but then again just two weeks ago this whole thing would have been unthinkable.

And so we raise a shot of looted gin - A TOAST! May we continue to surprise each other.

**8/19/2014**

## AN EYE FOR AN EYE MAKES **OUR MASTERS BLIND**

*City—fuck 'em*  
*Narcotics—fuck 'em*  
*Feds—fuck 'em*  
*D.A.—fuck 'em*

-Lil Boosie

**ON THE AFTERNOON OF SATURDAY, AUGUST 9TH, 2014 AN 18 YEAR** old, unarmed teenager named Mike "Mike Mike" Brown was murdered by a Ferguson Police Department cop. He was shot in the back and the head, as he knelt on the street with his hands in the air in the middle of a densely populated apartment complex. Hundreds of residents immediately gathered around the site of his murder, spilling out onto the main street, W. Florissant, and partially blocking it. Mourners at the site were met with assault rifles and police dogs, while police shut down access to the city. The following night, Sunday, August 10th, another candlelight vigil was called. This event, attended by over a thousand, quickly and naturally evolved into something else. What follows is a compilation of first person accounts of the event.

This is not the only account of what happened. If you were there last night, tell your own story. Share it with friends and send it to [antistatestl@riseup.net](mailto:antistatestl@riseup.net)

There was a candlelit vigil called for 8 o'clock last night in the apartment complex where Mike Mike was murdered by the police. The turnoff for the complex is along a stretch of W. Floris-

sant. We showed up around 7:40pm or so and as we approached the turn off, police had blocked off car access in about a half mile in each direction along W. Florissant.

We parked and got out and started walking. As we walked from our car toward the apartment complex, we were slowly surrounded by more and more people—it became clear that everyone on the street was heading towards the apartments. There were only about 5-10 cop cars at this point, with the cops mostly sitting in them, totally unprepared for what was about to happen. They weren't stopping people from walking past their line, only using their cars to blockade the street, so we got by them fine. As we walked by them it was clear to me they'd never dealt with a protest before, much less hundreds of people.

We slowly started to see more and more people amassing at the intersection leading towards the apartments. Hundreds of people



in the street. They started walking towards the line of police we'd just passed. So we stopped where we were, waited to join the group and started blasting Lil Boosie. The crowd went wild. Plenty of cheers of "Turn it up!" "Blast that shit!" A few trying to get it turned off too, saying it was "stirring things up too much."

trick has worked on the self-imposed protest leaders who openly work with Johnson to control the crowds.



There are countless calls from the Nation of Islam, the New Black Panther Party, and their socially conservative ilk for women to go home, for strong black men to step up, and other such patriarchal attempts divide the protesters. The first couple days these calls were met with tremendous resistance from mostly black women. "Fuck you, go back to church". "I've been here from day one". "It's our babies who're dying". The constant harassment seems to have taken its toll as fewer women are out, especially after dark. But women are still out front taunting the police and rushing into stores to get theirs.

Nearly all who attempt to restrain the actions of the most confrontational and declare themselves leaders of the community are over 40. Aside from physically stopping young people from acting, they try to ostracize them from the protest. These wise elders may walk around with a paternalistic aura of authority, but the youth aren't fooled: "I can't listen to these old heads, been sayin' the same thing for years." "This peaceful marching ain't workin', without the looting nobody would've gave a shit about Mike

OBS. From Jesse Jackson to Al Sharpton. From Nelly to Tef Poe (Po). From current St Louis Mayor Slay to future St Louis Mayor French. And the list goes on.

While they may be succeeding on TV, radio, and social media these loudmouths aren't having as much success on West Florissant (despite their own reports to the contrary), and that must scare the shit out of them. It's worth mentioning that social media is where they have had the most success. They've become pros at getting twits who will never go down to Ferguson to retweet their fewer than 140 character self-serving reports ad nauseam. In return the twits get to feel as if they're a part of something. Maybe these rumors, half-truths and lies will prove to be damaging to people, (and that would be terrible) but most of it is transparently conspiracy theory bullshit to anyone with critical thinking skills.

There are still far more black protesters than white on West Florissant, but there seems to be more diversity as the struggle continues. Early on comments directed at white protesters such as "why're you here" were answered with "man, she/he hates the police too!" Now if the presence of white protesters is even noted it sounds more like "thank you for being here." A sinister few liberal and leftist groups try to spread absurd stories that small groups of white agitators (or even KKK infiltrators!) are tricking black protesters into going on the attack. The racist underlying assumptions about the exploitable nature of black protesters makes sense when you realize that's exactly how groups like the Nation of Islam and the New Black Panther Party view them. Back in the real world, white protesters are just now starting to catch up with some of the ferocity of their black comrades, who're grown enough to make decisions for themselves.

