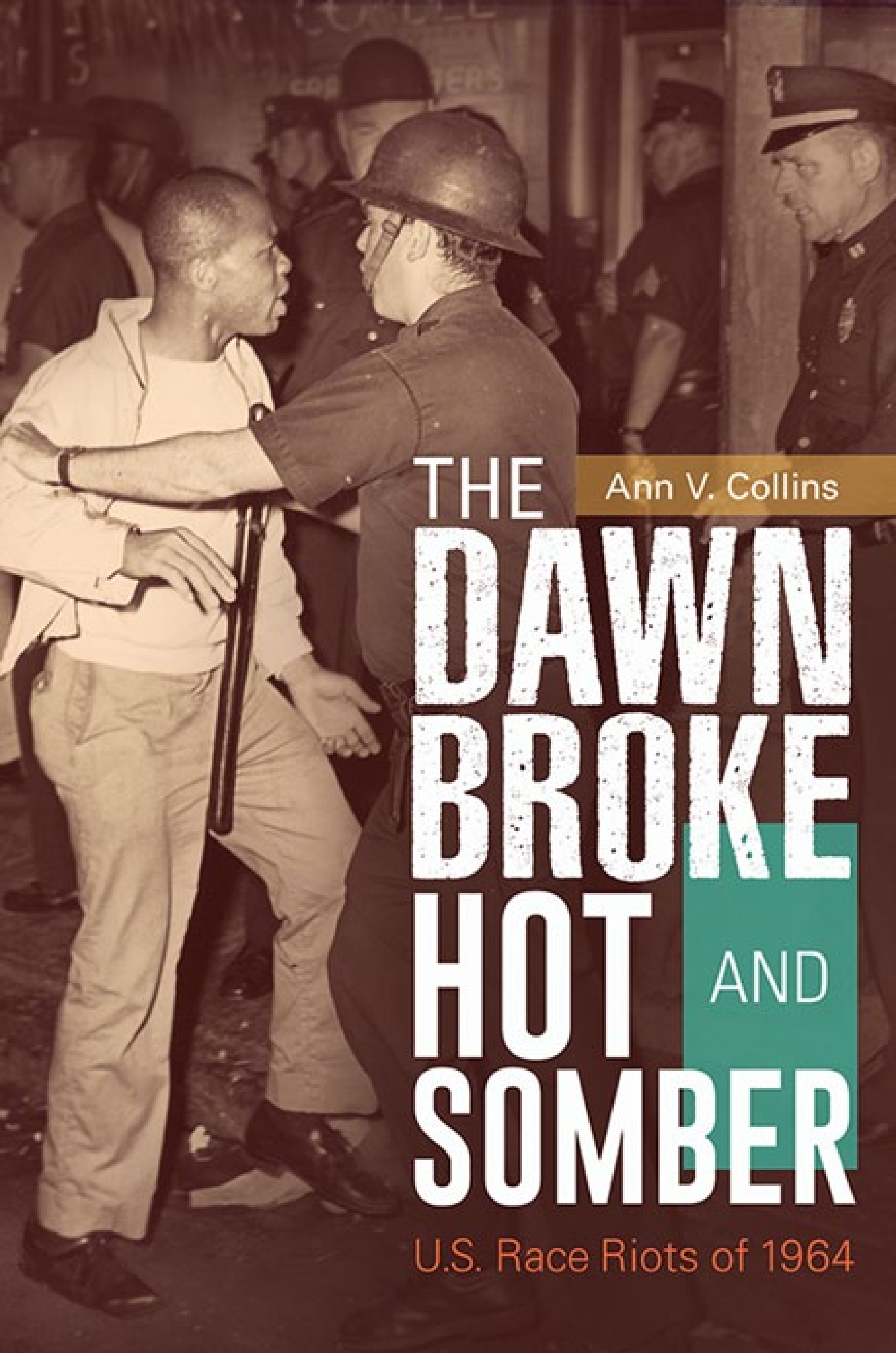

THE DAWN BROKE HOT AND SOMBER

Ann V. Collins

U.S. Race Riots of 1964

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Manufactured in the United States of America

To my parents
Martha Luan Carter Brunson Haynes
B. R. Brunson (December 7, 1924–December 17, 1988)
Richard Kent Haynes

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Preface

An enraged and exasperated crowd took to the streets of Harlem on the afternoon of July 18, 1964. Residents joined in with activists of the civil rights group Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which originally had organized a protest that day to demonstrate against the disappearance of three civil rights workers in Mississippi almost a month earlier. Instead CORE leaders decided to spotlight the issue of police brutality in light of a recent incident closer to home. Just two days earlier in the Yorkville neighborhood on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, 15-year-old James Powell, an African American summer school student from the Bronx, had been shot and killed by an off-duty police lieutenant who said the boy had charged at him with a knife. The rally culminated in a march to the officer's regional precinct, with some of the event's leaders pushing for immediate action against him. Satisfied that the encounter between Powell and the officer was being looked into, they left. But the rest of the protesters were fired up and ready to vent their frustrations. What originally started as a peaceful gathering to raise civil rights concerns in the United States soon turned into an avenue for African Americans to voice their dissatisfaction with their status in society. The next morning, front-page newspaper articles blared that thousands of black residents had participated in rioting—looting businesses and taunting their white neighbors. For a total of six nights the violence and destruction continued, first in Harlem, then in neighboring Brooklyn. Soon after, other northern cities erupted with racial violence, too. "The dawn broke hot and somber in Harlem yesterday," declared the *New York Times* on July 20.[1] And, indeed, the dawn of a new era of rioting broke as well.

Before the 1964 Harlem uprising, white Americans—fueled by racism and fear—were the primary participants in rioting, using this type of violence on their black neighbors to murder, terrorize, and eliminate whole thriving communities. Their ultimate goal was to deny African Americans an equal footing in society. Dozens, or even hundreds (see chapter 1 for the

debate over the definition of a riot and how to count them), of these white-on-black riots exploded during the first half of the 20th century all over the country, in places as diverse as Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; and Tulsa, Oklahoma. Two earlier riots in Harlem—one in 1935 and another in 1943—foreshadowed the violence that would follow in the 1960s as, in those incidents, African Americans looted and destroyed property to counter the actions of the police. But the vast majority of riots during the first half of the 20th century featured white violence.[2] Not until 1964, though, did rioting become with regularity "the language of the unheard," as Martin Luther King Jr. put it in a powerful speech just weeks before his assassination in 1968.[3] During the 1960s and beyond, African Americans rioted hundreds of times to make their voices heard, focusing their ire particularly on the destruction and looting of businesses. James Powell's fatal encounter with a police officer in Harlem on that hot July day marked the first of many that would spark unrest throughout the decade and over the years to come. This book focuses on one critical span of time—July and August 1964—the moment when a new era of activism and race relations in the United States began.

As I pondered in the summer of 2014 what new research to undertake, I became very interested in a time in U.S. history that continues to this day to resonate in the American psyche. That year marked the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer, the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act, and the epic election between Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater—all consequential occasions. Having grown up in Central Texas and graduated from Texas State University, Johnson's alma mater, I have long had a fascination with his political career and presidency. I also knew that I wanted to continue the analysis of U.S. riots that I landed on as a graduate student at Washington University in St. Louis. As I dug deeper into the political and social turmoil of the 1960s, I noticed that many studies jumped straight to the Watts riot in Los Angeles in 1965 when they analyzed the racial violence of that decade. But eight major riots, including the one in Harlem, had erupted in four states a year earlier than the one in Watts. In this book, I hope to shed light on those 1964 incidents and fill a gap in the collective violence literature.

More importantly, however, I hope to provide an understanding of why we still seem to be living this history today. Shortly after I finalized the agreement on the idea of this book with my publisher, Praeger, Michael Brown and Darren Wilson had their ill-fated confrontation on Canfield Drive in Ferguson, Missouri, only 30 minutes from where I currently live. Sadly, the scene played out in an all-too-familiar way: a violent encounter between a white police officer and a young African American man, against the backdrop of a city with a predominantly white power structure, a rapid influx of African Americans in a relatively short period of time, a higher unemployment rate among African Americans, a struggling public school system, and systematic institutional racism practiced in daily life. The rioting that broke

out in Ferguson looked a lot like what I was researching from the 1960s. In some ways, it was unbelievable that these events were happening five decades after they became so prevalent during the long, hot summers of years ago. In other ways, it is amazing that this type of violence does not occur more often.

Race relations continue to play a significant role in the United States today. Although we have made genuine strides through the blood, sweat, and tears of courageous defenders of equal and civil rights, we still have a long way to go as evidenced in the violence that endures. Valid questions linger about disparities in our criminal justice system, as well as access to good public education, health care, and affordable and decent housing. Debates over policing, civil liberties, free and fair elections, white privilege, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Confederate flag often pit us against each other rather than unite us to make the United States a more perfect union for all people, not just some. In order to understand these arguments of today, we must recognize the issues of the past in the realm of race relations. It is my hope that *The Dawn Broke Hot and Somber* will offer a basis for a deeper comprehension of our history and foster an empathy for moving forward in a positive way.

Acknowledgments

I am deeply aware of the many blessings in my life, and the way this book came together is no exception. My family, friends, and colleagues played a large role in seeing this project become a reality. I am thankful that Praeger, and in particular, Michael Millman, decided to work with me again on this publication. They have been a pleasure to partner with during my publishing career. Moreover, I could not have found a better place to do my life's work. The people at McKendree University in Lebanon, Illinois, make it a truly special institution. I am grateful that the administration and Board of Trustees granted me sabbatical leave during the Spring 2016 semester to allow me to focus solely on this book. The only drawback to that was being out of the classroom teaching a subject I love—all aspects of American politics and government. The students at McKendree make my job interesting and fun. I am especially appreciative of two students in particular, Maximilian Áviles and Mollie Borowiak, who did an excellent job assisting me with some primary research for this book. Also, my friends and colleagues at McKendree are the best, and I am so glad my life's journey allowed me to join theirs.

Finally, I feel very fortunate for the family that I have, and I dedicate this book to them. My parents, Luan and Kent Haynes and the late Bill Brunson, have been wonderful role models in my career and, more importantly, in my life. They have supported me in everything I do and every step of the way. My brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins have made my life an enjoyable adventure, and I am glad to have all of them around me. My children, Carter and Elizabeth, remind me consistently of the best things in this world. Their insights and perspectives on life, even from an early age, give me great hope that the future of this country is in safe hands. I pray that they and future generations have the courage and strength to see the humanity in one another and work together for the common good.

CHAPTER ONE

The Nature of Riots and the 1960s

Historical Overview

Riots in the United States

The United States has a long and sordid history of racial violence. From the time when enslaved Africans first arrived in Jamestown in 1619, to the present day, black and white interactions have often been tense, or even vicious and deadly, particularly as white Americans began to feel threatened by any sort of African American success. Much of this violence has come in the form of riots.[1] White-on-black riots took hold during the early 19th century, frequently in response to abolitionists, whose efforts imperiled the slave economy; reached their peak during the Red Summer of 1919 in the frenzied aftermath of World War I; and then greatly subsided as World War II came to an end in 1945. During these incidents, whites carried out brutal attacks against African Americans in order to push back against any sort of perceived economic, political, and social progress. Complete annihilation of black neighborhoods and business districts, as well as the lynching of thousands of African Americans, characterized this era as especially monstrous. Also, by the second decade of the 20th century, a younger generation of African Americans born after the end of the Civil War became less reticent in countering the assaults against them. Moreover, as many African Americans migrated out of the rural Jim Crow South, they became more emboldened to assert their rights for equality, heightening some of these riots into full-fledged race wars. This opposition, of course, provoked white panic even more. These white-on-black attacks gradually faded, and by the 1960s,

so-called ghetto or urban riots shifted the nature of collective racial violence to inner-city African Americans, who vented their discontent with their economic and political status, and more immediately with their interactions with the police, by looting and destroying nearby property. These kinds of riots have occasionally continued to explode in the decades since under eerily similar circumstances, most notably in Los Angeles in 1992 and Cincinnati in 2001, and more recently in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, and Baltimore, the following year. The complexion of riots has changed over American history, therefore, from white-on-black massacres, to interracial wars, to outbursts of destruction by urban blacks.[2]

The focus of this book centers on the eight major riots—all of which took place in July and August 1964—that ushered in a new era of rioting in the United States during the mid-20th century. Riots in New York City (in Harlem and the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn) and Rochester, New York; Jersey City, Paterson, and Elizabeth, New Jersey; Dixmoor, Illinois; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, laid bare before the country the economic, political, and social distress that African Americans faced on a day-to-day basis. Before these incidents, the vast majority of riots that occurred in the United States featured white-on-black attacks or intense interracial clashes, mostly instigated by whites. Notable exceptions occurred in Harlem in 1935 and 1943, when blacks rioted in response to violent encounters with the police—a harbinger of the long, hot summers to come in the 1960s. But not until 1964 did these urban riots become a consistent outlet for African Americans. And by middecade, riots began to occur with some regularity, predominantly during the summer months. In the Watts section of Los Angeles in August 1965, for example, 28 African Americans died during a riot after a white patrolman stopped an erratic black driver and soon found himself surrounded by an unruly and then violent mob. In July 1967 in both Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan, rumors of police brutality fueled extensive looting, arson, and destruction—in Newark after the arrest of a black taxi driver, and in Detroit following the raid of a black club. Twenty-four African Americans died in Newark and 36 in Detroit during those incidents. These three riots—in Watts, Newark, and Detroit—were perhaps the most devastating in terms of casualties and property damage during the 1960s, but hundreds of these riots erupted across the country during that tumultuous decade.

Inner-city rioting became so widespread, in fact, that President Lyndon Johnson created the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in late July 1967 to analyze its prevalence. Critical in its conclusions about racism in the United States, the commission asserted in its final report that two societies, separate and unequal, existed in the country. Soon after the release of the report, another round of riots—some 125 in 28 states—exploded after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968. Although they

reached their peak in numbers in the 1960s, riots have continued to appear on the American landscape, and many have vestiges of their precursors that emerged in 1964. Black and white Bostonians came to blows a number of times between 1974 and 1976, for instance, over disagreements about desegregation and busing. A July 1977 New York City blackout led to widespread looting by inner-city blacks. Unlike riots a decade earlier, however, police reacted with circumspection, sometimes even allowing participants to take their spoils with them. Other riots during the 1970s pitted white supremacist groups such as the American Nazi Party or the Ku Klux Klan against African Americans and their allies. Such clashes erupted in Camp Pendleton, California, in 1976; in Columbus, Ohio, in Mobile, Alabama, in Chicago, Illinois, and in San Jose, California, in 1977; in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1978; and in Decatur, Alabama, and, most brutally, in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1979. A May 1980 riot in Miami, Florida, lasted for three days as African Americans looted stores and attacked whites after an all-white jury in Tampa acquitted four police officers on trial for shooting an African American. Over the next decade, many of the riots that occurred centered on hostility between African Americans and Jewish, Latino, or Asian Americans. Riots became less common in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, but the ones that occurred continued to be severe.

One of the largest riots during the late 20th century happened in Los Angeles in April and May 1992, when a jury found four police officers not guilty of the charges against them even though they had been videoed beating an unarmed black man, Rodney King. Nearly 60 people died during the rioting, primarily black and Latino participants shot by police or killed in the pandemonium. Much like the violence of the 1960s, although the acquittals provoked the immediate call to action in Los Angeles, harsh societal conditions provided the backdrop: high joblessness among African Americans, repeated incidents of police brutality, and a surge of demographic change in the region. Over the decade of the 1980s, Latinos moved into predominantly black neighborhoods, and Korean Americans began to purchase stores once owned by African Americans. Around the same time as King's beating at the hands of the police, one of these store owners shot and killed a 15-year-old African American girl, whom she accused of attempting to steal a bottle of orange juice. This incident was also videotaped and played often by the local media. The assailant incurred a fine for her conviction of voluntary manslaughter and received probation and community service—a punishment that many in the black community thought too lenient, fanning the flames of discontent. Cincinnati experienced similar turmoil in 2001, when an unarmed black teenager died at the hands of a police officer. The city had a reputation for police brutality and racism, and this incident proved to be the breaking point. Although no one died during the rioting, black residents inflicted over $3.5 million worth

of property damage on city hall and other downtown buildings and neighborhoods. Black entertainers and African American organizations also boycotted the city in response to the violent relationship between Cincinnati's police and its black citizenry. In more recent years, 1960s-style riots erupted in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, and Baltimore, Maryland, in 2015, after unarmed African American men died during encounters with the police. The alarming treatment of Michael Brown, whose dead body lay in the middle of the street in his neighborhood in Ferguson for over four hours, and Freddie Gray, whose neck broke while being transported in handcuffs in the back of a police van in Baltimore, epitomized to many Americans the current state of police relations with people of color in the United States during the 21st century. Sadly, many of the conditions that existed in the 1960s continued to persist, perpetuating separate and unequal societies.

Starting with the 1964 riots analyzed in this book and continuing until the present day, African Americans have used their collective power of property destruction and looting to voice their despair and frustration at being relegated to a different status in American society. And, while many Americans could not (and still do not) comprehend these actions, and even Martin Luther King Jr. criticized their methods, many did (and do) understand the underlying circumstances that have prompted them to rebel. In a speech at Grosse Pointe High School in Michigan in March 1968, King decried the violence of the rioters, but he cast blame on whites as well for choosing the current situation over righting the wrongs of injustice and inequality. To King and others, riots were a way for African Americans to be heard, but—unfortunately—their white neighbors were not listening or did not care. It was a damning, yet accurate, commentary on the state of the country. The long, hot summers of the 1960s, King maintained, could be directly attributable to "winters of delay."[3] King went on to lay out his plan for solving the problems that African Americans faced: the recognition and eradication of racism in the United States; the acknowledgment that time alone would not solve the difficult issues facing African Americans, but that people must act immediately ("the time is right to always do right"); the passage of more civil rights laws, particularly the legislation that Congress was debating at that moment over housing (the Fair Housing Act); and the reprioritization of focusing on domestic issues rather than an "unjust, ill-considered, evil, costly, unwinnable war" in Vietnam.[4] Sadly, King would die at the hands of an assassin only a few weeks later, sparking another round of inner-city riots. Just as sadly, some 50 years later, a starkly disproportionate number of African Americans continue to toil in dismal conditions. The United States still grapples with the existence of two societies and the riots that erupt occasionally as a result. Vestiges of the racial unrest of the 1960s endure.

The Context of the Early to Mid-1960s

The 1960s stand out in modern American history for a number of significant reasons. Remembered as a time of tumult and transformation, the decade witnessed some of the most bitterly fought and violent political and social acts, as hope and rage provided a toxic mix of emotions.[5] Many ordinary Americans pushed for change, but others stood firm in resistance. Issues surrounding race played a pivotal role in these encounters. Early in the decade, African Americans began to stage sit-ins at segregated lunch counters. Initiated by college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, the sit-ins led to the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960. While older civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP, founded in 1909 in New York City), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE, established in 1942 in Chicago, Illinois), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC, created in the wake of the 1955 bus boycotts in Montgomery, Alabama) existed, SNCC offered a forum for a new generation of activists. In May 1961, members of SNCC and CORE organized Freedom Rides to travel through the South to gauge reaction to the recent Supreme Court decision *Boynton v. Virginia*, in which the Court ruled segregated interstate transportation and facilities, such as bus terminals, waiting rooms, and restrooms, unconstitutional. Although they had mixed success as members of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and other whites met them with violence in South Carolina and Alabama, the Freedom Riders gained the media's attention (and therefore the country's and the world's attention), as well as that of the federal government. On September 22, 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued a regulation banning the segregation of interstate transportation and facilities. The following April, largely in an effort to avoid the public relations ordeal caused by the media attention that public demonstrations (i.e., lunch counter sit-ins and Freedom Rides) had effectively garnered over the last two years, the Kennedy administration also initiated the Voter Education Project. Through this initiative, coordinated through the Southern Regional Council (SRC), a long-standing Atlanta-based civil rights organization, the NAACP, CORE, SNCC, and SCLC registered thousands of African American voters, primarily in the upper and middle southern states, through the end of 1964. However, because of the fierce and violent counteraction that whites unleashed on these efforts, the media spotlight became even more intense. And not until the protection of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 would the Deep South successfully see considerably more African Americans added to the voting rolls.[6]

Efforts to integrate and push for equal rights came in other forms as well. James Meredith became the first African American student at the University of Mississippi during the fall semester in 1962, triggering white

violence that left 2 people dead and over 300 injured. "I have made my position on this matter crystal clear," Mississippi governor Ross Barnett reassured the white people of his state in an address that aired on television and radio during the lead-up to Meredith's admission. "No school in our state will be integrated while I am your governor! . . . With the help of Almighty God, we shall be invincible, we shall keep the faith."[7] The federal government had other ideas in mind, however, and President John F. Kennedy sent in troops to ensure Meredith's safety. Other white politicians stoked tensions throughout the South with public vitriol as well. Alabama governor George Wallace, for example, declared, "I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever," in his inaugural address in January 1963. In June, Wallace literally stood in defiance of permitting 2 black students to enter the University of Alabama, forcing Kennedy to federalize Alabama's National Guard to allow them admittance. Later that summer, Martin Luther King Jr., in his march on Washington, countered Wallace and others with his dream "that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of 'interposition' and 'nullification'—one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers."[8] Sadly, less than a month later, 4 African American girls died in the basement of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, when a bomb planted by members of the KKK exploded underneath the church's front steps. Birmingham had been the site of a concerted effort throughout the spring by King and Fred Shuttlesworth's Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights in combating racism through lunch counter sit-ins, boycotts, and marches. The country watched in horror as Commissioner of Public Safety Eugene "Bull" Connor let loose dogs and fire hoses on the activists, including children. As African Americans continued to assert their rights, their white neighbors remained resistant to accept them on an equal footing, sometimes with deadly results.

Although events were already seemingly frenetic enough during the first few years of the decade, some scholars suggest "the Sixties" of popular lore really began in 1964, or perhaps a few months earlier when gunshots in Dallas, Texas, struck down the president of the United States. And, indeed, a number of significant events occurred in the months following John F. Kennedy's assassination: for instance, the unveiling of the Great Society, Freedom Summer, and the presidential election between Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater, whom many credit with helping usher in the era of modern conservatism. Johnson's Great Society carried on the mantle of Kennedy's New Frontier mission of providing federal funds for education, health care for the elderly, and the destruction of racial discrimination. In his first State of the Union address in January 1964, Johnson declared,

> Let this session of Congress be known as the session which did more for civil rights than the last hundred sessions combined; . . . as the session which declared all-out war on human poverty and unemployment in these United States. . . . Unfortunately, many Americans live on the outskirts of hope—some because of their poverty, and some because of their color, and all too many because of both. Our task is to help replace their despair with opportunity.[9]

He reiterated his conception for the country four months later at the University of Michigan's commencement ceremonies. "The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all," Johnson suggested. "It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice," he continued, "to which we are totally committed in our time."[10] Over the next four and a half years, Johnson would enact almost 200 laws addressing education, poverty, immigration, the arts, the environment, health care, housing, consumer protection, and civil rights. In 1964 alone, Johnson signed into law 19 pieces of legislation as part of his vision of a Great Society, including the landmark Civil Rights Act on July 2, which deemed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin illegal. "We believe all men are created equal," Johnson stressed in a radio and television address that evening. "[T]hose who are equal before God shall now also be equal in the voting booths, in the classrooms, in the factories, and in hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, and other places that provide service to the public."[11] The administration now made it clear that the federal government would not tolerate the discrimination that activists had met over the last few years at lunch counters, on bus trips through the South, while marching in the streets, and in so many other places around the country.

But African Americans continued to face discrimination, as well as violence, throughout the rest of the year and beyond. Organized and recruited by Robert Moses, SNCC field secretary for voter registration and director of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), an alliance of civil rights groups in Mississippi, hundreds of primarily white college students from around the country joined African American activists in June 1964 to initiate the Mississippi Summer Project. For the next two months, they worked to add African Americans to the voter rolls (only 6.7 percent, the lowest percentage in the country, were registered in Mississippi at that point) and to set up Freedom Schools to teach African Americans of all ages curricula they did not have access to in their still deeply segregated schools.[12] In response, many white Mississippians, some of whom had ties to the thriving KKK (some 91,000 members and counting in 1964), fought back fiercely against altering what they perceived to be the natural order of things.[13] Only a week into the launching of the Freedom Summer initiative, three of the civil rights workers—James Chaney and Michael Schwerner, both CORE workers, and Andrew Goodman, a student volunteer from Queens College in New York

City—were reported missing in Neshoba County. They had gone on June 21 to look into the burning of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, where Schwerner had been urging congregants to register to vote and to set up a Freedom School. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) went in to investigate and two days after the men's disappearance found their hidden and still smoking station wagon, which had been set on fire. Throughout July, the FBI had no luck in finding the three workers themselves but—sickeningly—did discover the corpses of eight African American men, one of whom wore a CORE shirt, as they looked through the area's swamps, rivers, and woods.[14] Agents finally found the men's bodies on August 4 buried under an earthen dam near Philadelphia, Mississippi.[15]

Again, the organizers and volunteers in Mississippi had mixed success during their march for equal rights. While relatively few African Americans actually registered to vote during the Freedom Summer initiative, the media focus on the deaths and violence in the state revealed to the rest of the country that something had to be done to address these atrocities. African American leaders also used their voices to continue the push for action. Martin Luther King Jr., under the protection of the FBI, visited Mississippi for five days in July 1964, urging the federal government to do more to protect African Americans, particularly in their right to vote—even if it took U.S. marshals to do so. Sadly, that same morning, authorities announced that another church had been burned, this time in McComb, bringing the total to 10 African American churches over the last two months.[16] Other black leaders began to adopt a more strident tone in the call for African American rights. Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad had already come to the conclusion that viable options for the future did not include integration and nonviolence. Stokely Carmichael, who participated in the Freedom Rides in 1961 and Freedom Summer in 1964, and who would eventually ascend to the leadership of SNCC, grew frustrated at the slow pace of progress the movement seemed to be making and became skeptical of integration. He soon adopted the mantra of "Black Power" and helped sow the seeds for the Black Panthers created in Oakland, California, by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton in 1966. Still other leaders sought to change the system from within the government. Organizers of Freedom Summer also created the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), open to all voters, to encourage African Americans to cast their ballots in the upcoming elections since they remained shut out of the state's all-white Democratic Party. They sent 68 delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in August 1964, whom Democratic Party organizers effectively blocked from participating (in a "compromise" brokered by Democratic Party operatives that the MFDP had no say in, they gave the MFDP delegates two at-large seats at the convention, which they refused on principle). They did, however, successfully gain the country's attention through their televised testimony before the Democratic

Party's Credentials Committee. "Is this America," asked activist and MFDP delegate Fannie Lou Hamer in an impassioned speech before the committee, "the land of the free and home of the brave, where we have to sleep with our telephones off the hooks because our lives be threatened daily, because we want to live as decent human beings, in America?"[17] Clashes over race played out in the streets and over the airwaves throughout much of 1964. Likewise, the matter of race became the most critical issue in the presidential election that year.

In a contest that shaped the political landscape for decades to come, the 1964 presidential general election pitted Democratic incumbent Lyndon Johnson against Republican challenger Barry Goldwater. Beginning less than two weeks after Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law, the Republican National Convention took place at the Cow Palace in Daly City, California, just south of San Francisco, between July 13 and July 16. For three fractious days, the conservative Goldwater wing collided with the more moderate Republicans, who supported either New York governor Nelson Rockefeller or Pennsylvania governor William Scranton. On the first ballot, delegates chose Goldwater, who infamously declared in his acceptance speech: "I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice! And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!"[18] As a US. senator from Arizona, he had voted against the Civil Rights Act, which he declared that he opposed in a speech on the Senate floor, based on what he saw as federal government intrusion into private enterprise.[19] Although he touted his libertarian beliefs, Goldwater also tried throughout his campaign to tap into the so-called white backlash against Johnson's civil rights initiatives, focusing during his stump speeches on violence in big cities and the lack of law and order there.[20] He echoed this theme at the Republican National Convention. "The growing menace in our country tonight, to personal safety, to life, to limb and property," he asserted during his acceptance speech, ". . . particularly in our great cities, is the mounting concern, or should be, of every thoughtful citizen in the United States."[21]

Just as Goldwater and his fellow Republicans wrapped up their convention, the streets of Harlem exploded with racial strife. Some asserted that Goldwater himself held partial responsibility for the tensions. "We got a civil rights bill and along with the bill we got Barry Goldwater and a dead black boy," declared one CORE high school student at a rally to protest police brutality. "This shooting of James Powell was murder!"[22] Others suggested that Goldwater's candidacy even benefited from the violence. "There is considerable evidence to show," a columnist for the *Chicago Sun Times* wrote, "that every time there is violence by Negroes, Goldwater gains supporters." Civil rights activist Kenneth Clark wrote in the *Herald Tribune* in response to Goldwater's convention acceptance speech, "This type of cynical opportunism can only add to the explosiveness of an already difficult and complex social

problem. It will incite the passions and hatreds of already unstable and prejudiced citizens and police officers."[23] Goldwater became so concerned about his image and legacy, however, that he privately told reporters that he would end his campaign if anyone promoted racial hostility in his name. He also publicly announced that he wanted to meet in person with President Johnson to forward a concerted message of calm to quell the unrest in Harlem. Johnson expressed skepticism to his aides over Goldwater's motives. "Nothing good can come of that," he confided to his friend Texas governor John Connally in a telephone conversation. "He wants to use this forum, he wants to encourage the backlash, that's where his future is, it's not in peace and harmony."[24] Johnson knew it would look bad not to meet with Goldwater, however, and he arranged that they do so on July 24 in the Oval Office. After their 16-minute meeting, apparently filled with awkward spans of silence, the White House issued a statement that Goldwater also endorsed. "The President met with Senator Goldwater and reviewed the steps he had taken to avoid the incitement of racial tensions," the statement read. "Senator Goldwater expressed his opinion, which was that racial tension should be avoided. Both agreed on this position."[25] Regardless of their statement, "racial tension"—in the form of more inner-city unrest, as well as in the electoral arena—continued.

One month after the meeting between Johnson and Goldwater, the Democratic National Convention opened in Atlantic City, ending three days later on August 27. The presence of the MFDP delegates highlighted that the issue of race continued to be contentious, not only in a general sense throughout the country but also within the Democratic Party. Earlier in the year Alabama governor George Wallace tried to use a segregationist message as his central campaign theme as he also ran for president. He even began garnering support outside of the Deep South in Indiana and Wisconsin, where he got over 30 percent of the vote in those states' Democratic primaries, and in Maryland, where he received 43 percent.[26] He eventually ended his candidacy on July 19, suggesting that the Republicans had adopted a segregationist platform at their convention and as Goldwater—who would go on to distance himself from Wallace—gained traction.[27] For his part, Johnson became obsessed with the role of civil rights and the issue of race in the election. He knew that the passage of the Civil Rights Act that summer would have political consequences. "I think we just delivered the South to the Republican Party for a long time to come," he glumly told his aide Bill Moyers the night he signed the bill into law.[28] Moreover, Democratic Party leaders had started referring to the uprisings in the inner cities as "Goldwater rallies" because—as others suggested—every time they occurred, the Republican candidate seemed to gain support.[29] Ordinary citizens began contacting the White House as well: "I'm afraid to leave my house," one New Yorker lamented. "I fear the Negro revolution will reach Queens."[30] Starting early

in the summer, Johnson begged black leaders—to mixed success—to keep a low profile and not schedule public protests, knowing that they could feed into the white backlash against civil rights and diminish his electoral support.

At the end of July, many of the African American civil rights leaders agreed it was time to tamp down not only violent protests but nonviolent ones as well. They issued two statements printed in newspapers across the country on July 30. In them, they condemned the states' rights platform adopted by the Republican Party at their national convention, but they also called for "a broad curtailment, if not total moratorium" on public protests until after Election Day on November 3, and asserted that looting and vandalism hurt the movement.[31] While this support from black leaders undoubtedly soothed some of Johnson's concerns, after Hamer made her speech at the Democratic National Convention some three weeks later, Johnson went so far as to write a statement withdrawing his name from consideration for president. "The times require leadership about which there is no doubt and a voice that men of all parties and men of all sections and men of all color can and will follow," he began. "I have learned after trying very hard that I am not that voice, or that leader. Therefore I shall carry forward with your help until the new President is sworn in next January, and then I will go back home as I've wanted to since the day I took this job."[32] His wife, whom he and others affectionately called Lady Bird, persuaded him not to actually follow through on this impulse. And, as expected, Democrats chose him as their candidate at the national convention in Atlantic City. In his acceptance speech on August 27, he reiterated his belief in equality and civil rights for all and the quest to come together as a nation:

> Every American has the right to be treated as a person. He should be able to find a job. He should be able to educate his children, he should be able to vote in elections and he should be judged on his merits as a person. . . . So long as I am your president I intend to carry out what the Constitution demands—and justice requires—equal justice under law for all Americans. . . . Let no one tell you that he can hold back progress and at the same time keep the peace. This is a false and empty promise. To stand in the way of orderly progress is to encourage violence. . . . I am determined in all the time that is mine to use all the talents that I have for bringing this great, lovable land, this great nation of ours, together—together in greater unity in pursuit of this common purpose. I truly believe that we someday will see an America that knows no North or South, no East or West—an America that is undivided by creed or color, and untorn by suspicion or strife. . . . Our tomorrow is on its way. It can be a shape of darkness or it can be a thing of beauty. The choice is ours, it is yours, for it will be the dream we dare to dream. . . . So as we conclude our labors, let us tomorrow turn to our new task. Let us be on our way![33]

He would go on to win a resounding victory over Goldwater in November. Unfortunately for Johnson, as well as the country, the day after the convention ended, another riot broke out in Philadelphia—the eighth of the summer with racial overtones. Moreover, increased involvement in Vietnam and protests over that fact as well as student protests at the University of California at Berkeley during their Free Speech Movement contributed to the turmoil of the times. The country would not yet be on its way to unity, and the outbreak of riots continued to expose the fractured nature of society.

