

E M E R G E N C Y I S S U E # 1

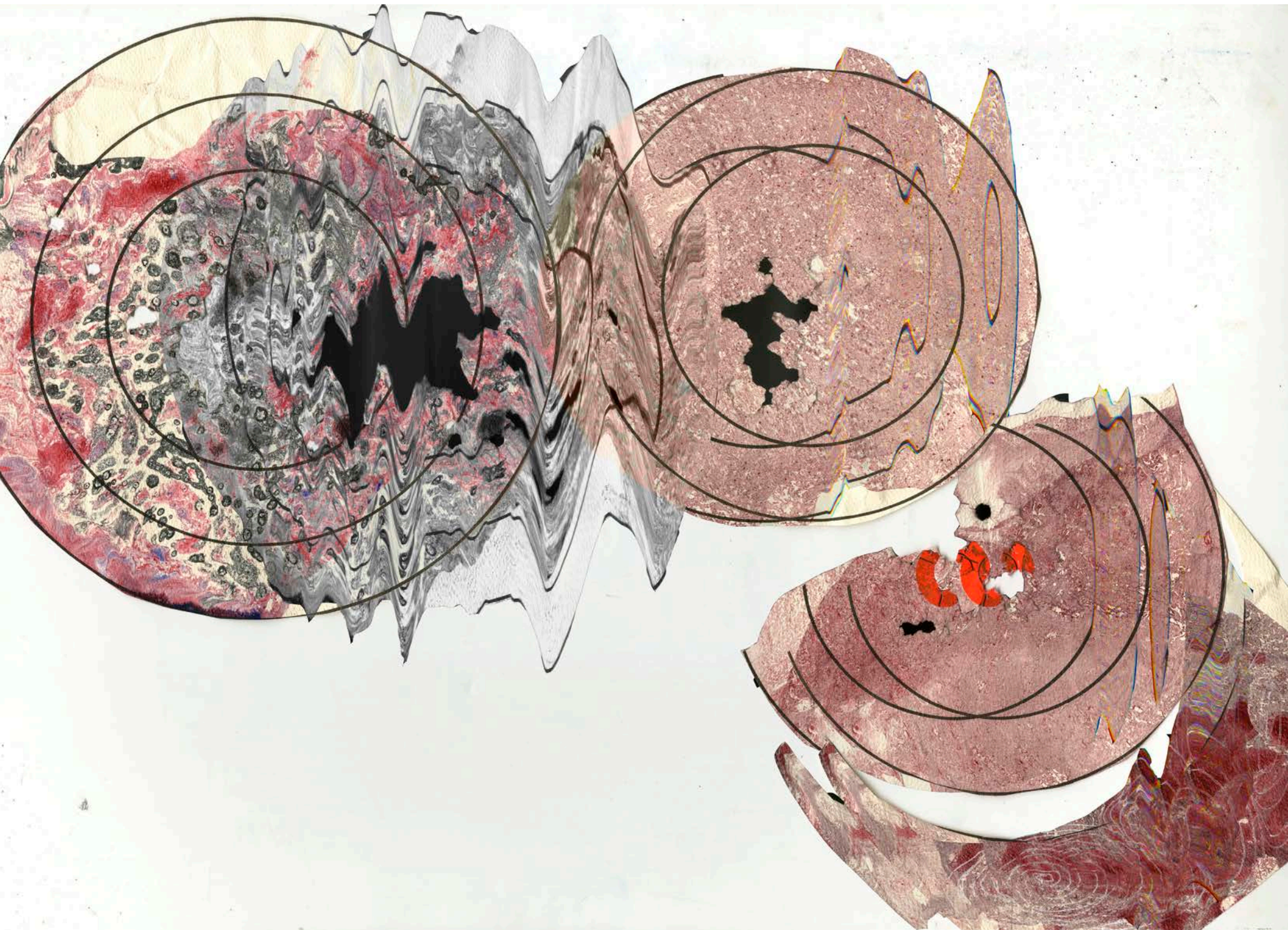
POLICE



NEW SCHOOL ZINE PUBLISHING COLLECTIVE 2014

TO PROTECT

AND TO SERVE



Introduction / essay by Joseph Giacona / 6

**drawings made from targets collected from a shooting range in
the L.E.S. / illustration by Sonia Choi / 4 & 48**

accountABILITY / illustration by Piera Yerkes / 10

thoughts on reform / diagram by Piera Yerkes / 20

Band-aid cop / mixed media by Piera Yerkes / 17

All Cops R Hot / illustration by Marina Claire / 28

'On Violence' / diagram by Cantey Smith / 35

A Discourse on Looting / essay by Victor Bradley / 11

Expulsion / flash fiction by Ann Dwyer / 14

Thought In Decay / essay by Luis Lei / 16

The Overly Dramatic Truth / essay by Roy Cherian / 30

Welcome to Turkey -

Where the Police Don't Give a FK / essay by Nathaniel Phillipps / 22**

Operation Safe Cycle / photo by Joseph Giacona / 40

Cop in a Cab / photo by Joseph Giacona / 38

Purgatory Revisited / novella by Gakana

Statement about Police / text by evan bender / 36

A weird thing happened to me the other night. I was walking down my block blazed as fuck when I saw the familiar and frightening fluorescent, sterile glare of flashlights passing over the cracked sidewalks and brick edifices of the brownstones on the other side of the block. One car was already parked and another drove up. Out hustled three big dudes with shaved heads wearing baggy sweatshirts to join some other big fuckers in sweatshirts. A tall, thin black guy faced away from them with his arms up, fingers laced around the back of his head.