The authorities engaged in some good cop/bad cop by putting Ron Johnson (a black officer who grew up in North County) in command of police operations. During the light of day, he and his officers take off their riot gear and walk alongside protesters. This

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It was about 8:10 when I showed up. When exiting the highway, I already saw six cop cars parked at the shell gas station. Across the street from there in the cemetery was more than 10 police SUVs parked. We commented on how they were just being prepared for what might happen yet nothing could prepare us for the amount of police ahead. We drove another mile down Lucas and Hunt, and as we were headed north, traffic got incredibly thick. Then the police cars started speeding past us. It was impossible for them to get through so they sped dangerously past on the opposite side of the street at very high speeds. We showed up and couldn't make it to the apartment complex by car because there was so many people, police, police cars, dogs, kids.

We parked and made the hike in—past the 100+ cop cars. Some friends were so deeply disturbed by the amount of police that they had to leave early without being able to participate in the vigil. This is most likely the case for so many people who wanted to be there to show support but who were afraid of further police brutality.

Due to the overwhelming preemptive police presence brought in to defend commerce and prescription medication, emotions of The People intensified.

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The crowd continued to surge forward toward the police line. Some people stood in front of them, urging people not to confront the police directly, expressing fears of more police violence. But there was no calming people down, and soon hundreds of people formed a angry line just feet from the line of cops, now out of their cars—visibly scared and totally outnumbered.

Everyone was putting their hands in the air—a display of what Mike Mike was doing when he was shot twice in the head and

six times in the back—and shouting don't shoot, along of course, with so many shouts of "fuck the police" and "murderers." A few people started throwing things. I'd say there were around 200-300 people with 600-1000 more still coming from the apartment complex.

At some point the police on the southern end of the street (which is where the rowdier crowd was) called for more back up from the police blocking off the north side. Instead of navigating the side streets, the scared and hasty cops decided to drive their cars through a mob of hundreds or more people who were growing bolder all the time. Maybe the first two or three cars slowly made their way through the crowd but certainly by the fourth people were physically stopping the cars, beating on them and eventually all the you could hear was one loud thud after another as people stomped the police cars. I'd say a few windows were broken at this point. The door of one cop car was pulled open, but the car sped off before the cops inside could be extracted. The police were just running a gauntlet of angry people. Lots of cheering and by this point (20-30 minutes in?) almost everyone had given up on being afraid.

You might be expecting the crowd of attackers to have been young men in their early 20's or teens, but definitely that was not the case. All genders and all ages were getting their kicks in. I saw people as young as 10 or 12 year old attacking the cars and people in their 50's too. Fucking surreal.

Once the police had managed to escape the attacks and made it to the south side, it seemed clear that the block was ours. The police maintained lines at Ferguson Ave (to the south) and just north of the bridge for the 270 interchange (to the north). The mile or so between was totally unpoliced and filled with thousands of people.

This commercial stretch, full of parasitical businesses, has numerous small roads leading east into the densely-populated neighbor-

days, a common tactic was to fire shots in the air to scare the cops off when they got too close. Some openly talk of going to war with the police and don't hide the fact that they are carrying. The last few days people have begun shooting at the police. Tragically, the only people hit so far have been a handful of protesters- some of them with life-threatening injuries. People are beginning to advocate for more restraint with the gun fire and better aim.

The rebels (and the police) have no experience with such a situation. Revolt like this hasn't been seen in America since the 70's. People are learning how to make and utilize Molotov cocktails, barricades, projectiles, and fire, as well as when and where it makes sense to attack. Coordination and communication are difficult outside moments of rioting. Perhaps it's because there's no safe and comfortable place to gather and share ideas. The QT could potentially serve this purpose, however just today it has been entirely fenced off. The second night of unrest must have involved some exceptional coordination as crews smashed up stores all over the metro area, filling their cars with all sorts of goodies.

