READING RODNEY KING

READING URBAN UPRISING

EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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Introduction

On Being Stuck

Robert Gooding-Williams

> If we want to be instructed by events,
> then we must not be in a hurry to solve them.
> —Paul Ricoeur
>
> God gave Noah the rainbow sign. . . .
> —James Baldwin

When an event becomes news, it acquires the aura of the extraordinary. News events are new events that the news represents as nonroutine. Television news, for example, when it highlights an event, tends to obscure the quotidian setting of that event's occurrence. What Stanley Cavell characterizes as "the theatricality of scripted news recitation" helps to explain this tendency.[1] Theatricality, here, pertains to the emphasis the news places on events themselves, treating them as intrusions upon ordinary situations, but rarely acknowledging the complicated ways in which events develop out of the situations which engender them. The drama of the news constructs social events as transient curiosities that have accidently supervened on the circumstances of day-to-day life.

Events that have ceased to be news we call "old news." Old news consists of news events that we remember to have been news. A news event that has become old news, though we remember it as something extraordinary, is no longer new,

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and so no longer qualifies as news. Old news is no longer news, because it is no longer current.[2]

By the time this book is published, the beating of Rodney King, the subsequent trial in Simi Valley, and the fiery uprising in Los Angeles will have become old news in the minds of most Americans. Less than a year from this writing, all of these events will have gone the way of all news events. The conversations I imagine transpiring then—not in L.A., and perhaps not in California, but surely elsewhere in the United States—will sound something like this: A: "A book about Rodney King? That trial—the first one I mean—was a long time ago." B: "Not really, Los Angeles was burning just last April." A: "You're right, but it still feels like a long time ago. I'm almost sure that it was before the election. But was it before or after the war in the Gulf?" Receding into the foggy background of a picture of the world that the news media, especially the television news media, creates for us, old news—be it yesterday's famine, yesterdays' war, yesterday's police brutality, or yesterday's trial verdicts—slowly but surely ceases to command our attention, as we are set upon relentlessly by the insistent and dramatic intrusions of today's and tomorrow's news. When the beating of Rodney King, the trial in Simi Valley, and the uprising in Los Angeles became news events, they acquired the aura of the extraordinary. When these same incidents become old news, they will strike most Americans as distant oddities whose auras bear little, if any, connection to their present circumstances.

A central purpose of this book is to challenge the construction of the Rodney King incidents (the beating, the trial, and the uprising) as *old news*, though not by transforming these incidents yet again into new and dramatic news events. *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising* contests the representation of the Rodney King incidents as *news*, viz., as new and dramatic news events, no less than it contests the remembrance of these incidents as old news. By stripping these incidents of the aura of the extraordinary, this book attempts to recover and to explicate their connections to the uneventful and ordinary realities which, while ignored by the news, persistently affect life in urban America. The uneventful is what the news coverage of "current events" lets disappear from view. It is, more exactly, that complex network of conditions—social, economic, political, and ideological—that enable, influence, and shape the character of events, before they become news events. An explication of the uneventful factors and situations which gave rise to and determined the character of the Rodney King incidents is essential to any attempt to preserve these incidents as objects of public scrutiny and debate—a theme to which I will return below. Only by engaging the complicated contingencies which permitted and gave rise to the Rodney King incidents; and only, therefore, by resisting the construction of them as news and old news, will it be possible, as Paul Ricoeur puts it, to be instructed by them.[3]

When he spoke to the press during the Los Angeles uprising, Rodney King, in his own way, alluded implicitly to the limitations of the news format. "We're all stuck here for awhile," King said, in the course of his call for peace.[4] Although he did not elaborate on his conception of what it is to be stuck, the generality of King's remark, with its unspecified "we" and its unspecified "here," suggested that being stuck is so basic and universal a condition as to be part of the essence of the uneventful. We are all stuck, but only for awhile, because we all eventually die. But before we die and wherever we are, we are prey to the world, routinely and relentlessly bound to circumstances and situations that lack the charisma essential to the news event.