A weird thing happened to me a while before that. I was walking down my block drunk as fuck when a sedan slowly crept along the street. Nothing weird, but my spidey senses tingled and I said loudly and like an idiot, "Some motherfucking undercover!" The car reversed. All I could see was a bald, neanderthalish head and a brutally large arm hanging out of the open window. They yelled something back like, "Yeah, what?" or "What the fuck did you say?" I don't remember. For all my belligerence and belief in the idea of cop-watching, I said 'Oh shit' to the girl I was with and sped walked the half block to my apartment to get safely inside. Before, I've given cops shit like during 'Operation Safe Cycle' when they ticketed anyone and everyone for going the wrong way coming off of the WB bridge into Manhattan. I stopped and did some filming and took some pictures. Of course there's not really any pragmatic reason to, it's symbolic; just to be there and know that there are citizens who feel far more solidarity with the 'criminal' than the cop. After a minute of standing in front of where the cop was I just ended up leaving. I left with this weird accrete of guilt and helplessness that my small actions would produce very little systemic change; and that if I was really about my shit I'd camp there for as long as the cops were and miss my morning class to defend... defend something dubious and uncertain.

I stood on the street corner diagonal from where the black man was being stop-and-frisked. My previous experience with these undercover and the warrants I have out told me not to be the fuckass I normally am and just stay quiet. Maybe just my presence would have an effect - that the white boys feel more sympathy for those targeted by police than we do for the police who protect us white boys, we implicit 'elite'. Another young black guy walked by and I asked him for a light for my cigarette and he said quickly, "I ain't got nothin for you nigga," which at first I thought was rude and then I thought maybe I was being rude and then I realized I was just

stoned and paranoid about this supposed rudeness but walked the fuck out of there as quickly as possible feeling dirty and guilty about the situation for a reason I couldn't pin down. But the tableaux was interesting and disgusting: a white boy stands and watches the cops who are watching the blacks and a black man around my age comes along and says, "This situation is too dangerous for me to even stop and give you a light."

I left. Was my spectation good that I wanted the cops to feel watched? Was my spectation bad that I could safely observe oppression like a Roman watching Christians get mauled in a coliseum? Should I have gone over to that corner and made my spectation known? Filmed it? Maybe they could have run my ID and I'd spend a night or two in jail - should I have endured that for the vaguely ethical notion of solidarity and defense?

I don't know.

I don't know most things when it comes to justice. As much as I think about politics I have very few logical conclusions but a lot of affective responses. The scariest thing I've ever seen in New York was during the 2011 protests when a taxicab sped down the street with police lights blaring. An undercover. Holy shit, right? It's not safe to pee anywhere in this city. There's some video of me getting grabbed and tossed by an undercover in a protest around the same time which I didn't really care about. I got tackled by some NYPD for being an asshole and I wouldn't call that 'violence' or 'repression' because I knew it wasn't systemic and I knew I had entered a sort of ritual combat anyway. I knew they wouldn't plant crack on me like they would on 'some nigger'. 'Niggers' are infinitely reproducible because they justify the very oppression wielded by the cops. The cowboy creates the indian in order to be the cowboy; the colonizer creates the savage in order to create that quality of 'civilization'. They are people abstracted to concepts and their particular forms are meaningless commodities. I am also a particular sort of commodity, just a symbol of a shitty hipster gentrifier and so they wouldn't fuck with me the same way they would fuck with others, Others. I am not a person in this calculation, just a representation of a system of reproduction that reproduces whatever it is I am. The cops are not people either. Their application of force is an infinitely reproducible form, a program: beat people of color and tell white people to get out of the way. White people are too much paperwork, it seems. And you can take the uniform off of the cop, you could write him up or fire him or incarcerate him or kill him and he will be replaced

with another particular body which will fulfill this abstraction. Lucky me? And what do I do with this luck? An affective response I have to cops: fear. Another affective response: revulsion. The final logical-affective response: I have no idea how to justify any of these feelings. I have no idea how to change that which produces and reproduces these social relations independent of any of our particular bodies and persons. I have no idea why I want to change it or what to change it to, but I know with certainty that Michael Brown's death, Trayvon Martin's death, the reaction of police to protesters from St. Louis to New York to Oakland, the reaction of police to every non-white, non-elite person everywhere - that this shit is 'fucked up' and I simply have no more words to explain or actions to contribute.

What is justice? Not even Plato figured that out, and John Rawls is a liberal piece of shit imo. How do we apply justice? Harder question. To whom do we give this role of judiciating and applying justice? Do we need an elite class which wields this 'monopoly of violence'? And what are the alternatives, unless we believe in a Max Stirner type of social-Darwinist bullshit.

This collection of essays, fiction, and visual media reflects a question posed to The New School community on what to make of these questions. Conclusions don't matter necessarily, for simple immediate reactions and opinions short of claiming 'truth' are a truth in themselves. The first step to finding a more agreeable way of applying justice in society is to engage in an open discussion on the topic.

Joseph Giacchino

Editor

New School Zine

Publishing Collective

VICTOR BRADLEY

A DISCOURSE ON LOOTING

The Black American, insofar as he and she is cognizant of the experience of forty million racial compatriots, is constantly imagining herself and himself as the victim of violence. Economically, this violence manifests itself as a poverty passed down from slavery itself with interest compounded in restrictive covenants, the school to prison pipeline, racial setasides for subprime mortgages, the "last hired, first fired" blues , and a rampaging, murderous¹ drug war. Politically, there is the the fear of being civically negated, and relearning the pain of silence, or that any scion of their aspirations will be cut down by an assassin's bullet ringing across a balcony in broad daylight. There is the eternal drone of antiBlack recrimination: "thug" "welfare queen" "culture of poverty,"² which justifies Jim Crow's emeritus status in American life, as our needs are repeatedly ruled to be a function of the inferiority with which God³ has marked us. Socially, there is the fear that one will be put in the unfortunate situation of coming into conflict with White people. That is, those people who have as racial compatriots the structure and machinery of power. Physically, there is the pregnant metaphor of literal bloodshed, the spine torsioning sound of baton, gun butt, bullet, or asphalt, on skull. The scream of the cracking branch over the roaring, flesh vaporizing inferno; the fear that White people will find you to be a threat. This unfortunate finding kills, and kills again until it is finally finished.