A Model of Riots

Riot Research

Scholars have long explored various facets of violent action taken by groups of individuals. One question focuses on terminology. When individuals join together in attacking other individuals or even property, are they engaged in riots? revolts? rebellions? uprisings? The Oxford English Dictionary provides the following definitions: “a violent disturbance of the peace by a crowd; an outbreak of violent civil disorder or lawlessness” (riot); “an act of renouncing allegiance to established authority, esp. through collective armed rebellion” (revolt); “an organized armed resistance to an established ruler or government” (rebellion); and “a popular rising against authority or for some common purpose” (uprising). One witness to the 1967 Detroit riot suggests it depends on a person’s perspective. When asked what the violence in Detroit should now be referred to, he responded, “It was all three [a riot, rebellion, and uprising]. See, if you sit out in Montana and just see the stuff on TV, it was a riot. If you’re in Detroit, and you’re the victim of police brutality or being denied a job, as was the case in 1967, you might view it as a rebellion or an uprising. So I think that, you know, the most important thing about that is not what you call it. The most important thing to remember is that it happened.”[34] And as riot historian Paul A. Gilje asserts, “Drawing fine distinctions . . . would lead to a semantic jungle from which we might never emerge. Instead, compromise and artificial distinctions must be relied upon.”[35] With activists, Gilje, other collective violence social scientists, and even the 1960s media outlets in mind, the term “race riot” will be used in this book when analyzing the violent events that took place in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Pennsylvania in August and September 1964. These are different from the “race riots” described in the exploration of the white-on-black violence that took place during the first half of the twentieth century.[36] The outbursts of the 1960s did have racial overtones, of course, but unlike the vast majority of riots during the Progressive Era through World War II when white participants murdered any black person they could find and destroyed whole sections of towns, African Americans did not seek

out their white neighbors and kill them and obliterate their neighborhoods in the 1960s. Instead, African Americans primarily wrecked and looted businesses—many of them owned by whites—in their own areas. But the media of the time and contemporary leaders used the term "race riots" when referring to the inner-city uprisings, so that phrase is used throughout this book as well (mindful that other terminology could certainly be used just as accurately instead).

Debates have also occurred over how factors such as changing demographics, unemployment, housing, segregation, income, and education inform us about the causes of riots. Scholars stress different variables. "Collective violence resembles weather: complicated, changing, and unpredictable in some regards, yet resulting from similar causes variously combined in different times and places," asserts social scientist Charles Tilly, one of the most preeminent scholars on this subject.[37] Similar causes include structural factors such as social changes, economic strife, and political issues that provided the backdrop for these riots to erupt. Moreover, perhaps counterintuitive to their appearance of spontaneity and irrationality, riots can even be identified as rational, as they are designed to achieve social change. Indeed, whites during the first half of the 20th century did everything in their power—including violence—to prevent African Americans from fully joining society. And the urban riots of the 1960s gave African Americans a tool to express their dissatisfaction with their continued status as second-class citizens. Although riots are certainly driven by inflamed emotions of fear and rage, they are not necessarily extemporaneous events. They are moments of opportunity. Donald Horowitz, an expert on ethnic riots, describes people who take part in these events as possessing "lucid madness," not "blind fury."[38] People merge into these avenues of expression.

In his research, riot scholar Raymond Momboisse lays out an account of group behavior that mirrors how the media reported on the 1964 riots:

> Mobs . . . do not suddenly spring into full bloom. They are the product of a process of evolution. Individuals who constitute a mob always have certain common interests and needs. . . . These individuals are preconditioned, for tense conditions do not as a rule arise abruptly. There may be a series of irritating events or a deluge or vicious rumors which create a climate of tension. Frustrations are built up.
>
> The first step in the transformation of a preconditioned and responsive group of individuals into a mob is some climatic [*sic*] event. . . . It causes a crowd to gather at the scene. . . . The gathering of a crowd automatically causes more onlookers to accumulate. . . . Rumors are numerous and spread rapidly. . . . As an incident proceeds to attract numbers of individuals, they are pressed together. . . . They initiate conversations with strangers. . . . [T]hey "mill" about. . . . Through the milling process, the crowd

> excites itself more and more. . . . More and more people appear on the scene. . . .
>
> As tension mounts, individuals become less and less responsive to stimulation arising outside the group and respond only to influences from within the crowd itself. . . . Brutalized emotions rise and receive the sanction of the mob. . . . Such overt behavior is, of course, always violent and destructive. . . . Once action has begun, it usually spreads quickly, engulfing even the more intelligent and self-controlled. . . . To the members of a rebellious group, violence of whatever order provides an outlet for those feelings.[39]

Riots, therefore, are rational, relatively brief eruptions of violence outside the confines of the law aimed at influencing social change. As Paul Brass understands it, an expert on riots and collective violence in India, there is political utility in violent responses. With the civil rights movement and its message of nonviolence in full force by the early 1960s, African Americans who rioted in 1964—not feeling the gains from government action—insisted on more pressing change. This work identifies the conditions that created the atmosphere for these 1964 riots to erupt. Three facets must come together: certain *structural factors*, such as demographic, economic, labor, political, legal, social, or institutional elements; *cultural framing*, discourse and actions taken by both African Americans and whites to advance civil rights for all, or to fight against this ideal; and a *precipitating event*, the immediate spark that ignites the violence—usually some sort of encounter between African Americans and authorities that prompted cries of police brutality. Although unique in some ways, riots share these common characteristics: structural factors, cultural framing, and a precipitating event.

Structural Factors

Some scholars focus solely or at least primarily on the underlying general features within a society when examining collective violence. In this field of study, political, social, and economic issues provide support in illuminating when outbursts happen. Shifts in employment rates and demographics, and entrenched segregation, for example, stand out as leading sources of explanatory evidence. And, indeed, these structural factors did make up one important aspect of the 1964 disturbances. The riots that broke out that year did so under specific societal circumstances. Surveys with riot participants and people who lived in riot areas during the 1960s suggest that residents felt these structural concerns. After the 1964 Bedford-Stuyvesant (a neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, often referred to as Bed-Stuy) riot, for example, survey respondents answered that the “real reason” for the violence stemmed from “social and economic discrimination and deprivation.”[40] Later in the

decade, the Kerner Commission, a group established by President Johnson to analyze and provide suggestions for preventing future instances of racial violence, reiterated these findings in its final report. Interviews and surveys with residents in predominantly African American communities in cities that experienced riots revealed that police practices, unemployment and underemployment, and inadequate housing ranked as their top three grievances. Inadequate education, poor recreation facilities and programs, and ineffectiveness of the political structure and grievance mechanisms followed closely behind.[41] Demographic shifts contributed to and exacerbated this discrimination and deprivation. Northern cities experienced an influx of southern blacks during the 1960s. In even greater numbers than their early 20th-century predecessors, some 4.5 million African Americans left the South between 1940 and 1970 to destinations in the North and West. During this Second Great Migration, they settled in big cities such as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia looking for better opportunities and to escape the discrimination that they faced in the South.[42] Unfortunately, this dream remained largely unfulfilled.

Nationwide, African Americans faced more than twice the unemployment rate as whites in 1964—9.6 percent and 4.6 percent, respectively, and riot cities reflected that ratio and other tensions as well.[43] “The overwhelming majority of black New Yorkers,” historian Christopher Hays asserts regarding the time period after World War II leading up to 1964, “saw their quality of life decline, whether it’s school segregation, housing segregation, unemployment, earnings.”[44] In Jersey City and Paterson, New Jersey, poor living conditions, few opportunities for employment, and limited recreational areas for African Americans created stress.[45] Dixmoor, Illinois, just a few miles south of Chicago, received a rating of 15, the lowest score possible, from the Northeastern Illinois Metropolitan Area Commission in the areas of education, income, and employment.[46] And in North Philadelphia, known as “the Jungle,” African Americans—many of whom had only an eighth-grade education—earned some 30 percent less in wages than the city average, and black unemployment fluctuated between 13 percent and 20 percent in 1964.[47] The riots in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Pennsylvania brought the disparity between black and white America to the conscience of many of its citizens. African Americans, of course, had labored for decades under these conditions. Some black leaders subscribed to King’s call for changing these circumstances with nonviolent protest in asserting their rights. Others had become more insistent on the need for more drastic actions. Whites were also split on what was unfolding in the streets of these northern cities. Many expressed horror as they became awakened to the appalling treatment of their black neighbors at the hands of officials—not just in the South, but in the North as well—as unimaginable images of violence flashed on their televisions and in their newspapers. Others remained oblivious or—worse—hostile to the fact

that African Americans experienced a whole different reality than themselves. Leaders from all camps stoked the embers of discontent.

Cultural Framing

These structural strains appeared in riot cities in 1964, but they also existed in nonriot cities as well. It remains inadequate, therefore, to tie the eruption of riots solely to structural factors. It proves essential to clarify why African Americans felt the need for violent outbursts even as the government appeared to be taking steps to address the inequality that continued to plague the country. Cultural framing helps us to understand this puzzle. Some social scientists, such as Aaron Wildavsky, suggest that culture can be conceived of not only as "ideas, values, and beliefs, as is commonly done, or as patterns of social relations, but [also] as values justifying relationships indissolubly bound together."[48] Work by sociologists such as David Snow and Robert Benford adds to this idea that framing in particular offers "an interpretive schema that signifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action in one's present or past environment."[49] Awful conditions can exist, but framing imbues meaning to them and, sometimes, calls for action. African American civil rights leaders, religious figures, and even athletes such as the newly renamed Muhammad Ali began to sound that call by the 1960s. At the same time, segregationists remained resistant to African Americans fully joining society. And some leaders—both black and white—insinuated that leftist agitators, communists, and Black Muslims, such as Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X, bore responsibility for stirring up trouble in inner-city African American communities. This cultural framing, together with the backdrop of certain structural factors, set the scene for race riots to erupt in the summer of 1964.

Renowned for urging African Americans to practice nonviolence even in the face of white viciousness and discrimination, Martin Luther King Jr. continued to press for peace throughout the turbulent 1960s. In a WSB-TV news conference on July 27, 1964, in the wake of the New York riots, King reiterated his vision of nonviolence but recognized that some of his detractors blamed him and other civil rights activists for the uprisings, either through their calls for equality or by being unable to anticipate and stop the violence. Asserting that violence "creates many more problems than it solves" and declaring it "both impractical and immoral," he counseled African Americans to end the rioting. But he also urged that the country needed "an honest, soul-searching analysis and evaluation of the environmental causes which have spawned the riots." He went on to appeal for an "elimination of ghettoized housing, discriminatory barriers to jobs, inferior and segregated schools, and discriminatory barriers of the right to vote."[50] Even before the

riots broke out in July 1964, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had been keeping track of King and other activists, suggesting that civil rights presented "the primary domestic issue on the political front today." And as Congress took up the civil rights bill, the FBI received queries from "both sides" of the debate over its passage regarding "communist penetration with the racial movement."[51] Organizations pushing for equal rights, such as CORE and SNCC, came under suspicion for their allegedly leftist ties.

Yet, as rioting spread from Harlem to Brooklyn, both Bayard Rustin and James Farmer, prominent African American leaders in these organizations, came under attack by those participating in the violence as well. As Rustin called for an end to the unrest with a bullhorn in Bedford-Stuyvesant, people in the streets called him an Uncle Tom. When Farmer tried to reason with rioters that they were fueling police violence, not resolving it, one countered, "We don't want to hear *that* shit!"[52] The FBI also looked to Malcolm X as a possible instigator of the violence. Earlier in the year, when he announced that he was organizing a new mosque in New York City after breaking with the Nation of Islam, he declared,

> Because 1964 threatens to be a very explosive year on the racial front, and because I myself intend to be very active in every phase of the American Negro struggle for human rights, I have called this press conference. . . . Concerning nonviolence: it is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks. It is legal and lawful to own a shotgun or a rifle. We believe in obeying the law. In areas where our people are the constant victims of brutality, and the government seems unable or unwilling to protect them, we should form rifle clubs that can be used to defend our lives and our property in times of emergency. . . . When our people are being bitten by dogs, they are within their rights to kill those dogs. We should be peaceful, law-abiding—but the time has come for the American Negro to fight back in self-defense whenever and wherever he is being unjustly and unlawfully attacked. If the government thinks I am wrong for saying this, then let the government start doing its job.[53]

But Malcolm X had departed on a trip to Africa weeks before the rioting broke out in Harlem later in July. The FBI in its postriot report came to the conclusion that although "radicals" likely "took advantage" of the heightened environment, it could not find evidence that anyone had previous information about or sway over the violence in New York and beyond that summer. Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, expressed relief that the FBI tempered both racial and conspiratorial overtones in its report and "cleared the civil rights movement completely."[54]

While eventually dismissed as "a senseless attack on all constituted authority without purpose or object" in the FBI report, the riots did have a

function for those who participated. As mentioned above, postriot surveys of those who took part suggested that they had real grievances with entrenched economic and social discrimination. Leaders such as King and Malcolm X did not physically escort people into the streets of Harlem, Brooklyn, Rochester, and other riot cities in July and August 1964; their words, however, gave powerful meaning to the structural concerns that African Americans continued to toil under. Rioting, as King later suggested, allowed the unheard to be heard. And, not surprisingly, instead of addressing the tragedy of continued structural inequity in meaningful ways, white leaders—even those such as Johnson who pushed for civil rights legislation—became more consumed by the violence and its backlash among the white electorate, and they began shifting their concerns away from the war on poverty and more toward the war on crime.[55] Wallace's blatant call for sustained segregation, as well as Goldwater's subtler emphasis on law and order throughout 1964, highlighted white America's concern for what they saw unfolding in the streets of northern cities that summer. In the wake of the inner-city unrest, brochures handed out at Goldwater rallies featured images from the riots with quotes about and by the candidate himself: "He will work with Federal, State, and Local authorities to restore law and order in the streets, protect your home, your family, your job—and bring moral leadership back to the White House," and "This is the time to attend to the liberties of all. The general welfare must be considered now, not just the special appeals for special welfare" (linking the outbreak of riots to the Civil Rights Act, which Johnson signed into law only two weeks before).[56] These ideas, along with calls from African American leaders for equity and justice, helped shape the cultural framework before, during, and after the violence erupted. As scholar Paul Brass has put it (in the context of India), these white and black "fire tenders" assured that the embers of discontent were constantly being stirred.[57]

Precipitating Events

Numerous nonriot cities, however, likely had both structural factors and black and white leaders imparting meaning to those concerns. Precipitating events offer insight into the third component essential for race riots to erupt. While structural factors and cultural framing provide the backdrop for collective violence to occur, the precipitating events light the sparks that prompt people to act. "The precipitating factor," sociologist Neil Smelser asserts, "confirms the existence, sharpens the definition, or exaggerates the effect of [preexisting] conditions. . . . [It] may confirm or justify existing generalized fears or hatreds. Many racial outbursts have originated in the report—true or false—that one of the groups in question has committed some act which is in keeping with its threatening character." Further, "it provides adherents of a belief with more evidence of the workings of evil forces. . . . A precipitating

factor, then, links the generalized belief to concrete situations."[58] "In the view of participants," riot scholar Horowitz concurs, "precipitants render aggression both appropriate and necessary. . . . They supply a shorthand recollection of group qualities and relations, as well as guidance for a course of action."[59]

Likewise, conflict scholar Thomas Schelling underscores the contribution of precipitating events, or what he labels incidents, to mob formation, particularly in the absence of organizers:

> It is usually the essence of mob formation that the potential members have to know not only where and when to meet but just when to act so that they act in concert. Overt leadership solves the problem; but leadership can often be identified and eliminated by the authority trying to prevent mob action. In this case the mob's problem is to act in unison without overt leadership, to find some common signal that makes everyone confident that, if he acts on it, he will not be acting alone. The role of "incidents" can thus be seen as a coordinating role; it is a substitute for overt leadership and communication. Without something like an incident, it may be difficult to get action at all, since immunity requires that all know when to act together.[60]

Precipitating events in the summer of 1964 centered on some sort of encounter between authorities and people from African American communities, prompting loud outcries of police brutality. Although episodes of excessive police action had been recorded well before the 1960s, as well as specific incidents of violence between police and people of color, the 1964 riots ushered in an era when African Americans began to see these encounters as their signal to act. Furthermore, rumors contributed to the amplification and distortion of these events, fueling an already volatile situation.[61] The recipients of the rumors, of course, had to be open to accepting them, and then—even more—had to act on that information.

As Donald Horowitz submits:

> Rumors form an essential part of the riot process. They justify the violence that is about to occur. Their severity is often an indicator of the severity of the impending violence. Rumors narrow the options that seem available to those who join crowds and commit them to a line of action. They mobilize ordinary people to do what they would not ordinarily do. They shift the balance in a crowd toward those proposing the most extreme action. They project onto the future victims of violence the impulses entertained by those who will victimize them. They confirm the strength and danger presented by the target group, thus facilitating violence born of fear. Rumors, then, are not stray tales. They perform functions for the group and for

> individuals in it. . . . [B]ut a rumor will not take hold unless there is a market for it, a need in an emerging situation; and rumors change in the telling, becoming sharper in their factual assertions and more meaningful to recipients.[62]

Paul Brass highlights the roles of leaders in using rumors to spur action. Often "[t]here is . . . little or nothing that is either arbitrary or spontaneous about the occurrence of . . . rumor[s]. . . . Rumors serve the purpose of mobilizing members of a community for attack or defense." And "conversion specialists," to use his term, prove adept at using these rumors to clue in riot participants on opportune moments to act.[63]

Overall View

In the late summer of 1964, structural factors, cultural framing, and precipitating events merged to create the conditions for African Americans to riot in eight northern cities in the United States. This model is drawn out in Figure 1.1.

The Dawn Broke Hot and Somber offers an examination of the conditions that led to outbursts of collective violence during that critical year of 1964 in the heady decade of the 1960s. But, even more, it sheds light on events that changed everything in their wake. No longer would African Americans suffer the humiliation of poverty, discrimination, and inequality solely in muted and peaceful protests. Rioting became a powerful tool to make their voices heard. With collective behavior, collective violence, and riot literature in mind, my work conceptualizes the moments in time when African Americans decided to respond collectively with violence to encounters between people in their community and the police. This book lays out the essential

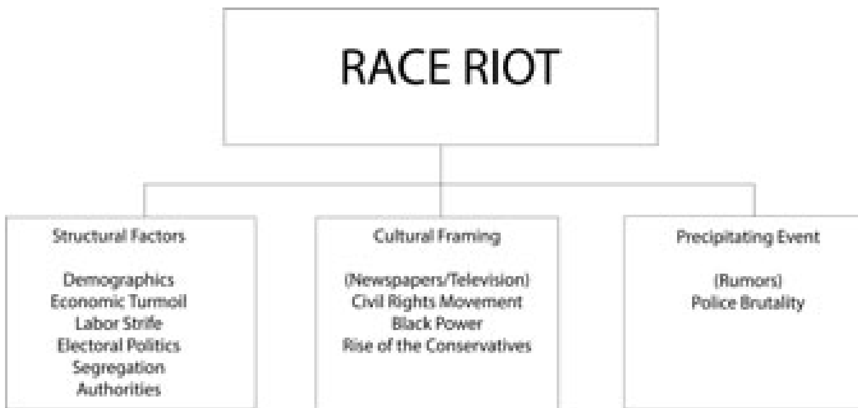

Figure 1.1: A model of race riots

components that allowed these race riots to happen. Structural factors such as economic turmoil, electoral politics, and demographic change set the scene for violence to occur. Meanwhile, calls from African American leaders to march in the streets for equal rights, but also to ready themselves to go beyond that if necessary, and pushback from white leaders that the status quo must prevail, stirred the embers of cultural framing. And, finally, a precipitating event in the form of police brutality lit the spark and sounded the alarm for action. As these three conditions coalesced, riots erupted.

The chapters that follow investigate these topics more deeply and present eight case studies that demonstrate my model of race riots. Chapter 2 explores the riots that broke out in July 1964 in New York—those in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant in New York City and the one in Rochester in upstate New York. Chapter 3 then examines the riots in August in New Jersey in Jersey City, Paterson, and Elizabeth; in Illinois in Dixmoor; and in Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Chapter 4 offers more analysis on the economic, political, and social milieu of 1964. Chapter 5 places the 1964 riots into the context of the riots that came both before and after them. It also surveys governmental response to race riots throughout American history. Finally, the Epilogue brings readers to the present day with consideration given to the riots that continue to plague the United States in places such as Ferguson, Missouri, and Baltimore, Maryland, and the persistent conditions that allow them to erupt still. Unfortunately, in the case of race riots, William Faulkner's refrain holds true, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."[64]

CHAPTER TWO

"The People Are Mad, Mad, Mad"

Some 5 million African Americans left the South to go north and west during the Second Great Migration between 1940 and 1980—or more than double the number of an earlier generation who fled the racism, violence, and lack of economic opportunities in the South at the beginning of the 20th century.[1] Northern and western cities in particular saw their black population increase over this relatively short amount of time, many of them quite dramatically: Chicago, from 14 to 34 percent; Detroit, from 16 to 44 percent; and Newark, from 17 to 54 percent.[2] Rochester, New York, the site of 1964's third major riot, saw its nonwhite population increase 204 percent during the decade of the 1950s—the largest jump of any upstate city.[3] Not surprisingly, during the post–World War II era, New York City experienced significant changes in its population as well. Between the 1940 census and the census taken 20 years later, its white population went from 94 percent to 85 percent. In 1940, the city's black population stood at 661,100, and in 1970 that number had burgeoned to 2,347,100. By the 1960s, nonwhites made up 26 percent of Manhattan's population and 15 percent of Brooklyn's.[4] In addition to African Americans, Puerto Ricans, also escaping discrimination and scarcity, flocked to New York City during midcentury—almost 175,000 between 1946 and 1953 alone.[5] And just as this influx of African Americans and Puerto Ricans came into the city, working-class employment became more difficult to find. Over a span of 30 years beginning as World War II came to an end, deindustrialization forced the loss of some half a million factory jobs. Moreover, even for those who could find employment, racist proprietors and poor salaries contributed to a substandard subsistence for many.[6] Store ownership for African Americans was also low. In Harlem, for example, only 4 percent of businesses had black owners or managers.[7]

Sadly, federal programs designed to offer help with housing, labor, and education disproportionately aided whites, while largely leaving out people of color. Laws regulating minimum wage and labor conditions covered jobs that African Americans could not secure anyway. And post–World War II legislation such as the GI Bill (the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944) and the Housing Act of 1949 had the consequence of strengthening segregation—offering affordable housing, student loans, and job training to white citizens, while excluding African Americans and largely relegating them to inferior housing and jobs.[8] These institutional barriers that prevented equal opportunities for African Americans had damning effects. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, established by President Johnson in 1967 to study the racial violence erupting around the country, asserted in their final report that "the continuing exclusion of great numbers of Negroes from the benefits of economic progress through discrimination in employment and education, and their enforced confinement in segregated housing and schools . . . are the source of the deepest bitterness and at the center of the problem of racial disorder." "White racism," the commission concluded, "is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II."[9]

In their examination of the urban violence that erupted during the 1960s, scholars Joe Feagin and Harlan Hahn explore segregation and racism as well, and their pernicious effects on society. "As increasing numbers of black migrants from the South entered urban areas in the North," they write, "they congregated in relatively confined and tightly bounded sectors of the cities. Newly arrived black residents in a northern city were not free to locate at any place in the community; their choices were severely limited by the prevailing discrimination, both individual and institutional, that divided the city into distinctive black and white areas. Thus geographic residential segregation became one of the most crucial and continuing social facts both for black residents and for cities in which they reside." This separation, they suggest, "had important consequences for the subsequent social and political development of metropolitan areas and eventually for the outbreak of urban violence." Packed into dense spaces and faced with constant discrimination, these "black urbanites" formed strong "extensive social networks and patterns that were restricted primarily to the black community and that did not encompass a large number of informal contacts with whites." As a result, these predominantly "black communities seem to have generated a growing sense of unity and purpose." With blacks left out by white America, and not gaining enough traction through other means (nonviolent protests and electoral politics), "the ghetto rioting that erupted in hundreds of cities represented a concerted attempt to achieve political objectives that had not been gained through other means."[10] In addition to these community networks, both "traditional" civil rights groups, such as CORE, and "non-traditional" organizations, such as communists and Black Nationalists,

tapped into this angst—whether intentionally or not. During the first part of 1964 in New York, for example, several events highlighted the sense of unsettledness in the air. After a Brooklyn minister beseeched him to do so, Bayard Rustin, who had organized the March on Washington the previous August, led a boycott calling for integration in the city's schools in February. Close to half a million students participated. The "winds of change are about to sweep over our city," Rustin foretold. They "who stand aloof from the frustrations and deprivations of the ghetto" should expect violence.[11] Two months later, CORE leaders called for a stall-in outside the World's Fair to spur city officials to respond to demands for better housing and education, as well as calls against police brutality. People who participated would block access to Queens to prevent visitors from getting to the fair. "Our objective is to have our own civil rights exhibit at the World's Fair," Brooklyn CORE organizer Oliver Leeds asserted. "We do not see why white people should enjoy themselves while Negroes are suffering."[12] Although many African Americans backed off from taking part in the stall-in after pleas from white leaders, societal conditions and the cultural milieu surrounding them were ripe for an explosive situation.

In addition to the continued outcries against inadequate schools, poor housing, unequal treatment, and police malfeasance, mounting crime rates pervaded parts of New York City. Faced with lower incomes, higher rents (along with crumbling housing), and steeper mortality rates, African Americans in the city held out little hope for progress. "The mood of the Negro, particularly in New York City is very, very bitter," suggested Louis Lomax, coproducer of a documentary on the Nation of Islam and Elijah Muhammad, in testimony to the state legislature in June 1963. "He is losing faith. The Negro on the streets of Harlem is tired of platitudes from white liberals."[13] Conservative ideology did not inspire faith either. After a Goldwater rally in April 1964 at Madison Square Garden, where the candidate spoke out against legislating integration, Roy Wilkins, head of the NAACP, asserted, "If [our] pleas continue to be met with sophistry and antebellum oratory, there will certainly be violence in the streets and elsewhere. There is nothing left. There is no place to turn."[14] Violence did erupt in the street that very month when a group of teenagers toppled a fruit stand and began to lob melons, oranges, and apples on Lenox Avenue close to 128th Street. The four policemen who arrived first on the scene were bombarded with food and rocks and soon called for backup. Twenty-five more authorities rushed in brandishing guns and nightsticks. Amid more cries of police brutality, five youths were arrested.[15] By June, violent crimes of every sort—murders, assaults, rapes, and robberies—had increased by double digits in the city since the previous summer.[16] Residents' views of the police suggested that authorities did not offer a source of relief. "Part of the reason why in Harlem there is such disdain for law and order," suggested Cleveland Robinson, an African American commissioner on the City Commission on Human

Rights, shortly after the outbreak of the Harlem riot, "is the high crime rate in Harlem and the number of unsolved crimes—numbers, prostitution, dope peddling—going on under the noses of the police. There is a feeling that Harlem is a lucrative field for police who are paid off and who do not pay attention to crime."[17] Indeed, heroin and gambling proved to be alluring to many African American youths who could not secure employment elsewhere.[18] Adding fuel to the fire, the state legislature had passed only a few years earlier a measure allowing police officers to be exempt from the Lyons Law, requiring municipal employees to live in the city. As historian Michael Flamm framed it, this fact "reinforced the sense in Harlem and Bed-Stuy that the NYPD was an outside force of occupation and oppression."[19]

The case studies that follow analyze the structural factors, cultural framing, and precipitating events that led to riots in three areas in the state of New York in July 1964—Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant in New York City and Rochester in the northern part of the state. Race relations got heated in these cities in 1964, and that summer they reached the boiling point.

New York City

Harlem (Manhattan) and Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn)

"Dirty niggers." Patrick Lynch reportedly called out on the morning of Thursday, July 16, 1964, to a group of schoolboys sitting on a nearby stoop. "I'll wash you clean."[20] Lynch served as superintendent of an apartment building close to the Robert E. Wagner Sr. Junior High School in Manhattan in the predominantly middle-class Irish area of Yorkville. The students, who came from other parts of the city to attend summer school, had been sitting on the stairs waiting for their class to start. As Lynch cleaned the sidewalk in front of his building, he turned the hose he used on the boys, prompting them to run and then regroup to throw bottles and garbage can lids toward him. Fifteen-year-old James Powell, another student attending the school who lived in the Soundview public housing unit in the Bronx, ran toward the commotion and then after Lynch himself. Shortly after Lynch rushed into the building, Powell turned around to go back to his friends. Unfortunately, he came directly into confrontation with a white off-duty police lieutenant named Thomas Gilligan who had been shopping in the neighborhood that morning. Witness accounts varied as to what exactly happened between Powell and Gilligan, but in just a matter of seconds, Gilligan shot and killed Powell. Gilligan asserted that he had displayed his badge, pulled out his gun, and discharged a warning shot before Powell lunged at him with a knife. It was only then, he said, that he fired two bullets into the boy—one striking Powell's right forearm and the other his abdomen. Some people at the scene, however, disputed that Powell even had a knife.[21] Perhaps in the end, the

exact details did not matter. A black teenager lay dead at the feet of a white police officer. And a new era of American rioting was about to begin.

