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## THREE DAYS OF HELL IN LOS ANGELES

A Series of Reports prepared by the Emergencynet News Service (ENN) in "real-time" as the events were unfolding.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-EMERGENCYNET NEWS SVC.-04/29/92-2145CDT

### L.A. POLICE ACQUITTED, RIOTING STRIKES S.E. LOS ANGELES

By Clark Staten

Los Angeles, CA - In an unexpected climax to a year of racial strife surrounding the alleged L.A.P.D. beating of Rodney King, a jury of six men and six women found the officers not guilty. The jurors were unable to reach a conclusion regarding one charge against Officer Laurence Powell, age 29, for using excessive force under the color of authority. A mistrial was declared by Judge Stanley Weisberg on that one count, with eight jurors voting for acquittal and four for a guilty verdict.

Sgt. Stacey Koon, Officer Theodore Briseno, and Officer Timothy Wind were found completely not guilty on all counts of official misconduct, excessive force, filing false police reports, and assault with a deadly weapon. District Attorney Ira Reiner said that no decision had been reached in regard to whether or not to retry Officer Powell on the one count that was declared indecisive.

An eighty-one second video tape, captured by a concerned citizen, sparked the controversy regarding police brutality and led to eventual indictments of the officers. Many months of investigation, charges, and counter-charges followed the release of the video tape. Various segments of the community in Los Angeles were polarized as the details of the played out daily on local television stations.

A trial ensued. It was moved to suburban Simi Valley, CA, due to pre-trial publicity and the seemingly premature release of the now "infamous" tape of the police wielding batons and striking King repeatedly. A jury was chosen that contained eleven white jurors and one of Philipino descent. Black civil rights activists complained that no blacks were chosen for the jury and that the choice of jurors was another example of racism.

The trial and surrounding investigations also sparked unprecedented criticism of Police Chief Daryl Gates and the entire Los Angeles Police Department. The Christopher Commission was formed and did find occasions of racism and institutional brutality. Police officers in Los Angeles were also found to have used official computer systems for insensitive and racist remarks. Calls were received for the resignation of the Chief Gates.

Lawyers for the officers charged in the allegations argued that the policemen believed that King was acting under the influence of the animal tranquilizer PCP, which often causes violent and unpredictable behavior that has resulted in the injury of numerous emergency responders and law enforcement officers. They also testified as to King's combativeness that didn't appear on the tape. King was not found to have been using PCP, but was found to have a blood alcohol level of .19, which is more than double that allowed in most states as indicative of "drunken driving". The evidence was weighed and the jury found the four officer not guilty after seven days of deliberations.

A reaction to the acquittal of the four officers was immediately received from blacks and civilrights activists. The Mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley, said; "We must express our profound anger and outrage (at the acquittal), but we also must not endanger the reforms that we have made by striking out blindly". He continued, "We must demand that the L.A.P.D. fire the officers who beat Rodney King and take them off the streets once and for all".

California State Senator Ed Smith said that he was also shocked. Smith was quoted by the United Press as saying, "It's hard to beleive that there was no sustaining of the charges at all...the world saw the videotape and if that conduct is sanctioned by law in California, then we have to re-write the law". Exec. Director Ramona Ripston of the American Civil Liberties Union called the verdicts "a travesty of justice".

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### Response to the Jury Verdict

According to late afternoon and early evening news reports, citizens of the Southeast and Southcentral area of Los Angeles have decided that they can't wait for laws to be changed. Reportedly, numerous occasions of rioting, arson, and looting are taking place at the time of this report. Live helicopter news reports showed the air over several neighborhoods appeared to be filled with smoke. Los Angeles Fire Department officials report that as many as nine (9) large stores are burning, and that numerous cars have been "torched" in an attempt to block intersections.

The Los Angeles Police 77th Station is said to have requested reinforcements due to the violence that is believed sparked by the police acquittal. The Cable News Network (CNN) reported that they had received a report of "white motorists" being pulled from their cars and "beaten" by a crowd of black youths. No official source would confirm the type of injuries in the area of the disturbance, but an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) source said that the situation was "extremely fluid" and that fire department medic units had been called to several locations.

A L.A.P.D. police sergeant who could not be identified said that the police department was conducting a "tactical rec MAR high would cancel

day off for all police officers and cause them to immediately report for work. Officers were seen at several locations to bearing the standard

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As the story continues to unfold, senseless violence seems to beget senseless violence. Parker Center in downtown Los Angeles reportedly has been under "siege" by a large crowd of protestors since shortly after the jury's announcement. Several reports of arrests have been received, but most observers agree that the police officers there appear subdued and restrained in their actions. Sporadic events of violence and arson, in predominantly black neighborhoods, continue to be reported.