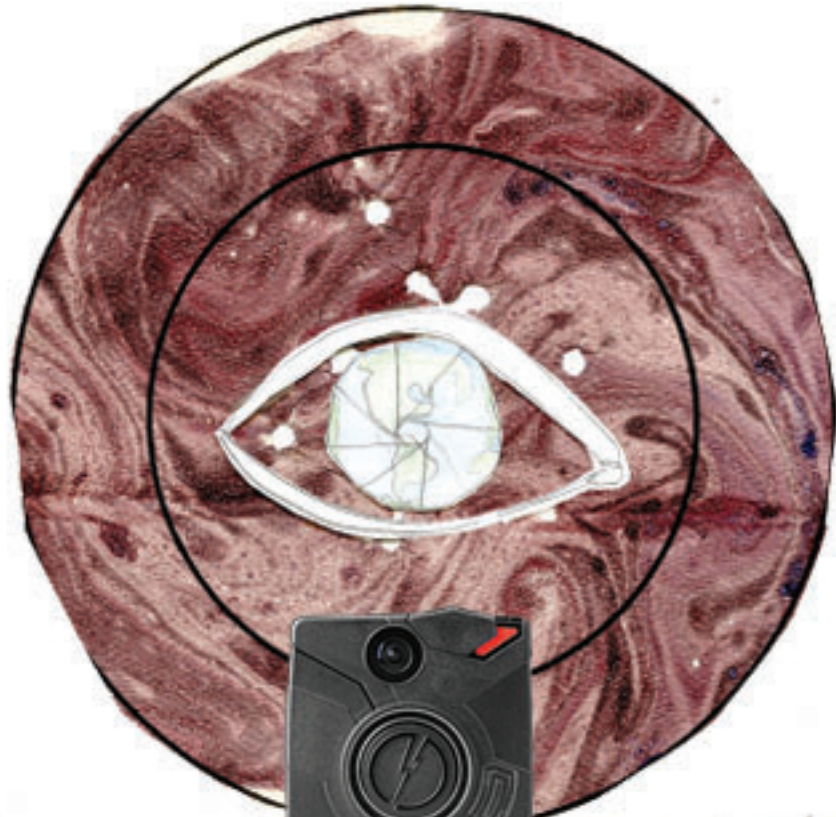
1 These blues are old, often referenced but never sung. They reference the traditional reluctance with which Americans hire Black Americans, and the glee with which they are terminated.

2 All pronunciations of "nigger"

3 God here refers not to any God which humanity recognizes, but to the Americanist God whose great commandment is "My country, right or wrong." This is that God whose only morality is the "American way" and in whom all things are justifiable by national security and the pursuit of surplus.

LOOTING: TOWARDS A

DEFENSE AND CLARIFICATION



are these devices offering officer "accountability" through fear of punishment?



A LOOTING: TOWARDS

DEFENSE AND CLARIFICATION

Violence is negation, the rendering down to a state of social naughtness. Violence as perpetrated by and against an "I" is profoundly psychological, therefore, we cannot deny, that those people whose very lives are violence, when they choose to loot, are reflecting what they have endured back on the colonial order, which looted their lives and their potential for profit. Violence in such cases is a proclamation of human existence; an assertion that one is not merely an object to be tortured and manipulated, but a being capable of willfully impacting reality. Wellresourced, contented people do not loot. People who are at peace with the proximal physical universe their bodies inhabit do not loot. People who have something invested in their material surroundings do not loot. People who have reasonable doubt that society is trying to destroy them, Do. Not. Loot. Much has been made of the lack of loving tenderness with which poor people, and especially poor Black and Brown people, treat the brick/mortar/Iron and steel of their physical spaces. When one reflects that they almost never own those spaces, that these spaces are a means of exploiting them through absentee landlords, through commerce which siphons the pittances of the poor, through police quotas; this lack of infrastructural caress seems altogether natural. For whose benefit should they maintain these spaces which they do not own, but which signify America's nonreciprocal ownership of their entire selves? Must we be capitalist oppression's ground crew as well as its victim? This is why looting occurred in Ferguson. Because Ferguson belongs not to the Black human beings who are 2/3s of it, but to others.

Ferguson, like most Black communities, belongs to the police. It is a plantation where the fruits of despair are reaped to fuel a police state, where inhumanity is sown and oppression harvested. This is the ghetto. The ghetto follows Black skin. This is why White flight

kills, not because Whiteness is life, in my experience, it is something else entirely; but because wealth and resources condition life, and Homo Occidentalis cleaves to and covets a disproportionate share of these as the very breath of life. Ferguson belongs to the White 33%, they are citizensproper, they have vested interests and a reason to vote, they have the luxury to give a damn about the prevailing social order, they understand power from having wielded the weapon so long, as a result: They vote. Looting is a proxy for the seizure of economic power and the accumulation of capital in the same way that a riot is a proxy for revolution. There is no way to distinguish opportunistic looting from cathartic looting which releases tension, which constitutes an explosive politicization, which is a dramatic reassertion of subjugated force. Denied structural and institutional power they offer raw physical force, and the oppressed population's great reserve power of public disobedience. Perhaps the distinction is nonexistent and merely one of emphasis. One loots when she has the opportunity because of the tension which is always there, the tug of war between subjugated personhood and a subjugating society. Surely, there are easier and more reliable larcenous strategies than to wait for the great crackling tinder of societal tension to burst into a chaotic blaze. This would only be practical if the sufferingclass were suddenly resensitized to the quotidian brutality which characterizes its life. But, the explosions occur rarely enough that injustice remains profitable. These leftovers of the importation of African humanity, from a faraway place, in a time long past; present a threat to the very existence of injustice in the world, which will yet, depending on your perspective, prove either apocalyptic or cosmically creative. A new and better genesis, than the American one.