Less well remembered than his T-shirt-commodified and much more newsy query, "Can we all get along?" Rodney King's reference to being stuck identified a condition that is at once ontological and social.[5] Being stuck is an ontological condition (a condition constitutive of human existence), because each of us is, as existentialists insist, forever finding him- or herself saddled with a world that is not wholly a product of his or her creation. But being stuck is also a social condition, since the world and worlds which impinge on us are always and everywhere the products of social histories and ongoing social practices.[6] Being stuck, then, is a matter of being inexorably caught up in a network of political, economic, and cultural legacies that escape the aura of the extraordinary. Neither news nor old news, these legacies constitute the uneventful conditions of social existence which useful analyses of the Rodney King incidents cannot possibly ignore. By calling our attention to the facticity of being stuck, Rodney King's own words provide an appropriate point of departure for such analyses.

Since being stuck is a many-dimensional social phenomenon, *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising* addresses a number of topics, ranging from America's history of racial violence to the effects of capital accumulation on the inner cities. Written by philosophers, social scientists, literary critics, and legal scholars, the essays included here discuss the devastating impact that Federal public policy has had on urban America; the creation of suburban geographies that have helped to sequester and to "normalize" communities like Simi Valley; the conflict in Los Angeles between African Americans and Korean-American shop owners; and the repressive activities of the LAPD in the wake of the uprising. More generally, these essays raise a variety of questions regarding the relationships between race and power in American society. What, they ask, is the connection between the bludgeoning of Rodney King and the presence of racism in America? How, they wonder, could a jury come to doubt that the videotape it saw depicted an excessive and unjustified use of violence? And what role, they wish to know, did racial

ideology play in bringing about the burning of Koreatown? By addressing these and many other issues, the contributions to this volume explore the multiple connections between the Rodney King incidents and the quotidian exercise of political, economic, and cultural power throughout the United States. The following discussion of these contributions, though it hardly does justice to their complexity and diversity, attempts to identify some thematic affinities between them.

Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising begins its analysis of the Rodney King incidents by focusing on the ruthless bashing of Rodney King in Lake View Terrace, California. Entitled "Beating Black Bodies," Part One of this volume contains three essays that, notwithstanding the differences between them, all suggest that the attack on Rodney King was the product of a violent racism that is a characteristic feature of ordinary life in America. Judith Butler, for example, in her "Endangered/Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia," highlights the paranoia which the Los Angeles police enacted in the battering of Rodney King, and which, she maintains, the Simi Valley jurors and President Bush (in a statement he made on the day after the verdict) reenacted. This paranoia, Butler argues, reduced Rodney King to "a phantasm of white racist aggression," while expressing a mode of perception that insists always and everywhere on seeing black bodies as dangerous bodies.

Ruth Gilmore, in her "Terror Austerity Race Gender Excess Theater," also intimates that white violations of black bodies are nothing extraordinary in the United States. Gilmore reminds us, in fact, that the beating of Rodney King was an act of "civilized terror" belonging to a firmly established American tradition of white-on-black violence, the most prominent examples of which are racial lynchings. She also reminds us of the connections between the King beating and America's ritual brutalization of black women, as she suggests that both phenomena need to be seen as quotidian modes of performance that have functioned typically to reinforce a conception of the American nation as a white, male, heterosexual enterprise. The horror of the uneventful looms large in Gilmore's essay: "terrorism, imprisonment, deportation, sterilization, state-supervised death. All of these features are everyday elements of life in California, in Arkansas, in Texas, New York, you name it. This is where we're at; where are we headed?"

Historicizing the picture which Butler and Gilmore begin to draw, Houston Baker, in his "Scene . . . Not Heard," shows that "the classic American 'scene of violence' " to which Rodney King was subject has its origins in American slavery. Turning in particular to Frederick Douglass's 1845 slave narrative, Baker identifies the essentials of this "scene of violence" in Douglass's depiction of an overseer's murder of a slave. Arguing in a more general vein, he also claims that the " 'scening' of the African presence in America—its literal desubjectification and silencing—is in a cogent sense a *local* scene of violence that overdetermines a vast, outgoing scene of American national violence." For Baker, America's relentless objectification and silencing of black bodies cannot be neatly separated from its vaster and bloodier rituals of collective brutality. It can be resisted, however, by a humane hearing of black urban voices (including, especially, a hearing of "rap's multiple . . . soundings") that hearkens to "what precisely it *sounds* like to be violently *scened* in the United States."