As more of Powell's classmates came out of the school to see what was unfolding, their principal called an ambulance, and some 75 police soon arrived to maintain order over the crowd, which quickly grew to approximately 300. Some students began lobbing bottles and garbage can lids in anger. Fortunately, as their principal and teachers pleaded with the students to back down, the scene soon became calm and the police arrested no one. Gilligan left the area quickly.[22] The next morning CORE organizers led a protest in front of the school to highlight the continued issue of police brutality and to push for a civilian review board to oversee the police department. By midday over 200 people—including students, whites, and Puerto Ricans—joined the demonstration. Some carried signs that read "Stop Killer Cops!," "We Want Legal Protection," and "End Police Brutality," and chants of "Killer Cops Must Go" could be heard.[23] By Saturday, July 18, the nearby neighborhood of Harlem seethed. "They murdered my baby," Powell's mother, Annie, cried as someone led her to a car after the funeral home visitation for her son in Central Harlem that afternoon. "That's all it was. Murder."[24] Meanwhile, at the site of the shooting, a small group of white extremists met to voice their displeasure at civil rights activists, whom they blamed for urban unrest. Other whites at the scene did not particularly like the extremists, but they also expressed frustration with the protests as well. "The fact that the boy was killed is a terrible thing," exclaimed one woman. "But [protesters] aren't helping things by going around the streets like wild animals." A taxi driver who saw Friday's march added, "Instead of giving civil rights laws an opportunity to be applied, there are crackpots advocating violence."[25]

Later that evening, several CORE chapters held another rally, this one in Harlem and originally organized to remind people that three civil rights workers remained missing in Mississippi. After Powell's death at the hands of Gilligan, however, the more immediate concern turned to police brutality. "James Powell was shot because he was black," a 17-year-old Bronx CORE worker cried out to those gathered. "It is time to let 'the man' [white people] know that if he does something to us we are going to do something back," the chair of the Downtown CORE chapter added. He went on, "If you say 'You kick me once, I'm going to kick you twice,' we might get some respect." Another speaker from the South Jamaica CORE chapter suggested, "45 percent of the cops in New York are neurotic murderers."[26] At around 8:00 p.m., Reverend Nelson C. Dukes of the Fountain Springs Baptist Church stood before the increasingly animated crowd and spoke for about 20 minutes. He concluded with a call to march on the 28th Police Precinct where they would demand Gilligan's immediate suspension. Some in the crowd called out "Let's go" and "Let's do it now."[27] A *New York Times* reporter described what happened next:

> As the barricades were being set up between the crowd and the police a scuffle broke out. It was the first violence of the long night. About 25 patrolmen and demonstrators went down in a welter of flailing arms and legs. "That's it," said [the man in charge] Inspector [Thomas V.] Pendergast. "Lock them up." The crowd by this time had grown to several hundred. . . . The crowd began shouting. The rain of bottles and debris increased. Dozens of policemen poured out of the station, buckling on holsters as they ran. One was struck on the head by a bottle and was sent to the hospital. The force began pushing the crowd toward the Seventh and Eighth avenue ends of 123d Street amid a rain of bottles. A bus rolled up and 48 members of the Tactical Patrol Force—the police shock troops—scrambled out. Mr. Dukes looked on, shaking his head. "This has got out of hand," he said. "If I knew this was going to happen I wouldn't have said anything." Then he walked away.[28]

But, of course, by then, it was too late. The crowd now stood at 500 and growing. Small bands of youths headed down Seventh Avenue, where some of them targeted an unfortunate white couple who happened to be driving that way. They hit the car with their fists, while an older man ran up and smashed out a headlight with a bottle. Robert Leuci, a Tactical Patrol Force officer, rushed in to help. "I asked [the woman inside the car] if she was all right," he recollected. "Her voice was weak and trembling. I remember the way she turned away, wiping her eyes and her face with her forearm. Her hair was a bloody mess and it hung across her face. I had never seen such wide-eyed fear on the face of anyone, nothing like the fear on that woman's face." The car finally broke free and sped away.[29]

By 10:00 p.m., some 1,000 participants had joined the melee. "Why don't you go home?" implored one member of the police force monitoring the crowd on 125th Street. "We are home—this is our home, baby," came a response from those gathered. Unable to convince them to leave, police started firing their guns over the heads of the crowd, rushing toward them.[30] Word spread that police were attacking indiscriminately, and soon some rioters began lobbing Molotov cocktails. At midnight, the shooting "was almost continuous in Harlem, breaking out first in one place, then a couple of blocks away, then again a couple of blocks in another direction. But the fall of bricks and bottles from roofs and windows also was almost continuous, the streets were soon deep with broken glass, so that patrol cars were put out of action with flat tires."[31] In the meantime, looters began targeting nearby primarily white-owned businesses, including grocery stores, clothing shops, and bars.[32] "A continuous roar rose from the crowds, an ocean of sound that just kept coming," TPF officer Leuci later recalled. "There were wailing sirens, flashing red lights that reflected off the windshields of cars and storefront glass. Traffic had been diverted from 125th Street into the side streets; 125th Street was a

battleground, with cops and looters in hand-to-hand combat. Someone said a tow truck was flying along 125th Street, stopping to attach its hook to the metal gates of liquor stores, appliance stores, and pawnshops, where guns were sold."[33] At the *Herald Tribune*, a reporter answered a phone call from a black resident wondering how to reach Governor Rockefeller. "The Goldwater stuff has started," the man exclaimed. "They're shooting at people up here in Harlem. The police are chasing the people here at Eighth Avenue and 125th Street and shooting at them. . . . [T]hey're shooting in the air. The crowd runs when they shoot, then, when they stop, the crowd comes back again."[34] This routine would go on for much of the night. In fact, police shot so many rounds of bullets that a fresh supply had to be brought in during the early morning hours. Greatly outnumbered by rioters, the NYPD also requested help from the forces in neighboring boroughs. Reporters estimated the presence of at least 500 policemen, but an exact number was never confirmed.[35]

Amazingly, just 1 person was killed during the first night of rioting in Harlem (a police sniper targeted a man lobbing bricks off a building), but over 100 people suffered injuries, including seven gunshot wounds. A woman looking for her mother near 127th Street around 4:00 in the morning took a bullet to the knee. "I thought they were just shooting blanks until I got hit in the leg," she lamented, "and then the cops just left me, and I had to take a taxi to the hospital." Police also shot a bartender just after he left work. "They were beating up everyone," he said, "and there was nothing but smoke and gunshots for blocks around." He got shot, he said, after he darted into the hallway of an apartment building. "I wasn't throwing anything or doing anything; they just shot me."[36] Reporters and white bystanders were also subject to threats of violence or violence itself during the melee. "In essence it was simple—run with the mobs when they attacked the police, then run away from them when it looked like they wanted to attack you," two *New York Times* reporters recalled after the riot. "Hey, whitey, we gonna get you," was a refrain they heard often.[37] A sailor from California "stumbled through the police barricade at 123d and Seventh Avenue" around 4:00 a.m. A "white youth with a bloody mouth and glazed eyes," he said he had been attacked when he got off at the wrong subway stop after taking the wrong train. "They beat me and took my watch," he mumbled.[38] Shortly thereafter Commissioner Michael J. Murphy, who had been at his summer home on Long Island, arrived on the scene and met with local black leaders.[39]

The landscape looked devastating as the sun came out Sunday morning. "The dawn broke hot and somber in Harlem," the *New York Times* solemnly laid out the scene. "Broken glass was strewn along 125th Street. At the emergency entrance to Harlem Hospital there were circles of blood left from the violence Saturday night." "It looks like a war out there," proclaimed a woman carrying a baby.[40] Both Commissioner Murphy and Paul R. Screvane, who was serving as acting mayor while Mayor Robert Wagner traveled in Europe,

issued statements on Sunday to try to get the situation under control. "I view these developments with the utmost seriousness," Screvane asserted, "and have given approval to all necessary steps to insure and maintain the rule of law and order in this as well as other parts of the city . . . to insure, for example, against disorder by contagion. I call upon all citizens in every section of our city to remain and help maintain calm." In his statement, Murphy addressed the people of Harlem: "I have met with some of the prominent people of your community and we all join in appealing for calm, lawful action by our people. Let us show that the community does not approve of violence. Some persons have used this unfortunate incident as an excuse for looting and for vicious, unprovoked attacks against police. These crimes have been met by swift and necessary police action. In our estimation, this is a crime problem not a social problem."[41] Both officials urged residents to allow the Civilian Complaint Review Board, an entity of the police force itself, to do its job in investigating Powell's death (the district attorney was also conducting a separate investigation into the incident). But black leaders for a long time had called for actual civilian oversight of the police and reiterated the need more so than ever now. An NAACP representative even suggested that the police had agreed to allow civilian participation in the Powell investigation, but a spokesman for the force denied this claim.[42]

While CORE leader James Farmer urged Harlem residents to stay in their homes, he also sharply rebuked the police. "The police were hysterical," he declared, "and I must say that the Police Commissioner, in the posture which he had adopted in the last few months of self-congratulations for the Police Department, must assume part of the responsibility." On Sunday afternoon, black leaders held a rally at the Mount Morris Presbyterian Church in mid-Harlem, where Farmer likened the riot to "New York's night of Birmingham horror." The crowd of 500, about half of whom were Black Nationalists, met the well-known pacifist with boos. The audience sympathized more with the action called for by the rally organizer Jesse Gray, a community activist who had led a rent strike the previous November to highlight the squalid conditions that many Harlem residents endured. "There is only one thing that can correct the situation," Gray cried out as he stood (with his face bandaged and swollen after clashing with the police the previous night) at the front podium, "and that's guerrilla warfare." To applause he continued, "This city can be changed by 50,000 well organized Negroes. They can determine what will happen in New York City."[43] Psychologist and social reformer Kenneth Clark—citing the "disease of racism"—also condemned city leaders. Taking issue with Murphy's characterization of the events in Harlem as a "crime problem," Clark wrote for the *New York Herald Tribune* that residents "do not have the political or economic power to obtain even the most minimally adequate public services in housing, sanitation, health, police protection, and education." He went on, "The real danger of Harlem is not in the infrequent

explosions of random lawlessness. The frightening horror of Harlem is the chronic day-to-day quiet violence to the human spirit which exists and is accepted as normal."[44]

Clark and others had been spearheading initiatives to improve conditions in Harlem during the early 1960s; some 233,000 mostly black residents had packed into three and a half square miles by then. Receiving both federal and city funding, organizations such as Harlem Youth Opportunities, Unlimited (HARYOU) and Associated Community Teams (ACT) sought to combat "despair, hopelessness and futility." Dr. Charles H. Roberts, whom Mayor Fiorello La Guardia had appointed chair of a commission to analyze the 1935 Harlem riot after it erupted, reflected on how conditions had not changed enough since his yearlong study concluded that bursts of violence would continue to occur due to "emotional tension which sought release upon the slightest provocation." He cited accusations of police brutality, rent gouging, lack of good schools, poor recreational and health facilities, overcrowding, as well as discrimination as factors contributing to the earlier riot. Sadly, he suggested, Harlem denizens still believed that "advantage is being taken of them because they are colored and segregated" and "don't know how to go about" receiving better treatment. A 1964 HARYOU study found stark disparities in housing, education, and health conditions between Central Harlem and the rest of New York City: for example, Central Harlem's infant mortality was double the city rate; 20 percent of Central Harlem's housing unit residents experienced overcrowding, compared to 12 percent for the rest of the city; by eighth grade, Central Harlem's schoolchildren were two and a half years behind other students in New York City; and only 7 percent of Central Harlem's males had managerial, professional, or technical jobs, compared to 24 percent in the rest of the city.[45]

On Sunday evening, some 1,000 people gathered in the streets outside James Powell's funeral. Just before the service started at 8:00 p.m., "bottles began crashing to the street. Suddenly there were shrieks from the corner of Seventh Avenue and 132d Street, and patrolmen, waving nightsticks, charged into crowds that were pouring out from behind barricades. The crowd broke up when shots were fired into the air. Three busloads of specially trained anti-riot policemen drew up and help put down the outburst." Around the same time "more than 100 young Negroes, many carrying heavy pieces of lumber," joined the fray.[46] And so began another night of rioting. Civil rights activist Bayard Rustin tried to convince the crowd to go home, but they cried out "Uncle Tom" and, after he left in tears, "We want Malcolm X."[47] Earlier in the day, President Johnson's press secretary, George Reedy, had stated to reporters in Austin, Texas, that the president had been kept apprised of the situation occurring in Harlem but had no plans to take federal action. "The president has made it clear," Reedy asserted, "that any time local authorities need help in keeping law and order we stand ready to

help."[48] But New York City officials sought no help even though eruptions of violence continued throughout the night. According to officials, at least 120 people suffered wounds, including an African American police sergeant and 2 *New York Times* photographers, but hospital records indicated tending to over 200 injuries. Police arrested 108 people Sunday night and throughout Monday morning, and 45 more businesses experienced looting or damage.[49]

On Monday morning, Annie Powell and several other family members accompanied James's body a little over half an hour away from Harlem to Hartsdale's Ferncliff Cemetery, where they saw him laid to rest next to his father who had died a few years earlier. "Oh God," Ms. Powell exclaimed at one point during the graveside service, "look how I brought my boy to you."[50] Back in Harlem and at City Hall, store owners and city leaders remained on edge. Estimates placed damages to businesses—mostly white-owned—at $50,000. The *New York Times* reported that "[m]ost of the white merchants have owned stores in Harlem for 30 or 40 years. They have seen the neighborhood change slowly, first from one that contained whites as well as Negroes to a largely black community and now to a neighborhood seething with racial feeling and Black Nationalism." As they cleaned up from the weekend violence, several expressed fear and frustration. One white store owner who had bought his business two years earlier for $18,000 was ready to sell it for $3,000 less. "It's a loss, sure, and no one wants to take a loss, but enough is enough," he grumbled. "Two years ago it wasn't like it is today." He continued bitterly, "I tell you what they ought to do. They ought to take all that Federal money coming into Harlem and buy all the small stores. Then give them Harlem. Let them hold all the demonstrations they want." Another white store owner and his son placed the blame on specific individuals and groups of people. "If they could just shut up this guy Farmer [CORE's national director]," the father asserted, "it would be all right." His son, however, cast a wider net: "It's not just Farmer. It's the Black Nationalists, the Communists, Farmer, all of them. . . . They are organizing each block in this area for guerilla warfare. Block by block. Regular troops."[51] Meanwhile, as business owners mused over the damage to their property and their future in Harlem, the city's political and police officials met to see what they should do next.

Acting Mayor Screvane and Police Commissioner Murphy met with two separate groups of civil rights leaders, including representatives from CORE, the Urban League, and the NAACP, throughout the day on Monday, July 20. After discussing their conversations with Mayor Wagner, who decided he needed to cut his European trip short and head home, Screvane released a statement Monday evening hoping to quell the violence and reduce tensions. In addition to announcing that a grand jury would be taking up Lieutenant Gilligan's case in the fatal shooting of James Powell, he declared, "We are taking steps and undertaking programs which needed to be taken before the riots dramatized the needs. Even these programs are only the beginning of

things that must be done to get at the roots of the many problems affecting the people of this community and of other deprived communities in New York City."[52] He also announced five "programs of action" that the city planned to take to address the issues that Harlem faced: tapping Deputy Mayor Edward Cavanaugh to review the police department's civilian complaint review board's procedures and all the cases in which it had heard police brutality charges; placing more "Negro officers and patrolmen" in Harlem, at least temporarily; scheduling regular meetings between the new Community Affairs Committee of top police officers (with Commissioner Murphy as chair) and community leaders in Harlem (and other neighborhoods); recruiting and "pre-training" "minority group members" for the police force (which was already in the works through federal and local initiatives; only some 1,700 of the 26,000-person police force were African American); and fostering communication between city officials and minority communities.[53] Screvane also called for support of the police and the restoration of order:

> At the same time we shall not relax our support of the application by the Police Department of every possible measure for the support and maintenance of law and order in the area. All those with whom we met today spoke with one voice in regretting the spilling of blood and the infliction of injury upon police and civilians alike in an outbreak which is projected to the world as reflecting shame and discredit on New York City and the United States. Racists and demagogues in our city and elsewhere in the United States benefit by such an outbreak and such a display. All other citizens are losers. Peace, order and constructive action must be the order of the day.[54]

Indeed, newspapers in countries around the world featured stories and photographs of the riot.[55]

Civil rights leaders also issued statements on Monday. Farmer said that CORE thought Screvane's message was "welcome but inadequate in this hour of crisis." In addition to summoning Mayor Wagner home and pressing for more black policemen and government officials in Harlem, he called for Gilligan's immediate arrest and suspension and the creation of an independent board to hear police brutality cases. From Los Angeles, A. Philip Randolph, president of the Negro-American Labor Council and 50-year resident of Harlem, struck a different note. "Violence and bloodshed is not the remedy," he stressed. "It will destroy our community and hurt and set back the Negro cause. It only plays into the hands of our enemies." He then focused attention on the upcoming presidential election. "It could elect Senator Goldwater, who voted against civil rights legislation, President," Randolph declared, "which would be the greatest disaster to befall Negroes since slavery." He concluded,

"Since there is now a Federal civil rights law, let us declare a moratorium on demonstrations and peacefully test it and work for its enforcement."[56] The idea of a moratorium grew out of discussions with Bayard Rustin, who conveyed to Randolph the urgency of tamping down the violence in Harlem. The two men knew that George Wallace's decision to drop out of the presidential race that Sunday might prove beneficial to Goldwater, who would more likely appeal to Wallace's voters. Randolph and Rustin successfully persuaded NAACP leader Roy Wilkins to join their call for a moratorium. Rustin and Wilkins sent a telegram to other national civil rights leaders cautioning them that the "Civil Rights Act of 1964 could well be diminished or nullified and a decade of increasingly violent and futile disorder ushered in if we do not play our hand coolly and intelligently." They all agreed to meet in New York to discuss this issue face-to-face a few days after Johnson and Goldwater's planned meeting on July 24.[57]

Meanwhile, as these civil rights leaders began contemplating how to calm things down, many Harlemites were in no mood for peace. Although the scene remained relatively tranquil throughout the morning on Monday, it turned tense again later that afternoon. A crowd began gathering on Seventh Avenue in front of Hotel Theresa (which housed Malcolm X's Organization of Afro-American Unity, the group he founded after he left the Nation of Islam) and discussing "the merits of civil rights leaders, Black Nationalist leaders and Uncle Toms," according to the *New York Times*. "Uncle Tom no longer exists," exclaimed one participant. "It's black against white now."[58] Soon mimeographed leaflets distributed by Jesse Gray's group and the Harlem Defense Council (a new organization that shared an office with the Progressive Labor Party) materialized, calling for "Harlem residents to defend themselves against the police" and for another march on Harlem's 32nd Precinct on Saturday.[59] Rent strike leader Gray spoke at a rally at the United Nations at 6:00 reiterating the call for a march on Saturday; he stressed that "there will be more demonstrations and riots whether we like it or not." A few hours later, that warning came true. Just before sunset, a group of 50 people gathered and marched around Central Harlem. Others set small fires, threw bottles at the police who were standing by, and smashed a cigar store window until authorities made them disperse by wielding their nightsticks and brandishing their guns. At 9:30 the police fired shots over some 1,000 demonstrators gathered at Second Avenue and 125th Street, and the crowd quickly ran away. Just over an hour later, 150 people, primarily teenagers, congregated in front of New York's CORE headquarters. Farmer came out to let them know that Gilligan would be facing a grand jury investigation. "They should kill him," people in the crowd replied. Farmer then pleaded with them to go home, but they retorted, "We're not going home, we are home."[60]

When he could not persuade them to leave, Farmer joined arms with Rustin and national vice president of the Negro American Labor Council Joseph

Overton and led the crowd up St. Nicholas Avenue in an effort to channel their energy. But as they marched, some in the group began throwing bottles at the police, who again fired shots over their heads to get them to disband. Just before midnight, helmeted police with nightsticks were met with "a barrage of bottles and debris" as they broke up another group of "shouting youths" at 125th Street and Eighth Avenue. Periodic outbursts occurred for several more hours. By 3:00 Tuesday morning, police had arrested at least 20 people in Central Harlem, the *New York Times* reported, while 17 injuries—including 3 on police—had been sustained.[61] Perhaps more ominous, however, was the fact that the violence was no longer solely confined to Harlem. Around midnight, protesters congregated for a rally at the Brooklyn CORE office on Nostrand Avenue in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of the borough to protest Powell's death. As it broke up sometime later, the marchers converged with people coming out of the neighborhood taverns. By 1:30 or 2:00 a.m. Tuesday morning, some 1,000 people stood near the corner of Nostrand Avenue and Fulton Street. The call went out that a riot was erupting, and police from all over Brooklyn and some from Queens hurried to the area.[62] Soon the scene exploded as demonstrators hurled bottles at the incoming police, broke in shop windows and began looting, and eventually burned an unmarked police car. When extra police—some of whom were black—arrived, jeers of "black cop, black cop" and "Uncle Tom" could be heard. Others yelled, "Killer cops." A loud cheer erupted when another protester suggested, "Let's get the Jews before this is over," highlighting the layers of tension present in the community.[63] Police reported 30 arrests for burglary, looting, disorderly conduct, assaults to police officers, and "malicious mischief." Some 30 businesses were looted in that first round of Bed-Stuy rioting.[64] As historian Michael Flamm put it, "The epidemic of violence had now spread."[65]

"Bedford-Stuyvesant . . .," reported the *New Yorker* in its August 1 issue following the riots, "is bigger than Harlem, more heavily populated than Harlem, and, in the final accounting, a tougher ghetto than Harlem."[66] The *New York Times* described the area this way: "In old New York, Bedford-Stuyvesant was a neighborhood of about 100 blocks in north central Brooklyn. . . . The neighborhood is now defined racially more often than geographically, meaning the almost entirely Negro area bounded, roughly, by Washington Avenue, Eastern Parkway and Broadway. It includes the old Bedford-Stuyvesant, and has a population of nearly 400,000."[67] Throughout the 20th century, as New York held out promise to African Americans fleeing the misery they endured in the South, Bed-Stuy—while not renowned as a cultural destination like Harlem, its neighbor to the north—became a popular end point. After World War II, many of the neighborhood's whites left the area for the suburbs or New Jersey. By 1960, Bedford-Stuyvesant's African American and Puerto Rican population stood at 83 percent. And, like those in Central Harlem,

Bedford-Stuyvesant's residents experienced some of the same conditions that suggested they also lived in a separate society from the country's whites: inferior and segregated housing, low income and high unemployment, and substandard health care and schools. Unlike Harlem, which had Representative Adam Clayton Powell Jr. as its voice in Washington, D.C., however, Bedford-Stuyvesant was incorporated into three separate congressional districts each represented by whites. As a result, while Harlem's HARYOU received assurances of $117 million in federal grant money to help boost vulnerable youths in early July (before the riots), Brooklyn's Youth in Action program brought in a fraction of that sum—$223,000—a few weeks later.[68]

On Tuesday morning, President Johnson—concerned about the violence (and the backlash it could inflict on his campaign)—called Acting Mayor Screvane to reassure him that the federal government was there to help if necessary. The President released a statement to the country later that day. Aware of what was at stake politically, He knew he had to strike just the right balance between maintaining order while protecting civil rights, appealing to both northern and southern voters simultaneously. "We're getting wires and calls and Congress denouncing us and saying it's damned easy to run into Mississippi and jump on Georgia," he had grumbled to Screvane on the phone, "but when New York happens, we don't open our mouth."[69] To the country he relayed:

> For the past three days, the nation has been shocked by reports of rioting and disorder in the streets of our largest and one of our proudest cities. The immediate overriding issue in New York City is the preservation of law and order and the right of our citizens to respect their property and to be safe in their person as they walk or drive through the streets. In the preservation of law and order there can be no compromise—just as there can be no compromise in securing equal and exact justice for all Americans. . . . Law enforcement is basically the responsibility of the Governor, state and local officials. The Acting Mayor informed me that he is aware of all his responsibilities and is determined to discharge them, including the full application of impartial justice. It must be made clear once and for all that violence and lawlessness can not, must not and will not be tolerated. In this determination, New York officials shall have all the help that we can give them. And this includes help in correcting the evil social conditions that breed despair and disorder. American citizens have a right to protection of life and limb—whether driving along a highway in Georgia; a road in Mississippi; or a street in New York City.[70]

He then went on to state that he had directed Federal Bureau of Investigation FBI director J. Edgar Hoover to be in touch with Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Police Commissioner Murphy to keep them apprised of the investigation the FBI would be conducting to see if any federal laws had been broken, as

well as to offer the assistance and cooperation of the federal government to them.[71] Johnson was especially afraid that radicals or communists might have instigated the violence.[72] Screvane had his suspicions as well. In a radio interview that day he suggested that "fringe groups, including the Communist party and some of the other more radical groups," should be held responsible for the unrest (he also suggested that "youngsters who just didn't have anything better to do" joined in for the "fun" and "delight" in it).[73]

Mayor Wagner—canceling his speech on automation that he had been scheduled to give in Geneva before the International Labor Organization—arrived back from Europe on Tuesday afternoon and received a 50-minute briefing at the airport. "I have complete faith in Commissioner Murphy," he stressed to waiting reporters, "and the ability of the Police Department to contain the situation."[74] That evening he held more meetings at the governor's mansion and then drove through Central Harlem with Commissioner Murphy in an unmarked police car to assess the scene, noting the damage but also that the area seemed fairly calm. There were still occasional outbursts, but not nearly as many or as severe as those on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday: a group of juveniles parading down Eighth Avenue carrying "Gilligan—Wanted for Murder" signs; teenagers looting dry cleaners on Lenox Avenue; and "looters form[ing] a human chain to pass garments from [a cleaning] store to the street."[75] The following night Wagner described what he saw and laid out his plan of action in a speech that aired on both radio and television. "I am convinced," he declared, "that the overwhelming majority of those who live in the Harlem community neither participated in nor appreciated the violence and disorder." He went on to stress that "law and order" must be maintained and provided nine steps of action that he had taken or ordered, including receiving assurances from Commissioner Murphy that he would "double his efforts" to establish a closer relationship with the people of Harlem, reaching out to the "minority communities" to hear their needs, and cooperating with the president and FBI director "in all matters concerned with law, order, justice and rights in New York City."[76] With the mayor back and firmly in control, the worst of the rioting appeared to be over in Harlem. Meanwhile, the residents of Bed-Stuy remained on edge. Police captain Edward Jenkins of the 79th Precinct reached out to local black leaders to enlist their help in stemming any further outbursts in Bedford-Stuyvesant.[77] But violence erupted there again on Tuesday night.

The *New Yorker* described the beginning of Bed-Stuy's second night of rioting this way:

> The first broken window that night belonged to a drugstore right in front of the speaker, and the crowd scattered. Several officers went over and looked at the shards of glass for a minute, and then one kicked the pieces over to the building wall. The speaker never stopped talking. Soon the

> crowd drifted back, and after a few minutes it was even larger than it had been before; two hundred and fifty stood around the speaker on the wide sidewalk, and the overflow spilled into the street and became a menace to cars. The police held them off. Then there was a commotion, and a girl, not yet in her teens, was streaking east; she held something—cupped in her hands—that she had snatched, under the police guard's eyes, from the broken store window. There was a laugh as she disappeared. A few seconds later, there were shots from the west and the crowd began to run—not away from but toward the gunfire.[78]

The gunfire in the distance had been from police trying to disperse another crowd at Franklin and Fulton. The unrest in Bed-Stuy was again under way. For almost 10 hours, "[m]ore than 200 helmeted policemen, firing in the air and wielding nightsticks, battled hundreds of roving youths."[79] Police shot so many rounds that, again, more ammunition had to be brought in as it had in Harlem on Saturday night. Described by a police sergeant as "pure, undiluted hell" and by a police chaplain as "much more serious" than what had just occurred in Harlem, the violence Tuesday night resulted in 50 arrests, two critical injuries, and hundreds of broken store windows and looted businesses, many run or owned by Jewish merchants and which, in total, amounted to some $350,000 in damages and losses. Much of the stolen merchandise (including alcohol, televisions, phonograph consoles, lamps, and furniture) ended up at the 79th Precinct when looters could no longer carry their load, leaving it in the street—so much so that the *New York Times* suggested the precinct "resembled a furniture warehouse."[80]

On Wednesday afternoon Brooklyn borough president Abe Stark, stating that he was "deeply concerned about what effect this rioting will have on the nationwide progress of the civil rights movement," met with 60 community leaders at Brooklyn Borough Hall. They made both immediate and longer-term plans to address the violence and the underlying conditions that precipitated it: use a sound truck staffed by clergy and government officials to urge people to stay off the streets; request that the media—especially radio stations that appealed to teenagers—make announcements pressing listeners to stay off the streets; secure a pledge by area CORE, Urban League, and YMCA groups to refrain from demonstrating or holding large gatherings; and ask Mayor Wagner for an increased police presence, a citizens' police review board, more African American police in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and action on addressing issues that led to the rioting in the first place, especially unemployment and "youth problems." The Brooklyn NAACP chapter sent a sound truck to Fulton and Nostrand, one of the focal points of violence the previous night. Members handed out flyers that read, "cool it and let the message sink in; violent demonstrations and looting hurt our cause. Folks like Senator Goldwater, Governor Wallace of Alabama, the John Birchers and extremists

are fixing to do us up, and if we don't play it smart we'll give them the excuse they've been looking for."[81] "This is what Wallace and Goldwater and every Southern politician is happy to see," NAACP attorney George Fleary warned the listening crowd. When he suggested that they "lay off the cop on the beat," however, the crowd rushed in with a fit of anger to try to push the sound truck over. Police swooped in, and Fleary fled in the truck.[82] Not even an hour after Mayor Wagner finished his televised plea for law and order, groups of various sizes—some as large as 60—roved through Bedford-Stuyvesant throughout the night, looting and occasionally throwing bottles at police. Wednesday's police reports included 22 arrests, three injuries (men shot by police), and 400 instances of "broken windows."[83] A little after midnight, a sudden and steady rain forced most people off the street. The violence was over for the night.[84]

"If I could leave tomorrow," one Bedford-Stuyvesant business owner declared on Thursday, echoing similar concerns in Harlem over the previous days, "I'd walk out." His partner joined in, "They need federal troops here."[85] Meanwhile, at a luncheon at the White House with corporate leaders that afternoon, Johnson reassured the audience with his usual balance of stressing order and equal rights: "I did not become president to preside over mounting violence and deepening disorder. I fully intend to use all the resources I have to make sure that those who claim rights—and those who deny them—bend their passions to peaceful obedience of the law. I intend to work to ensure that every person enjoys the full constitutional rights and equal opportunity that are his birthright as an American citizen." He then went on to ask for their help in this endeavor: "But this cannot be done from the White House alone. I need the help of every American. I ask you to do this not just because it is good for business or for economic stability. I ask you to do this because it is vital for the America you and I know and believe in."[86] That same day, the U.S. Senate voted on President Johnson's antipoverty legislation, the Economic Opportunity Act. Barry Goldwater left the campaign trail to oppose the bill, but it passed by a margin of 61–34. It faced a tougher battle in the House. A few days later, Johnson pressed AFL-CIO president George Meany to help him find the votes by directly referencing the violence in New York. "We're within a hair's breadth of being able to put 150,000 young men to work in the next 90 days. . . . Where all this Harlem stuff comes from is they've got no jobs; they can't do anything. They're just raising hell." The House would approve the measure just over two weeks later, and Johnson signed it into law on August 20.[87]

Although the unrest in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant was coming to an end, Thursday saw a few more incidents of violence in the area. "In Lower Manhattan, several hundred [white] youths jeered" at a group of some 250 CORE members who gathered at police headquarters to condemn police brutality. "Eggs and garbage were thrown at the pickets, but the missiles fell

short of their targets as the police kept the spectators at a safe distance." One white youth did manage to hit a police inspector in the eye with a stone, however, as he protected the CORE marchers, and he was taken to the hospital.[88] One white onlooker, an electrical engineer from Little Italy now living in Brooklyn, offered his rationale for gathering at police headquarters. "I came here to watch the cannibals. I lived with them savages for nine years in a housing project. I know. I'm for Social Security. I'm for Medicare, I'm for unions, but damn it, I'm going to vote for Goldwater to show the politicians we're sick and tired of cannibals."[89] In Brooklyn, 2 black ministers rode in a sound truck north and south of Fulton. NAACP members also patrolled the area but were run off by people with homemade signs that read, "We want N.A.A.C.P. to stay out of this" and "We will fight now and pray later." For the first time during the violence over the last few days, members from the region's 22 gangs appeared on Fulton Street "in organized gang formation." As soon as the NAACP members fled, however, they left the scene. Police arrested 24 people and reported less than 40 incidents of looting. A crowd formed at one point Thursday night during the arrest of a 17-year-old boy looting a grocery store. The ministers with the sound truck pleaded with the onlookers to leave. "Ladies and gentlemen, will you please return to your homes? Help our community. Help us make Bedford-Stuyvesant a safe place again." After no one responded, 1 of the ministers urged again, "Please get off the streets." Eventually 1 woman yelled back, "Go to hell! These are our streets." But just then it began to rain, and the street suddenly cleared.[90] For the moment, the violence had ended.

When the dust finally settled, the *New York Times* reported that between Saturday, July 18, and Thursday, July 23, 1 person died in the unrest in Harlem, 82 civilians and 36 police suffered injuries, police arrested 202 people, and 117 businesses were damaged. In Bedford-Stuyvesant, no one died, but 10 civilians and 12 police were injured, 276 people were arrested, and 556 businesses sustained damage.[91] Although many white and some black leaders tried to dismiss the riot participants as young, outsider hoodlums from the fringes of society, closer analysis revealed that most of them had similar educational and employment backgrounds to other residents in the area. Moreover, of those arrested, over 90 percent lived in Harlem or Bedford-Stuyvesant. Debates also centered on why the violence erupted when it did. Was it, as some suggested, the harsh conditions of the inner city and the widening income differences of the haves and have-nots running up against the hope of the civil rights movement? Or should blame be directed at the riot participants themselves and the white liberals who enabled them with government aid in the form of the Civil Rights Act and other measures? Many leaders—both black and white—put responsibility squarely on communist or other radical agitators bent on sowing seeds of destruction.[92] President Johnson ordered an investigation into the uprisings in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant

(and in other cities that would soon follow) in early September, and the FBI issued its report later that month. The bureau concluded that the riots had no pattern or single leader, and it exonerated the Communist Party U.S.A. as well, stating that it "does not appear to have officially instigated these riots, though its members were observed taking part."[93] As for Lieutenant Gilligan, the police officer who shot and killed James Powell, both the police board and the grand jury investigating the case cleared him of any wrongdoing.[94] As people continued to discuss the causes of the violence, the timing of the unrest, and the aftermath of events in Harlem and Bed-Stuy, perhaps Kenneth Clark put the area's frustrations best when he lamented, "What disgusts me [about the riots] is the pretense of shock, surprise, horror. The horrible living conditions, the sanitation, pushing people around—apparently nobody gives a damn about it. They send hundreds and hundreds and thousands of cops. They would do better to send one third as many building inspectors or a thousand sanitation workers, or just an attempt at proper schooling."[95] Although the underlying conditions remained, the riots had ended in Harlem and Brooklyn for the time being. Sadly, however, the long, hot summer was just beginning. Another riot erupted in Rochester, New York, just as the unrest in New York City subsided.

Rochester

The third largest municipality in the state of New York, Rochester had just over 318,000 residents in 1964, including 35,000 African Americans. Over the previous 14 years, the city saw a large influx of nonwhite migrant workers and skilled laborers; the 1950 census put the nonwhite population at 8,247, and just a decade later, it had increased to 25,067.[96] Although the headquarters for Xerox and Eastman Kodak, the city—like numerous others across the country—offered little in the way of upward mobility for people of color. The overall unemployment rate in Rochester was low and the median family income was higher than the national average, but the city's African Americans experienced a much higher unemployment rate (14 percent, compared to 2 percent overall), and Rochester had the highest income gap between whites and nonwhites in all of New York.[97] Two weeks before the riot, at the behest of city officials concerned about "severe" African American teenage unemployment, the U.S. Department of Labor had begun a program in Rochester to train school dropouts under its Office of Manpower and Apprenticeship Training.[98] Moreover, a 1959 report issued by the State of New York's Commission Against Discrimination concluded that some 35 percent of the houses in the city's Third and Seventh Wards, where most nonwhites lived (80 percent of the black population lived in only six census tracts), had been deemed "deteriorating and dilapidated."[99] The report also suggested, "In respect to the Negro population, Rochester today is sitting on a pressure

cooker whose relief valve has long been choked. The growing concentration in a limited area can only lead to increasing social problems." Not surprisingly, the public schools were also segregated, with 30 percent of them mostly populated by black students by the early 1960s.[100] The location where the riot started on Friday, July 24, the corner of Nassau and Joseph Avenues, lay at the center of Rochester's largest black neighborhood. "The area has been likened by Rochester residents to New York City's Harlem," the *New York Times* reported on July 25. "It is marked by a high rate of crime, a narcotics problem, unemployment, decaying tenements and inferior schools."[101] These structural concerns provided the backdrop to the unrest. News reports underscored that, before the riot broke out, in addition to the structural factors that existed in the city, an underlying mistrust and tension permeated race relations in Rochester as well.