A DISCOURSE ON LOOTING

VICTOR BRADLEY



EXPULSION BY ANN DWYER

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN ACADEMIA NERVOSA: THE SOCIAL SUBORDINATION, SUBMISSION, AND SUBVERSION OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS, 2012.

*They had to take me, over the shoulder, my arms
reaching back frantically,*

*clawing at the walls, my nails scraping chalkboards,
knocking telephones off their*

*hooks, and robbing the shelves of their books. I cried
to the teachers I loved—*

*didn't even get to say goodbye, as I was dragged out
of the loved halls, legs*

*kicking at their faces with gusto, ripping the wind
and soul out of my buttoned*

*chest. I mean, it's just school, really, and I guess
most kids wouldn't care, but I*

1 6 harbored in that beautiful building like bacteria.

Thought in decay? A Reflection on the New School as a place for radical intellectuals.

Luis Lei

When I received the invitation to write an article regarding police brutality, I was thrilled. Last month, Ferguson and much of the country was burning from the outrage of Mike Brown's murder. Yet, I had not heard a single faculty, student, or administrator talk about the issue. Besides this call from the Zine Publishing Collective, the Newschool has been completely silent. This should not surprise anyone. We are, after all, a mainly white, male dominant, middle and upper middle class community.

More importantly, the fact that something as pressing as police brutality has been ignored in our classes, conferences, journals and minds, says something about the state of the Newschool as a place for radical intellectuals, as well as the state of academia in general these days: Our endeavors have lost relevance vis-a-vis the contemporary struggles of the oppressed, and as such, have become thought in decay.



This may sound surprising to many on campus. After all, intellectual rigor and sophistication may have never been as high as it is today. But I invite readers to consider that this “rigor” and “sophistication,” whether logical, mathematical, or of any other kind, are precisely the signs of thinking heads that are abstracted, separated, and oblivious to the lived realities of our shared present. This separation is at the heart of the problem with academic inquiry. The fragmentation of the subjective and objective, between theory and praxis is the very essence of stagnant, decaying thought. What we study and write is great for professional training, for making us conform to the status quo, but it has a crippling inability to engage the challenges humanity is facing.

Let me illustrate. As a community, police brutality is not an issue for us. We may “suffer” from arbitrary cycling or parking tickets, while black people are being systematically incarcerated and shot. The truth is that the police state is here to “protect” the very system that allows for our school to flourish. As a result, our intellectual analysis of police brutality, even if we did engaged in such endeavor (which we are not doing), would be one that is inherently objectifying, i.e. one that necessarily leaves out our own subjectivity and lived experience (except for maybe the few students who are the most exceptional and rebellious spirits). The problem of purely subjective analysis is that we can afford to conform ourselves to talking about it; action is precluded. Much like I am doing right now, I can turn these “ideas” into something publishable, and maybe I will become a specialized “scholar” on minorities issues once I finish my degree. Police brutality will, meanwhile, continue to haunt us.

The interplay and relation between the subjective and objective elements, between thought and action, action and thought, is crucial to forestall the current decay of thought in academia. But this can only be achieved by those who can,

and are willing to embody both the subjective and objective elements; those whose thought leads to action because their lives, their communities’ survival and health, depend on it; because they are driven by an overriding moral duty towards a just society where everyone is not merely recognized, but treated as a fellow human. Insofar as the Newschool, as academia in general, has become a segregated bastion of privilege based on race, class, and even gender; insofar as we do not have black, poor students in any significant numbers; insofar as those who are here feel no solidarity towards the downtrodden and are narrow minded careerists, our “radical thought” is only that: Pure thought. Its decay is a consequence and indication of its irrelevance.

Of course, in such a short space I have to generalize. But I believe this reflects a tendency we are all aware of. If you have ever struggled to turn intellectual sophistication into something that helps people engage with, rather than abstract from the world; if you have ever found yourself trying to read the “canon” (whatever that is in your field of expertise) in a way that is relevant to both personal and societal problems today, then you have felt the stifling effects of academic decay. Solutions, however, are not something a single person can prescribe. Only by building community spaces where these questions can be discussed; only when through these discussions we develop a collective understanding of the problems; only then, we can come up with specific measures and actions that can help us move towards a solution.

Luis Lei
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THOUGHTS ON REFORM

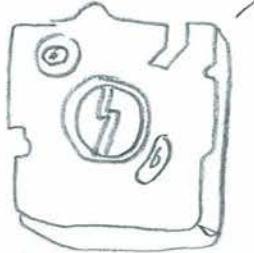
by piera
Comments, q's, etc → yerkp670@newschool.edu

SOME PPL think that worn body surveillance cameras could drastically reduce incidences of police violence, abuse, corruption.



if existing police were trained as social workers and some social workers joined "the force".

though this new source of authority, this power may still be in the cops' hands



a technology that can reform

the cams' "objective data" would be uploaded to the cloud

INSTEAD OF



where information decays

and they banded together with E.M.T.'s to drive around helping people in trouble.

though maybe its futile to try to project this utopian ideology into public institutions.

wtf happens // off the record //



NYPD is trying them



and they wont make police unracist

systemic inequality

Maybe mutual aid networks

can

build new systems of relation from the ground up?

collect & redistribute resources

but will having to be accountable make some reconsider their prejudice?