One witness said that the atmosphere and conditions were reminiscent of those at the onset of the "Watts Riots" that shook Los Angeles following the death of Martin Luther King. City residents are said to be "holding their breath" and praying that the seemingly isolated "lawlessness" doesn't spread to engulf the entire city in vengeance for the actions of a jury that made a decision.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-EMERGENCYNET NEWS SVC.-04/30/92-1700CDT

## MAJOR RIOT IN LOS ANGELES, THIRTEEN DEAD, 192 INJURED

Los Angeles, CA - Following a jury verdict which acquitted four L.A.P.D. officers of charges resulting from the video- taped beating of motorist Rodney King, Southcentral Los Angeles erupted in a violent and deadly outburst of arson and shooting. Local police and emergency medical services officials report the deaths of as many as nine (9) people and injuries to another 138.

As the sun rose over Los Angeles, more than forty (40) major fires still burned out of control. They were part of an estimated 140 fires that were set in the Southeast and Southcentral parts of the city. During the night, firefighters and paramedics were hardpressed to keep up with the requests for emergency response to more than 140 fires. Reportedly, they came under sniper fire on several occasions, from rooftops surrounding the fire scenes. One Los Angeles firefighter is reported in stable, but serious, condition at an area hospital following his being shot in the face while fighting a blaze.

According to a police spokesman at least five (5) people have been shot by police and one was killed in a gun-battle in the city's Inglewood area. A spokesperson for the Daniel Freeman Hospital says that they have treated at least fifty (50) citizens with "riot-related" injuries. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) officers say that all available city ambulances are "on calls" and that mutual aid from Los Angeles County and Orange County has been requested. At least 192 people are reported to have been taken to various hospitals in the L.A. metropolitan area.

Los Angeles Mayor Thomas Bradley has been following the rise of violence and has repeatedly called for calm among the city's black citizens. Observers report, however, that many of those participating in looting and arson are not black, but rather, youths of hispanic and caucasian origin. Reports were also received that numerous reputed "street gang" members were seen to be participating in the violence and shooting.

Mayor Bradley is said to have declared a local "State Of Emergency" and requested a California disaster declaration. Mayor Bradley is also reported to have issued a "dusk to dawn" curfew which prohibits people from being on the street during nighttime hours. He also issued orders prohibiting the sale of firearms and gasoline (other than into vehicle tanks) to Los Angeles citizens. The Mayor also announced that all Catholic and public schools in the Southern part of Los Angeles have been closed and will not reopen until further notice.

According to California Governor Pete Wilson, he has activated more than 2,000 National Guardsmen to help quell the rampage in Los Angeles. The Guardsman are reportedly members of Military Police Units and are said to be armed with sidearms and M-16 rifles. Police spokespersons indicate that the Guardsmen have not been used for law enforcement duties, but to secure areas that have been previously cleared by police. An unidentified Army Sergeant was reported to have said that the guard is "on stand-by" awaiting the orders of police officials.

As the morning progressed, numerous eyewitness reports of additional looting were seen on KPLA T.V. and the Cable News Network. Hundreds of citizens of all colors were seen to be breaking into stores, almost at will, and leaving with armloads of merchandise. Several new fires were reported by the L.A. Fire Dept., these in addition to those that still burned out of control in several locations. Fire Chief Donald Manning appealed to L.A. citizens to discontinue the practice of assaulting and shooting at firefighters who were attempting to fight the conflagrations.


In afternoon developments, the Bank of America is reported to have been closing all of it's Los Angeles branch banks and moving money to safer locations, away from the chaos that is spreading through various neighborhoods. Other businesses are said to be closing and boarding up their windows in an attempt to prevent future looting. Reports were received that the crowds of looters were said to be moving into an area on Hollywood Blvd. and that the thievery seems to be spreading as the day progresses.

As lawlessness continued, President George Bush called for calm and a stop to "anarchy" on the streets of Los Angeles. He said that he had conferred with U.S. Attorney William Barr, Mayor Tom Bradley, and Governor Pete Wilson in an effort to provide whatever assistance might be needed to stop the senseless arson, violence, and looting. President Bush is said to have several key staff members monitoring the situation closely and available to provide federal assistance should it be needed.

An unidentified Los Angeles Police officer provided a concise commentary on the state of affairs in Los Angeles; "Things are totally out of control here... and we expect it to get worse when it gets dark...I hope we all live to see tomorrow".

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By: Clark Staten, EMT-P

Los Angeles, CA - The latest reported deaths in Los Angeles bring to thirty-eight the total that have been killed as the result of the fires, riots, and shooting that has plagued this second largest American city. The death toll has risen following another night of violence and mayhem that is said, by some, to be the consequences for the acquittal of four L.A.P.D. officers in Simi Valley, CA on Wednesday.