The city's African Americans had long asserted that police used excessive force against them. One well-known instance occurred in August 1962, when Rufus Fairwell, a gas station attendant, ended up with two cracked vertebrae and extensive eye damage after an encounter with the Rochester police. A grand jury failed to find fault among the police, and no one on the force was disciplined.[102] In March 1964, an all-white jury found 15 Black Muslims guilty of third-degree assault for resisting police officers and for unlawful assembly. The charges stemmed from a January 1963 police raid on one of their meetings after someone reported that one of those present had a gun.[103] People at the meeting countered that the police had burst into their private religious meeting for no good reason. Also in February 1963, an African American man named A. C. White suffered such severe injuries by 4 police during a traffic stop that he had to be hospitalized.[104] Malcolm X visited the city and proclaimed in a speech before some 600 to 800 people at a meeting hosted by the local NAACP chapter to discuss police brutality, "My people have caught hell long enough. . . . You do not get anything by being polite. . . . The only time you get something is when you let the man know you are fed up."[105] In March, the city council voted six to three to create the Police Advisory Board of Rochester in response to "Negro unrest over allegations of police harassment, discrimination and brutality." Disapproved of by the police (not surprisingly), the board included nine members, two of whom were African American, appointed by the city manager—"representatives of the Catholic, Jewish and Protestant faiths, a University of Rochester professor, two businessmen, a union leader, an accountant and a physician." By the time of the riot in July 1964, no complainant had won a case before the board, however.[106] Another source of hostility occurred shortly before the unrest when activist and comedian Dick Gregory traveled to Rochester to address a civil rights rally in May. On his way out of the city, the airport bar refused to serve him and other black leaders.[107] CORE had also been active in the city over the last few months, picketing, staging

a sit-in, organizing a rent strike, and coordinating a fast to highlight the inequalities in the city.[108] Racial strife was alive and well in the city of Rochester, New York, in the summer of 1964.

The incident that tipped this toxic mix of structural maladies and bad race relations in the city into a full-fledged riot began at the corner of Nassau Street and Joseph Avenue late on Friday, July 24. The Northeast Mothers Improvement Association was throwing a street dance that evening to raise money for a playground at a nearby children's park. Shortly after 11:00 p.m., the two white uniformed officers assigned to direct traffic and preserve peace at the gathering moved in on Randy Manigault who, they suggested, was intoxicated and acting in an "unruly manner." According to police reports, Manigault "violently resisted arrest" and "was very abusive verbally," so two plainclothes officers also at the scene stepped in to help. As tensions heightened between Manigault and the officers, the crowd became more animated and some even attempted to pull him away. More police soon converged to help, this time with dogs. A reporter at the street dance asserted that it was the arrival of the dogs that caused the scene to unravel. False rumors quickly went out that one of the dogs had bitten a girl and that an officer had slapped a pregnant woman. Just a few years earlier, the police force had pledged not to bring dogs to events where African Americans were predominantly in attendance. In just a matter of minutes the crowd had grown from approximately 200 to almost 500, and some began throwing rocks and bottles at the police, their cars, and any "civilian vehicles containing white people" that happened to be passing by.[109] The next morning, an article in the *New York Times* described what happened:

> The disorders spread over a 50-block area. At the height at least a half-dozen police cars were overturned. The personal automobile of Police Chief William Lombard was rolled over and burned. At least a dozen ambulances were sent into the area where the violence erupted. A number of stores were vandalized and one witness said several liquor stores and pharmacies were "stripped to the walls.[110]

By 12:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 25, Police Chief Lombard had arrived on the scene. Shortly thereafter the words "mob" and then "rioting" became part of the official discourse to describe what was going on. At 3:00 a.m., City Manager Porter W. Homer declared a state of emergency. At this time, officials tried to reach Governor Rockefeller to call in the state police, but his aide would not wake him. It was not until two hours later that Rochester's leadership received word that the state police were coming in to help. At 7:30 a.m., 250 state police marched down Joseph Avenue to try to disperse the crowd (to mixed success)—which had now grown to some 2,000 people by some estimates.[111] A preliminary assessment tallied 90 arrests, some 85 injuries,

and 60 looted or damaged businesses.[112] After the first night of rioting, Deputy Police Chief Clarence DePrez announced that it was clear that the riot had been “well organized” since the looters had steered clear of black-owned businesses. And the *New York Times* declared that “the ultimate looting was far more thorough than anything seen in Harlem in the last week. . . . The few Negro-owned establishments were spared, as were a Black Muslim mosque and the local headquarters of the Congress of Racial Equality.”[113]

In a television interview on Saturday morning, Constance Mitchell, the first woman and the first African American to be elected to the Monroe County Board of Supervisors, declared, “We are in the middle of a social revolution in this country, and I think that the same thing that happened in Rochester Friday night can happen to any other city in America.” An FBI agent investigating the center of unrest asserted, “The White House wants to know what’s going on.”[114] That afternoon, the city manager set a curfew for 8:00 p.m. to last until 7:00 the next morning. The New York Liquor Authority, at the request of city officials, also banned the sale of alcohol in Rochester and area communities through 5:00 p.m. on July 26, or until the violence ended.[115] But as news reports suggested, these measures did not help. “Widespread rioting and looting by Negroes,” the *New York Times* announced on Sunday, July 26, “broke out here last night for the second time in 24 hours. . . . The fighting erupted shortly after an 8 p.m. citywide curfew ordered by city officials went into effect. By 3 o’clock this morning, the fighting was still going on and was moving rapidly toward the main business district from the integrated residential area on the southwest side where it began.”[116] Police urged about 50 white families to leave the area temporarily because they could not guarantee their safety at this point. The rioting on this second night had shifted to Jefferson Avenue, Bronson Avenue, and Cady Street, a predominantly white area of the city that had begun to see the arrival of African Americans. Just before midnight, Mayor Frank Lamb went on television to announce that he would be looking into demands being made by some of the city’s African American leaders, but not until “order is restored in our community.” While open to forming a committee to examine the problems plaguing African American neighborhoods, appointing more African Americans to the police advisory board, hiring additional black social workers, and supporting more black businesses in the city, the mayor told reporters that he drew the line at the idea of the “deputizing of ‘responsible people’ in the riot-torn areas to help keep the peace.” Meanwhile, as the mayor tried to reassure the city on television, the streets remained violent. Police used tear gas to try to break up the outbursts cropping up in various locations across the city. Looting was now occurring in both white and integrated sections of Rochester, and the goods not hauled off in cars were destroyed. As police “moved in military formation down the streets,” some black residents “hooted and jeered.” Residents also put rocks across Jefferson Avenue to keep the police at

bay. A flying brick hit one of the patrolmen on the ankle. Both a restaurant and a grocery store in the neighborhood "were virtually destroyed by looters. All the windows were shattered and furniture and merchandise were hurled into the street." When the city jail became full, those arrested had to be taken to the county penitentiary. One white man died when a looter struck him on the head and he was then hit by a car that fled the scene (although the city medical examiner said he likely died as a result of the blow to his head). "The people are mad, mad, mad," one African American man declared in the midst of the turbulence. "What you see here is going to look like a Sunday school picnic after tonight. There are two sets of law, one for white and one for black. We just took enough of it. Police brutality, that's the name for it."

Police arrested another 120 rioters on Sunday, "a hot, humid day of violence." That afternoon a Civil Defense helicopter crashed into a house on Clarissa Street, killing the pilot and 2 people in the house (and eventually the Monroe County Civil Defense director, who died a month later from grave burns he suffered in the crash and an infection). Later that evening, Governor Rockefeller ordered 1,000 National Guardsmen to Rochester as a precaution to assist state and local police already in the city.[117] At 9:00 p.m. on Sunday, 150 Guardsmen in 10 trucks rumbled down Jefferson Avenue to tout their presence. By the next morning, the violence had ended.[118] Over the three nights of rioting, a total of 4 people died, 350 suffered injuries, and over 900 were arrested.[119] Most of those detained were men in their 20s and 30s with jobs and no prior arrests. Out of the 893 people arraigned (128 of them white), most received minor charges such as a curfew violation or disorderly conduct. And the vast majority had their sentences suspended. Although over 200 businesses had been looted and property damage ran into the millions, not many looters were prosecuted.[120] Governor Rockefeller flew to Rochester on Monday afternoon to visit the scene of the rioting. At a press conference, he stated that he knew of no "direct relation" between the violence in Rochester and New York City. "There is no indication that I have from any source at the present time of outside agitation," he asserted.[121] "We have no information that Communists or other subversive groups were involved in the riots," the FBI's Buffalo field office agent echoed as well. "From the information we have, it appears that the race riots were spontaneous as the result of the arrest of the youth." Supervisor Mitchell, however, put the situation in even starker terms: "[It] was not a race riot—this is war. Pull those National Guardsmen out and see what happens." Local NAACP official Arthur Whitaker took a more moderate approach. Both a minister and a sociologist, Whitaker highlighted the fact that whites were involved in the violence, as evidenced by arrest records; 15 percent of those whom police arrested were white youths. But there was no indication of interracial attacks over the weekend. The uprising instead stemmed from the city's African Americans' frustrations with police brutality and mistreatment by white business owners.[122]

Even though structural tensions and strained race relations permeated Rochester, the city's white leadership, news media, and merchants seemed caught off guard that racial violence could erupt there. "It's unbelievable that such a thing could happen in Rochester," Mayor Lamb asserted during the weekend uprising.[123] A Monday, July 27, article in the *Democrat & Chronicle* reiterated these sentiments. "Rochester," the article concluded, "is perhaps the most unlikely city in America for this to happen." Two days later, an article in the *Times Union* ran with the headline, "Rochester Outbreak Wasn't Expected." In another news article covering the rioting, a local pharmacy owner suggested that black residents had "nobody to blame but themselves. Rochester is one of the fairest cities in the country to the Negro." In still another article, a psychiatrist offered the solution of law and order that politicians had been calling for. "The only way to deal with a rioting mob," the psychiatrist concluded, "is with 'absolute firmness'." He "compared the situation to that of a naughty child and its parent. If the parent allows the child to get away with naughty acts, the child will only continue to do more of them."[124] Meanwhile, national officials also tuned in to the events in Rochester. In a telephone conversation on Monday, July 27, Attorney General Robert Kennedy and President Johnson discussed the situation in the city after the weekend of violence and expressed their concern over the violence spreading to other communities and what their response should be. Kennedy began:

> I've talked to the mayor [Frank Lamb] up in Rochester, who evidently is not a very strong figure. I thought that . . . on this whole problem—and I just pass the idea onto you, and then perhaps you'd think about it, and maybe we could work on it and see if it makes any sense—I think what really is required in these communities is . . . some action, particularly amongst the young people, that gives them the feeling that there's some hope. . . . Obviously with the Communists, with the Black Muslims, and just the no-gooders, you're not going to be able to do anything. Our experience in making the effort in juvenile delinquency is that that makes a hell of a difference. . . . Rochester's somewhat different. They have, you know, they have [a] very low rate of unemployment. They've got some dropouts there, but the situation is better. But you could have that kind of an explosion in a lot of these cities, and I would think that if it occurs during August and September and October, it could cause us some difficulty. I don't know that it's going to go on, but the fact that you have Harlem and Rochester is going to give some of these people ideas in some of these other communities.[125]

President Johnson agreed that something had to be done to prevent the unrest, and he wanted Kennedy to help him come up with a broader plan on poverty, jobs, and education.

On Wednesday, July 29, Roy Wilkins held a press conference to announce the decision by civil rights leaders of "a broad curtailment, if not total moratorium, of all mass marches, mass picketing and mass demonstrations until after Election Day, November 3." He also suggested a change in focus: "We call upon our members and supporters to utilize the months ahead to enlist voters, to expand the enforcement of the new Civil Rights Act and to win new friends and new supporters for the civil rights cause, which is not alone our cause but the cause of America." Largely blaming Senator Goldwater for inserting racism into the discourse of the presidential race, Wilkins also went on to condemn the riots in Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Rochester. "We would like to once again go on record as strongly opposing looting, vandalism or any type of criminal activities . . . which damages both the community and the civil rights movement." But he stressed that underlying conditions must be remedies as well. "In meeting these situations we call for more socially sensitive police action, for machinery for continuing communication and local civilian review. We suggest that leadership must seek in these situations justice and equality as well as law and order. Responsible Negro leadership needs desperately responsive white leadership, as it relates to jobs, improved housing and educational opportunities." Finally, he condemned radical elements that some people associated with the violence. "The established civil rights organization has by word, deed and constitution consistently rejected the participation of extremist groups, such as the Communists."[126] Not surprisingly, this step by traditional civil rights leaders was met with mixed responses. The *New York Times* asserted that it offered "a welcome indication of maturity and responsibility in a period of national trial for Negro and white alike." However, the newspaper also wondered how effective the measure would be. "The big question now is how successful the Negro groups will be in discouraging more explosions."[127] The black newspaper *Amsterdam News* called the ban "a wise move," but only because it would help reelect President Johnson. Less traditional black leaders proved more critical. "We'll continue to have demonstrations in Harlem," Jesse Gray retorted, "in spite of what Wilkins says. The only guarantee that President Johnson will act in the best interest of the Negroes is if Negroes keep demonstrating. If Negroes don't demonstrate, Goldwater will move Johnson to the right." Others suggested that no one would pay heed to the ban anyway. "Nobody is going to pay any attention to this ban," Reverend Milton Galamison of Brooklyn contended. "The people in the streets throwing bottles won't listen to these leaders anymore." From Egypt, Malcolm X announced, "I'd die before I'd tell Negroes to restrain themselves in the face of unjust attacks."[128]

The riots in New York shared several important features. Structural factors, such as rapid demographic change, high unemployment, poor housing conditions, and segregated schools, provided the backdrop to Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Rochester in 1964. Cultural conditions also played a role.

The push for equal rights, often cast in terms of the struggle in the South, was also going strong in the North. Organizations such as CORE and the NAACP pushed back against the inequalities of everyday life. Particularly in the realm of police brutality, the call for better treatment was growing louder. Into these tinderboxes dropped a spark—usually some sort of negative encounter between the police and an African American in the community. The convergence of these structural factors, cultural framing, and precipitating events proved powerful. African Americans used these uprisings as an avenue to vent their frustrations and dismay at the fact that white America still considered them second-class citizens. And in the summer of 1964, the events in New York proved to be only the beginning of this journey.

CHAPTER THREE

“The Blood Is Boiling in Our Veins”

The New York riots stoked fears across the country. Much of the concern stemmed from how the violence might affect the presidential election and set back the march forward for civil rights. “Every riot brings Barry thousands of votes,” a woman from Chicago wrote to CORE’s James Farmer after the Harlem riot. “Every sit-down or roll-in-the-dust demonstration, interfering with the right of citizens to pursue their legitimate activities, promotes the objectives of Barry and his fascists.” She accused Farmer of being “a leading campaigner for” the Republican candidate and wondered how he could raise the issue of police brutality when the police had to “defend themselves and decent citizens against mobs of vicious, snarling savages.” As revealed in their nuanced statement on July 29, black civil rights leaders found themselves walking a fine line between still wanting to push for equality and justice but condemning the violence that had erupted in New York. Although frustrated with the disorder and property destruction, “whether used by the racist or the reckless of any color,” Martin Luther King Jr. repeated his call for governments—at all levels—to take action to remedy the “environmental causes” of the unrest. “As long as thousands of Negroes in Harlem and all the little Harlems of our nation are hovered up in odorous, rat-infested ghettoes,” he asserted, “as long as the Negro finds himself smothering in the air-tight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; as long as the Negro feels like an exile in his own land . . . [and] as long as the Negro finds his flight toward freedom constantly delayed by strong headwinds of tokenism and small handouts by the white power structure, there will be an ever-present threat of violence and rioting.”[1]

King had traveled to New York on Monday, July 20, to meet with other civil rights leaders and Mayor Robert Wagner shortly after the violence erupted in

Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant. By Thursday, little progress had been made as a result of his conversations with city officials over the previous days. As King left Gracie Mansion, the mayor's home, for the last time that week on the afternoon of the 24th, he addressed reporters who had gathered there. Venting his exasperation primarily at Commissioner Michael J. Murphy, who remained unwilling to punish Lieutenant Thomas Gilligan or form a review board outside the jurisdiction of the police department, King suggested that Murphy proved "utterly unresponsive to either the demands or the aspirations of the Negro people. He is intransigent and has little understanding of the urgency of the situation." He warned that violence still bubbled below the surface in the city: "explosive possibilities are still there, and they will only subside to the degree the Administration seeks to remove the conditions that brought them on at first."[2] In a lengthy article entitled "Hot Summer" published on July 26, the *New York Times* explored those conditions in both the North and the South after the unrest in Harlem, Bed-Stuy, and Rochester:

> The cycle of discrimination that confronts the Negro in these and other Northern ghettoes is hard to break. There is job discrimination, resulting in low Negro income. The low income plus housing discrimination condemn the Negro to living in the slums. There is apathy toward education, disqualifying many Negroes for many jobs that might otherwise be available. The bleakness of the Negro's future often puts him in conflict with the authority wielded by the dominant white man and breeds hostility toward the enforcer of that authority, the policeman. The northern Negro has relatively little to show for all the years of pressure against such discrimination. As a result the talk this year of a "long, hot summer" has grown. The potential for explosion was clearly there. Ten days ago came the spark. . . . In the South, the focus last week was an effort to enforce the new Civil Rights Law, particularly in the Deep South. Thus in Atlanta the Civil Rights Act passed its first major test, as a three-judge Federal District Court unanimously ordered a hotel and a restaurant to comply with the public accommodations section of the law by Aug. 11. . . . In Mississippi, the first arrests involving the Civil Rights Act were made last week in Greenwood. Three white men were charged by the F.B.I. with conspiring to violate the law. . . . In St. Augustine, site of racial conflict for two months, there was new violence by segregationists last week. . . .
>
> Is there a solution for the problems underlying last week's racial violence? The problem in the North is different from the South. In the South, the discrimination the Negro seeks to overcome takes relatively crude forms such as keeping him out of places of public accommodation and preventing him from registering to vote. And there is now a Federal law designed to bring these barriers down—the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The new law, it is true, is being resisted in the hard-core segregationist regions of the Deep South, and the resistance is often expressed in white terrorism.

> But the die-hard area is shrinking. Over wide regions of the South the civil rights law is being complied with more readily than most Negro leaders had dared hope. In the North, where the Negro's right to public accommodation and the unrestricted ballot has long been a matter of local law, the act passed by Congress July 2 has little relevance. Here it is a question of raising the economic, social and cultural level of a whole section of the population. And that, experts agree, would require efforts and expenditures on the Federal, state and local levels of a greater magnitude than any made or planned thus far.
>
> What is not clear is what they plan to do—or can do—to prevent violence within a mass movement they do not completely control.[3]

And, indeed, more violence was on the way.

In the case studies that follow, I demonstrate that structural factors, cultural framing, and precipitating events merged to create riots in cities in New Jersey, Illinois, and Pennsylvania in August 1964.

Jersey City, Paterson, Elizabeth

The unrest in Jersey City began on the evening of Sunday, August 2, just after 8:00 p.m. According to the police, an intoxicated 26-year-old African American woman named Dolores Shannon had been noisily creating a disturbance outside a public housing complex located at Prior and Grand Streets. As the police came in to arrest her for disorderly conduct, Walter Mays, a 34-year-old African American man sitting on a nearby porch, tried to help her and was subsequently arrested himself for disorderly conduct. Shortly after they arrived at the Fourth Precinct station, a group of approximately 40 protesters converged, shouting chants about police brutality. The crowd stayed for only a short time but regrouped—with many more joining them, some estimates placing them at 500 (although many were "onlookers")—at around 10:00 p.m. at the location where Shannon and Mays had been arrested. "We're ready for you," they exclaimed, as 100 police wearing helmets appeared on the scene. "Come on! Come on!" Bottles, bricks, and trash-can lids rained down on the authorities when they moved in with their nightsticks to disperse the crowd. About 50 of those gathered broke off to attack an unfortunate white family driving by the area on their way home. The police rescued the mother and her two children and sent them to Jersey City Medical Center after their car windows had been broken and they had been beaten. Although by this time the police managed to disband the crowd, most of them did not go far. Small groups soon began breaking into stores and looting them in the 10-block black business district next to downtown. For the next few hours, a mix of protesters singing "We Shall Overcome" and other songs and local black leaders calling for peace were met with

"intermittent flare-ups" of violence. Officials from the Jersey City NAACP used a sound truck in the area to plead with people to go home, only to be met with shouts of "No, you go." By 2:30 a.m. on Monday, August 3, police had arrested five rioters but expected more.[4]

Mayor Thomas Whelan, who had been vacationing in Sussex County, arrived back in Jersey City early Monday morning. "We are not going to tolerate violence," he declared, "by any persons or groups." He also suggested that he was not surprised by the uprising, considering "what happened in New York." Rioting there helped foster the tensions in Jersey City, he asserted, and "rioting is contagious."[5] Later that day, leaflets distributed by the "Labor-Negro-Vanguard Conference" appeared outside the public housing complex where the unrest had started. They read, "Now is the time for action, not talk. Don't be fooled by Negro leaders that tell you to go home, wait, be patient, act intelligent."[6] Meanwhile, Jersey City's elected black officials and local CORE and NAACP leaders gathered to discuss the unfolding crisis in their city and how they might respond to it. On Monday afternoon, they met with approximately 200 of the city's African American residents—"most in their late teens or early 20's"—at NAACP headquarters to hear their grievances (in 1964, roughly one-fifth of Jersey City's 280,000 residents were black). The *New York Times* provided a description of the meeting:

> They heard youths' complaints about police brutality and indignities from whites and repeated references to what have become the chief demands of the Northern Negro movement: Better jobs, housing and education. Because of the large number of youths in trouble here, the leaders added a fourth demand—better recreational facilities. . . . Feelings ran high, and several persons clamored for a chance to speak at the same time. . . . Someone shouted: "Let's do what we did last night!" Others took up the cry.[7]

Outside the building, still others gathered to debate what might happen next. "It's all up to what 'the man' [the white man] decides now," one black youth concluded. Race relations in the city, he declared, would hinge on Mayor Whelan's decision to listen or not to black residents' pleas to "hire more Negro policemen, treat us like humans, clean up the place, make it look like a decent place to live." But after an 8:30 p.m. gathering between city officials and black leaders and clergy, prospects appeared dim. "A far as I'm concerned," the mayor told reporters after the 26-minute meeting, "they presented us no formal demands." He later added, "I will not permit a small group of agitators to intimidate us. One per cent of this city will not rule 99 per cent." Raymond Brown, head of the local NAACP chapter, provided his perspective on the short meeting by noting that "nothing of value happened." James Bell, Jersey City's CORE leader, concluded that Mayor Whelan

was "going to solve the problem with a nightstick." Finally, one white clergyman interviewed by reporters replied, "I'm heartbroken."[8]

Unfortunately, just before the meeting got under way, violence was breaking out for a second night in a row in Jersey City. "The first sign of trouble was in Ward F, the Negro section," the *New York Times* stated the next day. Around 8:15 p.m. Monday, August 3, calls started coming in to police that teens were throwing rocks at cars driven by whites at the intersection where the previous night's unrest began. A few minutes later, a group of rioters attempted to topple a police car passing by. The scene was tense: "Policemen armed with shotguns and pistols stood their ground at the intersection of Grand Street and Woodward Street as Negroes threw rocks and bombs at them. Several hundred shots were fired into the air and the crowds retreated into back alleys of the project. However, the youths regrouped and attacked the police again and again, coming out of the shadows in waves." Eventually, they broke into smaller groups and expanded out from the Grand Street area. "At the Duncan housing project, for example, on the west side of the Negro section, there was scattered looting of small shops and much window-breaking and other vandalism." Unlike the previous night, on Monday, rioters even ventured into white areas of the city. "In portions of the city that were untouched by Sunday night's rioting, groups of whites gathered on corners and in front of taverns to listen to sirens and to news on transistor radios. But late last night, they found that they, too, were in the riot zones. One car containing marauders who were throwing rocks at other cars was stopped a block from Police Headquarters. Sunday night's riot include much looting of stores; last night's resembled more a small military battle."[9] Participants used "gasoline bombs, bricks and rocks in a running fight with the police," and by 11:00 p.m. Police Chief Joseph Smith announced that rioting was occurring "all over the city." By this time, some 400 police from Jersey City and nearby areas reported for riot duty. Rioters also targeted city buses near Grand Street and Pacific Avenue. One driver "was dragged out of his bus and beaten," and a passenger "was hospitalized after rioters beat him." Two of the rioters—a 17-year-old and a 24-year-old—were shot by police and six other individuals suffered injuries. Sixteen people had been arrested. By 1:30 a.m. Tuesday morning, Grand Street, "the axis of the riot," was quiet.[10]

But a few hours later, the violence resumed. "The scattered outbreaks of violence today began in the morning," the *New York Times* reported in an article dated August 5. "Two Molotov cocktails were tossed at patrol cars about 10 A. M., but they missed. Later, six rubbish fires broke out in a vacant, three-story frame building, and two men were arrested for throwing rocks at policemen. Through the day and night, the Jersey City policemen seemed relaxed but alert."[11] Some 400 police confined the rioters to two primarily black neighbors, and another 500 police "stood ready."[12] Meanwhile, Mayor Whelan met with Jersey City's director of the Community and Neighborhood

Development Organization, or CAN DO, and other officials associated with that organization. Subsidized by public funds and akin to the Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, the organization's mission centered on solving social issues in the city. They agreed that it would be a good idea to petition Washington for federal funding to create jobs in the city. One meeting participant suggested that "CAN DO felt that Federal agencies had funds that could be used in various social welfare projects here, and that the city should ask for them." Their specific targets included "a subsidized work program for youths and young adults," money for more housing projects, and funding for a new school. Later that night around 10:00 p.m., the mayor visited the police command post near most of the unrest. Police Chief Smith described the violence to him as "sporadic." Firebombs thrown from "darkened second-and-third story windows" posed the biggest threat. Police arrested 5 people for throwing firebombs and another man for trying to coax others into marching on City Hall. In all, over 35 people had been arrested since the rioting began on Sunday night, and some 30 individuals had suffered injuries. Also around 10:00 p.m., a group of black clergy circulated through the black neighborhoods with a sound machine to announce that city officials would open at least two area playgrounds the next day that had been closed due to funding issues. The clergy members themselves had bought new equipment and volunteered to staff the playgrounds. According to the *New York Times*, "One of the prime complaints of the Negro community heard here since the rioting started has been over the lack of proper recreational facilities."[13] Both city officials and black leaders were striving to find a balance between reassuring black residents that their voices were being heard, while at the same time stressing the need for order.

Indeed, on Tuesday, Mayor Whelan tried to walk that line when he issued a statement at a news conference:

> To all Negroes in Jersey City, may I say that I not only sympathize with your cause—I support it. But I will neither support nor tolerate outbreaks of violence or terror by any citizen or any group of citizens, whether they be black or white. . . . Anyone who attacks a policeman had better be prepared to come off second best and will most certainly suffer any consequences. . . . I am not going to permit Jersey City to become another Harlem or another Rochester because of the actions of a few terrorists, intent upon destroying years of excellent relations in our city among all races. The complaint has been raised of "police brutality." There is no excuse for the use of unnecessary force on the part of the police. Where there has been brutality it will be dealt with sternly. But every citizen must understand that pillaging, looting, hooliganism and hoodlumism are hardly the way to right a wrong. . . . The rioting that broke out in this city as the aftermath of a routine arrest is another piece in the fabric of pressure

> being wrapped around enforcement agencies. I will not hamstring our police department and I will not license lawbreaking. This is simply a case of hoodlumism versus law and order and I am determined that law and order will win.[14]

While saying some words of comfort to black residents, there was no doubt that the mayor's loyalty stood firmly on the side of order. And like officials in New York City, Whelan also resisted the idea of a civilian review board overseeing accusations of police brutality. "If there's going to be any civilian handling of this stuff," he asserted, "I'm the guy who'll do it."[15] The next day, the *New York Times* published an editorial with a similar emphasis. "Once again it must be said, for Jersey City and elsewhere, first that law and order must be enforced and secondly that responsible elements, Negro and white, in government and out, must act to restrain the extremists and above all to set vigorously about the task of correcting the basic causes of the violence." The newspaper's editorial board also laid out some sympathy for the plight of African Americans. "When the body politic is sick, as is the case in this respect in the United States, the search for remedies must not falter. It is to state the obvious to say that the social evils of racial inequality in the United States have to be eradicated, but it is also obvious that this cannot be done quickly or easily. . . . It is not surprising that certain elements among the Negroes—desperate, reckless, impatient—should seek the violent, essentially revolutionary solution."[16]

In an article published in the *New York Times*, civil rights leader Junius Griffin explored some of those issues of inequality plaguing impoverished African Americans in Jersey City:

> There are about 275,000 residents in Jersey City, the state's second largest city, and about 17 per cent are Negroes, mostly living in Ward F. . . . Nearly 2,000 Ward F families live in three low-rent, public housing developments, including Lafayette Gardens, where last night's rioting started. Behind Lafayette Gardens is a playground with 14 swings in it and an iron wire fence around it. Weeds grow through the playground's cracked concrete floor, and the fence gate is locked because of an economy move so that children who want to play there must burrow under the fence. At Booker T. Washington Houses, another development, the playground consists of a single pole with a basketball ring atop it. The streets of Ward F, even before the rioting added broken glass and bricks and bottles to the litter, looked as if a garbage truck hadn't made its rounds in weeks. Most Ward F people are poor. The women who are not on welfare are employed as domestics or in factories or in laundries. The men do what little construction work they can find, but they say they are denied union membership. Unlike many other Negro ghettos in the North, Ward F has virtually no community

> leadership and few spokesmen. . . . There are a branch of the Congress of Racial Equality and a branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Jersey City, but both are virtually ignored by Ward F residents. Fred Martin, the Negro City Councilman from Ward F, has "completely lost touch with the youth of the area," according to one observer. He is the first elected Negro official in the city's history.[17]

Born in Jersey City, the 34-year-old Reverend Castle began earning the trust of the black residents of Ward F shortly after he became rector of St. John's in 1960. As he walked through the predominantly black neighborhoods on Wednesday, August 5, he "was greeted and waved at by nearly every person in sight at Booker T. Washington Gardens." When he asked some of the youths if the violence had subsided in the city, they reassured him, "Yeah, Father. Everything looks quiet." And, fortunately, no rioting broke out that night. Castle knew, however, that the potential remained—and he intended to continue to fight for social justice even as he and his family received threats because of his "radical" ideas. "The church needs to dream again about changing the world," he asserted. "You can't go around any more with Bandaids just patching this rathole here that rathole there. The conditions that caused the riots are cancerous and must be cut out by surgery—peacefully. And the moving force must come from the white community. They cannot ignore their responsibilities for these conditions."[18]

And, indeed, earlier on Wednesday morning Mayor Whelan met for three hours with some of Jersey City's clergy and seemed—according to some of those in attendance—somewhat more open to hearing their perspective than he had even a day earlier. Councilman Martin, however, remained skeptical. "Whelan and his boys think they're still living in 1940 or 1950," he posited in an interview. "They think they can still get away with the police beating the hell out of Negroes with clubs. Well, they can't. It's a new day. When the rioting ends, when things calm down again, we're going to hit him on everything—schools, housing, jobs, everything. We're not going to let him off the hook." Local NAACP leader Raymond Brown concluded that the mayor was "a typical product of his time—absolutely unable to comprehend what's going on. . . . He and the clerics have been blinded to the fact that this is a group of kids making a protest against terrible conditions in the only way they know." At a news conference after the meeting, Mayor Whelan admitted that he had no plans to introduce any new programs in response to the violence. Rather, he pledged "to press vigorously for the programs we already have under way."[19] A few days after the unrest had died down in Jersey City, the mayor suggested in a television interview that the city—and particularly its black communities—needed federal funds to revitalize "a shrinking economical and industrial base," especially in the areas of education, housing, recreation, and sanitation.[20] Meanwhile, at the federal level, President Johnson

followed events in New Jersey (as he had in New York) with interest. On August 4, one of the most momentous days of his presidency, he spoke with New Jersey governor Richard Hughes by telephone. Much of the day was consumed by debates and decisions over how to respond to the Gulf of Tonkin incident, which had occurred two days earlier. Also in the hour and a half before his call with the governor, Johnson received word of the discovery of the bodies of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, the civil rights activists murdered in Mississippi earlier that summer. Johnson's conversation with Hughes centered primarily on suspicions of outside agitators involved in starting the unrest in Jersey City. "I'm very much . . . very suspicious, Mr. President," Governor Hughes responded when Johnson asked about the "rioting situation." "There was an Italian fellow that came over to agitate this from Brooklyn, or some place, last night. And they held him at $5,000 bail as the ringleader, and he put up the bail pretty fast. And there were about 26 other people arrested, and they put up from . . . varying amounts—100 to 500 [dollars] up—and this doesn't look like civil rights money to me."[21]

A few days later, Johnson spoke with labor leader Walter Reuther by telephone and expressed frustration over the continued unrest in northern cities, particularly after the announcement of his plans for the War on Poverty as well as the passage of the Civil Rights Act and his plans to ensure its enforcement. "I dropped nine points in New York in the last two weeks because of [civil disorders in] Rochester and Brooklyn and New Jersey," Johnson lamented. "And you can't take another nine-point drop. And I don't see that they're getting a thing there. They said . . . Our argument was—Bobby Kennedy's and Jack Kennedy's and mine—to all these lawyers and preachers and everybody we talk to, was let's take it out of the streets and into the courts." He also reiterated his (and other government leaders') fears of radical elements stirring up trouble. "And Walter," he declared, "I'll tell you on my word of honor, every riot is led primarily by members of the Communist Party."[22] The FBI would soon announce, however, that although radicals and communists took advantage of heightened racial tensions, they held no real culpability in the northern urban riots during the summer of 1964. Nonetheless, much to Johnson's dismay, the unrest was only halfway over. Four more riots would occur over the next few weeks.