### **Repression, Respectability, Race, Gender, and the Generation Gap**

The police are caught in a bind and are seeing the limits of using force. If they keep their distance protesters riot, but when they come with force they inspire more people to come into the streets, which lead to more riots. At this point, if they want to crush this thing they have to convict Darren Wilson (the cop who shot Brown) of murder. But the wheels of justice are slow. In the meantime, they're going to have to work to divide the protesters. In their desperation, all of the time-tested dichotomies are being deployed- protester vs criminal, honest vs opportunist, resident vs outsider. Unfortunately the police have a long list of accomplices willing to do the work for them, most of whom are fully aware of what they're doing. From the New Black Panther Party to the Nation of Islam. From HOT 104.1 to FOX News. From MORE to

tersects with this stretch of West Florissant, a road that leads to subdivisions and the apartment complex where Mike Brown was killed. Police fear to venture too far down Canfield.

On the days when the police allow traffic to flow, West Florissant becomes congested with vehicles, many of which are loaded down with passengers, both inside and out. Routine activities include blasting music, squealing tires, and taunting the police by way of insults (“fuck the police”, “fuck 12”), doing doughnuts, and taking runs at them, just to break at the last minute. People jump from car to car in celebratory fashion, chanting, flirting, singing, drinking, and smoking. When police lines shut down the street on either end of the stretch, cars pour in from side streets to do more of the same. And when the protesters get rowdy enough, people openly ride their cars up to stores, fill them with looted goods, and escape back into the neighborhoods.

A significant number of protesters are armed. In the first few



hoods just one block in that direction. The police, too afraid and outnumbered to enter a residential area seething with outrage, weren't able to block these streets. People, hearing about what was going on, poured into the commercial district on foot and in cars and motorcycles throughout the night. For once, the geography of this fucked up suburb was on our side. Seemingly endless numbers of angry people were able to join the rioting by entering through the protection of a residential neighborhood united against the police who were unable to enter.



I kept trying to encourage people to cover their faces if they were doing shit. I'd say for every ten people I said that to, nine told me they didn't give a fuck and were proud, but a lot of people did mask up. Some comments were made about how we looked like a group of ninjas.

Also, anytime I heard someone saying we shouldn't throw things at the police (not because it was wrong, but out of fear they'd shoot us) I was able to have good conversations—saying it's a way we take power from them and give it to ourselves. Even when people were super upset, by the end of the conversation even if we still didn't agree it was clear we respected each other. I made sure to say “But fuck them, right?” and motion to the police and everyone quickly agreed and would shake my hand or pat me on the back. So much camaraderie in the street last night.

I've definitely been in plenty of situations in my life where I was the only or one of the only white people in a group and been very aware that that's who I was to the group. I didn't get this feeling at all last night. Some white friends definitely had shit said to them or were threatened, but as far as I know nothing else happened. And even friends who were threatened said that for every one negative comment they received, they received twenty or more positive and encouraging comments. "Why are y'all here?" "Because we hate the cops" "AAAAAAW YEAH!! GET ON WITH IT!!"

Around this time the group was making its way back to the intersection leading to the apartments. There was a media van parked along the side of the road and I heard this person behind me say "Man, I HATE the fuckin media." And him and his friends ran over and started rocking it. I think there might have been reporters inside. Later in the night I saw a picture of a Post Dispatch reporter wearing a helmet and vest. A news van also had its window smashed out during the night.

Also around this time I heard someone behind say, "Let's jump this fuckin cracker." I turned around a little nervous, but it was clear that all they meant by "cracker" was the three police left guarding the south side of W. Florissant. This seemed to be the idea going through everyone's head so everyone started running towards the police line. Except no one made it there because the QT (one of two places rumored to have called the police on Mike Mike which began all of this) was right next to them and people attacked it instead.

At some point someone fired a few celebratory shots in the air. Later people fired guns at the police helicopter circling above. In the QT, it definitely looked like people three or four deep just lining the windows of the place and people taking whatever the fuck they wanted. The line of police next to the QT sped off as fast as they could away from the crowd.

## F E R G U S O N OVER ONE WEEK IN

WHAT BEGAN AS A PROTEST MOVEMENT AFTER 10 DAYS OF SUSTAINED defiance, has taken a couple shaky steps towards revolt. The situation here is still fluid and ripe with potential. Locally, people are surprised that similar unrest hasn't sparked off in other cities. If it were to spread, the scope here would likely widen. It's difficult to get a sense of how people outside the metro area interpret what's happening here. What follows are some observations from St Louis residents and participants in the struggle who might give a clearer picture of this strange new reality.