In Part Two of this volume, "Acquitting White Brutality," Patricia Williams, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Gary Peller focus on the trial of the white policemen who beat Rodney King. Williams, in "The Rules of the Game," discusses the change of venue to Simi Valley, the rhetorical strategies of the lawyers who defended King's assailants, and the ways in which, in the course of the trial, "concepts of individualism and group, society and chaos were played against one another." "In summary," she writes, "it is possible to see the King verdict as not merely rational, but as the magnificently artful product of an aesthetic of rationality—even to the extent it rationalized and upheld an order of socialized irrationality." Crenshaw and Peller, in "Reel Time/Real Justice," contend that "law, in general, and the courtroom, in particular, are arenas where narratives are contested, and the power of interpretation exercised." In order to illustrate this claim, they explore the connections between the narrative representation of the King beating in the Simi Valley trial and the narrative representation of race relations in the Supreme Court's opinion in *Richmond v. Croson*. In general, Crenshaw and Peller stress "the ideological and symbolic intertwining of race and power in American culture," and thus address a number of issues that also provide the foci for Part Five of this volume.

Parts Three and Four of *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising* examine the King beating and the Los Angeles uprising from a political-economic perspective. Part Three, "Assaulting America: A Political Economy Begets Ruin," considers both events in light of the political economy of the nation as a whole. Cedric Robinson, for example, in his "Race, Capitalism, and the Antidemocracy," stresses the connections between the beating of Rodney King and the Reagan/Bush attacks on America's "liberal social contract." Summarizing his view of the King beating, he insists that the "brutality of the racial drama was a reenactment of a multiplicity of brutalizations inaugurated by the ruling elite. . . . The daily occurrences of street executions, the cruel and indiscriminate arrests and harassment conducted under the authority of law which form the immediate context for Rodney King's experience are the local reiterations of a national social agenda." Focusing more narrowly on economic conditions, Rhonda Williams identifies the macroeconomic developments of the 1980s that ravaged black and Latino communities of color, and that help to explain the "bread riot" character

of the postverdict Los Angeles rebellion. The central thesis of her "Accumulation as Evisceration: Urban Rebellion and the New Growth Dynamics" is that these developments, notwithstanding the tendency of mainstream economists to repress the discussion of "socioeconomic agency," should be seen as resulting from the strategic decisions of profit-seeking capitalists to increase their use of foreign labor and to create a two-tiered wage system. In Williams's view, "declining wages, rising wage inequality, and increasing racial inequality [must be located] within the context of dynamic and ruthlessly competitive capitalist accumulation."

Cedric Robinson's and Rhonda Williams's essays remind us that capitalist competition and the implementation of public policy are day-to-day social phenomena that can cruelly shape the character of other social events. Michael Omi and Howard Winant echo this insight in their "The Los Angeles 'Race Riot' and Contemporary U.S. Politics," especially when they describe the L.A. uprising as an act of resistance to state coercion and as "a . . . desperate effort to respond to the impoverishment, not only of the ghetto poor, but of U.S. society as a whole." Omi and Winant also aver that the L.A. riots challenged "the new convergence in mainstream racial politics" and that it testified "to the complexity of contemporary racial dynamics." Paying careful attention to the conjunction of class and racial dynamics, as well as to the politically significant cleavages which qualify panethnic racialized identities (e.g., "Hispanic/Latino" and "Asian-American"), they persuasively argue that a "monumental event like the L.A. riot . . . recasts racial-group identities." More generally, Omi and Winant insist on linking the L.A. riot "to the continuing presence of race in the social structures and meaning systems which organize the U.S. social order and identify its members."

Like Part Three of this book, Part Four—entitled "On the Streets of Los Angeles"—places the uprising in a political-economic context. As distinct from Part Three, however, Part Four examines some of the social forces that were present and active in Los Angeles itself, both before and after the uprising, while giving less attention to the macroeconomic and macropolitical tendencies which Robinson, Rhonda Williams, and Omi and Winant emphasize.