The next round of violence exploded in the cities of Paterson and Elizabeth, New Jersey. Sharing similarities with Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Rochester, and Jersey City, these struggling industrial centers were feeling strains over housing, employment, and police relations. As *Time* magazine described it:

> Trouble erupted first in Paterson, a city of 146,000 people (one-sixth of them Negroes), when a pack of carousing teen-agers in the slum Fourth Ward began pelting passing police cars with bottles and rocks. Soon

> hundreds of Negroes were racing through the streets, smashing windows and hurling debris at police. Almost simultaneously, 20 miles south of Paterson, hit-and-run bombers in Elizabeth, a city of 110,000 people (with 20,000 Negroes), pitched Molotov cocktails into three taverns. Before long, hundreds of Negroes were flinging bottles and bricks from rooftops and street corners.
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> Both cities had been braced for trouble. “Ever since the Harlem riots,” said Paterson Mayor Frank X. Graves Jr., 40, a tough ex-tank commander, “we’ve been on pins and needles.” For three nights, angry mobs shattered store windows and clashed with helmeted riot cops. On Elizabeth’s waterfront, center of the rioting there, 300 Negro youths scuffled with the police and with 100 white toughs.
>
> All told, 20 people were injured and 83—many of them hoodlums with previous records—were arrested. One man charged with smashing windows in Paterson was swiftly convicted and sentenced to a year in jail.[23]

But at least some of Paterson’s black residents had a different take. “These cops,” lamented one young black rioter, “they’ll stop your car and say, ‘All right, nigger, get out,” and you’ll have to swallow that. Then they’ll say, ‘You niggers get up against that wall,’ and they’ll smash you in the ribs, and you’ll have to swallow that, too. And pretty soon you’ll get tired of swallowing, so you wait for one of their cars to come by and you try to get it with a brick. Or you try to get into one of these stores around here, ’cause they’re all the same—all these white people is the same.”[24] And, indeed, on Tuesday, August 11, about 300 of Paterson’s black residents had reached their breaking point. According to the *New York Times*, that night they “ran through their neighborhood smashing windows, terrifying bus passengers and throwing stones and other missiles at the police.”[25] The violence broke out as teens returned home from a dance sponsored by the City Board of Recreation when they started throwing rocks at police cars driving by. This set off over three hours of violence in an area of 10 square blocks.[26] Black residents in Elizabeth soon followed suit. For three days, rioting continued on and off in both locations, and some 37 businesses suffered damage in the process.[27]

On the second day of rioting, Paterson mayor Frank X. Graves Jr. ordered all bars closed in the black area of the city, and suggested that the police stood “ready to use armored personnel carriers, sawed-off shotguns, tear gas and the ‘full resources of the Fire Department.’ The basic weapon will still be the nightstick. We will not use guns unless the lives of the police or the property of the police are threatened. Then we will shoot to kill.” Later at a press conference he backed off the claim of using deadly force in response to property damage but estimated that between 300 and 500 individuals had participated in the violence over a 50-square-block area. He also asserted that Paterson’s violence did not stem from outside agitators. “This was a local incident.”

As in the other riot cities, local clergy and civil rights leaders circulated at the scenes of unrest using loudspeakers to urge people out on the streets to go home.[28] On the third night of rioting, Augustus Harrison, the New Jersey state leader of the NAACP, visited Paterson and expressed his frustration with city officials. "The civil rights leadership has not been able to reach these youngsters," he expressed. "The white power structure hasn't given us anything to take back to them." Reporter Fred Powledge concluded that in Paterson, "Those who rioted stated no specific grievances. Local civil rights leaders have interpreted the violence as a reaction against inferior housing, jobs and education, but they have argued that the troublemakers were not rioting in the name of civil rights." Mayor Graves concurred that civil rights leaders were not to blame for the violence. "[A]ll those arrested had previous records," he stressed. Moreover, those individuals participating in the unrest, according to the mayor, were "the worst hoodlums that man ever conceived."[29] In a special report for the *New York Times*, civil rights leader Junius Griffin interviewed and wrote about some of the leaders of the unrest in Paterson and their link to currents of African American life in the United States:

> And, as is not unusual in other cities, the white leadership has been largely indifferent to the needs and aspirations of the Negro population. This breakdown in communications has been complicated by the fact that many of the city's Negroes are recent immigrants from the South, unfamiliar with urban living, its pitfalls and opportunities. Unemployment is high, perhaps 20 per cent of the labor force. . . . The voice of the district's Negro Alderman is largely lost among his 10 white colleagues. The city has no important appointed Negro official. The Fourth votes almost solidly Democratic and Mayor Graves is a Democrat, but many Negroes believe that he is trying to exploit white prejudices in his handling of the racial outbreaks to insure his re-election this fall. But the Negro clergymen who have attempted to restore order believe that it is not the thousands of Fourth Ward residents, despite their poverty and ignorance and reasonable grievances, who have caused the rioting. Rather, they say, it is the 400 or 500 youths from 16 to 22 who lounge in front of the decaying frame stores and tenements.[30]

Like younger African Americans in other riot cities that summer, Paterson's expressed their frustrations out on the streets. After three nights, however, peace prevailed in the city. Some residents credited the calm to the absence of police in the black neighborhoods starting on August 14. Unlike the previous three nights when some 200 police swarmed in, only 4 patrolmen in two cars drove through the area. Moreover, Mayor Graves pledged publicly that the city would reap the full benefits of the federal antipoverty act that was expected to be signed by President Johnson the following week.[31]

Meanwhile, in Elizabeth, Mayor Steven J. Bercik cautioned the people engaged in violence that they would be prosecuted "vigorously." He also vowed that, although he had met with black residents to discuss their complaints of police brutality, poor housing quality and living conditions, scarcity of jobs, and the absence of recreational facilities, he would not contemplate a resolution until the rioting had come to a halt.[32] Later he reiterated, "I do not want the rioters, or those involved in promoting civil rights to think that they can accomplish their aims by violence—by blackmailing public officials in this manner."[33] On August 14, the day after things settled down in Paterson and Elizabeth, New Jersey governor Hughes praised the police in both cities for their "firm resistance" to the violence. He also commended the work of the magistrates in both locales for the harsh sentences that they handed down to the participants convicted in the unrest. "There must be an end," he asserted, "to violence in our streets. I want to make it clear, the full resources of the state are behind any city that needs them." Hughes also scolded the media for "insist[ing] on describing the recent New Jersey disturbances as racial clashes." He disavowed calling what had happened in the state *race* "riots or uprisings" because the clashes were "in no way, shape or form fights of black against white." He continued, "If you count, I'll bet you'll find that 99.5 per cent of Negro families resent these riots and are frightened of them. There are always anti-social elements of all races looking for opportunities to throw stones, make Molotov cocktails or loot stores." As the violence wound down in both New Jersey cities, the governor remained in touch with both mayors and promised to send in the state police or National Guard if asked. As an added measure, he "also alerted his bipartisan commission on civil rights to the problem and directed both the state police and the State Division on Civil Rights to place observers in the affected areas of the two cities."[34] For the time being, however, the violence had ended in New Jersey. Unfortunately, unrest hit Illinois next.

Dixmoor

Nineteen miles south of downtown Chicago and 10 miles west of Indiana, Dixmoor, Illinois, had 3,100 residents in 1964, 60 percent of whom were African Americans and 40 percent white. Like people in other riot locations that summer, some locals expressed surprise at the incident that began on Saturday, August 15. Particularly to whites, on the surface, everything seemed fine. "We've had Negroes living here right along," Dixmoor police chief Stanley Gruszczyk stated after the violence broke out. "I didn't think a place could be any more integrated."[35] However, much like living conditions for African Americans in Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Rochester, Jersey City, Paterson, and Elizabeth, conditions for African Americans in Dixmoor—particularly when mixed with a toxic incident—revealed a citizenry on edge.

The Northeastern Illinois Metropolitan Area Commission rated the Chicago suburb a 15, its poorest score, on occupation level, education, and income. In all the Chicago suburban region, Dixmoor ranked 231 out of 250 in living standards, educational benefits, and income. Harvey, Illinois, just to the east of Dixmoor, where many of the riot participants lived, shared similar conditions. Harvey had over 30,000 residents, and had gone from a city of 6.9 percent African Americans in 1960 to one with almost a third of the population being African American in 1964. Many lived in low-income housing, and a high concentration of African Americans settled in the northwest section of the city, very close to where the riot began. Moreover, the unemployment rate stood at 9.3 percent for 18- to 24-year-olds, more than double the overall rate for the city. That summer, the region suffered an intense heat wave as well. In June, there had been 11 days of 90 degree or higher temperatures. And although the average was typically 7 days, July experienced 12 days of 90 or above, too. August was on track to do the same.[36] Even the heat was doing its part to fulfill the long, hot summer narrative.

The spark that set off the unrest in Dixmoor in 1964 centered on an incident that occurred at the Foremost Liquors store on 147th Street. The owner of the store, Michael LaPota, had an arrest record, once for shooting an alcohol tax agent who raided a still run by LaPota's father in 1933 (for which "Big Mike"—as he was known—spent 18 months in prison), and twice again in the 1960s—once for receiving stolen whiskey and not keeping good business records and once for two counts of battery. Described as an "extremely hard worker" and a "very tough man, used to getting his way," LaPota, his wife, and his son opened the store on Saturday, August 15, much like any other day. Just after 4:00 that afternoon, however, a scuffle, involving LaPota himself, broke out at the store. A few minutes earlier, Blondella Woods, an African American woman from Chicago, and her father (or perhaps a friend, according to some sources) came in, walked around, and eventually picked out two glasses to buy. After she paid and started to leave, Big Mike reached over and tapped a fifth of gin that Woods had hidden in her clothing and urged her to either pay the $2.69 for the bottle or put it back where she got it. She asserted that she had not taken it, and reportedly she hit LaPota over the head with another bottle when he grabbed her to stop her from leaving. Two accounts emerged of what happened next. LaPota and his lawyer claimed that a "violent struggle" erupted causing $60 worth of broken liquor bottles. Then 10 to 15 "Black Muslims" suddenly showed up and yelled at Big Mike for "beating a Negro woman." According to Woods, however, LaPota "slapped her around" and then watched while his son hit her with a club. It was now 4:22 p.m., and someone called the Dixmoor Police to summon them. An officer reached the store within seconds but was met by a group of African American protesters. He quickly retreated to his car and called for backup.[37]

Reports began to spread through the gathering and increasingly hostile crowd that Woods had been held down in the back of the store and beaten. In the meantime, the police took her to the station to book her on charges of shoplifting. After her arrival, she asserted that LaPota had hurt her and should be charged with assault and battery. She also insisted on being taken to a nearby hospital for her injuries, and the police complied. Back at Foremost Liquors, a man named Erwin X urged the congregated protesters to become more assertive. Shouts of "Get Whitey" rang out. Around 6:30 p.m., Woods left the hospital (where the doctor found "no visible injuries," but suggested "there might be something to her complaint of a sprained shoulder"), then posted bond back at the police station and was released.[38] The crowd in front of LaPota's store had now grown to approximately 150 people. Some chanted (including shouts of "Gestapo, Gestapo" targeted at the police) and marched along 147th Street. Some carried signs that read "Big Mike Must Go," "Dixmoor Police Are Afraid of Big Mike," "Mike's a Coward," and "Big Mike Beats Negro Woman."[39] Police from nearby departments, Cook County sheriff's deputies, and state troopers converged on the scene to help Dixmoor's five-person police force. At 11:30 p.m., LaPota closed his store, and although some protesters remained at the scene, by 2:15 a.m., Sunday, August 16, all visiting police had left, and things appeared to be back to normal in Dixmoor. The day had ended with no violence.[40]

Around 10:30 a.m. Sunday morning, protesters arrived at Foremost Liquors to continue their march. Rumors flowed, and voices calling for both calm and drastic action could be heard. John Hebert, the chair of the local CORE chapter, admonished the growing and increasingly hostile crowd to remember what "Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. accomplished through non-violence" and pledged to support "an intensified program to combat discriminatory practices" in Dixmoor. Clergy from the surrounding area, as well as a number of civil rights leaders, encouraged the people present to work within the system to fight for better conditions. "We have gone too far in Civil Rights," Syd Finley, a local NAACP official, declared, "to get involved in violent acts." More radical voices began to win, however. Yells of "Get Whitey," "Gestapo," "Action now," and "Call me slave" filled the air.[41] On Sunday afternoon, the police took two steps to attempt to ease the growing tension: they arrested LaPota based on Woods's accusations of assault and battery, and Police Chief Gruszczyk convinced Woods herself to speak with the now angry crowd to exhort them to disperse and follow the leaders of CORE in nonviolent action. Unfortunately, neither measure worked. At approximately 6:40 p.m., someone from the crowd threw a rock at the Foremost Liquors neon sign, wiping out half the letters in "Foremost". That appeared to be the signal for the violence to begin. Another rock crashed through the front windows, and the mob rushed in to begin looting Big Mike's store. A special report for the *New York Times* laid out what happened this way:

> Policemen from state, county and local levels threw tear-gas grenades last night at the rioters in Dixmoor after they tried to charge through a line of policemen guarding the liquor store. Capt. John D. Henry of the state police said small-arms fire whizzed over the heads of his men as they were advancing to dislodge the rioters from their hiding places. All street lights in the area were knocked out. After breaking every window in the store and stealing some bottles of liquor, the rioters turned on passing cars in a boulevard. Windshields on some of the cars were broken, and two state troopers were struck by stones thrown at them while in their squad cars. . . . State Police Capt. Clyde Oliver described the . . . outbreak as a "full-scale riot." During the disturbance, policemen wore helmets and plastic face masks to protect themselves from the rocks and other debris hurled through the air. Many squad cars were pelted with stones and bottles, and policemen walked the streets with shotguns.[42]

The unrest had erupted quickly. "Give us all the help you can," the police radio crackled out to all nearby departments, "all hell is breaking loose." Molotov cocktails hit the roof of the liquor store, as the rioters made it their goal to destroy Foremost Liquors. Any white person in the area fled swiftly to avoid attack. "You'd better leave quick, Daddy-O," some in the crowd warned reporters on the scene, "while you still can."[43]

Sunday night into Monday morning proved to be the most intense phase of the violence. "I never got hit with a rock in Mississippi or Alabama," one *Chicago Daily News* reporter revealed, "but I got hit in the right forearm Sunday night."[44] Overnight, the Harvey Fire Department used over 5,000 gallons of water to help police quell the crowd and to put out fires. Rioters lobbed projectiles at anyone in the immediate area and then began moving into nearby blocks in order to try to thwart police and firefighters from containing the unrest. Finally Cook County sheriff Richard Ogilvie reached the scene and began to coordinate the assorted law enforcement officials who responded to the plea for help in containing the chaos. After securing a perimeter, setting up a command center, and informing those assisting him that "If anyone shoots, we're shooting back," Ogilvie led some 40 officers into the riot zone.[45] They marched in a V formation and began arresting anyone who refused to leave the area. Ogilvie later stated that over 1,000 people participated in the riot.[46] Twenty-five people who would not disperse were arrested on the spot, as well as 25 or so young whites as they went toward the area of unrest to "get a nigger," and a few African Americans from Chicago and nearby suburbs who had come to lend support to Dixmoor's black community. Finally, at around 2:00 a.m. on Monday, August 17, authorities had the riot area under control—at least for a few hours.[47]

To try to maintain calm, Harvey's police chief, Matt Romer, and mayor, Elmer Turngren, announced the following course of action: they would be

limiting access to the area surrounding Foremost Liquors, where most of the rioting occurred, between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.; securing the agreement of store owners to close at 6:00 p.m.; and prohibiting the sale of alcohol, guns, and ammunition in the region temporarily. Although officials had remained hopeful that the violence was over, a group of between 100 and 150 protesters reemerged between Vail Avenue and 147th Street and 148th Street on Monday afternoon. For the next few hours an uneasy standoff existed between those gathered in the streets and the police. Police arrested a few individuals for disorderly conduct when bricks, bottles, and rocks flew at them. People in the crowd turned over and burned a car, and jeers and spit were also directed at the police to the cry of "Pigs go home." Rioters set Foremost Liquors on fire again with Molotov cocktails. Police also arrested a "Black Muslim agitator" who, they said, had inspired the unruly mob. At 9:22 p.m. the call went out for help from neighboring jurisdictions. As a crowd of 80 to 100 rioters tried to cross 147th Street from Harvey, police confronted them with their guns out and a police dog ready to charge. Rocks, bricks, and bottles thrown at the police by rioters were met with tear gas in return. At 11:00 p.m., police made one final storm into the crowd, which seemed to take the energy out of the unrest. By 11:30, the riot had mostly ended.[48] The final arrest count stood at 80, 57 people had been hurt, and only two buildings suffered damage—Foremost Liquors and the Dixie Hi Golf Course Clubhouse, which was set on fire the following night in a last act of defiance by "three Negro youths."[49]

On Tuesday, August 18, members of the clergy and civil rights leaders invited the mayors and other officials of Dixmoor and Harvey to meet with the community at 6:00 p.m. Black leaders held conflicting views on how to proceed. Some, such as local NAACP leader Syd Finley, stressed the need to push for nonviolent change. "We have gone too far in civil rights to get involved in violent acts," he told the group of about 150 that had gathered at the Second Baptist Church of Harvey, "and that is what has happened in Dixmoor. Don't be a political football. We have been turning the other cheek in the past. Can't we turn the other cheek one more time?" Some shouts of "No" could be heard in response. Reverend Napoleon Davis, the pastor of the church hosting the meeting, hit a more urgent note. "Now is the time for us to get what we want," he argued. "I don't think we should cool off now. We should have a meeting with the mayor immediately." Reverend William Billingplen, assistant pastor of Chicago's Progressive Baptist Church, agreed with pushing for quick action. He announced to the crowd that he had contacted the Illinois Human Relations Commission to request a citizen's advisory committee to facilitate an airing of complaints and ideas on how to remedy the problems facing Dixmoor. As the meeting progressed, the majority in attendance seemed to agree that violence was not ideal but that the riot might spur the white power structure to tune in more to the plight of their

African American neighbors. Discrimination, unequal opportunities in education, housing, and unemployment, and general poverty had to be addressed. By the end of the evening, NAACP leader Finley tried to reassure the crowd that he understood their pain even as he called for a calm response. He, too, had been in touch with state and even national officials (Illinois governor Otto Kerner, U.S. attorney general Robert Kennedy, and FBI director J. Edgar Hoover) to ask for an investigation into the use of tear gas and dogs on the rioters.[50] While the immediate violence had ended in Dixmoor and Harvey, continued soul-searching would occur both there and in the summer's other riot cities as to the underlying conditions that contributed to the unrest. In the meantime, the next city to experience unrest that August was about to explode.

Philadelphia

With about 2 million people, Philadelphia was the fourth-largest city in the United States in 1964. About 550,000 African Americans lived there, or a little over a quarter of the population, many of whom resided in the northern section of the city referred to as "the Jungle." As in other cities, whites had begun their exodus to the Philadelphia suburbs by this time; over the decade of the 1950s, the white population plummeted 81 percent in North Philadelphia, while the black population rose 50 percent. Consisting of about four square miles, the Jungle had a reputation among whites of being "Philadelphia's greatest shame, greatest menace and greatest challenge." In describing the district, journalist William Weart wrote, "The children of the Jungle play in narrow streets, between parked cars, on sidewalks and in junk piles, rubble where homes stood, and in vacant, battered houses awaiting the wrecker's crane."[51] To alleviate crime in the area, the city earmarked $2.4 million for new recreational accommodations. When Mayor James H. J. Tate revealed the initiative in May 1964, he asserted that North Philadelphia had "the most juvenile crime, adult crime, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, unemployment, poverty and other social ailments."[52] The *New York Times* stated shortly after the unrest erupted in August, "Like most Negroes in other metropolitan areas, the Negroes of Philadelphia have grievances over their housing, educational facilities and job opportunities. Over the past year or two there have been demonstrations or picketing against a construction job for alleged discrimination; against the moving of a Negro family into a previously all-white suburb; against the use of blackface makeup by Mummers in their annual New Year's Day parade." The *Times* went on: "Last week Philadelphia became the seventh American city to experience large-scale race riots since the Civil Rights Act was passed in July. The outbreak followed the general pattern seen in New York and Rochester in New York State, Chicago's suburb of Dixmoor, and Jersey City, Paterson and Elizabeth in New Jersey."[53]

The incident that sparked the violence began on Friday, August 28, at around 9:30 p.m., when two policemen reached North Philadelphia to answer a call about a car blocking traffic. Their presence appeared to heighten the tension rather than calm the people involved. The seemingly mundane situation escalated quickly. According to police reports, when the patrolmen, Robert Wells, who was black, and John Hoff, who was white, arrived on the scene, a three-way intersection at Columbia Avenue, a man and woman inside the car were arguing. When they asked the woman, Odessa Bradford, to get out of the car so it could be moved off the road, she declined. Wells then forcibly removed her, pulling her out by her wrists; handcuffed her; and then—along with Hoff—put her in a police wagon. As they did so, a crowd began to gather around and then surge in toward them, exclaiming that they were hurting Bradford. One man, 41-year-old James Nettles, punched Hoff in the head and knocked him down. The police quickly put out an "assist patrolman" call (an alert that someone on the police force is in peril), "the first of 50 that went out during the night."[54] Rumors began to spread that the white patrolman had beaten and killed a pregnant black woman.[55] "Rocks and bottles showered down on the policemen who rushed to the scene," reported Joseph Lelyveld for the *New York Times*. "Finally, they were able to contain the mob. But an hour and a half later, violence broke out again and the looting began. It spread up and down Columbia and Ridge Avenues, west of Broad Street, the main north-south street, and was not contained until daybreak. The police kept their pistols in their holsters through the night, and no shots were fired. But nightsticks were used freely." As in other riot cities that summer, black leaders who tried to calm the situation and press people to go home "were hooted down." Lelyveld described the looting as "large-scale and ambitious." He explained, "One man was seen carrying a sofa out of a furniture store and a woman pushed a full rack of clothes from a dress shop. After dawn, most of the looters appeared to be teenagers. The police arrested one youth who was carrying an ax." Earlier in the year Mayor Tate had emphasized that North Philadelphia had "45 juvenile gangs with 2,000 members," eight of which were "among the most vicious fighting gangs in the city." Police commissioner Howard R. Leary also cited that 3,134 juveniles had been arrested in the district in 1963 alone.[56]

Not surprisingly, many of the residents of North Philadelphia had a tense relationship with white authorities, both in city hall and within the police department. It was the former police commissioner, Thomas J. Gibbons, after all, who had dubbed the region "the Jungle," a racially loaded and offensive term.[57] On Saturday, August 29, Mayor Tate declared a state of emergency and designated a quarantine for 125 blocks of the city. Residents were "to disperse themselves and peaceably depart to their habitations." For a while it appeared that calm might prevail. "Tension ran high on the streets," Lelyveld explained. "But the people responded to police appeals, over electronic

megaphones, to go indoors and not congregate. Twenty clergymen, white and Negro, toured the neighborhood in an attempt to act as a calming influence." Unrest broke out again, however, later in the day. "Just before 8" on Saturday night, "patrolmen responding to an alarm at Eighth Street and Columbia Avenue were pelted with rocks for five minutes by teen-agers who had just broken into a dry-cleaning store." Police also arrested four men after they stopped them for a "minor traffic violation." They "appeared to be headed for the trouble zone," and the police discovered "hundreds of copies of a Black Muslim publication." City leaders held mixed opinions about the role of any so-called "outside agitators" or the push for civil rights in the unrest. Mayor Tate stated at a news conference that the riot had "nothing to do with civil rights or any proper or fair grievance," and he suggested that he was not aware of any outside influence. Alternatively, Terry Chisholm, executive director of Philadelphia's Commission on Human Relations, alluded to "warnings from Harlem, Paterson, and Rochester that 'blood brothers' had been planning to ignite riots" in the city.[58] Cecil B. Moore, president of the local NAACP chapter, sided with the mayor on the role of outside forces and instead placed the blame squarely on "a long history of police mistreatment" in the region.[59]

Even though he suggested that everything was "definitely under control" late Saturday night, Mayor Tate announced that residents in the riot area should not plan on going to church Sunday morning because "safety of the people is paramount" According to *New York Times* journalist Lelyveld, "At 3 A. M., however, arrests were mounting as the police began picking up persons for violating the Mayor's proclamation, and looting was reported outside the quarantined area. The violence was scattered over an area of four square miles." Reports indicated that police arrested 64 people Saturday night and Sunday morning, and 2 police and 27 civilians suffered injuries. On Friday and early Saturday morning the toll had been 152 injuries, 35 of them police, and 108 arrests.[60] By Sunday night, the unrest had largely subsided. "The prevailing mood of the Negro district of North Philadelphia was calm last night and early today," Joseph Lelyveld wrote in a *New York Times* article published on Monday, August 31, "although there were isolated instances of stone throwing by teen-age bands. After one night of sustained rioting and another of scattered looting, the disorders were well contained. False alarms were running ahead of real incidents, however minor, at a rate of ten to one." The 125-block quarantine, however, "remained in effect until further notice"—perhaps "as long as [another] week," Mayor Tate announced. The police arrested 44 more people between Sunday afternoon and early Monday morning, bringing arrests to 333. A total of 248 people, 66 of whom were police and 2 of whom were firefighters, suffered injuries throughout the span of violence. The mayor also made a point of stating that he was "especially proud" that Philadelphia's police force had been able "to restore order without the use of dogs, horses or fire hoses." Some of the city's black leaders

also agreed that the police showed some discretion. "I think the police exercised a remarkable degree of restraint," NAACP leader Moore declared when the unrest had ended. Representative Robert N. C. Nix, the first African American to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives from Pennsylvania, agreed. "I think they handled themselves admirably," he declared after the unrest died down. "I have higher respect for them now than I ever had before."[61]

Lelyveld noted, "There seemed to be no disposition on the part of the Negro leadership to take the disturbance as an occasion for pressing new demands on Mayor Tate's administration. This was in sharp contrast with other Northern cities that have experienced racial violence this summer. There, Negro leaders have been quick to lay the responsibility at the feet of the white authorities."[62] Not everyone agreed that the white power structure and the police showed self-discipline, however. "They whipped everything that was running—women, babies," according to one resident. "You would have thought it was down South," another man declared. "There were hard feelings toward the police."[63] Still other residents, especially whites, criticized the police for being too lenient on those engaged in the looting and destruction of property. Police commissioner Leary solicited the help of black leaders to put a stop to the uprising and ordered his force to contain the violence rather than meet it with force. This action prompted Deputy Commissioner Frank Rizzo to later label Leary a "gutless bastard."[64] Some suggested that the fact that the city had a civilian review board played into the dynamics of how the police responded to the unrest. Philadelphia, along with Rochester, New York, was one of the few cities across the country that had a civilian review board that oversaw charges of police brutality. Not surprisingly, the city's Police Advisory Board, established in 1958, had been resisted from the beginning by the police department and the Fraternal Order of Police. Throughout its existence, however, it advised only 31 suspensions or reprimands out of 411 complaints against the police.[65] But still, residents—especially some of the merchants of North Philadelphia—wondered if the board's presence prompted the police to hold back.

As in other northern riot cities that summer, most of the businesses in North Philadelphia were owned and run by white merchants, many of whom were Jewish. One source placed the damage to the area as widespread and severe by the time the riot was over. "When the chaos ended, three days later, hardly a store in the business district had its windows intact. . . . More than 600 businesses across 300 square blocks were damaged or looted, at a cost estimated at $4.1 million." Some asserted that the riot served as an anti-Semitic attack. Others suggested it was simply antiwhite. Over the next 25 years following the riot, the number of businesses in the area went from 158 to 57.[66] Many African Americans, however, cast the violence in the context of their substandard existence compared to that of their white neighbors. Poor

housing, high unemployment rates, low graduation rates, and an average annual income about 30 percent lower than the city average reminded the residents of North Philadelphia that the Civil Rights Act passed some two months earlier did not apply to them. As NAACP leader Moore tried to convince people to get off the streets and stop looting during one episode of violence, a woman replied to him, "[T]his is the only time in my life I've got a chance to get these things." Yet civil rights leaders distanced themselves and the movement from the rioters. Reverend Leon H. Sullivan, for example, suggested the violence centered on "civil destruction," not civil rights. The rioting and looting, he asserted, were done by "a few hoodlums who saw an opportunity to vandalize." Other leaders scolded the residents of North Philadelphia that their issues could not be resolved violently in the streets. And many were ready to place the blame on black militants. Police eventually arrested three people allegedly linked to the Black Muslims for starting the riot, although their exact contribution was uncertain.[67]

Just like the riots in New York, those in New Jersey, Illinois, and Pennsylvania shared significant characteristics. Structural factors such as unemployment, terrible housing conditions, demographic shifts, and poor schools provided the framework. Cultural conditions also contributed to the unrest that summer. Northerners, like their southern counterparts, knew the time proved ripe for parity. Mainstream organizations such as the NAACP and CORE did their part to uncover the indignities of everyday life for African Americans. Especially when it came to police brutality, these groups urged a strong and immediate solution. Finally, a spark—an adverse encounter between the police and African Americans—lit the community on fire. When the structural factors, cultural framing, and precipitating events collided, violence erupted. The summer of 1964 opened a new path for African Americans to express their discontentment. The riots in northern cities provided a forum for the world to witness that something different was afoot in the march for equality. Violent outbursts in the form of looting and destruction, predominantly in black neighborhoods, would be the new normal.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Let Us Close the Springs of Racial Poison"

The eight riots that erupted during the summer of 1964 did not boil up out of nowhere. The social, political, and economic contexts leading up to them offer important insights into why they occurred. Much of white America proved unsympathetic to the plight of their black neighbors. "A gun to the heart of the city" is how Mayor Robert Wagner—of course, deeply concerned about business interests in his city—described one attempt to highlight the injustices of living as an African American in the United States at that time. The Brooklyn and Bronx chapters of CORE had called for a "stall-in" on opening day—April 22, 1964—of the 1964–1965 World's Fair taking place in the Flushing Meadows area of Queens. They intended to deploy something drastic and on a large scale to shine a spotlight on the long-standing issues of police brutality, substandard schools and housing, and workforce discrimination in the city. Targeting the World's Fair would likely prove an effective way to garner attention from the media and elected officials at both the state and national levels. The idea was to have hundreds of people head to the fair in their cars and then block traffic by stopping on the roads or running out of gas near the fairgrounds. Not only world leaders but also world media outlets would be there.[1] A 700,000-pound, 140-foot-tall stainless steel Unisphere stood as the fair's centerpiece, surrounded by "hundreds of unique pavilions . . . representing foreign lands, technology, transportation and government." New York City had planned the fair with "Peace Through Understanding" as its theme.[2] Local civil rights leaders hoped to expose the hypocrisy of the organizers and government officials. Peace through understanding did not even exist in the city, much less the world.

"While millions of dollars are being spent on the World's Fair," read a statement released on April 4 by the local chapters of CORE, "thousands of Black & Puerto Rican people are suffering." It went on:

> There will be no peace or rest until every child is afforded an opportunity to obtain high-quality education, and until significant changes are made in all areas mentioned. The World's Fair cannot be permitted to operate without protest from those who are angered by conditions which have been permitted to exist for so long—conditions which deny millions of Americans rights guaranteed them by the Constitution of the United States. We want all our freedom!!! We want it here!!! We want it Now!!![3]

A few days later, Arnold Goldwag, the public relations officer of CORE's Brooklyn chapter, sent a telegram to Mayor Wagner, New York governor Nelson Rockefeller, and Robert Moses, the World's Fair Corporation president, that reiterated their demands and intentions:

> THE PEOPLE OF THIS COMMUNITY ARE FED UP WITH EMPTY PROMISES AND PIOUS PRONOUNCEMENTS. UNLESS YOU FORMULATE AND BEGIN TO IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM, BY APRIL 20, WHICH WILL END POLICE BRUTALITY, ABOLISH SLUM HOUSING AND PROVIDE INTEGRATED QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL—WE WILL FULLY SUPPORT AND HELP ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY-BACKED PLAN TO IMMOBILIZE ALL TRAFFIC LEADING TO THE WORLD'S FAIR ON OPENING DAY.[4]

Leaders of Brooklyn's CORE chapter stood ready to put their plan into action. "Our objective is to have our own civil rights exhibit at the World's Fair," asserted Oliver Leeds, one of the chapter's leaders. "We do not see why white people should enjoy themselves when Negroes are suffering." Isaiah Brunson, chair of the Brooklyn chapter, agreed: "The Power Structure of this City, State and Country must be made to realize that we will accept palliation no longer. Empty promises, investigatory committees, and such have done nothing to alleviate the problems that exist."[5] Not all civil rights leaders agreed with local leaders' intentions of wreaking havoc at the World's Fair, however. James Farmer, CORE's national chair, called the plan a "harebrained idea" and suspended Brooklyn's whole chapter when they refused to call it off. But in the weeks leading up to the fair's opening day, the New York media gave the seasoned national leader Farmer and the up-and-coming local chair Brunson equal coverage, calling into question Farmer's authority and continued effectiveness. Farmer, who long pushed for integration and cooperation between the races, had grown alarmed by the younger generation of civil rights leaders willing to antagonize and degrade whites in order

to push for their equality. Nonetheless, he did not want to disenchant fresh recruits coming into the organization, so he acknowledged their "growing frustration, anger, militancy." If he could not stop the planned stall-in, Farmer decided, he would come up with his own plan of attack for the opening day of the World's Fair.[6]

Meanwhile, city leaders spoke out and took action to show their condemnation of the scheduled stall-in. Police commissioner Michael J. Murphy pledged to "protect the constitutional rights" of people "to peacefully assemble and petition," but also suggested that "the World's Fair should be a happy occasion in a somewhat far from happy world. No unlawful acts by any groups will be allowed to mar it." Traffic commissioner Henry A. Barnes declared that it would now be illegal to purposely run out of gas in New York City. Even though he suddenly made this proclamation just after the local CORE chapters announced their plans, he told the media the new decree was not related. Some in the media also disapproved of the activists' proposal, suggesting it would be counterproductive—it would "win few converts to the civil rights banner," "provide new ammunition from racists," and be a "grab at the groin of a community of 10 million," for example. Regular people—on all sides of the issue—also wrote in to newspapers or to the CORE chapters themselves to air their concerns or disdain. Those who sided with the activists feared that the stall-in "would turn many people against the Negro cause." Those against it wanted the protesters to be taken into custody for "loitering, inciting to riot, and being plain fools." Others who wrote to CORE directly did not bother to mask their hatred. "The colored people of Brooklyn," one letter read, "want to be and act like parasites that should be exterminated." Another one that arrived on New York City Board of Education letterhead stated, "Why you miserable *blacksonofabitch*! How dare you threaten the World's Fair and the Christian White Power structure of the City? You nigger bastards belong in Africa not here among genteel white Christian folk! We hope the police break your black ape heads on [opening day]! So drop dead!"[7]

In addition to Farmer, other national black leaders also weighed in. The NAACP's Roy Wilkins, the Urban League's Whitney Young, and SNCC's John Lewis joined Farmer in issuing a statement on April 16 that asserted that the stall-in was not in "the broad interests and needs of the Negro people." Lewis, however, reconsidered the next day and suggested that the local CORE members were just practicing "the time-honored tactics of civil disobedience." The other national civil rights leaders had expected Martin Luther King Jr. to join them in condemning the Brooklyn CORE branch, but in a letter to Wilkins, King sided with Brunson and the other local leaders. Although King deemed their actions a "tactical error," he asked, "Which is worse, a 'Stall-In' at the World's Fair or a 'Stall-In' in the United States Senate?" He went on, "The former merely ties up the traffic of a single city. But the latter seeks to tie up the traffic of history, and endanger the psychological

lives of twenty million people."[8] In another move that showed the fractured existence of the civil rights leaders just a few days before the opening ceremonies, Farmer broadcast that he planned a "counter-demonstration." A thousand protesters would join him at the fair and engage in sit-ins, lie-ins, and other acts of defiance that would take place during President Lyndon Johnson's planned speech launching the festivities. In addition to prominent places such as the Unisphere, they would specifically target the pavilions of southern states and corporations with a record of discrimination. Rather than prevent people from reaching the fairgrounds, Farmer's protesters would make a point of highlighting injustices once fairgoers were there.

