Daniel Lindsay and T.J. Martin, dir., *LA 92*, (National Geographic, Netflix, 2017), streaming.

LA 92 is a chaotically beautiful documentary directed by Academy Award winning film makers Daniel Lindsay and T.J. Martin (*Undefeated*). Comprised solely of archival footage intercut with media voiceover, the film centers around the events that led to the infamous 1992 uprising. There are no interjections from experts or eyewitnesses. The events unfold as if they are happening live, forcing the audience to make their own judgments, much like they would with a viral video. The film addresses themes of race, the carceral state and the militarization of the police, the power of corporate media, and the economic hardships confronting people of color in America. It juxtaposes the 1965 Watts Riots, Tom Bradley's mayoral victory, Daryl Gates' appointment to Chief of the LAPD, the death of Latasha Harlins, the Rodney King beating, and the riots themselves.

The film is introduced with the Frederick Douglass quote: "We have to do with the past only as we can make useful to the present and to the future." Though mostly set in the racially charged early 1990s, the opening scene revisits the Watts Riots in a series of quick cuts of burning buildings and people beaten by police. The white broadcasters describe the chaos, and CBS newscaster Bill Stout asks, "What shall avail our nation, if we can place a man on the moon, but cannot cure the sickness in our cities?"

Twenty-seven years later, little had changed in the city, as a dispatch from a police chase in 1991 mirrors one from 1965. Amateur video soon reveals the infamous Rodney King beating. Police Chief Gates swore the incident was isolated, but the shocking nature of the footage galvanized the public, and more importantly the media, against the police. Following a change of judicial venue to a predominately white neighborhood, the jury acquitted the officers involved in the beating of all but one charge. Coupled with the news that a Korean store clerk who shot fifteen-year-old Latasha Harlins would receive no jail time, the public shock and disgust over the verdict soon boiled over into violence.

Los Angeles was a powder keg. Battle lines were drawn, and each side viewed the other an enemy of war. For many officers,

"sometimes police work [was] brutal. That's just a fact of life." For black Angelenos, enough was enough. Anger soon turned to outright rebellion. Invoking King and Harlins, people revolted against the police. Despite calls for non-violence, the police lost control of the city, and the media, for once, was at a loss for words. Overturned police cars and burnt effigies lined the streets of Los Angeles. With twenty-one dead, 960 structure fires and people walking the streets of Los Angeles with automatic weapons, an elderly Korean woman defending her shop from looters hauntingly reminds viewers: "This is America."

In a dramatic shift in tone, rioters realized they were not destroying the police or the media, but their own neighborhoods and businesses. As emergency services had been suspended from the epicenter of the rioting, a dispatcher casually noted, "people, you're on your own!" The National Guard was called in and a citywide curfew was enacted. The chaos displaced people and destroyed business, as Los Angeles became the war zone each side always claimed it was. Lawlessness begot lawlessness, and many communities were devastated as a result.

LA 92 is a stylistically exceptional documentary. The absence of experts filtering this content allows those past events to feel immediate. By presenting the film as amalgamation patchwork of "viral videos" rather than a concisely packaged documentary, the film makers transport the audience back to the tumult and chaos of 1992. The directors begin and end their film with footage of the 1965 Watts riots to remind viewers how far we have come yet how little has changed.

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