Part Four begins with "Anatomy of a Rebellion: A Political-Economic Analysis" by Melvin Oliver, James Johnson, and Walter Farrell. In this essay, the authors interpret the Los Angeles uprising in light of recent demographic, social, and economic changes occurring in Los Angeles society. They note, for example, that during the last two decades, South Central Los Angeles has been transformed from a predominantly black to a mixed black and Latino area. They likewise report that "the traditional Mexican-American community of East Los Angeles" did not participate in the rebellion (though the participation of South Central L.A.'s Central American Latino population was substantial); that racial tensions between Latinos and Koreans were no less significant than those between blacks

and Koreans in precipitating the rebellion; and that prominent among the seeds of the rebellion were structural transformations of the Los Angeles economy and "nearly two decades of conservative policy making and implementation at the federal level." Oliver, Johnson, and Farrell conclude their essay with a critique of the Bush administration's plan to revitalize the South Central Los Angeles community.

Mike Davis's contribution to Part Four, "Uprising and Repression in L.A.," takes the form of an interview that originally appeared in the *CovertAction Information Bulletin*. Concentrating on the repressive aftermath of the uprising, Davis calls attention to INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) and Border Patrol incursions into South Central L.A. "Very clearly," says Davis, "the INS and Border Patrol have used the uprising to vacuum up people in the community. More than just taking the opportunity to deport large numbers of people, they have used the situation to instill fear. It's been a reign of terror followed by political attacks not only on the Black community, but to a surprising degree on Central Americans." Davis also discusses the LAPD's extensive efforts to disrupt the "gang-unity process" which was one result of the uprising, as well as its ongoing compilation of computerized data bases to facilitate the surveillance and management of criminalized black and Latino youth. "In Los Angeles," Davis claims, "we are beginning to see a repressive context that is literally comparable to Belfast or the West Bank, where policing has been transformed into full-scale countersurgency (or 'low-intensity warfare,' as the military likes to call it), against an entire social stratum or ethnic group."

Part Five of *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising*, "Ideology, Race, and Community," augments the political-economic analyses of Parts Three and Four by investigating the role of racial ideology (that is, the representation and interpretation of racial identities) in the Rodney King incidents. Like the exercise of political power and the competitive pursuit of economic profits, racial ideology harshly conditions day-to-day life throughout the United States, persisting in its own way as an essential feature of the ordinary in America. In my own contribution to Part Five, "Look, a Negro" I elaborate a concept of racial ideology that I use to discuss both the trial of Rodney King's assailants and the television media's representations of the L.A. uprising. In my view, courtroom and media representations of black bodies grow out of a long and ongoing tradition of racial ideology that, following Toni Morrison, I call "American Africanism." Such ideology needs to be read allegorically, I argue, in order to expose and to criticize its interpretations of the sociopolitical status of blacks in America. In the second essay of Part Five, "The New Enclosures: Racism in the Normalized Community," Thomas Dumm develops an interpretation of racial representations that stresses the interplay of "scientific " racism, the deployment of monitoring tech-

niques to discipline visual observation, and the use of strategies of normalization to intern black minorities. These factors function conjointly, Dumm argues, to frame and sustain the sense of "normality" that is constitutive of communities such as Simi Valley: "[A] system of streets encloses Simi Valley from the dangerous people of the outside world. People feel safe because they are surrounded with a familiar sameness. Those who are different are far away, spatially. Those who invade will be contained and removed."

The final essay of Part Five, Sumi Cho's "Korean Americans vs. African Americans: Conflict and Construction," investigates the role of racial ideology in urban conflicts between Korean Americans and African Americans. Challenging African-American stereotypes of Korean Americans, as well as Korean-American stereotypes of African Americans, Cho sees both sets of images as having helped to cause the looting and burning of Koreatown and Korean-owned stores during the Los Angeles uprising. Criticizing the tendency to stereotype Korean Americans and other Asian Americans as model minorities, she likewise argues that "the embrace of Asian Americans as a model minority is an embrace of 'racist love.' The basis of that love has a racist origin: to provide a public rationale for the ongoing subordination of non-Asian people of color." When Cho addresses theoretical issues, she boldly challenges race-relations theorists to eschew the traditional interpretation of American race relations in terms of a black/white binary opposition that "misses many of the factual complexities in contemporary, urban politics." Cho also insists on the need to construct race-relations theories that "emphasize the experiences and conditions of the oppressed and of those working directly to improve those conditions."