April 22, opening day, was cold and rainy, and fewer than 93,000 people visited the fair. Organizers had anticipated 250,000 but asserted that the weather, not the protests, had deterred visitors. And, indeed, the planned stall-in proved a bust. CORE had expected at least 2,500 motorists to clog the roads, but more police appeared than protesters. Farmer and his supporters experienced a bit more success, however. Some 700 protesters blocked gates and entrances. Police arrested Farmer, as his national CORE supporters yelled, "Farmer is our leader. We shall not be moved."[9] They remained on the fairgrounds for hours.

Meanwhile, President Johnson arrived to give his speech. In his remarks, Johnson acknowledged that the country had work to do in the realm of civil rights, while at the same time trying to strike an optimistic tone:

> I prophesy peace is not only possible in our generation, I predict that it is coming much earlier. If I am right, then the next world's fair, people will see an America as different from today as we are different from 1939 [the last time that New York hosted the World's Fair]. The will see an America in which no man must be poor. They will see an America in which no man is handicapped by the color of his skin or the nature of his belief—and no man will be discriminated against because of the church he attends or the country of his ancestors. They will see an America which is solving the growing problems of crowded cities, inadequate education, deteriorating national resources and decreasing national beauty. They will see an America concerned with the quality of American life—unwilling to accept public deprivation in the midst of private satisfaction—concerned that not only that people have more, but that people shall have the best.[10]

After this prepared speech, Johnson changed venues to dedicate the U.S. Federal Pavilion. Here he encountered some of the protesters and tried to reassure them that he was on their side. "We do not try to mask our national problems," he stressed to them. "No other nation in history has done so much to correct its flaws."[11] They remained unconvinced, however, and cried out in response, "Freedom now! Freedom now!" and "Jim Crow must go!" He tried

again to suggest that the future would see "a world in which all men are equal," but the animated crowd responded with laughter.[12] Indeed, for many African Americans the president's promises seemed empty. And although officials blamed the weather for the low turnout on the fair's opening day, both the Brooklyn CORE activists and Farmer's national CORE supporters had made their points. "Peace Through Understanding" remained an unfulfilled dream unreachable by African Americans and other people of color.

Back at the White House on April 23, President Johnson told reporters that he "felt sorry for" the protesters who interrupted the dedication ceremony, suggesting that the commotion offered "no good purpose . . . of promoting the cause they profess to support." Both Mayor Wagner and Republican New York senator Jacob K. Javitz apologized to Johnson for the treatment he received at the fair. "[A]s the city in which this took place," the mayor professed, "we must be ashamed." Police commissioner Murphy summed up the fair's opening day for Johnson by concluding that it was "a day in which the President came to the world of fantasy and encountered the world of fact."[13] Johnson likely felt stung by the demonstrators at the fair. Indeed, from the moment he became president, Johnson picked up the mantle of John F. Kennedy's civil rights agenda. In an address to a joint session of Congress five days after Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, Johnson vowed:

> All I have I would have given gladly not to be standing here today. The greatest leader of our time has been struck down by the foulest deed of our time. Today John Fitzgerald Kennedy lives on in the immortal words and works that he left behind. He lives on in the mind and memories of mankind. He lives on in the hearts of his countrymen. No words are sad enough to express our sense of loss. No words are strong enough to express our determination to continue the forward thrust of America that he began. . . . [T]he dream of education for all our children—the dream of jobs for all who seek them and need them . . . and, above all, the dream of equal rights for all Americans, whatever their race or color—these and other American dreams have been vitalized by his drive and by his dedication. And now the ideas and the ideals which he so nobly represented must and will be translated into effective action. . . .
>
> And let all know we will extend no special privilege and impose no persecution. We will carry on the fight against poverty and misery, and disease and ignorance, in other lands and in our own. We will serve all the Nation, not one section or one sector, or one group, but all Americans. These are the United States—a united people with a united purpose. Our American unity does not depend on unanimity. We have differences; but now, as in the past, we can derive from those differences strength, not weakness, wisdom, not despair. Both as a people and a government, we can unite upon a program, a program which is wise and just, enlightened

> and constructive. . . . On the 20th day of January, in 1961, John F. Kennedy told his countrymen that our national work would not be finished "in the first thousand days, nor in the life of his administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But," he said, "let us begin."
>
> Today, in this moment of new resolve, I would say to all my fellow Americans, let us continue. This is our challenge—not to hesitate, not to pause, not to turn about and linger over this evil moment, but to continue on our course so that we may fulfill the destiny that history has set for us. Our most immediate tasks are here on this Hill. First, no memorial oration or eulogy could more eloquently honor President Kennedy's memory than the earliest possible passage of the civil rights bill for which he fought so long. We have talked long enough in this country about equal rights. We have talked for one hundred years or more. It is time now to write the next chapter, and to write it in the books of law. I urge you again, as I did in 1957 and again in 1960, to enact a civil rights law so that we can move forward to eliminate from this Nation every trace of discrimination and oppression that is based upon race or color. There could be no greater source of strength to this Nation both at home and abroad. . . .
>
> In short, this is no time for delay. It is a time for action—strong, forward-looking action on the pending education bills to help bring the light of learning to every home and hamlet in America—strong, forward-looking action on youth employment opportunities. . . . In this new spirit of action, the Congress can expect the full cooperation and support of the executive branch. . . . As one who has long served in both Houses of the Congress, I firmly believe in the independence and the integrity of the legislative branch. And I promise you that I shall always respect this. It is deep in the marrow of my bones. With equal firmness, I believe in the capacity and I believe in the ability of the Congress, despite the divisions of opinions which characterize our Nation, to act—to act wisely, to act vigorously, to act speedily when the need arises. The need is here. The need is now. I ask your help.[14]

And, so, Lyndon Johnson got to work. He made it his mission to ensure that Congress would pass civil rights legislation—and sooner rather than later. The principal question, however, eventually centered on whether or not African Americans would perceive these deeds and feel the effects of any actions the federal government took. By the summer of 1964, it did not appear so.

President Johnson met with national civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer, Roy Wilkins, and Whitney Young on January 18, 1964, to assure them that he would push for a strong bill "without a word or comma changed." Johnson projected that the House of Representatives would pass the legislation within a month.[15] He also discussed with them his plan to reduce poverty in the United States, a key component in the march for civil

rights. Seemingly sanguine with what they heard coming from the president, Young reiterated the need for immediate action to reporters afterward: "One out of four Negroes is unemployed. One of every six Negro families lives in a house classified as substandard. Five hundred thousand Negro youths between the ages of 16 and 21 are out of work and out of school. We regard this as not a mild recession for the Negro but a catastrophic situation, a national disgrace." King asserted that African Americans would not accept "any watering down" of the legislation.[16] Howard Smith, the 80-year-old segregationist from Virginia who chaired the House Rules Committee—aware that a discharge petition was under way to extract the bill from his grip (it had been sitting in his committee since November 20—two days before President Kennedy's assassination), perhaps getting the message that the president and national civil rights leaders stood together or sensing that history did not stand on his side (60 percent of Americans supported civil rights legislation), did finally agree to a committee vote just a few days later, on Thursday, January 30. In an 11 to 4 tally, the committee moved the bill to the House floor under an "open rule." That meant each line was subject to being amended.[17] The next day, House debate began. Although southern members tried to weaken the bill as King and others had forecast and as civil rights opponents had done to previous legislation, each amendment fell. Arkansas Democrat Oren Harris, for example, attempted to add an amendment that would cut the clauses that gave the federal government the power to withdraw funds to state and local programs that promoted racial discrimination. This attempt and all others by civil rights opponents went down in defeat.[18]

Finally, Smith himself rose toward the end of the day on Saturday, February 8, with his own proposal. "Now, I am very serious about this amendment," he assured his colleagues. If Congress stood ready to offer protections against discrimination based on race, it should also do so for sex. The chamber erupted in laughter. Most members saw Smith's move as a ruse to kill the bill. Southerners were delighted, while civil rights proponents expressed dismay. But Smith, who truly did believe in equal rights for women, was serious. And some of the few female House members (12) rushed in to push for the passage of his amendment. Michigan's Martha Griffiths, a liberal Democrat who supported the civil rights legislation, pointed out that the fact that Smith's proposal was met with ridicule demonstrated that "women were a second-class sex." She continued, "A vote against this amendment today by a white man is a vote against his wife, or his widow, or his sister." Katherine St. George, an upstate New York Republican, also weighed in. "We do not want special privilege," she stated. "We do not need special privilege. We outlast you. We outlive you. We nag you to death. So why should we want special privileges? I believe that we can hold our own. We are entitled to this little crumb of equality. The addition of that little, terrifying word, 's-e-x,' will not hurt this legislation in any way." Only 1 of the 12 women of the House,

Oregon's Edith Green, opposed the amendment, certain that it would sink the whole bill. But over her trepidations, as well as those coming from the White House, the House approved it by a 168 to 133 vote. And as Johnson predicted, on February 10, the House passed HR 7152, with 290 members in favor and 130 opposed.[19] The final vote included 152 Democrats and 138 Republicans in favor, with 96 Democrats—mostly from former Confederate states—and 34 Republicans against it.[20] Now it was the Senate's turn, and the presence of the filibuster loomed large. Passage would be difficult.

Majority leader Mike Mansfield, a Democrat from Montana, knowing the bill would go down in defeat if he referred it to the Senate Judiciary Committee, prevented it from going there. Mississippi senator James Eastland, chair of the committee, would certainly have let it languish, as he had done to dozens of other civil rights bills over the previous few years. Knowing this, Mansfield instead put the bill directly on the Senate calendar. Debate was about to begin on March 9, but in response to a procedural motion, southern senators promptly began a filibuster that lasted 16 days.[21] Debate over the substance of the bill finally began on Monday, March 30. Senate majority whip and soon-to-be vice president Hubert Humphrey, a Minnesota Democrat, launched into a three and a half-hour speech stressing the great and immediate need to end racial discrimination. "The time has come," he declared, "for America to wash its dirty face and cleanse its countenance of this evil. . . . The Negro no longer can be told, 'There is your place, and stay here.' They won't take it anymore and they shouldn't. They are sick of it."[22] But for the next two months, a devoted group of anti–civil rights senators used the filibuster to great effect. In the meantime, Humphrey worked closely with Illinois Republican Everett Dirksen, the minority leader in the Senate, to secure the two-thirds of the chamber needed for cloture to end the filibuster. In mid-May Dirksen announced his support for the legislation, satisfied that his proposed amendments would allow state and local authorities some leeway in their actions before the federal government would have to step in. He would now deliver enough Republicans to help Humphrey get his cloture vote. Finally, on June 10, the Senate did so by a margin of 71 to 29. Nine days later, the chamber voted again to pass the bill (73 to 27) and send it back to the House to consider the Senate version (with its amendments added). Civil rights advocates seemed gratified that it still included provisions that ensured most public accommodations would be integrated, discriminatory programs would stop receiving federal funding, and equal opportunities would be available in the workforce.[23] Now the task remained to convince a majority of House members to adopt this new version of the bill without watering it down or changing it in any way. If they did make changes, it would have to go back to the Senate and therefore be under the gun of another filibuster and cloture vote.

Howard Smith, chair of the House Rules Committee, had planned to stall before allowing the bill to go to the House floor again. A bipartisan group of civil rights proponents ensured that his dilatory action did not happen, however, and the legislation went before the full House on June 30 just as it had appeared after the Senate vote—with no new changes. Two days later on July 2, by a vote of 289 to 126, the House approved the Senate's version. That evening, in an elaborate ceremony at the White House, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. In his remarks, Johnson declared:

> We believe that all men are created equal. Yet many are denied equal treatment. We believe that all men have certain unalienable rights. Yet many Americans do not enjoy those rights. We believe that all men are entitled to the blessings of liberty. Yet millions are being deprived of those blessings—not because of their own failures, but because of the color of their skin. The reasons are deeply imbedded in history and tradition and the nature of man. We can understand—without rancor or hatred—how this all happened. But it cannot continue. Our Constitution, the foundation of our Republic, forbids it. The principles of our freedom forbid it. Morality forbids it. And the law I will sign tonight forbids it.
>
> The law is the product of months of the most careful debate and discussion. It was proposed more than one year ago by our late and beloved President John F. Kennedy. It received the bipartisan support of more than two-thirds of the Members of both the House and the Senate. An overwhelming majority of Republicans as well as Democrats voted for it. It has received the thoughtful support of tens of thousands of civic and religious leaders in all parts of this Nation. And it is supported by the great majority of the American people. The purpose of the law is simple. It does not restrict the freedom of any American, so long as he respects the rights of others. It does not give special treatment to any citizen. It does say the only limit to a man's hope for happiness, and for the future of his children, shall be his own ability. It does say that there are those who are equal before God shall now also be equal in the voting booths, in the classrooms, in the factories, and in hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, and other places that provide service to the public. . . .
>
> We must not approach the observance and enforcement of this law in a vengeful spirit. Its purpose is not to punish. Its purpose is not to divide, but to end divisions—divisions which have all lasted too long. Its purpose is national, not regional. Its purpose is to promote a more abiding commitment to freedom, a more constant pursuit of justice, and a deeper respect for human dignity. We will achieve these goals because most Americans are law-abiding citizens who want to do what is right. That is why the Civil Rights Act relies first on voluntary compliance, then on efforts of local communities and States to secure the rights of citizens. It provides

> for the national authority to step in only when others cannot or will not do the job.
>
> This Civil Rights Act is a challenge to all of us to go to work in our communities and in our States, in our homes and in our hearts, to eliminate the last vestiges of injustice in our beloved country. . . . My fellow citizens, we have come now to a time of testing. We must not fail. Let us close the springs of racial poison. Let us pray for wise and understanding hearts. Let us lay aside irrelevant differences and make our Nation whole. Let us hasten that day when our unmeasured strength and our unbounded spirit will be free to do the great works ordained for this Nation by the just and wise God who is the Father of us all.[24]

Martin Luther King Jr. deemed the Civil Rights Act "the dawning of new hope." Yet real concerns plagued Johnson about the ramifications of the law. In addition to the fear of having "just delivered the South to the Republican Party for a long time to come," a remark he made to his aide Bill Moyers the night after the signing ceremony, the president knew he faced tough opposition to and unreliable roll call votes for the policy initiatives he wanted to focus on next, including education, health care, and poverty.[25]

Johnson knew that legislative success would to a large degree depend on the outcome of the upcoming November elections. He needed a strong majority on his side to push through the progressive agenda that he had planned. But he had no intention of waiting until after the elections to begin—his War on Poverty stood front and center in what he envisioned as his administration's mark on the country. He had already declared an "unconditional war on poverty" during his State of the Union address to Congress in January. Now it was time to get down to action. Many of his proposals stemmed from conversations with and analysis conducted by Walter Heller, an economist concerned about poverty whom President Kennedy had consulted and tasked with coming up with solutions. Although the federal government had made attempts for decades to care for the poor, almost 40 million people still lived in poverty. But Heller and his colleagues were ready to change course. Instead of relying solely on the federal government, the idea would be to provide funding to local governments and other organizations that had a better sense of what their communities needed to deal with poverty. Johnson liked the idea. Still profoundly haunted by the poverty that he saw firsthand growing up in the Texas Hill Country and among his students as a young teacher in Cotulla, Texas, the president assured Heller he approved of this approach. "That's my kind of program," he remarked. "I'll find money for it one way or another." With fierce debates still raging over the civil rights legislation, the president went ahead in April and pitched the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) to Congress. Johnson recommended establishing an Office of Economic Opportunity to oversee implementation of the EOA, and he tapped

Sargent Shriver, the Peace Corps administrator and John Kennedy's brother-in-law, to serve as its director.[26]

The legislation centered on Heller's idea that local officials should have control over how funds would be allocated. A Community Action Program would allow local jurisdictions to use Community Action Agencies to help those in poverty in their immediate areas. Other components of the bill included the Job Corps and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) programs, which provided job training for 16- to 21-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds (Job Corps) and instructed young people how to serve poor communities around the United States, and then sent them to areas of need (VISTA). With some opposition, backers of the bill were able to move it fairly rapidly through the Senate, and it passed on July 23 by a 61 to 34 margin. The House followed suit a few days later on August 8, 226 to 184.[27] At the August 20 signing ceremony for the Economic Recovery Act, President Johnson stressed:

> For so long as man has lived on this earth poverty has been a curse. . . . Today for the first time in all the history of the human race, a great nation is able to make and is willing to make a commitment to eradicate poverty among its people. . . . This is not in any sense a cynical proposal to exploit the poor with a promise of a handout or a dole. . . . The measure before me this morning for signature offers the answer that its title implies—the answer of opportunity. . . . For the million young men and women who are out of school and who are out of work, this program will permit us to take them off the streets, put them into work training programs, to prepare them for productive lives, not wasted lives. In this same sound, sensible, and responsible way we will reach into all the pockets of poverty and help our people find their footing for a long climb toward a better way of life.
>
> We will work with them through our communities all over the country to develop comprehensive community action programs—with remedial education, with job training, with retraining, with health and employment counseling, with neighborhood improvement. We will strike at poverty's roots. This is by no means a program confined just to our cities. Rural America is afflicted deeply by rural poverty, and this program will help poor farmers get back on their feet and help poor farmers stay on their farms. It will help those small businessmen who live on the borderline of poverty. It will help the unemployed heads of families maintain their skills and learn new skills.
>
> In helping others, all of us will really be helping ourselves. For this bill will permit us to give our young people an opportunity to work here at home in constructive ways as volunteers, going to war against poverty instead of going to war against foreign enemies. . . . Our American answer to poverty is not to make the poor more secure in their poverty but to reach down and to help them lift themselves out of the ruts of poverty and

> move with the large majority along the high road of hope and prosperity. The days of the dole in our country are numbered. I firmly believe that as of this moment a new day of opportunity is dawning and a new era of progress is opening for us all.[28]

Just 11 days later, Johnson signed into law another pillar of his War on Poverty, the Food Stamp Act of 1964, which made the initiative—at the time just a pilot program—permanent. Again, he reiterated his commitment to eradicating poverty:

> I am proud to sign the Food Stamp Act of 1964 because it is a realistic and responsible step toward the fuller and wiser use of our agricultural abundance. I believe the Food Stamp Act weds the best of the humanitarian instincts of the American people with the best of the free enterprise system. Instead of establishing a public system to distribute food surplus to the needy, this act permits us to use our highly efficient commercial food distribution system. It is one of many sensible and needed steps we have taken to apply the power of America's new abundance to the task of building a better life for every American.
>
> [T]his year we anticipate that 17 million children—3.2 million more that in 1960—will enjoy hot lunches in their schools, many of them for the first time. This is because of the sustained effort made to help our schools provide student lunches. For 3 years we have conducted pilot operations for the food stamp program in both urban and rural areas. These tests have exceeded our best expectations. They have raised the diets of low-income families substantially while strengthening markets for the farmer and immeasurably improving the volume of retail food sales. As a permanent program, the food stamp plan will be one of our most valuable weapons for the war on poverty.[29]

By the end of August 1964, the president's War on Poverty was well on its way.[30]

Also by the end of August, however, the eight major riots had broken out in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Pennsylvania. Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater insinuated that the push for civil rights had created the unrest. He lumped the riots and crime into the same realm of law and order issues, and he made countering this domestic violence one of the central themes of his campaign. Political journalist Richard Rovere, in a piece for the *New Yorker* in October 1964, described Goldwater's tactics this way:

> Until the first day of the Southern tour, it seemed that Goldwater would not go much beyond the rhetoric of the acceptance speech and the amplifying statements he made in the days immediately after the Convention.

> But on his first evening out, in a baseball park in St. Petersburg, he delivered a speech that went well beyond anything he had said in San Francisco or Phoenix. He began by reminding his audience of what he had said about crime and violence in San Francisco and by declaring that it was "a tragedy [that] the breakdown of law and order should be an issue in this campaign for the highest office of the land." But, he went on, "it must be an issue, a major issue," for "the war against crime [is] the only needed war. . . ." He cited a number of alarming statistics on crime (nationwide, he said, it has climbed "five times faster than the population" during the Kennedy-Johnson administration), and demanded to know how President Johnson can "ignore the six thousand or so major crimes committed in the last twenty-four hours." . . .
>
> He talked about those realities all the time, in an underground, or Aesopian, language—a kind of code that few in his audience had any trouble deciphering. In the code, "bullies and marauders" means "Negroes." "Criminal defendants" means negroes. States rights means "opposition to civil rights." "Women" means "white women." This much of the code is as easily understood by his Northern audiences as by his Southern ones, but there are also some words that have a more limited and specific meaning for the Southern crowds. Thus, in the Old Confederacy "Lyndon Baines Johnson" and "my opponent" means "integrationist." "Hubert Horatio" (it somehow amuses Goldwater to drop the "Humphrey") means "super-integrationist." "Federal judiciary" means "integrationist judges."[31]

Goldwater's conservative law and order counter to Johnson's War on Poverty lay at the heart of the 1964 presidential campaign. And even if the two candidates preferred that "race" not be an issue, it was.

Shortly after the Philadelphia riot, Denison Kitchel, Goldwater's campaign manager, spoke to reporters about his candidate and the current news. He lambasted the Johnson administration for not displaying enough leadership in ending the recent spate of race riots; according to Kitchel they were becoming an increasingly "common and universal tragedy." Stressing that Johnson had no "constitutional right" to intervene against state law enforcement officials, he suggested that a Goldwater administration would put a stop to the rioting using whatever means necessary "to the extent of their constitutional powers." He also pushed back on the idea that Goldwater's mentions of "law and order" during campaign stops had racial overtones, labeling that idea "incorrect."[32] For his part, President Johnson believed that the riots posed a clear threat to his bid to remain in the White House. "This thing could get awfully dangerous for us," he lamented to NAACP leader Wilkins in a conversation during the midst of the unrest in Rochester. In an unsigned memo, one of the president's aides agreed: "Further riots in other cities loom ahead," the July 27 document read. "This one issue could destroy us in the campaign. Every night of rioting costs us the support of thousands. Therefore we need

to move swiftly to try to hold the line before it spreads like a contagion." To stem the violence, the aide urged Johnson to meet with New York City officials, including Mayor Wagner, police commissioner Murphy, and a small group of Harlem leaders, such as representatives from the NAACP. "Appeal to the good sense and conscience of the city both white and Negro," the adviser suggested. "Denounce violence but recognize frustration. [Be] firm in the insistence on obedience to law. Pinpoint the cause of the riots—poverty, squalor, hopelessness for the future."[33] In other words, Johnson should stress the need for law-abiding actions but also focus on tackling the sources of the unrest through alleviating poverty. Throughout the rest of his presidency, Johnson would walk this line—his War on Poverty and his War on Crime were two sides of the same coin.

"The first of several long, hot summers had begun," Johnson later wrote, looking back on the summer of 1964. The unrest in New York "foreshadowed dark days of trial ahead." The question was: how should his administration respond, both in the immediate term and during the years ahead (that is, if he secured his party's nomination and won the election)? In most policy areas, Johnson's stances garnered him more support than his opponent. He painted Goldwater's views as extreme, particularly in the Republican candidate's willingness to use nuclear weapons. But on "law and order" issues, Johnson was vulnerable. If perceived as ineffective on countering crime and violence, his legislative agenda and vision of a Great Society would be more susceptible to attack. In the midst of the unrest in Rochester, Attorney General Bobby Kennedy (who would soon be leaving his position with the administration both because Johnson would not tap him to run as his running mate in 1964 and so he could throw his hat into the ring for the U.S. Senate seat in New York) weighed in on this subject as well. "[Y]ou could have that kind of explosion in a lot of these cities, and I would think that if it occurs during August and September and October, it could cause us some difficulty," he cautioned the president. "I don't know that it's going to go on, but the fact that you have Harlem and Rochester [is] going to give some of these people ideas in some of these other communities."[34]

On Sunday, August 2, New York City mayor Wagner along with his two sons visited the White House—a welcome distraction from the "maelstrom" stirring in his city, as well as from the lingering distress left from his wife's death earlier in the year. He used the occasion to pitch to the administration New York City's need for some of the federal funds being set up by the War on Poverty to help alleviate the structural factors contributing to the riots. As Wagner chatted with the president and Lady Bird that evening, he ruminated over the progress that had been made in his city but also on the work that still needed to be done. He had overseen the building of public housing and provided over $1 million to eradicate rats, for example. His office also helped establish summer employment for Harlem teens, but, unfortunately, it was

only a "drop in the bucket." Lady Bird then asked the mayor about another concern in the city related to the unrest. It seemed to her that a civilian review board might be a good way to monitor the police. Why was he not willing to establish one? "[T]he morale of [the] police department," Wagner responded, "would drop to zero overnight." If that occurred, New York City would be unmanageable. The next morning, the Jersey City rioting appeared in the news. One conservative journalist noted that Johnson had pushed through the Civil Rights Act on the premise that racism affected interstate commerce. But is it not "also discriminatory," he pondered, "to allow civil rights to be taken away from white or colored people by means of riots and mob violence"? Why did the president not step in to help the local police with quelling the disturbances erupting in New York and New Jersey? The administration continued to be wracked with apprehension over how the events playing out that summer would affect November. "It is by now clear," one Justice Department official declared, "that civil disorder will be the central domestic issue of the election. Every Negro riot represents tens of thousands of Goldwater votes."[35]

President Johnson and his supporters did have some legitimate cause for concern. A public opinion poll published on August 31 revealed that 53 percent of Americans showed more concern about safety than the previous year. "[N]o section of the country or group of voters this fall," concluded the pollster who tapped into these sentiments, "will be immune from the volatile atmosphere." The next day the grand jury looking into James Powell's death unanimously found Thomas Gilligan not guilty. It would have taken at least 12 of the 23 jurors to declare that Gilligan had not acted in self-defense. "In light of the great public interest evinced in the case," District Attorney Frank S. Hogan issued a 14-page summary of the grand jury's conclusions. Clearly, many observers believed that unrest would erupt again in Harlem and Bed-Stuy in response to the verdict. Civil rights leaders expressed dismay about the findings. "I remain convinced," NAACP leader Roy Wilkins stated, "that an experienced officer should be able to arrest a fifteen-year-old boy without killing him. They can explain and explain until they're blue in the face, but they'll never explain why it's necessary for a police officer to shoot a fifteen-year-old kid. It just doesn't go down." Activist Jesse Gray declared that the grand jury's verdict was "the greatest whitewash since Emmett Till." And although he could not spearhead protests because he was still under scrutiny by officials for the unrest in New York City a few weeks earlier, his supporters handed out fliers at a rally on 125th Street announcing "Powell's Murderer Set Free" and "Harlem knows that this grand jury decision means that any white policeman who wants to kill a Negro will not have to worry about being tried for murder." CORE's James Farmer expressed indignation as well. "If this killing was not a crime," he suggested, "then the law and Police Department policy are at fault." He concluded that police were acting as

"judge, jury, and executioner." CORE also issued a report as an organization. "The odds on every day," it read, "greatly favor that a new incident will take place and that it will involve a Negro victim."[36]

The streets of New York City stayed calm after the verdict, however. Many had predicted the results of the grand jury. "What else did you expect?" one man expressed. "I would say that 95 percent of the people of Harlem felt it would be like that," sighed another. A local NAACP official echoed, "These grand juries have a long record of exoneration of police officers accused of brutality against Negroes." The police, of course, voiced relief. "Gilligan did the right thing," said one. "If the grand jury exonerated him it must be because he was right," declared another. If the verdict had gone the other way, the police would be "damn good targets for all the punks in the city."[37] Meanwhile, the administration continued to push its message to whoever would listen that its War on Poverty would help alleviate these uprisings. In a phone conversation with his friend Wesley West, Johnson stated: "I've got a pretty good program. If my poverty thing works out, I'm going to be pleased with it. I'm going to take a bunch of these young, strapping boys out of these damn rioting squads that they're engaged in and put them out and put them to work. Feed them and clothe them and try to get them where they can get in the Army."[38] As the riots erupted, the administration asked African American journalist and director of the U.S. Information Agency Carl Rowan to speak about the racial violence. "Some Negroes believe that extremism in pursuit of the black man's liberty is no vice," he paraphrased Goldwater, "but I say that stupidity is never a virtue. . . . The hour has come when bold, uncompromising efforts must be made to free the civil rights movement from the taint of street rioters, looters, and punks who terrorize subways." Johnson liked what he heard and pushed for Rowan to make more speeches in places critical to his election. "Get him in 10 important states," he urged his aides. "NY, Illinois, Ohio, California, et al."[39]

Indeed, although Johnson and Goldwater had met in the Oval Office on July 24 and vowed to keep racial issues out of the campaign, neither could seem to avoid them. Race was present in both campaigns. While not blatantly citing the fact that Washington, D.C., residents were predominantly African American, Goldwater asserted on September 10 that it was "the one city which should reflect most brightly the President's concern for law and order, for decent conduct. Instead it is a city embattled, plagued by lawlessness, haunted by fears." The administration tied the Republican candidate's remarks to the demographic makeup of the federal district. In a rejoinder to Goldwater's assertions, Nicholas Katzenbach, Johnson's new attorney general, declared in a speech to the Federal Bar Association in Manhattan a few days later that poverty should receive the blame for urban unrest, not race. "I do not mean to imply that Negroes do not commit crimes," he asserted. "Of course they do. What I do mean to show is that to draw a causal connection between

membership in the Negro race and crime is wrong. The relevant link is not between riots and race, but between riots and delinquency, between lawlessness and lawless environments." The solution, he reiterated, centered on addressing "the lack of food, shelter, education, work, self-respect, and hope"—the primary motivation behind the administration's War on Poverty. Behind the scenes, however, crime itself remained a concern. On September 18, within hours of Katzenbach's address, a Democratic National Committee representative sent the administration a memo. "I strongly urge that a quiet, serious study be made of the overall problem of crime," the document read. "We obviously should not make an issue of it during the campaign, but the country is entitled to an honest statement of the problem on a long term basis; and a dispassionate study by a group of law enforcement officers, judges, statisticians, and public representatives could play a constructive role next year."[40]

Less than a week later, Norbert Schlei, a Justice Department official, issued "Riots and Crime in the Cities," a document solicited by the administration to lay out policy responses to the current unrest. "They said, 'Goldwater is making all this noise about crime in the streets,'" Schlei recollected years later. "'Would you please focus on this issue and do a study of it for us and tell us what you think, what this issue is about, and where it is going?'" He pushed for "principal emphasis" to be on legislation recently passed such as the War on Poverty and the Civil Rights Act but admitted that those would not produce "immediate and dramatic improvements." His final recommendation was for the president to create a commission to examine the problem after November. Katzenbach had also pitched that idea to the president, and Johnson ended up doing so as part of his War on Crime initiative that he would launch in 1965.[41] By October, the administration felt somewhat more assured as polls indicated the president held a comfortable advantage over Goldwater leading up to the election. "You are doing well and will win big," Ted Sorensen, speechwriter for President Kennedy, praised Johnson. "The only possible, but not present, danger to such a margin is the 'violence in the streets—race mobs—Negro crime—white backlash' issue."[42] By mid-month, however, a Harris Poll seemed to be playing out Sorensen's anxiety. Some 61 percent of Americans now feared more for their safety than a year earlier—up 8 percentage points from August. At a campaign rally in Dayton, Ohio, on October 16, the president again tried to address this issue. "Children without roots, children without education, children who face discrimination—they all tend to become delinquent children," he declared. "The war on poverty is a war against crime and a war against disorder." He then took aim at his opponent: "There is something mighty wrong when a candidate for the highest public office bemoans violence in the streets, but votes against the war on poverty, votes against the Civil Rights Act, and votes against major educational bills that have come before him as a legislator. The thing to do is not to talk about crime; the thing to do is to fight and work and vote against crime."[43]

For their part, Goldwater campaign staffers made a 28-minute movie to be released less than two weeks before election day called *Choice*. In it, they tried to play up the law and order angle to help them come from behind and secure the election. Part of the film featured scenes of Harlem rioters. Before its official unveiling, however, *Choice* got out to the press and other organizations, which cast the film as incendiary. The Democratic National Committee labeled it the "sickest political program to be conceived since television became a factor in American politics." Even Goldwater himself called the film "sick" and "racist" and asked that it not be shown.[44] In the end, the Republican law and order gambit failed for the time being. Johnson won the election handily—486 electoral votes to 52, and by 16 million votes, respectively. Ninety-four percent of African American voters cast their ballot for Johnson. He won in every state except for Goldwater's home state of Arizona (by less than 5,000 votes) and the deep southern states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina—a portent of elections to come. In Alabama and Mississippi, Goldwater garnered 70 percent and 87 percent of the vote. Democrats now also enjoyed solid majorities in both the U.S. House of Representatives (295 to 140) and the U.S. Senate (68 to 32). Even in elections for state legislative seats, the Democrats dominated. Republicans lost 90 seats in upper houses and 450 in lower houses.[45]

Even though it was clear early in the evening that he would lose, Goldwater decided not to give a concession speech, and he went to bed. At 1:40 a.m., Johnson finally acknowledged to his backers that he had indeed won. Camped out in Austin for election returns, he said, "I doubt if there has ever been so many people saying so many things alike on decision day." The final tally, he asserted, offered "a mandate for unity, for a government that serves no special interest."[46] The next morning, Goldwater finally sent out a statement of congratulations. "There is much to be done," he also suggested, "in Vietnam, Cuba, and the problem of law and order in this country, and a productive economy. Communism remains our No. 1 obstacle to peace and I know that all Americans will join with you in honest solutions to these problems."[47] Although he won by a landslide, Johnson obsessed over which states voted for him and which ones did not. In a conversation with aides Bill Moyers and McGeorge Bundy the morning after the election, he lamented, "I didn't care about the other Southern states. Louisiana is a bunch of crooks, and Mississippi's too ignorant to know any better, and Alabama's the same way, but Georgia knows better." Accounts of fraud and intimidation in the South circulated throughout the day on November 3. Vote tallies from minority districts in South Carolina, for example, took longer to come in than in other jurisdictions.[48] Johnson himself explained to his running mate Humphrey in a telephone conversation on election day another tactic that had been reported to him:

> They've got out a[n] instruction from the Negro Protective League, that says that any Negro goes and votes, that the Protective Leagues just wants to inform him, as their friend, that if he's ever had a traffic ticket, if he's ever been under suspicion, if he's ever been speeding, if he's ever had an old parking ticket, if he ever hadn't paid his taxes on time, if he's ever been discharged from employment, that he'll have to report right away to the sheriff, and that these things will have to be settled before he can clear his record to vote. . . . Just the meanest, dirtiest, low-down stuff that I ever heard. Ought to go to jail for it. It's just inhuman.[49]

Yet, for the overall purposes of the election, those maneuvers did not work. Johnson won. It was time to get busy on policy issues.