A photograph of a protest scene. In the foreground, a person is lying on the ground, partially obscured by a police officer in riot gear. Other people are sitting or lying on the ground in the background. The scene is outdoors, possibly on a street or plaza. The text is overlaid on the image in large, white, bold, sans-serif font.

**TÜRKİYEYE HOŞ GELDİNİZ
WELCOME TO TURKEY**

ESSAY BY NATHANIEL PHILLIPPS

WHERE THE POLICE

DON'T GIVE A FK!**

May 31st, 2014, began our first official day as part of the international field program (IFP) of The New School university in Istanbul, Turkey.

It was also the first time that most of us had ever tasted tear gas, released by the police on protesters, as we watched from the balcony of a bar. Admittedly, to us Americans, it was exciting to be so close to the scene of a protest commemorating the 1-year anniversary of the Taksim Square/Gezi Park demonstrations in Istanbul, even though I would argue that all of us fully understand the grimness of the political environment in Turkey at the moment.

I would consider last year's cohort lucky, that they arrived in Istanbul pretty much as the protests exploded into massive unrest, from what began as a peaceful demonstration of a small group of people resisting a historic green square in Istanbul being removed of its trees in anticipation of becoming a construction site for a new ridiculous project of the ruling AKP (Justice and Development) political party of Turkey.

Banners in remembrance of people who lost their lives last year in the unrest.



A tear gas canister hit Berkın Elvan, 15, in the head on his way to get bread, resulting 9 months later in his death.

I only moved to the New York area last fall and the police presence there is crazy, most palpably, in areas of more concentrated Black/brown communities. But I have never seen as many police in my life as I did on Saturday, dispersed at prime locations around the city. The Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, told the police to use all means necessary to quell any unrest, and they did just that. Police were called in from neighboring areas of Turkey, and access to Taksim Square (the focal point of last year's protests) was completely denied. The mayor of Istanbul even directed the private ferry companies that transport people between the European and Asian sides of the city from operating during the day, to further restrict peoples' access to the park.

As a local shared with us, these actions by the Prime Minister show that he is fearful of the nascent liberal and intersectional movement that was sparked by Gezi. **My** fear, however, is that *fear* is not enough to incite change. Although this fear further undermines Erdoğan's leadership, it does not mean that he will change his behavior in the slightest. Seemingly, all signs point to the contrary. After Saturday's



you do when the political channels available to you are impotent, if not antagonistic, to your desires? How do you protest when you need permission from the very government you are resisting? Improper and/or violent police conduct is an astounding issue to me and I think the Turkish case is a lucid example. After all, these police are citizens, practically fighting against their fellow citizens, in a match that they are emboldened and legitimated by their government to win. What is the psychology of a police force that crushes those it's supposed to protect? In this context, where is the credence of a movement that is attempting to exercise its rights of expression—freedoms ostensibly guaranteed by the constitution of Turkey—in the eyes of its state? To Erdoğan and the establishment in this country, it does not exist.

protests, Turkey and Erdoğan in particular received instant indignation from the international community, with the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights declaring that the “misconduct of law enforcement officials poses a direct threat to the rule of law and cannot be tolerated.”—misconduct is an understatement. The police are not only empowered, but outright directed by the PM to behave in such an irresponsible, unprofessional, and heavy-handed fashion. Citizen grievances will go practically unheeded by Turkish authorities as there is a lack of any competent and truly independent police oversight structure. Recommendations abound on measures that Turkey needs to take to uphold basic freedoms, from Amnesty International to the European Union, but the ruling party is lethargic at best to implement them, and disingenuous if they do.

Sure, doubling down and becoming more aggressive may be a sign of a weary regime, but how do you fight against police who have pretty much free reign? Won't this lead to increased violence—and normalized violence—when both sides become more intent on beating the other? What do

THIS PIECE WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ONLINE:
<http://nathanielphillipps.wordpress.com/2014/06/03/turkiyeye-hos-geldiniz-welcome-to-turkey-where-the-police-dont-give-a-fk/>





Fuck the Police

ALL COPS R HOT

“Violence is as once
imminent and actual,
spectacular and mundane.”
(p. 130)

Dylan Rodriguez *Forced Passages* 8

“Brutality, torture,
and excess should be
understood as an essential
element of American
statecraft, not its corruption
or deviation”
(p. 47)

It is not a new story in the least. From Emmett Till, to Oscar Grant, to Michael Brown, centuries of black death haunt America. Popular discourse suggests that these impulses of racialized violence re-emerge as specters of a disgraced past, visceral but fleeting. However, I argue that rather than an aberration to the statecraft of the United States, racialized violence against black (and brown) bodies is constitutive of the social order. In unpalatable but nevertheless true words, the “coherence of white life” is premised on the “incoherence of black [civil, social, and biological] death” (Wilderson, 2002).

“The Overly Dramatic
Truth”¹:

Michael Brown and the
banality of extrajudicial
executions

by Roy Cherian

This claim is most clearly evidenced and materialized by the monument of the prison regime. Universally speaking, the primary purpose of a modern carceral institution is the immobilization of threat(s) within society, however so defined (Foucault, 1979). Consequently, the civilian is replaced with the inmate and the associated rights of membership are suspended; this

¹ The title is taken from a song of the same name by Brooklyn-born rapper, El-P, off his album *Cancer for Cure* (2012)



state can be considered one of “civil death” (Rodriguez, 2006). Related to this primary objective, the immobilization of incarceration is meant to punish. In exceptional cases, the goal of punishment is rehabilitation, but more often than not its objective is objectification itself, and ultimately biological death. Dehumanization, considered a hallmark of what Orlando Patterson (1982) calls “social death” — characterized by the deracination, domination, and dishonor of the enslaved and/or captive — is necessary so as the legitimate the state’s escalation of violence towards biological death, i.e. (extra)-legal execution. The act of revoking civil status is foundational in facilitating social and biological death and has been present during all instances wherein the modern state exercises its bio-political right to kill on a mass scale, most notably during the Holocaust (Foucault, 2008). This civil disenfranchisement, in other words, is the first, and necessary, step towards legitimized murder by a state whose legitimacy lies in its preservation of life

(Foucault, 2008).