The current totals of dead, injured and damage done now exceed those that occurred in 1965, when residents of the Watts section of Los Angeles erupted after the arrest of a black man by a white highway patrol officer. Thirty-four (34) people died in the following six-days of chaos, 1,000 were injured, and \$200 million dollars in damage was done. Older eyewitnesses say that the most current riots far exceed the days of the Watts riots, both in intensity and level of violence.

As 4,000 regular Army troops and 1,000 federal law enforcement officers move into Los Angeles, people have begun to actually assess the severity of this latest day of "revolution". They find thirty-eight (38) people dead, 1,250 people injured, 3,600 structural fires, hundreds of businesses looted and closed, and more than 3,000 people arrested. At least four (4) police officers and three (3) firefighters have been shot and hundreds of other injured as they attempted to control the fires and lawlessness of the past three days.

A "Dusk to Dawn" curfew has been imposed by Mayor Tom Bradley, in an effort to prevent citizens from congregating into the groups that have controlled the streets in recent days. The curfew also finally has "teeth" as 4,000 California National Guardsmen assist the police in securing areas of previous violence. This evening, the National Guard Units were also "federalized" by President Bush and supplemented by another 4,000 Army and Marine troops with orders to act as "Light-Infantry" and to "return fire if fired upon".

Reports are received at the time of this report that authorities may be gaining a tactical advantage and that, with the help of an added 9,000 law enforcement and military personnel, the situation may be under control by the weekend. According to current reports, there have been fewer fires and shooting incidents since the curfew was instituted on Friday evening.

The wave of destruction, which had spread from Southcentral Los Angeles to Downtown, to Pasadena, to Hollywood, and to Koreatown, has not always seemed just a response to the Rodney King verdict. Often in it's intensity, the "rioting beast" did not pay attention to the race, color, or creed of it's victims; it struck indiscriminately. Early video tapes of the "rioters" sometimes showed middle class white youths, street gang members, and those that have been associated with radical organizations such as the American Communist Party.

Differing agendas seemed to be "at play" in differing circumstances. Much looting appeared to "opportunistic" in scope and origin. Entire families were seen working together to steal from stores in their own neighborhoods. Often, what was being stolen was not of any necessity, but rather luxury items such as designer gym shoes, radios, and starter jackets. Frequently, it just appeared that it was those "without" were taking from those "with", because they could.

In other situations, the anger and frustration was expressed by pulling white motorists from cars and trucks and brutally beating and kicking them. In one such case, Reginald Oliver Denny, was pulled from his truck as he stopped to prevent hitting looters who filled the street. The incident was captured by a helicopter television news crew as it occurred and was broadcast live. Some viewers said that the violence that was portrayed was as "violent and sickening" as any that occurred to Rodney King. Denny was taken to Daniel Freeman Hospital after the furious beating, and has been upgraded from critical to serious, following brain surgery to remove a blood clot.

Arson was another way that some people vented their rage of various kinds. Fire Chief Donald Manning was quoted as saying that the Los Angeles Fire Dept. has responded to more than 3,600 fires in the past three days. Further, he commented that at given times during the past two days, the L.A.F.D. was receiving calls for three (3) fires every minute. He said that this level of need for service far exceeded the department's ability to respond and that this call volume was five (5) times that of normal.

Manning said that additional fire units were called from all over California to help fight the conflagrations that spread through neighborhood after neighborhood. Efforts were also reportedly hampered on numerous occasions by sniper fire and direct confrontations against firefighters. One firefighter was quoted as saying yesterday, "I'd feel a lot more secure if they gave me a rifle". He was responding to the fact that at least three firefighters have been reportedly shot while in the performance of their duties, and that often police officers were not available to accompany and protect fire units while they performed their already dangerous duties.

Los Angeles Police say that the circumstances also "unleashed" criminals, street gangs, and others who's only motive in involvement in the riots was that of profit. They point out the fact that this was also felt to be the perfect opportunity to justify acts of violence, by street gang members, against members of the police department. Police Chief Daryl Gates admitted that on several occasions his forces had also been "overwhelmed" and unable to respond to even calls for assistance from fellow officers and firefighters. This reportedly enabled those that would engage in revenge against any official agency to feel that they could do so with impunity.

As the senseless violence reached it's peak in Los Angeles on Thursday night, reports began to be received that it had spread to other cities and states across the country.

- 1. In Northern California, 1,400 people were arrested in San Francisco as rioting engulfed the city's downtown area. A State of Emergency was declared there and a curfew established.
- 2. In Los Vegas, a mob of two-hundred (200) people went on a rampage, setting fires, and engaged in sniper fire and drive-by shootings. Local law enforcement officials admitted that they were overwhelmed and requested the activation of the Nevada National Guard. The