Observers quickly questioned the depth and breadth of Johnson's policy "mandate," however. "[T]he little Kennedy folks around," the president lamented on November 4, were pushing the notion "that nobody loves Johnson. They're going to have it built up by January that I didn't get any mandate at all, that I was just the lesser of two evils, and the people didn't care, and so on and so forth." Unfortunately for him, though, a poll conducted just after the election revealed that only a narrow majority—51 percent of the country—supported the idea that liberals had a more solid policy agenda, while 49 percent suggested that conservatives did. A mandate did indeed seem dubious. But over the next two years, with a solid Democratic majority in Congress (and even a bit beyond two years, despite suffering Democratic losses in the 1966 midterm elections), Johnson was able to usher in his vision of a Great Society, signing into law major legislation on assistance for the poor (Medicaid) and elderly (Medicare), voting rights (the Voting Rights Act), environmental conservation (Wilderness Preservation Act, Water Quality Act, Air Quality Act), education (the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Higher Education Act), and consumer protection (the Fair Package and Labeling Act, the Truth-in-Lending Act).[50] At the same time, however, the president took notice of the resonance that "law and order" issues still struck the American people. In a December public opinion poll, the country continued to show concern about crime. An increase of 12 percentage points since October showed that 73 percent of Americans thought that crime had gone up in their neighborhood over the last year.[51] The administration debated how to respond. Some agencies continued to stress the importance of taking action with the War on Poverty. The Department of Justice, however, had other ideas.

"We feel," Justice officials declared, "the president must place a much greater emphasis on crime and law enforcement if he is to strike the right note with Congress and the public."[52] Johnson took heed and included a section on crime in his State of the Union address on January 4, 1965:

> Every citizen has the right to feel secure in his home and on the streets of his community. To help control crime, we will recommend programs to train local law enforcement officers; to put the best techniques of modern science at their disposal; to discover the causes of crime and better ways to prevent it. I will soon assemble a panel of outstanding experts of this Nation to search out answers to the national problem of crime and delinquency, and I welcome the recommendations and the constructive efforts of the Congress.[53]

Two months later, in a "Special Message to Congress on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice," on March 8, the president more thoroughly laid out his War on Crime:

> Crime has become a malignant enemy in America's midst. . . . No right is more elemental to our society than the right to personal security and no right needs more urgent protection. Our streets must be safe. Our homes and places of business must be secure. Experience and wisdom dictate that one of the most legitimate functions of government is the preservation of law and order. . . . In the longer run we must also deepen our understanding of the causes of crime and of how our society should respond to the challenge of our present levels of crime. Only with such understanding can we undertake more fundamental, far-reaching and imaginative programs. As the first step, I am establishing the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. The Commission will be composed of men and women of distinction who share my belief that we need to know far more about the prevention and control of crime.[54]

For the moment, the message appealed to crime-weary Americans. A commission set up to address the rising crime rates seemed reasonable. As well, Congress passed legislation unanimously in the House and by a voice vote in the Senate to set up the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance to be housed in the Department of Justice.[55] Over the next three years, some 20 states received federal funding to buy new equipment and offer more training for their police departments. Johnson's wish that 1965 would be "regarded as the year when" the United States "began in earnest a thorough, intelligent, and effective war against crime" was under way.[56] Although the rioting in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Pennsylvania prompted the federal government to examine the underlying causes of unrest, it also spurred the federal government to take more explicit action in the affairs of local police departments, courts, and state prison systems—a move that would have long-lasting implications in society, particularly for people of color.[57]

CHAPTER FIVE

“Correcting the Evil Social Conditions That Breed Despair and Disorder”

The 1964 riots stand out in important ways. Unlike the white-on-black riots during the first half of the 20th century, these instances of collective racial violence centered on the frustrations of African Americans and their continued status as second-class citizens. They also ushered in a new era of sustained unrest unlike any the country had witnessed before. President John F. Kennedy had suggested these acts of turbulence would occur if the United States did not address the fact that although a century had “passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves . . . their heirs, their grandsons” were “not yet freed from the bonds of injustice” and “social and economic oppression.” In a television and radio address to the country on June 11, 1963, hailed as one of the best of his short presidency, Kennedy stressed:

> This Nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened. . . . It ought to be possible, therefore, for American students of any color to attend any public institution they select without having to be backed up by troops. It ought to be possible for American consumers of any color to receive equal service in places of public accommodation, such as hotels and restaurants and theaters and retail stores, without being forced to resort to demonstrations in the street, and it ought to be possible for American citizens of any color to register and to vote in a free election without interference or fear of reprisal. It ought to be possible, in short, for

> every American to enjoy the privileges of being American without regard to his race or his color. In short, every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated. But this is not the case.[1]

Kennedy felt compelled to speak to the American people this way because just hours earlier Alabama governor George Wallace literally stood in defiance of admitting African American students into the University of Alabama. It would take the force of the federal government to ensure that they could attend. Also, in these words, Kennedy articulated the call for the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act that his successor, Lyndon Johnson, would help usher through in 1964 and 1965, respectively, after Kennedy's death. It was Kennedy who got these policy initiatives in motion and who charged Congress to take up legislation.

In his June 1963 speech, he laid out facts as he urged the country to do better:

> The Negro baby born in America today, regardless of the section of the Nation in which he is born, has about one-half as much chance of completing a high school as a white baby born in the same place on the same day, one-third as much chance of completing college, one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man, twice as much chance of becoming unemployed, about one-seventh as much chance of earning $10,000 a year, a life expectancy which is 7 years shorter, and the prospects of earning only half as much. This is not a sectional issue. Difficulties over segregation and discrimination exist in every city, in every State of the Union, producing in many cities a rising tide of discontent that threatens the public safety. Nor is this a partisan issue. In a time of domestic crisis men of good will and generosity should be able to unite regardless of party or politics. This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone. It is better to settle these matters in the courts than on the streets, and new laws are needed at every level, but law alone cannot make men see right. We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution. . . .
>
> The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated. If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public school available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who represent him, if, in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place? Who among us would then be content with the counsels of patience and delay? . . . We preach freedom around the world, and we mean it, and we cherish

> our freedom here at home, but are we to say to the world, and much more importantly, to each other that this is a land of the free except for the Negroes; that we have no second-class citizens except Negroes; that we have no class or caste system, no master race except with respect to Negroes? . . .
>
> The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South, where legal remedies are not at hand. Redress is sought in the streets, in demonstrations, parades, and protests which create tensions and threaten violence and threaten lives. We face, therefore, a moral crisis as a country and as a people. It cannot be met by repressive police action. It cannot be left to increased demonstrations in the streets. It cannot be quieted by token moves or talk. It is a time to act in the Congress, in your state and local legislative body and, above all, in all of our daily lives. . . . My fellow Americans, this is a problem which faces us all—in every city of the North as well as the South. Today there are Negroes unemployed, two or three times as many compared to whites, inadequate in education, moving into the large cities, unable to find work, young people particularly out of work without hope, denied equal rights, denied the opportunity to eat at a restaurant or lunch counter or go to a movie theater, denied the right to a decent education, denied almost today the right to attend a State university even though qualified. . . . I think we owe them and we owe ourselves a better country than that.[2]

After Kennedy's death, the federal government took up his plea in earnest. And although officials did make some strides in offering civil rights protections, their effects had not been felt by those living in substandard conditions by mid to late summer of 1964. A little over a year after Kennedy's clarion call for equality and inclusion, all hell would break loose in Harlem. Over the next two months, as more unrest followed, government entities scrambled in their search for their responses.

Throughout American history, race riots have prompted various official reactions during and afterward. In the early 20th-century riots, white authorities were often complicit in carrying out the violence against African Americans. In the wake of the riots, official investigations sometimes blamed the victims. Following the July 1917 East St. Louis, Illinois, white-on-black rioting, for example, Congress established a joint committee to investigate the unrest that occurred and the conditions that created it. Drawing from members of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, its charge centered on "investigat[ing] the causes that led to the murdering, the lynching, the burning, and the drowning of innocent citizens of the United States."[3] A few weeks after the riot, as many as 10,000 people marched in a silent parade in New York to put a spotlight on the atrocities committed by white Americans against their black neighbors, specifically in response to what had happened in East St. Louis. A year later, Congress released its report, stressing that at

the time of the riots, "East St. Louis wallowed in a mire of lawlessness and unshamed corruption. Criminals from every quarter of the country gathered there, unmolested and safe from detection." The report concluded that "the overwhelming weight of testimony, to which is added the convictions of the committee, ascribes the mob spirit and its murderous manifestations to the bitter race feeling that had grown up between the whites and the blacks. The natural racial aversion, which finds expression in mob violence in the North as in the South, was augmented in East St. Louis by hundreds of petty conflicts between the whites and the blacks."[4] In the end, the committee members mostly seemed to place the crux of the blame for the unrest on the influx of African American into East St. Louis.

After another race riot occurred in Illinois in July 1919—this time in Chicago—the state's governor created a commission to examine race relations in the city. After a two-year study, the commission released a lengthy report (some 650 pages) called *The Negro in Chicago* using social science methodology based on research from University of Chicago scholars. Both white and black Chicagoans bore the blame, according to the report, but mainly whites. Only the last 11 pages, however, included policy recommendations. While the commissioners were willing to attribute the unrest to racism, they offered very little in the way of moving forward. After the report's release, the *Chicago Journal* decried that it provided "little more than a statement of the need of more fair play, better manners, greater forbearance, and greater opportunity for recreation."[5] In the immediate aftermath of the 1921 Tulsa, Oklahoma, race riot, the governor there directed a grand jury to uncover the causes of white-on-black racial violence. Predictably, it pinned the blame on the city's African Americans, particularly for subscribing to "equal rights [and] social equality."[6] State governors also set up commissions to investigate riots that occurred in Detroit in 1943 and Los Angeles in 1965. In other instances, city officials took it upon themselves to consider what happened after racial unrest in their communities, such as the 1935 Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem and the 1968 Chicago Riot Study Committee.[7] All of these commissions offered perhaps a quick nod to "getting something done"; however, they offered little in the way of action. As an expert who testified before the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (or the Kerner Commission as it is commonly known), a group that President Lyndon Johnson appointed in 1967 to analyze the riots erupting across the country, put it:

> I read that report . . . of the 1919 riot in Chicago, and it is as if I were reading the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of '35, the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of '43, the report of the McCone Commission on the Watts riot. I must again in candor say to you members of this Commission—it is a kind of Alice in Wonderland—

> with the same moving picture re-shown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations, and the same inaction.[8]

The Kerner Commission itself presented on February 29, 1968, a 700-page analysis of the state of race relations in the United States. Tasked with uncovering what happened, why it happened, and what could be done to prevent it from happening again, the 11-member commission concluded that the country was "moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal." Moreover, it determined:

> [T]he single overriding cause of rioting in the cities was not any one thing commonly adduced—unemployment, lack of education, poverty, exploitation—but that it was all of those things and more, expressed in the insidious and pervasive white sense of the inferiority of black men. Here is the essence of the charge: "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 it, and white society condones it."[9]

It was a damning, yet accurate, assessment of race in the United States. After the 1992 Los Angeles riot, although multiple commissions were created—at the national, state, and local levels—to analyze the violence that erupted after the acquittal of four white officers who were videotaped beating Rodney King, an African American man who had been pulled over for driving erratically and speeding, they received only a small amount of media coverage, and their "recommendations were essentially forgotten and dropped."[10] Unfortunately, as scholar Lindsey Lupo concludes in her analysis of riot commissions, these bodies mostly "give the appearance of action, thereby calming the non-rioting public and creating a false sense of closure. In actuality, the response has not gone beyond law and order. . . . [C]learly the issues go deeper than the smashing of windows and hurtling of bottles and it is apparent that an appropriate sociological response is necessary. . . . [R]iot commissions have consistently acted as mechanisms of evasion since at least the early twentieth century."[11] It appears that commissions have been more for show than for action.

In more recent years, officials have approached postriot evaluation using a different mechanism—truth commissions. Modeled loosely on those in countries such as South Africa, these bodies have been formed to examine riots that occurred decades ago but left residual problems behind. As Priscilla Hayner, an expert on truth commissions, elucidates:

> Struggling with the limited options for confronting past atrocities, and with an eye toward the challenge of building a human rights culture for the future, many new governments have turned to mechanisms outside

> the judicial system to both confront and learn from the horrific crimes of the past. There has been increasing interest, especially, in mechanisms of official truth-seeking, through the creation of temporary commissions to dig up, investigate and analyse the pattern of politically motivated rights crimes. . . . A truth commission is not a court of law; it does not determine individual criminal liability or order criminal sanctions. On the other hand, a truth commission can do many things that courts can't or generally don't do. Trials focus on the actions of specific individuals; truth commissions focus on the large pattern of overall events. . . . Also, courts do not typically investigate the various social or political factors which led to violence. . . . Courts do not submit policy recommendations or suggestions for political, military or judicial reforms. And finally, while court records may be public, court opinions are generally not widely distributed and widely read, as is typical of truth commission reports.[12]

Several government entities have set up these organizations as a way to acknowledge the past and to lay out suggestions for mending the persisting animosities between the races in those locales. State assemblies in Florida, Oklahoma, and North Carolina in the 1990s and early 2000s set up commissions to examine the riots that occurred in Rosewood (1923), Tulsa (1921), and Wilmington (1898). In 2006, Atlanta created the Coalition to Remember the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot. The four commissions had parallel objectives but also distinct proposals for how their communities might heal. The Rosewood, Florida, commission, created in 1993, established the facts of the 1923 riot and reported back to the state legislature. In May 1994, the governor signed legislation that compensated 172 victims between $220 and $450,000 for the emotional and physical damages caused by the riot. The law also set up a scholarship fund for the families from Rosewood to use for their education at state universities. The Oklahoma State Legislature's commission issued its report in 2001. In it, the members recommended that riot survivors and their descendants be provided reparations, a scholarship fund be set up for those families affected by the riot, an economic enterprise zone be established in the Greenwood District of Tulsa (which had been decimated in the 1921 riot), and a memorial be built in honor of the riot victims. Although it did pass a law condemning the riot and allocate $750,000 of state money to create a memorial commission, the state legislature was not completely receptive to these proposals, particularly if it meant using public funding. In 2008, the City of Tulsa created the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation "to transform the bitterness and mistrust caused by years of racial division, even violence, into a hopeful future of reconciliation and cooperation for Tulsa and the nation."[13] In anticipation of the 100-year anniversary of the riot, city and state officials created the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Centennial Commission in order to "educate Oklahomans and Americans about the

Race Riot and its impact on the state and Nation; remember its victims and survivors; and create an environment conducive to fostering sustainable entrepreneurship and heritage tourism within the Greenwood District specifically, and North Tulsa generally." In February 2018, officials announced that curriculum had been created to teach about the riot in public schools throughout the state.[14] Although Tulsa, like other cities across the United States, still experiences racial strife, the march for truth and justice continues in various ways there.

The Wilmington, North Carolina, commission published its final report in May 2006. It issued 15 recommendations centered on the themes of economic development (including reparations), empowerment, education, and commemoration. Government leaders did little to follow through on the proposals other than dedicate a memorial acknowledging the riot in 2008. More recently, state officials have decided to put up a state highway sign in Wilmington describing the 1898 violence as a coup.[15] Atlanta's commission had the goal "to create public awareness of the riot and its legacy, facilitate open and ongoing dialogue amongst diverse communities, and inspire positive systemic change in Atlanta's racial relations."[16] It hosted public meetings, featured documentaries about the riot, and offered walking tours of the riot area to carry out this goal. These truth commission–type bodies, like previous postriot organizations, sometimes struggled in their missions in dealing with the simmering racial discord in their communities. And although they met with mixed success in getting their recommendations enacted, they at least made some progress in establishing that whites had done everything in their power to prevent their black neighbors from making economic, political, and social progress. By even admitting that the horrifying events had transpired, these commissions offered common ground in which African Americans and whites could communicate. Other attempts have been made to foster better relationships between the races as well. In 1997, President Bill Clinton launched "One America in the 21st Century: The President's Initiative on Race" at a commencement speech at the University of California–San Diego. "I want this panel to help educate Americans about the facts surrounding issues of race," he announced, "to promote a dialog in every community of the land to confront and work through these issues, to recruit and encourage leadership at all levels to help breach racial divides, and to find, develop, and recommend how to implement concrete solutions to our problems."[17] A little over a decade later, the U.S. House of Representatives issued a formal apology for slavery and Jim Crow laws. Of course, this 2008 measure was purely symbolic, but it was the first time the federal government acknowledged the barbarism of slavery and Jim Crow.[18] While not in direct response to riot violence, Clinton's and the House of Representatives' actions spoke to a broader concern about race relations in the United States and what could be done to heal centuries of damage.

In the summer of 1964, Lyndon Johnson also grappled with responding to the violence that began erupting with the riots in New York. In a statement issued on July 21 in the midst of the unrest in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant, the president tried to balance a message of law and order but also empathy for the circumstances that created the hostility among African Americans. "It must be made clear once and for all that violence and lawlessness cannot, must not, and will not be tolerated," he remarked. "In this determination, New York officials shall have all of the help that we can give them. And this includes help in correcting the evil social conditions that breed despair and disorder."[19] He then ordered J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), to look into whether any federal laws had been broken during the uprisings. Quietly issued on Saturday, September 26, two days after the Warren Commission Report came out on President Kennedy's assassination, the FBI document—which analyzed all of the riots that broke out between July and September—proved to be fairly muted in its findings:

> A number of charges have been made that various organizations instigated the riots in one city or another. These charges have been carefully investigated. The evidence indicates that aside from the actions of minor organizations or irresponsible individuals there was no systematic planning or organization of any of the city riots. Following several civil rights demonstrations which received widespread publicity throughout the country earlier this year, a number of violence agitators arose whose words were publicized in the press, on television and on the radio. . . . These and similar exhortations were addressed in general to Negroes living in crowded areas of many cities across the country. It is an essential part of the background to recognize that many of these areas are characterized by miserable living conditions, houses that are badly maintained, many of them rat infested and filthy. Drunkenness, narcotics peddling, prostitution, idleness, frustration, poverty and lack of opportunity are part of the atmosphere many people in these districts breathe. It is notable, however, that the general conditions above described exist not only in most of the seven cities where riots occurred, but also in varying degrees in several hundred other cities where no riots occurred. The facts developed lead to the clear conclusion that there is no discernable pattern of organization of the riots from city to city except as the result of the circumstances above stated, and that in most cases the riots followed ordinary arrests and altercations involving drunks, hoodlums or common criminals or all three. . . .
>
> It is a truism that the first duty of all government is to maintain order, else there is no government. Keeping the peace in this country is essentially the responsibility of the local government and when it fails the responsibility falls on the state government. Where lawless conditions arise, however, with similar characteristics in communities from coast to coast, the matter

> is one of national concern even though there is no direct connection between the events and even though no Federal law is violated. . . . While adult troublemakers often incited the riots, the mob violence was dominated by the acts of youths . . . variously characterized by responsible people as "school dropouts," "young punks," "common hoodlums" and "drunken kids." Rioting by these young people reflects an increasing breakdown across the nation in respect for the law and the rights of other people to be secure in their person and their property. . . . No evidence was found that the riots were organized on a national basis by any single person, group of persons, or organization. . . .
>
> The social and economic conditions in which much of the Negro population lives are demoralizing. While steady improvement of these substandard conditions is a long-term goal, the antipoverty program as well as other private and public activities should result in steady improvement. In addition, coordinated and concerted programs to keep teenagers in school should increase the level of education and diminish the dropouts who have been an increasingly serious source of trouble. . . . On occasion, as in a large city recently, the bureau receives reports of prospective violence and interviews the leaders involved. These interviews have had a highly deterrent effect. The leaders interviewed not only denied the reports but offered to advise the bureau of any future reports coming to their attention. Continuing contact in trouble areas, followed by interviews where trouble is anticipated, is a highly effective procedure which might be used more widely by local authorities.[20]

Not surprisingly, given its scope, the report elicited mixed reactions.

President Johnson issued a statement laying out his response to the FBI's findings. He would make riot training available to all police departments in the country; offer riot control techniques as part of National Guard instruction; have his secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare analyze the issue of school dropouts; and organize a conference with state and local officials to discuss how the federal government could help with the problem of racial unrest. He also declared:

> Most Americans have a deep commitment to civil peace. I call upon all our fellow citizens to remember that respect for law and order and regard for each person's rights are the cornerstones of self-government in a democracy. This administration feels strongly that this must be a society of law and order in which citizens live by recognized rules of conduct. To that end we not only enforce Federal acts but cooperate at all levels of government to assure that civil peace shall be maintained. Every citizen, regardless of his race, creed, or color, is entitled to equal justice. And every citizen is entitled to be secure in his person on our city streets or in the countryside.[21]

Unlike Johnson, others found fault with the report's findings. Activist Jesse Gray castigated it as too sympathetic toward police and too harsh on African American youths. The "FBI," he asserted, "swept under the official rug of the United States all the evidence and presented for all the world to see a fantastic report that could only have been born out of the wild dreams of sick minds." Presidential special assistant Bill Moyers suggested that there would be a "sharp backlash" from "Negroes who will object to the constant reference to their race." Moreover, he projected that Goldwater would use as campaign fodder the FBI's assertion that disrespect for the law among youths had led to crime and violence. "If I were writing for the Senator from Arizona," Moyers declared, "I could use this report." In addition, he argued that another section of the report that concluded that civilian review boards in cities such as Philadelphia and Rochester hampered police response and put the public at risk would offend white liberals.[22] On the other side of the political spectrum, conservative commentator William F. Buckley Jr. also condemned the FBI's findings, particularly its acknowledgment that antipoverty programs would be beneficial in alleviating racial strife. "We must hope that future attempts to conscript the FBI as a propaganda agent for the Administration's policies will fail, and one bases one's hopes that it will fail on a high regard for the integrity of John Edgar Hoover." The report, however, had actually been written by Thomas Dewey, the former Republican candidate for president. In addition to offering Johnson bipartisan perspective, he had also been New York's governor during the Harlem riot of 1943. The president asked him for assistance with the report, anticipating that Hoover's tone would be too strident. It turns out, however, that the FBI director needed no such oversight. We should "endeavor to remove the basic economic factors underlying Negro unrest in our large cities which result in sub-standard living for Negroes," Hoover penned to a White House aide. "The Anti-Poverty Program and the program to keep teen-agers in school to avoid drop-outs are steps in this direction."[23]

In the meantime, however, Hoover carried out Johnson's goal of beefing up riot training throughout the country and reported that he had taken "immediate action." The Treasury Department's law enforcement coordination director had come up with the idea of assembling small groups of federal troops at various military bases around the United States to be on standby should a nearby city need and summon them "to aid them in combatting crime and lawlessness, particularly in . . . civil disorders." In "dealing with violence and civil disturbances in our cities," the director urged, police should use "the minimum force necessary with a maximum humane, noninjurious effect." To ease concerns of federal overreach, he had contacted the International Association of Chiefs of Police and related that some 138 cities with over 30,000 residents had asked for "direct assistance for racial disturbances."[24] Nonetheless, the nationalization and militarization of police forces

had begun in earnest. It also did not help race relations that the vast majority of police forces were white and stayed that way during the 1960s. At the time of the unrest in Watts in 1965, for example, just 3.5 percent of police were black even though 16.5 percent of the population in Los Angeles was African American. Other cities displayed the same pattern: in New York almost 25 percent of the residents were black, but only 5 percent of the police; only 5 percent of Detroit's police were black in a city of nearly 40 percent African Americans. Chicago had made a bit more progress under the guidance of black politicians but still failed to reflect the population at large—17 percent of the police department was black in a city with 27 percent black residents. A journalist for the *Afro-American*, a black newspaper in Baltimore, decried this situation. "Colored citizens cannot be expected to be treated fairly by the average white policeman," one column read. "If the policeman has a background that is all lily-white and anti-black, he should not be allowed to stalk up and down the streets in colored neighborhoods."[25] By the 1960s, however, many cities had removed requirements for police who served there to live within their city limits. This situation allowed whites from the suburbs to patrol and oversee black urban neighborhoods without getting to know the residents—a toxic mix that fostered little understanding and empathy.

As more riots erupted throughout the 1960s, some African American leaders with militant tendencies called for meeting police hostility—and white animosity in general—with drastic action. And although the FBI report released in September 1964 concluded that there was no indication of a coordinated effort by African Americans to plan and carry out these riots, many whites bought into the idea of a widespread conspiracy—largely fueled by the words of radical black leaders. Observers particularly noted a clear uptick in rhetoric about the lack of progress and some calls for action as African Americans commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1963. Author James Baldwin, for example, struck a melancholy tone in an article he wrote for *Liberator* magazine, one of the leading outlets for black radicalism. "Let us, for once, leave in the filing cabinet all those pathetic statistics proving Negro gains and changes," he challenged readers. "We talk endlessly about progress and chatter about the future because we are afraid to pay the price of change in the present." Lincoln Lynch, the president of Long Island's CORE chapter, urged audience members to "revolt" at a dinner marking the Emancipation Proclamation in early 1963. "I urge that this first day of the 101st year should see, beginning now, a massive and sustained assault on the bastions of segregation and debasement of Negroes and Puerto Ricans." By the end of the year, his goal was to "look back with pride that here in this little corner of America the bonfire of human dignity will be burning bright." Journalist and author Louis E. Lomax echoed that sentiment. "The white liberal tone of the North,

although they do not recognize it, is in keeping with the white tone of the South—gradualism."[26]

By mid-1963, an increasing number of black leaders began predicting that more drastic action might start unfolding soon. NAACP labor secretary Herbert Hill, noting the unease permeating the country, even in the North, admitted that he was "rethinking through all his theories about the civil rights movement—old theories don't hold" and that the movement appeared to be "taking [a] revolutionary turn." Lomax concurred. "The mood of the Negro, particularly in New York City," he told the New York State legislature, "is very, very bitter. He is losing faith. The Negro on the streets of Harlem is tired of platitudes from white liberals." CORE leader Norman Hill forecast that there was a "good chance that the movement will become more violent." And Chicago Urban League activist Edwin Berry cautioned that "impatience and uneasiness" among African Americans fostered an "evil brew" that "could easily lead to violence." The *Afro-American* embraced this idea in a June editorial. "From Tuscaloosa to Cambridge, from Oxford to Philadelphia, from Danville to Los Angeles, ours is a nation in which revolution has been forged. We do not shrink from the use of the term 'revolution,' for how else can the social upheaval that has shaken our nation be honestly described?" At its annual gathering in July, NAACP leaders declared that the "permanently unemployed mass of Negroes" had the potential to upend "the American social order." Both traditionally black and white media outlets picked up on this unease. "In this one hundredth year of *de jure* freedom," *Ebony* avered, "today's Negro is not too impressed with how far he has come from bondage." The *New York Times* also weighed in. "Suddenly it seems," it published in August 1963, "that the Negro is mad at everybody." The following month, NBC aired a three-hour documentary, *The American Revolution of '63*, highlighting in part tensions in both Chicago and Harlem. The "Negro Revolt of 1963" had become an open and obvious reality.[27]

Events in Philadelphia, for example, seemed to confirm this refrain. Starting in April, the city's CORE and NAACP chapters pushed for the hiring of black workers in municipal construction activities. Protests took place in front of the mayor's home, city hall, and tourist sites, as well as areas where new structures were going into place. Cecil B. Moore, head of Philadelphia's NAACP chapter, led the charge. Striking a strident tone, Moore identified with and supported the city's black poor and working-class populace. Although he was described as "an arrogant foul mouth radical," residents of North Philadelphia knew he had the back of the "rank and file Negro." Steering away from the traditional NAACP approach of restraint and assimilation, Moore found ready recruits to his more radical mind set in places such as North Philadelphia's bars. "We are serving notice that no longer will the plantation system of white men appointing our leaders exist in Philadelphia," he announced in early 1963. "We expect to be consulted on all community

issues which affect our people." The Philadelphia-based Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), a group that espoused black nationalism and Maoist ideology and was led by Maxwell Stanford, also contributed to the call for action. Two of its members were arrested in a fight with police while demonstrating at a school construction site. Activists in other cities across the country chimed in as well. Between May 19 and July 1 alone, protests broke out in 153 cities. Equity in hiring for construction sites and school desegregation were the biggest concerns. Picketing took place in cities such as Englewood, New Jersey; Boston; and Twin Oaks, Pennsylvania. Protesters in St. Louis blocked buses and petitioned the school board. "The point of the demonstration," suggested one demonstrator, "is that we want action now and not talks—we have had hearings and talks off and on for three years."[28]

Protesters in Chicago held widespread demonstrations against segregated schools during the summer of 1963. Both the white superintendent and the only black member of the board of education came under intense fire. Some 9,000 marchers surrounded the school where the board member was scheduled to give a commencement address in late June. Charles H. Jones Jr., the head of the Chicago Friends of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, addressed those congregated. "We are sick at heart that this public protest is necessary," he cried. "But in the last half of the twentieth century—one hundred years after Emancipation—when this nation's children, generation after generation, have been marred and maimed by second-class treatment, we can no longer allow false representation of Negroes." In Detroit, between 125,000 and 200,000 protesters participated in a "Walk to Freedom March." Martin Luther King Jr. and Walter P. Reuther, head of the United Automobile Workers, led the crowd. Calling for broadening voting rights and overturning Jim Crow, King also charged the demonstrators to focus on improving Detroit's schools, housing, and employment. "We must come to see," he proclaimed, "that the *de facto* segregation in the North is just as injurious as the actual segregation in the South." He also made a point of praising the "magnificent new militancy" that he observed in the city. Also at the march was Reverend Albert Cleage Jr., a Black Nationalist whose goal centered more on black solidarity and less on integration. "Negroes," he asserted a few months earlier, "are struggling against a total white society, a total white civilization." Distancing himself from King and other traditional black leaders, he maintained: "I do not identify myself with those interracial groups who issue statements promising open occupancy in Michigan. I do not identify with those Negroes who are so identified with the white community that they would die if it collapsed." During his speech at the march, he entreated residents to boycott the city's grocery stores. At a meeting later in the year, he pushed for a "strategy of chaos" to stir up the status quo. "Either we get all our rights," he urged, "or we are going to tear it up."[29] Other civil rights activists were busy in other cities as well. By the end of the summer, the U.S.

Justice Department had tracked 1,412 protests across the country. African Americans stood ready to overturn the current system.