In essence, this progress from civil, to social, and finally biological death is the *modus operandi* that allows the modern liberal state to flex its right to kill through the necropower embodied in the prison (Mbembé, 2003). At the point where social death occurs, the sentence of execution becomes irrelevant; anyone in this state can be summarily executed precisely because they no longer retain human, let alone civilian, status. The massacre in Attica in 1971 provides evidence for the complete lack of reticence to execute incarcerated, socially dead objects without official sanction. Therefore, the necropower of the prison merges both exceptional and everyday violence, the overt and the bio-political. However, the issue at hand concerns the events on the streets of Ferguson, not within the prisons of Missouri. So then, how is it on the streets of Ferguson, Missouri that a young black man could be stripped of his civil and human rights? Where were the pre-emptive

Foucault, M., 1926-1984. Burchell, G., Senellart, M., Collège, d. F., & ebrary, I. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics lectures at the college de france, 1978-79: the birth of biopolitics lectures at the college de france, 1978-79*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hartman, S. V. (1997). *Scenes of subjection : Terror, slavery, and self-making in nineteenth-century america*. New York: Oxford University Press.

violations of civil and social death for Michael Brown?

Frank Wilderson III (2002) would say that, paradigmatically, black americans are still in a state of social death, and despite the end of slavery have existed as a racialized surplus population that has been dominated and opportunistically exploited — first in the field and then in labor market — throughout their history on this continent. Saidiya Hartman (1997) would echo this statement, asserting that while “emancipation announced the end of chattel slavery...it by no means marked the end of bondage”. In her seminal work, *Scenes of Subjection* (1997), Hartman elaborates on how a social and legal restructuring of society occurred after slavery that maintained blackness as the embodiment of evil, virulence, and abjection through ritualized and routinized terror and domination under the guise of the law. In this way, nascent black subjectivity was once again turned into objectivity through the legitimized subjection of the criminal wherein

blackness itself became criminalized.

Moreover, black subjects in america are criminalized not only due to a neurotic fear of indolence and rebellion, but also because the positionality of the black subject places him in direct opposition to u.s. statecraft so as to simply survive. “Theft” is an affront to unjust property relations, “illicit” economies speaks to disintegration from the formal economy, and so on. Black autonomy, in short, is both symbolically and materially insurgent. His paradigmatic oppression naturally makes him resist against death, thereby both forming subjectivity and autonomy and warranting conferrals of criminality under white supremacy (Mbembé, 2003).

Therefore we are witness to the fact that in the United States the quintessential prisoner is the black male, who embodies a threat anywhere and at any time (Sexton, 2007). Moreover, the necropower in the prison and on the street are of the same mind and often take on similar

forms. Combined with the logic of bio-power, this necropolitical process is extrapolated to the level of the population and embodied in the "mass capture, immobilization, and bodily disintegration" of black (and brown) men (Rodriguez, 2006, p. 241).

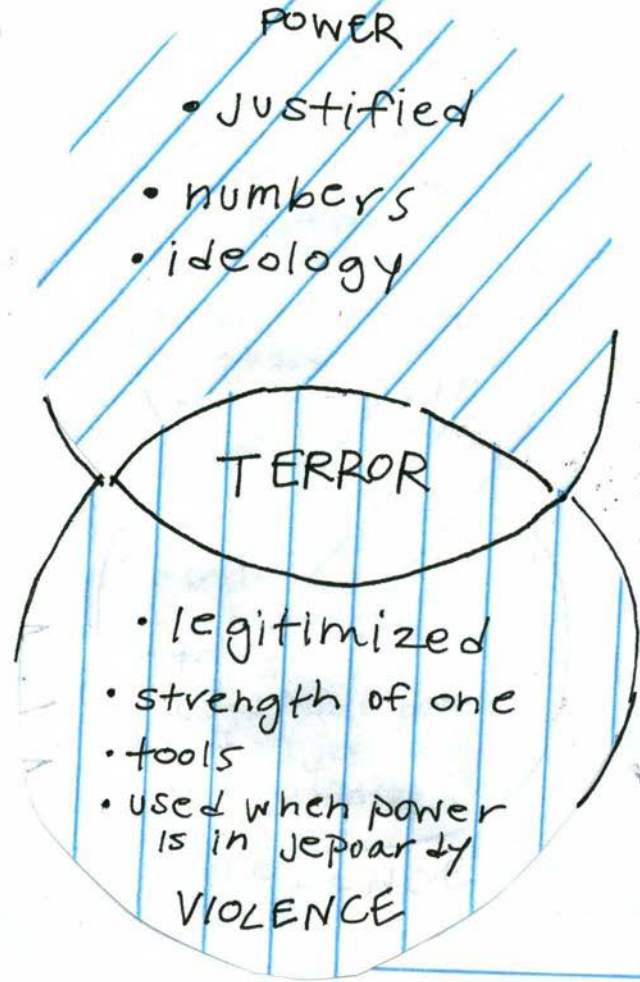
So then, it is not surprising—though no less abhorrent—that within modern america black (and brown) men are regularly violated both in the ghetto and in prison, where their numbers overwhelm only because of racial state violence. His paradigmatic position because of a history of slavery and its dialectical manifestations since its formal abolishment make it so that he naturally fits into—and rather defines—categories of deviance and criminality. To re-emphasize the opening quotes, "(b)rutality, torture, and excess should be understood as an essential element of American statecraft, not its corruption or deviation" where "violence is at once...spectacular and mundane". These are

necessary means when the goal is to destroy black subjectivity through the systematic domination of all aspects of life, where the hyper-surveillance and necropolitical ultra-violence in the prison and the ghetto, on the subway and on the street is "imminent and actual".