### **Cars, Guns, and Revolt in America**

West Florissant is a major street that cuts across North St. Louis County and North City. A quarter mile stretch of the road has been the primary gathering place for protesters. Just outside that stretch, in a strip mall parking lot, is the joint staging area for the Police (City, County, as well as dozens of smaller municipalities), the Highway Patrol, and the National Guard. The small stretch is home to many looted and burned (to various degrees) businesses including the QT - which has become a landmark, tourist destination, and gathering place for protesters. Canfield Drive in-



The big sign out front had the gas prices ripped down and "SNITCHES" painted on it. "RIP MIKE MIKE", "187 County Police" and so many other things were written on the brick of the QT. This morning the QT is a smoldering ruin with those messages writ large across it. Other graffiti I saw along the street: "AVENGE MIKE MIKE" "FUCK DA POLICE" "KILL COPS" "THE ONLY GOOD COP IS A DEAD COP" "SNITCHES GET STITCHES" "AN EYE FOR AN EYE MAKES OUR MASTERS BLIND," and "MIKE BROWN, THIS FOR YOU."

The energy in the streets was both angry and festive. People poured out of the QT with arms full of cigarettes, beer, food and passed it out to their friends. People cracked open beers and stood around drinking them with friends, cheering at the cars spinning their tires and doing donuts in the road, the people hanging out of cars blasting music and screaming, the pack of street bikes doing tricks on the liberated stretch of road.

People ripped out the QT's ATM, beat the shit out of it with a sledgehammer, got money out of it and then other people drove off with it. Lottery tickets were being thrown in the air with chants of "Make it raaaain!"

The largest groups at this point were in three places: front of the QT, at the intersection leading into the apartment building where Mike Mike was murdered and back at the south side of Florissant where there was still a line of police. People were ecstatic. It was clear that this stretch of the street was totally ours and we could do whatever we wanted. I can't really describe the feeling other than that it was a dream come true. I've been in a number of situations over the years where afterwards I've thought "Was that a riot? Kind of, I guess." But this time there was no question: this was a full-on fucking riot.

Sam's meat market and liquor store is the other place rumored to have called the police on Mike Mike. They got theirs too. And

it's rumored that a bunch of ten and twelve year olds started the looting there. People ran in and out of the smashed and unlocked doors for hours. People came out carrying diapers, food, other shit they needed to survive— not to mention the alcohol, cigarillos and other things they needed to celebrate. A ten year old girl carrying a large sack full of food said "we're gonna eat good at school tomorrow" as she passed by. The sign in the front of Sams was tagged "Fuck You Snitches."

Sooooo many police were swarming the south side of the street likely trying to keep people from the bigger chain stores behind them (in the Northland Shopping Center just a block south beyond the police line) but to no avail. Cutting through the residential neighborhoods, smaller groups of people broke the windows of Walmart and Foot Locker, opening them up and taking what they wanted. Walking through the neighborhoods, people were running down the street with stacks of shoes; empty shoe boxes littered the streets.

People kept rioting and looting for a long time. It even spread to places not directly in the area including beauty supply stores, auto supply stores and at least one bank. People who felt they have been on the periphery of The Haves were now fully included. Want, for the time being, was non-existent. The basic things in life weren't held over our heads, just out of our reach. All we had to do was take what we wanted. Just as easy as it is for The Haves to go and buy a yacht (or a QT for that matter), we could get rims, weaves, shoes, toilet paper, motor oil, car batteries, school lunches or anything else to make life more comfortable.

One after another the dumpsters behind the smashed businesses were set on fire. At one point I could see five of these fires and the smoke pouring from them just by turning around. Later, the QT was set on fire and totally demolished, and the huge plumes of smoke poured into the air and made it hard to breathe. Eventually, as their numbers grew as they were joined by pigs from other municipalities, lines of riot cops slowly began moving their lines forward, despite being pelted with rocks and bottles and amidst

angry shouts from people in the streets.

Throughout the evening, the destruction taking place in the commercial district was contrasted by a startling quiet in the residential areas. People moved to and from these areas, and many more people walked, ran and drove through the streets than usual, but there was no vandalism or violence of any sort. People were not fucking up their own neighborhood, they were fucking up the businesses that snitch on them, employ them in meaningless jobs, and hold captive the resources they need to live and enjoy life.

Similarly, the destruction meted out to these businesses was contrasted by a total lack of violence between demonstrators. Tensions ran high and harsh words were sometimes exchanged, but the absence of interpersonal violence flies in the face of the myths of "violent protestors" and shows that we do not need police in the streets to keep us from hurting each other.

This is where our narrative ends, but don't let us say that was the end. The people of Ferguson were up all night: celebrating, getting revenge on the cops and the world they've been excluded from, getting the shit they needed to survive, destroying rich people's shit for fun, telling stories and wilin' out.

**8/11/2014**