In the wake of the 1964 riots, and after he had securely defeated Goldwater, President Johnson—like President Kennedy before him—predicted more unrest, especially in the North. As the march on Selma, Alabama, unfolded, he continued to push for more federal support for local law enforcement. "I got 38 percent of these young Negro boys out on the streets," he lamented to conservative Democratic Arkansas senator John McClellan in March 1965 in search of support for his War on Crime. "They've got no school to go to and no job. And by God, I'm just scared to death what's going to happen in June and July." Particularly alarming was that "this damn world is shifting and changing so fast." He forecast "ten times" more violence on the horizon. "What you've seen in Selma was nothing. You just wait until this thing gets going in Harlem and Chicago." Civil rights leader Bayard Rustin agreed. In May, he urged Mayor Wagner to tackle the problems that led to the uprisings the previous summer, especially police brutality and unemployment, or suffer the consequences. "The choice before you is clear; either you creatively meet the causes of discontent in the spring," Rustin advised, "or negatively face another long, hot summer." He continued the call for action to desegregate schools, increase employment, and register people to vote. Two months before his admonishment to the mayor, he, James Farmer, and John Lewis led a march in Harlem. "We will stay in these damn streets," Rustin declared, "until every Negro in the country can vote." Although willing to protest in the streets, he also thought it wise to work with Johnson and the Democrats to achieve his objectives. "We need allies," Rustin tried to convince more radical black leaders.[30] And on August 6, with Rustin in the audience showing his support, the president signed the Voting Rights Act into law—one tenet in the drive for civil rights.

At the signing ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda, Johnson laid out his vision for the significance of the law to the members of Congress and the American people:

> Today is a triumph for freedom as huge as any victory that has ever been won on any battlefield. . . . And today we strike away the last major shackle of . . . fierce and ancient bonds. Today the Negro story and the American story fuse and blend. . . . This act flows from a clear and simple wrong. Its only purpose is to right that wrong. Millions of Americans are denied the right to vote because of their color. This law will ensure them the right to vote. The wrong is one which no American, in his heart, can justify. The right is one which no American, true to our principles, can deny.
>
> In 1957, as the leader of the majority in the United States Senate, speaking in support of legislation to guarantee the right of all men to vote, I said, "This right to vote is the basic right without which all others are

meaningless. It gives people, people as individuals, control over their own destinies." Last year I said, "Until every qualified person regardless of . . . the color of his skin has the right, unquestioned and unrestrained, to go in and cast his ballot in every precinct in this great land of ours, I am not going to be satisfied." Immediately after the election I directed the Attorney General to explore, as rapidly as possible, the ways to ensure the right to vote. And then last March, with the outrage of Selma still fresh, I came down to this Capitol one evening and asked the Congress and the people for swift and for sweeping action to guarantee to every man and woman the right to vote. In less than 48 hours I sent the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to Congress. In little more than 4 months the Congress, with overwhelming majorities, enacted one of the most monumental laws in the entire history of American freedom. . . .

There were those who said this is an old injustice, and there is no need to hurry. But 95 years have passed since the 15th Amendment gave all [*sic*] Negroes the right to vote. And the time for waiting is gone. There were those who said smaller and more gradual measures should be tried. But they had been tried. For years and years they had been tried, and tried, and tried, and they had failed, and failed, and failed. And the time for failure is gone. There were those who said that this is a many-sided and very complex problem. But however viewed, the denial of the right to vote is still a deadly wrong. And the time for injustice has gone.

This law covers many pages. But the heart of the act is plain. Wherever, by clear and objective standards, States and counties are using regulations, or laws, or tests to deny the right to vote, then they will be struck down. If it is clear that State officials still intend to discriminate, the Federal examiners will be sent in to register all eligible voters. When the prospect of discrimination is gone, the examiners will be immediately withdrawn. And, under this act, if any county, anywhere in this Nation does not want Federal intervention it need only open its polling places to all of its people. . . .

And I pledge you that we will not delay, or we will not hesitate, or we will not turn aside until Americans of every race and color and origin in this country have the same right as all others to share in the process of democracy. So, through this act, and its enforcement, an important instrument of freedom passes into the hands of millions of our citizens. But that instrument must be used. Presidents and Congress, laws and lawsuits can open the doors to the polling places and open the doors to the wondrous rewards which await the wise use of the ballot. But only the individual Negro, and all others who have been denied the right to vote, can really walk through those doors, and can use that right, and can transform the vote into an instrument of justice and fulfillment. . . .

Today what is perhaps the last of the legal barriers is tumbling. There will be many actions and many difficulties before the rights woven into

> law are also woven into the fabric of our Nation. But the struggle for equality must now move toward a different battlefield. It is nothing less than granting every American Negro his freedom to enter the mainstream of American life: not the conformity that blurs enriching differences of culture and tradition, but rather the opportunity that gives each a chance to choose. For centuries of oppression and hatred have already taken their painful toll. . . .
>
> Thus, this is a victory for the freedom of the American Negro. But it is also a victory for the freedom of the American Nation. And every family across this great, entire, searching land will live stronger in liberty, will live more splendid in expectation, and will be prouder to be an American because of the act that you have passed that I will sign today.[31]

Another part of his Great Society initiative had come to fruition.

Just five days later, however, in what would become one of the most well-known riots of the 1960s, the Watts area of Los Angeles exploded. Much like the 1964 riots, the unrest centered on accusations of police brutality set in an environment of toxic racial animosity. Both King and Rustin traveled to Watts to assess the scene and meet with residents. Rumblings of a Watts Manifesto circulated while they were there. When Rustin asked one young man what it meant, he lit a match and replied, "Daddy, that was our manifesto, and the slogan was Burn, Baby, Burn. We won." When Rustin asked what they had won, the youth explained: For a long time, residents had "asked [whites] to come and talk with us. They didn't come. We tried to get some war on poverty. It didn't come. But after our manifesto, daddy, the Mayor, the Governor, you, Dr. King, everybody came." Rustin later reflected on what he had heard. "If you wait until youngsters are forced to riot to listen to their grievances, woe unto you and damn you, for you will get nothing but violence."[32] Maxwell Stanford, the head of RAM, celebrated that "a guerilla war" had begun. Impressed by what he was witnessing in Watts, he described the mode of operation of the rioters. "One group of Freedom Fighters would drive through the liberated areas hurling objects through plate glass windows, and then they would set the stores afire. A Reparations Detachment would usually be on hand to claim any material goods which could be carried to the homes of the revolutionaries." Some community activists in Watts, however, had a different take on events. The "masses were rebelling *against* something (i.e. police brutality, unemployment, and white domination in general) but it was not a rebellion *for* something."[33] Angry at first, and then frustrated that his policies were not sufficient to overcome conditions of low employment, inadequate schools, and poor housing, President Johnson vented to participants of the August 19 White House Conference on Equal Employment Opportunity. "A rioter with a Molotov cocktail is not fighting for civil rights," he asserted, "any more than a Klansman with a sheet on his

back and a mask on his face." He continued, "They are both . . . lawbreakers, destroyers of constitutional rights and liberties, and ultimately destroyers of a free America." The following day, Johnson and King spoke about the state of U.S. race relations. King suggested that he was "not optimistic" and believed that a "full-scale race war" was on the horizon. "We're not doing enough to alleviate it," Johnson remarked, "and we're not doing it quickly enough. And I'm having hell up here with this Congress."[34] The uprising in Watts seemed to weaken his call for a Great Society. His vision of the country achieving economic success and racial union appeared to be slipping away from him.

Numerous books and articles have been written now about the 1960s riots—particularly those that occurred between 1965 and 1968. As historian Peter Levy highlights in his recent work, *The Great Uprising*, analysis has generally fallen into two camps—those that subscribe to the idea that radicals and outside agitators stirred up the riffraff and ne'er-do-wells in inner cities to loot and destroy for their own entertainment and profit, and those that cast blame on the conditions that African Americans had to face on a day-to-day basis in their neighborhoods—police brutality, poor housing, substandard education, and high unemployment.[35] President Johnson's Kerner Commission settled on the latter argument and laid out specific plans to overcome those conditions—plans that remain largely ignored by policy makers to this day. Elected officials helped fuel the first account. Johnson himself, for example, has come under intense scrutiny of late as a contributor to the riffraff narrative. His War on Crime, and particularly the 1965 Law Enforcement Assistance Act and the 1968 Safe Streets Act (his last major piece of domestic legislation), some scholars suggest, shifted the blame to African Americans rather than focusing on broader societal concerns.[36] Johnson's second attorney general later reflected on his administration's War on Crime. "It proved to be a dreadful mistake," Nicholas Katzenbach admitted. "You are meant to win wars, and the War on Crime was in a sense an unwinnable war."[37] But, of course, President Richard Nixon greatly expanded this war with his strategy to win the presidency. His Southern Strategy of racial resentment soon became a national strategy. By exacerbating the deep racial divisions that permeated the country, Nixon was able to stoke the fear of "the other" among whites. Echoes of this refrain can be heard in American politics today—still in the realm of race but also with ethnicity, immigration status, and religion.

Purposely conflating any type of violence—"street crime, political protests, and urban riots"—Nixon castigated the Democrats and their Great Society and pronounced that they had instead offered lawlessness and disorder. Upon accepting the Republican nomination for president in 1968, Nixon spoke directly to middle-class white voters—the "Forgotten Americans, those who did not indulge in violence, those who did not break the law,

people who pay their taxes and go to work, people who send their children to school, who go to churches, people who are not haters, people who love this country, and because they love this country are angry about what has happened to America." One of his aides wrote a letter to Nixon underscoring the stakes: "The people living in communities ringing the big cities are anxious to contain the spread of violence out of the urban core." In a radio interview, Nixon fanned the flames. "If we allow [the crime wave] to happen, then the city jungle will cease to be a metaphor," the candidate declared. "It will become a barbaric reality and the brutal society that now flourishes in the core cities . . . will annex the affluent suburbs."[38] Once in office, through his Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, he poured vast amounts of money into police departments across the county, modernizing and militarizing their equipment in order to continue the War on Crime, a conflict that eventually evolved into a War on Drugs as well. Helicopters, tanks, tear gas, and armored personnel carriers moved from the Department of Defense to local police departments. In 1970, President Nixon signed the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act, which strengthened mandatory-minimum sentences for "dope pushers."[39]

By the early 1980s, the War on Drugs intensified under President Ronald Reagan, who beefed up security measures to stem the flow of drugs coming into the country and also signed legislation that implemented mandatory minimums for certain crimes. President Bill Clinton, wanting to prove his tough-on-crime credentials and harkening back to the law and order approach of previous administrations, signed legislation that broadened the crimes that qualified for the death penalty, instituted mandatory life sentences for "three strikes" violent felon offenders, and earmarked billions for the hiring of more police officers and the construction of more prisons. At the beginning of the 21st century, violent crimes had started to decline in the United States, sparking sometimes heated discussions over the reasons why. Both Democrats and Republicans, however, began to question the need for mass incarceration. "The judicial system has been a critical element in keeping violent criminals off the street," Democratic senator Richard Durbin from Illinois declared in 2015. "But now we're stepping back, and I think it's about time, to ask whether the dramatic increase in incarceration was warranted." Some of his conservative Republican colleagues in the Senate, such as Rand Paul of Kentucky, agreed and called for shorter federal drug sentences for nonviolent offenses. In July 2015, President Barack Obama commuted the sentences of 46 individuals serving lengthy terms for nonviolent drug crimes. "These are young people who made mistakes that aren't that different than the mistakes that I made, and the mistakes that a lot of you guys made," he remarked to reporters exactly 51 years after James Powell was shot and killed by Thomas Gilligan in New York City. Even Clinton apologized that year at the NAACP convention for his role in fueling mass incarceration. "I signed a

bill that made the problem worse," he lamented. "And I want to admit it."[40] Rather than "correcting the evil social conditions that breed despair and disorder" among African Americans that President Johnson had cited so many decades earlier (police brutality, poor and segregated housing, unequal educational opportunities, and low employment), elected officials generally found it more expedient to continue the march of law and order so effectively laid out by candidate Goldwater. President Donald Trump appears to be a firm believer of this mind-set.

As scholar Michael Flamm describes it, James Powell's final resting place sits in a quiet cemetery not far from the graves of famous individuals such as Malcolm X, Thelonious Monk, James Baldwin, Judy Garland, and Oscar Hammerstein in Westchester County, New York.[41] Powell's unmarked grave perhaps belies the considerable role he has played in the history of U.S. race relations. For it was his untimely death that ushered in a new era of racial violence in this country. The protests that soon became riots in Harlem and then Bed-Stuy after Thomas Gilligan shot and killed Powell changed the tone and tenor of African American insistence on equal and fair treatment. While the nonviolence preached by King and others still had its place for years to come, burning, looting, and destruction became new weapons in the arsenal for justice and equity. Gilligan eventually resumed his position on the force in November 1964 and retired four years later at the age of 42. He died at the age of 88 in 2014—five decades after the 1964 riots.[42] Significantly, that momentous day when Powell and Gilligan met on a New York City street in July 1964 represented a hinge of history. Everything after that encounter would be different. Although African Americans had vented their frustration and desperation before then, the riots of 1964 were not the same. A spark that lit up under the right conditions could set off an explosion. Events in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Pennsylvania declared to elected officials and the general public alike that America's cities were hotbeds of racial animosity. Peaceful protests were no longer guaranteed—even when respected and well-known black leaders rushed to the scene to try to alleviate the tension. By examining the structural factors, cultural framing, and precipitating events that prompted these uprisings, we have gained a deeper understanding of their meaning and why they occurred. More research into the many riots that erupted during the 1960s would enhance our knowledge of racial violence even more. This analysis, however, offers an overarching framework for the riots that began in 1964, and some insight into the rest of the uprisings in that decade. Moreover, to comprehend where we are in the United States today, it is important to acknowledge how and why "the dawn broke hot and somber."

Epilogue

William Faulkner famously wrote, “The past is never dead. It’s not even past.”[1] Unfortunately, this maxim expressly holds true in the realm of riot history in the form it has taken since 1964. While the riots and the circumstances surrounding them that year and throughout the 1960s differ in important ways from those that have followed since, the eruptions that continue to this day share significant similarities with the ones examined in this book. Today’s riots and the incidents leading up to them echo the strains heard loudly in 1964. Calls of police brutality, in addition to sustained inequity between African Americans and whites in education, access to good housing, and employment rates as well as a perpetual cycle of disparate treatment within governmental institutions at the local, state, and federal levels continue to sound the alarm that the United States still has much work to do regarding racial justice. Numerous recent studies have examined the lingering racial bias that pervades our society and government.[2] Festering problems in Baltimore, Charlotte, and Milwaukee, erupted into violence after fatal encounters between police and people of color in 2015 and 2016. In other locations—such as Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Falcon Heights, Minnesota; and Tulsa, Oklahoma—similar interactions between police and African Americans led to cries for reform as well. However, perhaps nothing did more to shine a light on the problems that the country must face regarding race than the events in Ferguson, Missouri, that began on August 9, 2014, when white police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed an unarmed black teen named Michael Brown. Ferguson and its aftermath have shaped much of the discourse on race relations in the United States over the last few years. After the uprising there that started on that hot summer day, the United States has gradually started coming to terms with its racial Achilles’ heel.

Like other inner-ring suburbs north of St. Louis, Ferguson, Missouri, experienced a rapid demographic shift over the last few decades.[3] Between

1990 and 2010, its African American population increased from 25 to 67 percent. Despite this growth in numbers, black residents did not gain economic or political parity with the white citizens of the community. With nearly twice the unemployment rates as whites, many of the impoverished black residents settled in the less expensive, multifamily Canfield Green Apartments in Ferguson's southeastern corner where the shooting occurred. African Americans also remained starkly underrepresented in the community's power structure. Members of the police force, city council, and school board continued to be overwhelmingly white: only 4 of 53 police, 1 of 6 council members, and 1 of 7 on the school board were black. Moreover, a study released before the incident in Ferguson had found that the city police department disproportionately targeted black residents in traffic stops and arrests: in 2013, African Americans experienced 86 percent of the stops and almost 93 percent of the arrests even though they comprised only two-thirds of the population.

With these political, economic, and social inequalities providing the embers, the August 9 shooting and the local law enforcement's response to it provided the sparks that ignited the community. As Brown and a friend walked in the middle of Canfield Drive that afternoon, Wilson encountered and stopped them. Police later stated that Brown attacked Wilson in his police car and tried to grab his gun. Witnesses to the shooting asserted that the officer was overly aggressive toward a young man with no weapon who signaled his surrender by putting his hands up in the air. Autopsy reports revealed that six bullets hit Brown's body; the fatal shot struck the top of his head. Anger and resentment grew in the neighborhood when officials left Brown's body lying in the street for most of the afternoon, finally loading it and taking it away in an SUV more than four hours after he died. Over the next two weeks, intermittent looting and vandalism erupted in Ferguson alongside peaceful protests while local and later state police tried to maintain order.

Missteps by the local police only exacerbated the tension, however. In addition to leaving Brown's body in the street (intentionally or not harkening back to the days of public lynchings), local officials tried to impose control by setting a 9:00 p.m. curfew. Much like the "sundown towns" that cropped up across the United States throughout the 20th century, the curfew suggested that Ferguson's African American citizens were not welcome on the streets of their own city. The dogs that the police used to restrain protesters and rioters evoked images from more than half a century earlier of putting down peaceful civil rights demonstrations. As unrest continued to grow, local officials called on neighboring jurisdictions and county police for help. A stunned community and nation watched in dismay as the augmented police force met the heightening tensions by donning riot gear, commandeering armored vehicles, and shooting rubber bullets and tear gas into the

crowds. Ordinary citizens were arrested for not complying quickly enough when officers ordered them to move; journalists were arrested for trying to broadcast the unfolding drama to the world. Instead of calming the situation, this militarized response only aggravated it. Missouri governor Jay Nixon stepped in and put the state highway patrol in charge of the scene. For a few days, calm prevailed in Ferguson.

Unfortunately, local authorities soon fanned the flames again. On Friday, August 15, almost a week after Brown's death, Ferguson police finally revealed the name of Darren Wilson, who killed Brown. In addition, they released a local store video that appeared to show Brown shoplifting merchandise and then shoving the store's clerk just minutes before his fatal encounter. Many in the community believed the police were diverting attention away from the shooting by smearing Brown's reputation. Violence flared again. In response, Governor Nixon called in the National Guard to assist the state police and briefly established a midnight curfew. Brown's father entreated the town to observe a day of nonviolence on Monday, August 25—the day of his son's funeral. Tensions subsided, and peaceful protests outnumbered incidents of violence in the days and weeks that followed.[4]

In late November, more violence broke out when the St. Louis County prosecutor, Robert McCulloch, announced on the 24th a grand jury's decision not to indict Darren Wilson in Michael Brown's death. News outlets indicated that African Americans placed little faith in McCulloch, the man appointed to lead the investigation. They thought him an individual who brought too much personal and political baggage to the issue of race relations. (His father, a St. Louis policeman, had been shot and killed by a black man when McCulloch was 12, and many of his relatives worked for the police force as well.)[5] On March 4, 2015, the U.S. Justice Department released two reports on Ferguson. The first confirmed the grand jury's decision not to indict Wilson, clearing him of wrongdoing and suggesting that his determination to shoot Brown was "not unreasonable." It also concluded that Brown likely attacked Wilson and did not have his hands up in the air when he was killed as some witnesses had suggested. The second report, however, issued a blistering assessment of the Ferguson Police Department, which it deemed racist and unconstitutional in its actions toward black residents when it came to arrests and fines.[6] A year later, in March 2016, the city council passed an ordinance endorsing a settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice. Ferguson, the agreement stated in part, would ensure its police officers received better training, wore body cameras, and had civilian oversight over them.[7] Since the 2014 unrest, although the incumbent white mayor was reelected, more people of color now serve in the power structure of the city. And although the whole St. Louis region continues to struggle with issues of segregation and racial animosity, it has made a concerted effort to improve in some respects.

The events in Ferguson unfolded in analogous ways to the incidents of racial violence that erupted across the United States 50 years earlier. In contrast to the early 20th-century white-on-black race riots that intended to prevent blacks from fully entering society, the riots of the 1960s stemmed from violent encounters between police and African Americans. Blacks who still felt excluded, singled out, and held to different standards than white Americans looted and destroyed specific businesses and property. The numerous riots—much like what has unfolded in Ferguson—that exploded throughout the decade gradually prompted government officials to investigate police brutality and the socioeconomic conditions that would allow two societies to exist simultaneously in the United States. After the 1960s, rioting continued to occur sporadically following violent encounters between police and African Americans—in Los Angeles in 1992 and Cincinnati in 2001, for example. In the months leading up to Ferguson, in fact, other deaths of unarmed African Americans by white police received widespread news coverage.

In other words, the eruption in Ferguson did not appear out of nowhere. The historical, political, economic, and social context created a tinderbox that went up in flames when another unarmed African American died at the hands of a white police officer. The situation escalated when the local police's response was less than ideal. Reaction to the incident exposes a country still deeply divided along racial lines. In a public opinion poll conducted shortly after the shooting, 80 percent of African Americans agreed that the incident raised important issues about race, while 47 percent of whites felt that race was getting more attention than it deserved. The poll also revealed that 65 percent of African Americans believed that the police went too far in their response to the protests, while only about a third of whites agreed. Whites were almost three times as likely as blacks to trust that the investigation into the shooting would be fair.[8]

Ferguson also prompted President Barack Obama's administration to address racial unrest on a broader scale. In December 2014, Obama—by issuing an executive order—announced the creation of the President's Task Force on 21st-Century Policing. In their final report released the following May, the members of the commission laid out their charge and made suggestions to the president on what could be done. "The task force was created to strengthen community policing and trust among law enforcement officers and the communities they serve," the report read, "especially in light of recent events around the country that have underscored the need for and importance of lasting collaborative relationships between local police and the public."[9] Their recommendations centered on tenets such as building trust and legitimacy, implementing policies that reflect community values and oversight over those policies, using technology and social media effectively, practicing community policing, expanding training and education, and promoting officer wellness and safety.[10] Tensions still flare up in cities

around the United States, but attempts by various agencies and levels of government to understand and respond to the racial issues that still exist offer a start at addressing this decades-old dilemma. By even acknowledging that problems still exist, a common goal of racial harmony might be better met. It is now way past time to address those lingering issues that became all too evident beginning in the summer of 1964.

Notes

Preface

1. *New York Times,* July 20, 1964, 1.

2. In my first book, *All Hell Broke Loose: American Race Riots from the Progressive Era through World War II* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), I analyze the conditions that allowed race riots to occur from the Progressive Era through World War II.

3. Martin Luther King Jr., "The Other America" (speech, Grosse Point, MI, March 14, 1968), Grosse Point Historical Society, http://www.gphistorical.org/mlk/mlkspeech/index.htm.

Chapter 1: The Nature of Riots and the 1960s

1. See Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

2. See Ann V. Collins, "Social History of Race Riots in America," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Social History,* ed. Lynn Dumenil (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 234–242.

3. Martin Luther King Jr., "The Other America" (speech, Grosse Point, MI, March 14, 1968), Grosse Point Historical Society, http://www.gphistorical.org/mlk/mlkspeech/index.htm.

4. Ibid.

5. See Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993).

6. See Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989).

7. William Doyle, *An American Insurrection: James Meredith and the Battle of Oxford, Mississippi, 1962* (New York: Anchor Books, 1962), 65.

8. Interposition centers on the idea that a state can oppose an action of the federal government if it believes that it infringes on its authority, while

nullification refers to the refusal of a state to enforce federal laws, particularly based on constitutional considerations. Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have a Dream" (speech, Washington, DC, August 28, 1963), Teaching American History, http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/i-have-a-dream-speech/.

9. Lyndon B. Johnson, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union," The American Presidency Project, January 8, 1964, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26787.

10. Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks at the University of Michigan," The American Presidency Project, May 22, 1964, åhttp://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26262.

11. Lyndon B. Johnson, "Radio and Television Remarks upon Signing the Civil Rights Bill," The American Presidency Project, July 2, 1964, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26361.

12. Bruce Watson, *Freedom Summer: The Savage Summer That Made Mississippi Burn and Made America a Democracy* (New York: Viking, 2010), 7, 11, 136–141.

13. Ibid., 54.

14. PBS, "Freedom Summer: Murder in Mississippi," *American Experience,* https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/freedomsummer-murder/.

15. Since the murders were under the jurisdiction of state law (and state and local officials had no intention of charging anyone), the federal government focused on civil rights violations. In December 1964, the Justice Department charged 21 individuals with violating the civil rights of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner. A federal grand jury indicted 18 of them, but the presiding judge dismissed the charges against most of the defendants, stating that the law only pertained to law enforcement, not civilians. After the prosecution appealed, another grand jury indicted the men again in February 1967. A jury found 7 of them guilty, each of whom eventually served no more than six years in prison. Decades later in 1998, an investigative report for the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger* published parts of an interview with one of the defendants found guilty, which identified Edgar Ray Killen, a local Ku Klux Klan leader, as the ringleader of the murders. As a result, the Mississippi attorney general reopened the case. In January 2005, a grand jury charged Killen with murder. A jury decided that there was not enough proof to find him guilty of murder, but they did convict him of manslaughter. He received a sentence of 60 years and died in prison in January 2018. PBS, "Freedom Summer"; *New York Times,* January 12, 2018, D6.

16. *New York Times,* July 23, 1964, 15.

17. Fannie Lou Hamer, "Testimony before the Credentials Committee" (speech, Atlantic City, NJ, August 22, 1964), American Rhetoric, http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fannielouhamercredentialscommittee.htm.

18. Michael A. Cohen, *Live from the Campaign Trail: The Greatest Presidential Campaign Speeches of the Twentieth Century and How They Shaped Modern America* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 289.

19. Senator Goldwater, speech before the Senate, *Congressional Record,* Vol. 103: Pt. 6, June 17–26, 1964, 13421.

20. Jeremy D. Mayer, "LBJ Fights the White Backlash: The Racial Politics of the 1964 Campaign," *Prologue Magazine* 33 (2001), accessed online at https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2001/spring/lbj-and-white-backlash-1.html.

21. Cohen, *Live from the Campaign Trail,* 289.

22. Fred C. Shapiro and James W. Sullivan, *Race Riots: New York, 1964* (New York: Crowell, 1964), 44–45.

23. Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 396.

24. "Lyndon Johnson and John Connally on 23 July 1964," Conversation WH6407-13-4320, 4321, 4322, 4323, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [*Lyndon B. Johnson: Civil Rights, Vietnam, and the War on Poverty,* ed. David G. Coleman, Kent B. Germany, Guian A. McKee, and Marc J. Selverstone] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–), http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/4000666.

25. *New York Times,* July 25, 1964, 1.

26. Mayer, "LBJ Fights the White Backlash."

27. Perlstein, *Before the Storm,* 396.

28. Todd S. Purdum, *An Idea Whose Time Has Come: Two Presidents, Two Parties, and the Battle for the Civil Rights Act of 1964* (New York: Henry Holt, 2014), 325.

29. Gary A. Donaldson, *Liberalism's Last Hurrah: The Presidential Campaign of 1964* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2016), 206.

30. "Lyndon Johnson, J. Edgar Hoover, and Lee White on 21 July 1964," Conversation WH6407-11-4295, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [*Lyndon B. Johnson: Civil Rights, Vietnam, and the War on Poverty,* ed. David G. Coleman, Kent B. Germany, Guian A. McKee, and Marc J. Selverstone] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–), http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/4000564.

31. *New York Times,* July 30, 1964, 12.

32. Johnson tried to outmaneuver Hamer's speech by scheduling a press conference at the same time, but all three major networks aired stories on Hamer later that evening. Perlstein, *Before the Storm,* 403-404; Walter Cronkite, Interview with Lyndon B. Johnson, "LBJ: 'Why I Chose Not to Run.'" *CBS News Special,* December 27, 1969.

33. Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks before the National Convention upon Accepting the Nomination," The American Presidency Project, August 27, 1964, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26467.

34. National Public Radio, "The Call-In: Detroit's Riots of 1967," *Weekend Edition Sunday,* July 16, 2017.

35. Gilje, *Rioting in America,* 6.

36. See Collins, *All Hell Broke Loose.*

37. Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4.

38. Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 124.

39. Raymond M. Momboisse, *Riots, Revolts, and Insurrections* (Springfield: Thomas, 1967), 14–20.

40. Joe R. Feagin and Paul B. Sheatsley, "Ghetto Resident Appraisals of a Riot," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 32 (1968): 353.

41. Kerner Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), 143–144.

42. James N. Gregory, "The Second Great Migration: A Historical Overview," in *African American Urban History since World War II,* ed. Kenneth L. Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 22.

43. United States Department of Labor, "Civilian Unemployment Rate, 1964–2010," Table B-42, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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50. WSB-TV newsfilm clip of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speaking about race riots in Rochester and New York City, New York, July 27, 1964, WSB-TV newsfilm collection, reel 1187, 51:25/57:31, Walter J. Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection, The University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, as presented in the Digital Library of Georgia. http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/crdl/id:ugabma_wsbn_46951.

51. Kenneth O'Reilly, *Racial Matters: The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960–1972* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 140.

52. Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963–65* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 418.

53. Malcolm X, "A Declaration of Independence" (speech, New York City, March 12, 1964), Teaching American History, http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/a-declaration-of-independence/.

54. Branch, *Pillar of Fire,* 420–421.

55. See Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

56. Perlstein, *Before the Storm,* 486.

57. See Paul R. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

58. Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1963), 16–17, 249, 352.

59. Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot,* 317, 319.
60. Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 90.
61. See Terry Ann Knopf, *Rumors, Race, and Riots* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1975).
62. Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot,* 74–75.
63. Brass, *Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence,* 361.
64. William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (New York: Random House, 1951), Act 1, Scene 3.

Chapter 2: "The People Are Mad, Mad, Mad"

1. James N. Gregory, "The Second Great Migration: A Historical Overview," in in *African American Urban History since World War II,* ed. Kenneth L. Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 21.
2. Cathy Lisa Schneider, *Police Power and Race Riots: Urban Unrest in Paris and New York* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 48.
3. *New York Times,* August 2, 1964, 133; nationally, the growth rate stood at 27.7 percent for nonwhites and 17.5 percent for whites.
4. U.S. Census; Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 160.
5. Schneider, *Police Power and Race Riots,* 48.
6. Ibid., 49.
7. Michael W. Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer: The New York Riots of 1964 and the War on Crime* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 48.
8. Schneider, *Police Power and Race Riots,* 48–49.
9. Kerner Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), 203.
10. Joe R. Feagin and Harlan Hahn, *Ghetto Revolts: The Politics of Violence in American Cities* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 31–43.
11. Quoted in Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 65.
12. Quoted in ibid., 69.
13. Quoted in ibid., 50.
14. Quoted in ibid., 23.
15. Ibid., 70.
16. Ibid., 56.
17. *New York Times,* July 21, 1964, 22.
18. See Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 48–49; Schneider, *Police Power and Race Riots,* 50-52.
19. Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 45.
20. Fred C. Shapiro and James W. Sullivan, *Race Riots: New York, 1964* (New York: Crowell, 1964), 4.
21. Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots,* 171–172.
22. Ibid., 172.
23. Ibid., 173.

24. *New York Times,* July 19, 1964, 54.

25. Ibid., 54; Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 80.

26. *New York Times,* July 20, 1964, 1.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 16.

29. Ibid.; Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 84; Robert Leuci, *All the Centurions: A New York City Cop Remembers His Years on the Street, 1961–1981* (New York: William Morrow, 2004), 61.

30. Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 84; *New York Times,* July 20, 1964, 1.

31. Shapiro and Sullivan, *Race Riots,* 53.

32. *New York Times,* July 20, 1964, 16; Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 118. One person caught up in the streets that night was 17-year-old Lew Alcindor, now Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Born in Harlem in 1947, he had been participating in a Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU) journalism workshop that summer. On Saturday, July 18, he had gone to the beach. On his way home, he went by 125th Street to browse for shoes and records. "I poked my head out of the subway entrance and was faced with a firefight," he recalled in his memoir *Giant Steps.* "There was smoke in the sky, fire around the corner. . . . Harlem was rioting, [which] scared the shit out of me." Alcindor could relate to the feelings released in the city that night. "The fact that I understood, felt the impulse to put a brick through Woolworth's front window, didn't make me any less aware that it would not do any good. I knew cops shot kids, I knew the cops were white and more often than not the kids weren't." Like others, he held great antipathy toward the police. "It was not the death—that happened all the time, everybody had a friend who'd died—but the lie that was intolerable," he wrote later. "It made Harlem face the fact that they didn't even have the strength to exact an acceptable apology. What else was there to do but go wild?" He also placed blame on the white shop owners and renters. "Who was gouging the neighborhood on groceries, clothing, and rent?" he pondered. "White people. Who controlled the jobs that these guys playing craps on the stoop couldn't get? And who was making money selling them wine? Landlords, storeowners, pawnbrokers—white people." Quoted in Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 118–119.

33. Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 86; Leuci, *All the Centurions,* 60–61.

34. Shapiro and Sullivan, *Race Riots,* 52; Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 86.

35. Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 87, 93; Shapiro and Sullivan, *Race Riots,* 66. Police use of gunfire so readily broke with protocol. During the 1935 and 1945 riots, police had been told not to use their guns except in cases of pressing danger. In 1964, police were supposed to follow this command—using gunfire only as a last measure. After the unrest had settled down that summer, the department placed a ban on warning shots. Later in the decade, the NYPD even set up a Firearms Discharge Review Board, which compelled police to justify each round fired from their weapons. Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 93–94.

36. *New York Times,* July 20, 1964, 16.

37. Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 97.

38. *New York Times,* July 20, 1964, 16.
39. Flamm, *In the Heat of the Summer,* 97–98.
40. *New York Times,* July 20, 1964, 16.
41. Ibid., 17.
42. Ibid., 16.
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8. Ibid., 1, 12.
9. Ibid., 12.
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so ineffective that the police were finally ordered to withdraw from the riot area completely, and limit themselves to attempting to prevent the riot from spreading to other sections of the city. In another such city the police frankly admitted that the making of arrests for violent conduct and looting was 'unfeasible' and mob action continued at length without effective deterrence. Interviews with individual policemen from patrolmen to high-ranking officers revealed a general feeling that if they take action deemed to be necessary in such situations they will be pilloried by civilians unfamiliar with the necessities of mob control, or even ordinary police action, and may lose their posts and pensions." *New York Times,* September 27, 1964, 82.

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