In the american context, then, the black body is a threat anywhere and everywhere, a symbol of moral deceptitude and pathological violence, the embodiment of evil. This is the fiction upon which the american colony was founded and the current empire persists; it is its constitutive logic that ushers in white life through the sacrifice of black and brown bodies. The captive is therefore born in repression, forced to resist, and thereby doomed to succumb to civil, social, and/or biological death under a white-supremacist logic. This is the American way.

On Violence

by Hanna Arendt



WHO HAS THE
POWER TO LEGITIMIZE
VIOLENCE?

- A. Supreme Court
- B. Police Force
- C. US President
- D. All of the above.

GROWING UP I WAS TAUGHT THAT IF I
WAS EVER IN DANGER THAT I COULD
CALL THE POLICE, BUT IT SEEMS
THAT TODAY I'D BE MORE LIKELY IN
DANGER BECAUSE OF THEM. IF THE
POLICE AREN'T HERE TO PROTECT
US, THEN WHO ARE WE TO CALL
WHEN WE ARE IN DISTRESS? WHO DO
YOU CALL WHEN THE POLICE ARE
THE ONES COMMITTING A CRIME?







PUR- GATORY REVIEWS-

IT FEEL

I summon my courage and put my thoughts in order as I brace against the wall just outside the courtroom. As policemen walk back and forth between the courtroom and detention area, between limbo and judgment, I get glimpses of the warm ambiance on the other side of the door. Against the harsh white walls and light of where I am, it seems as if I am exiting a colorless dimension back into life. Childhood anticipation and joy surface, and I recall these same feelings when watching the classroom clock approach 3 PM on the day before summer break. I was always an outdoors person, feeling comfort in the warm, tropical sun and anxiety inside. This imprisonment has been hell.

The officer preparing my documents for the judge looks at me with disapproval. I recognized his bone structure, skin color and then, his accent. Minutes later I enter into the courtroom. Anxiety and adrenaline try to take over but I push them back.

I am in a wood-paneled room, with an audience of about 100 multi-colored faces, gaping-eyed as though astonished by my presence. A thin, brown man with a ripped t-shirt and a circular bloody emblem on his chest. A sight to behold. In their eyes I see all their worst fears placed on me, and I am reminded of all the silent stares throughout the day. Is this what the police officers saw when they encountered me? Should a police officer not have the insight and training to look past these superficialities? Yet, for the first time I feel no shame, no need for approval and their stares mean nothing.

Approaching the podium, I look up at the judge. Her appearance fails to impress me. Dark brown hair, pale skin suited in a black robe, and hidden behind a large wooden desk. She appears sequestered, tiny and distant. Turning to my court-appointed lawyer, I sense an understanding of equality between them. The lawyer instantly recognizes me, and conveys everything to the judge that I had said earlier, surprising me, given his dismissal then. The judge quickly reviews the paperwork before her.

Walking back and forth are many blue-eyed police officers, weighing in on the palpable hierarchy in the courtroom. Below them there are the onlookers and finally, me. I cast off the onus of the hierarchy and address the judge answering questions posed to me to clarify my wishes. My lawyer asks for Jeb to be released as I had requested. We are both dropping charges against each other and the judge agrees, delivering her decree to the court that the arrest records will be sealed. I can't remember how charges were placed against me, other than the officers at the scene choreographing it that way.

I stand there expecting something else, underwhelmed, looking at both her and the lawyer, as they look back at me. Where is the strong arm smashing the gavel into the desk and the deep guttural

proclamation of judgment as I've seen so many times on film? There is no satisfying climax and the judge indicates I am done. I thank her and my lawyer, and leave the podium, all eyes again following me for a few seconds until another specimen is brought out to draw their attention away. I get the feeling I have not lived up to their expectations.

For a few minutes, I was the epitome of their fears - who they are, and who they risk becoming and so despise. I take a look at the courtroom from my mind's eye and I see what has transpired for centuries: The brown man, assumed to be inherently bad, being accused, defended and judged by the enlightened whites because they alone are capable of doing so. The onlookers staring with resentment because they know I am them and they would cast me as a scapegoat to save themselves. I almost hear the refrain, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" fade into the back of my mind.

My thoughts go back to Jeb. He had only recently arrived here after spending the day at the precinct. I heard him laughing with the officers, and he's about to exit the court within just a couple of hours of arriving. I have been in here all day wilting away. Would there have been a way for me to exit without having to save him from a lengthy process, or was this outcome calculated by the officers to Jeb's advantage? I'm about to leave the country to visit an ailing relative. How would all this affect me when returning through immigration? The image of a rat finishing a maze only to be caught in a trap comes to mind. Something distracts me and I turn around to face the courtroom from the back.