The sixth and last part of this volume, "The Fire This Time," consists of a group of essays that I read as democratically inspired meditations on the chasm separating the promise of American democracy from the social reality illuminated by the Rodney King incidents. Reminiscent of James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*, the contributions of Elaine Kim, Jerry Watts, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Cornel West insist that we acknowledge the depths of that chasm, even as we imagine that someday Americans could learn to bridge it. Elaine Kim, for example, in her "Home Is Where the *Han* Is: A Korean-American Perspective on the Los Angeles Upheavals," argues that Korean Americans experienced April 29th and 30th of 1992 as "a baptism into what it really means for a Korean to 'become American' in the 1990s." The absence of genuine democracy could not have been clearer: "When the Korean Americans in South Central and Koreatown dialed 911, nothing happened. When their stores and homes were being looted and burned to the ground, they were left completely alone for three horrifying days. How betrayed they must have felt by what they had believed was a democratic system that protects its people from violence." Korean Americans had to learn, says

Kim, that "protection in the U.S. is by and large for the rich and powerful. If there were a choice between Westwood and Koreatown, it is clear that Koreatown would have to be sacrificed."

For Kim, the contradiction between the American dream and American reality became even more explicit when she began receiving racist hate mail after penning an essay for the "My Turn" section of *Newsweek*. "How many Americans migrate to Korea," asked one *Newsweek* reader, who then added: "If you are so disenchanted, Korea is still there. Why did you ever leave it? Sayonara." Responding to the vicious American reality which statements such as these reveal, Kim recalls Rodney King's remark about being "stuck here for awhile," awaiting "our day in court," and insists that Korean Americans need "tools and weapons" to resist subjugation, just as long as that day and its dream remain deferred. Paramount among those weapons, Kim suggests, is Korean national consciousness.

Like Kim, Jerry Watts knows just how remote now, for many Americans, is the prospect of participating in the dream of American democracy. In his "Reflections on the Rodney King Verdict and the Paradoxes of the Black Response," Watts even warns black Americans against their sometimes "naive faith in America." Such faith, he contends, led some blacks to believe, prior to the Rodney King verdicts, that the criminal-justice system in Los Angeles would "convict white cops for beating a black man when the very same system did not convict white cops for killing blacks." Given the evidence of the videotape, claims Watts, "blacks expected whites to be appalled by the divergence between professed American democratic values and the black urban reality." But, he argues, an honest assessment of the condition of the black urban poor requires the scuttling of such expectations, as well as the sober recognition that poor blacks living in our cities have become "hyperpariahs in American society."

Though the black urban poor have become outcasts in American society, African America's affluent elite, writes Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "is larger than it ever has been." Thus, Gates insists, in his "Two Nations . . . Both Black," black America in the 1990s is having "the worst of times . . . and the best of times." Since 1965, he claims, African Americans' progress has been in many ways "astonishing, something we need to be reminded of even in the wake of the Rodney King riots and the stark statistics that measure the gap within our community between the haves and have nots." And yet, Gates seems to suggest, the black bourgeoisie is still victim to a racism that reared its batons above Rodney King's head and that continues to thwart our democratic ideals: "We are isolated from the black underclass and yet still humiliatingly vulnerable to racism, in the form of random police harassment, individual racial insults from waitresses and attendants in stores, the unwillingness of taxi drivers to pick us up, systematic discrimination by banks and bank loan officers, wage discrimination in the workplace,

and our perception of a 'glass ceiling' in the corporate world. . . . The most pernicious forms of racism—the stereotyping of an individual by the color of her skin—still pervade white America. And caught in this no-man's-land of alienation and fragmentation is the black middle class." According to Gates, "fighting the power" in post–civil rights America must involve the recognition that "the causes of poverty within the black community are *both* structural and behavioral." Rather than scapegoat "Koreans, Jews, or even Haitians," he argues, the black elite must demand a "structural change in this country" and take on the task of "moral leadership." "For them," writes Gates, "the challenge awaits of healing the rift within black America, and the larger nation as well."