I search the room for Walter, but I don't see him and exit. I take note of my feelings - calm. I check my body - calm. I like myself. My lack of emotion could also be due to exhaustion. Outside the courtroom I find him and as he embraces me I feel solid and self-reliant. I feel assured that I will not become the environment I am now leaving. Tears are in his eyes. Joy is in his voice. There is a vague feeling that his emotions really aren't about me. I stolidly relate to him that Jeb would be out soon; that he will be brought out so he could leave tonight. His excitement turns away from me to Jeb's release and my feelings are justified. Each time we spoke on the phone it was about Jeb. What was it about Jeb that was so precious? The only thing I could think of was that they were both white. I saw it in their cloudy, drunken eyes when they turned against me for demanding quiet. When the police who I called handcuffed me. When Walter and Jeb drunkenly mocked the officers. All these experiences, these feelings I've cycled through today are familiar. Why?

We walk together up the stairs leading out to street level and I vaguely feel less weighed down, and the fresh air catches me by surprise as I inhale deeply.

I thank him for bringing my wallet, keys and some snacks and hail

a taxi. I have little time left to catch my flight to see my dying relative. Little time is left to reflect on this episode before it becomes the past.

"What time is it?" I ask the taxi driver.

"One thirty."

After giving directions I review my life and what circumstances led to this day. I want it all to disappear into the past even as it compels me to become someone else.

The car pulls up to the house and I gather my money and keys.

"What time is it?" I ask, worrying about my flight.

"Two."

I step out of the car and stand on the same spot I was exactly 24 hours earlier. Part of me wants to dismiss the day as an imaginary thing. As though I had slipped into and now escaped from a pocket dimension; no time having passed. But no, I can't ignore it. So much had occurred, grown, changed and appeared. My mind feels as though new beams and columns have been erected in a renovation. Walking into the apartment it feels familiar, but vague and unattached - a place I've visited but never belonged. It is similar to the emotions and feelings I experienced today: the fear, shame, betrayal. They were familiar because I had been in Purgatory before. Within minutes I am showered, packed and I've arranged for a pick up. When I looked into the mirror to comb my hair, I barely recognize the face looking back. I can see it is me, but there is no emotional connection to it; almost like a stranger. I dismiss it, feeling it is due to exhaustion, stress and from the condensation on the glass.

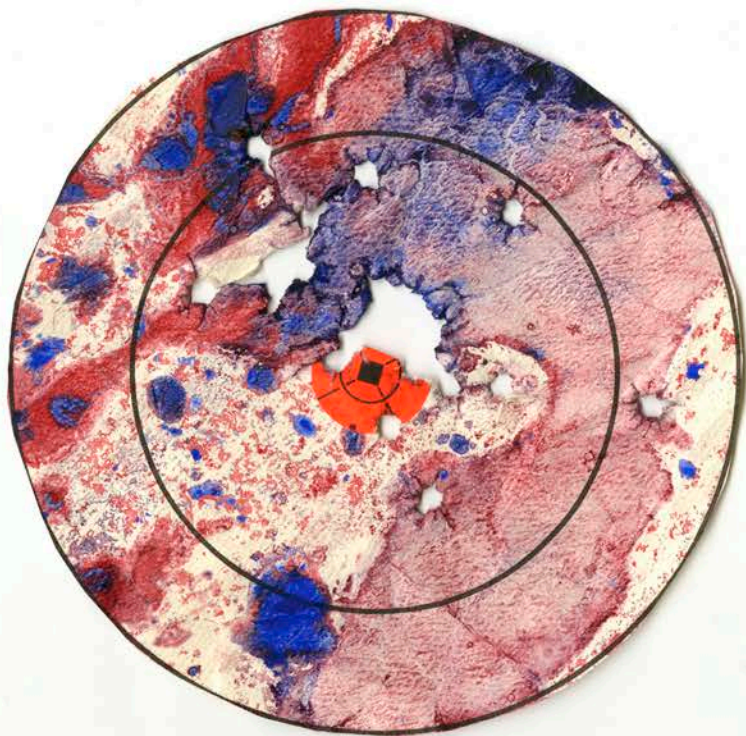
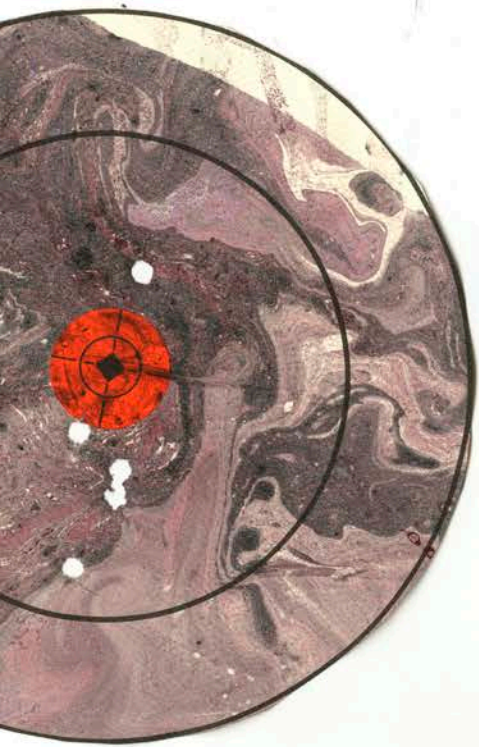
I call Walter and Jeb to make sure they're okay. They're outside. Everything is fine with him. I go to let them in, unsure what I will feel; only knowing that I hope he is well. The door opens.

I see him and I feel the need to console him and be consoled. His face is pale, haggard and there is the black eye.

"I am so sorry! I will never drink that much again!" He cries as he embraces me. I check myself. I don't believe it. I have moved on. I have changed. He thinks he's hugging the man I was a day ago. I feel the seismic shift in me and I know I am no longer here. I have lost a sense of complacency that the world is essentially good and now feel oppression and cynicism rising. The burdens of who I was have been lost, but so too, I have lost my identity.

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COURTESY

PROFESSIONALISM

RESPECT

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