In the concluding essay of this volume, "Learning to Talk of Race," Cornel West suggests that American political culture lacks the conceptual resources it needs to grapple intelligently with issues of race. Liberals and conservatives both, he argues, "fail to see that the presence and predicaments of black people are neither additions to nor defections from American life, but rather *constitutive elements of that life*." A serious discussion of race in America, he adds, "must begin not with the problems of black people but with the flaws of American society—flaws rooted in historic inequalities and longstanding cultural stereotypes." Addressing those flaws, West claims, requires that we look to new frameworks and languages, focus our attention on the public square, and generate new leadership. We need leaders, he insists, who can invigorate all of us with the ideals of "freedom, democracy, and equality." Explicitly echoing Baldwin, West warns us of the peril which awaits us if we *do not* succeed in creating a genuine multiracial democracy in America: "Let us hope and pray that the vast intelligence, imagination, humor, and courage in this country will not fail us. Either we learn a new language of empathy and compassion, or the fire this time will consume us all."

By sounding the theme of America's flawed democracy and still-deferred dream, Kim, Watts, Gates, and West remind us that the plight of being stuck can prompt the assumption of responsibility. Here, again, they recall James Baldwin, whose words of thirty years ago remain as relevant today as they were then: "And here we are, at the center of the arc, trapped in the gaudiest, most valuable, and most improbably water wheel the world has ever seen. Everything now, we must assume, is in our hands; we have no right to assume otherwise."[7] For Baldwin, being stuck—what he describes as being "trapped"—was not tantamount to being paralyzed. Rather being stuck, he believed, could be the beginning of an effort to take the world into our hands—to assume responsibility for it. Part of assuming responsibility for a postmodern and post–civil rights America, Kim, Watts, Gates, and West suggest, is committing ourselves to the difficult task of transforming a nation in which large numbers of citizens see peoples of color, *not* as fellow citizens, but as "throwaways" (Watts), as "robotic aliens" (Kim), or worse. The task cannot be an easy one, since so many Americans would delightfully dispose of the cultures and the lives of *all* peoples of color. As one of the *Newsweek* readers who responded to Elaine Kim put it, "I'm from a culture, Ms. Kim, who put a man on the moon 23 years ago, who established medical schools to train doctors to perform open heart surgery, and . . . who created a language of music so that musicians, from Beethoven to the Beatles, could easily touch the world with their brilliance forever and ever and ever. Perhaps the dominant culture, whites obviously, 'swept aside Chicanos . . . Latinos . . . African-Americans . . . Koreans,' because they haven't contributed anything that made—be mindful of the cliche—a world of a difference."

In its own way, *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising* is an attempt to heed Kim's, Watts's, Gates's, and West's calls to the cause of a genuine and multiracial American democracy. While the essays included here represent a variety of perspectives, all were inspired by a feeling that the Rodney King incidents had raised a number of issues that deserved a more careful scrutiny and reading than their constitution as news would permit. Each of these essays *reads* (interprets) the Rodney King incidents, by placing them within some political, economic, and/or cultural context. If, taken collectively, they help to keep public debate centered on these events, it will be because they show that the beating, the trial, and the uprising implicated so much of what is repugnant, though ordinary, in postmodern and post–Civil Rights America: the racist abuse of black bodies; the use of the law to advance racial domination; the deployment of public policy and economic power contributing to the devastation of America's cities; the dissemination of racial ideologies that denigrate peoples of color; and, not least of all, the perpetuation of a contradiction between the practice and the promise of American democracy—a persistent and painful consequence of these many other causes for repugnance. By highlighting the connections between ordinary American life and the Rodney King incidents, *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising* attempts to keep this contradiction in view, and so to keep alive the hope of surpassing it.

Notes

The first passage cited in epigraph comes from Paul Ricoeur, "The Political Paradox," in *Existential Phenomenology and Political Philosophy*, ed. Hwa Yol Jung (Chicago: Henry Regnary Company, 1972), 337. The second passage comes from James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Dell, 1981), 141.

1. Stanley Cavell, *Themes Out of School* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 262. See also p. 258.
2. My discussion of old news, here and in the next paragraph, was inspired by Michael Ignatieff, "The Ethics of Television," *Daedalus* 114 (Fall 1985): 70–71.

3. A discussion of the ordinary as the uneventful that I found helpful in formulating my thoughts is present in Cavell, *Themes Out of School*, 184–94.
4. "Rodney King's Statement," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 May 1992, 3.
5. Ibid.
6. For a similar point, see Marcuse's critique of Heidegger's fundamental ontology in the former's "Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Materialism," *Telos* 4 (Summer 1970): 21–22.
7. Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*, 141.