

# Back Together Again

One Year After the Rodney King Verdicts and Their Aftermath



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When the City Had Calmed Back Down,  
Hip-Hoppers Were Saying One Thing...

# We Told You So!

BY MONTY LUKE • ART BY JOHN TREVINO

Chuck D. called it "Black America's CNN." But for mainstream America, hip-hop was the news broadcast that never got turned on.

Years prior to the violence perpetrated against Rodney King, before the Simi Valley not guilty verdicts were announced, and as Los Angeles' violent response followed them, predictions for everything the nation saw in those days could be found in rap music. Hip-hop was virtually the only music form (with the exception of punk rock) that would even bother to tackle such subjects.

In a world of sugar-free, crooning R&B singers, apathetic, testosterone-regurgitating rock stars and neo-hippie, "everything's gonna be alright" throwbacks, the hip-hop nation prided itself on echoing the African-American ethos by telling it like it is.

So over the past year — as the hip-hop world's response to last year's uprising in Los Angeles came out — what Americans heard was a resounding, "We told you so!"

*But, being the music and culture of the streets, hip-hop informed those who listened, just like CNN.*

acters as willing to kill cops, the president and anyone else who stands in the way of obtaining real justice.

The message in that style is clear: *We will no longer be silent and passive in our opposition to the injustices we face daily, and we are willing to take whatever measures necessary to ensure that justice.* This warning, handed out to millions of Americans each year, comes across not only as the lyrical diatribe of hip-hoppers, but as the view of a vast majority of America's youth of color. What rappers like Paris, Da Lench Mob and Brand Nubian are doing is amplifying those emotions.

So why are these people, these urban poets, so in touch when the "mainstream" world — the world that doesn't see inner city L.A. or D.C. each day — seemingly isn't?

It shouldn't be a surprise: Hip-hop music is the streets, and the streets reflect what you hear in the music. Created by and for disenfranchised youth who are forced to exist amid the urban decay of a crumbling inner America, hip-hop music is a direct reflection of that environment. Those who adhere to the culture live in urban America. They use its music to describe their surroundings.

In the mid-'80s, Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five were already busy charting Reagan-era urban blight in "The Message." The internalized solution that the song's main character chooses — suicide — is not the manner in which rappers of more recent years would opt to vent their frustrations. Today's rappers would be more inclined to depict their characters

The result for many has been a widened understanding of the everyday lives of America's ethnic minorities, but often only by those who have an interest in hip-hop lifestyle. Those who truly have the power to change the poor conditions found in America's ghettos do not listen to the music and do not get the message — at least not until it's much too late. But, being the music and culture of the streets, hip-hop informed those who listened, just like CNN. Which might be why everyone in hip-hop knew what was going to happen if the four LAPD officers were acquitted.

N.W.A.'s "Fuck Tha Police," Ice Cube's "Black Korea," Public Enemy's "Burn Hollywood, Burn," and Pete Rock & C.L. Smooth's "Anger In The Nation" come to mind. For years, hip-hop had been giving two-minute warnings to the Establishment concerning issues like police brutality, poverty, unemployment, and economic

and political exploitation.

After the uprising, Ice Cube commented: "We've cried out, we've marched, we've picketed, we've protested, we've written letters, we've voted ... and [they've] still lied to us. ... We're through doing all of the above."

Why didn't anyone listen? It seems possible that the cries and warnings of a frustrated and marginalized people weren't just discounted, but weren't heard at all. Whatever happened, hip-hop still said to be aware that it could happen again, at any moment. As Cube said in one interview, "If you think that just because three days after April 29th shit was calm and cool ... not for a minute. We still got the shit on our minds, and we know that [our] power is not with singin' but with swingin'. ... If Black America goes, everybody goes."



JOHN TREVINO/Daily Nexus

*This section comes out 370 days after Los Angeles first heard the not guilty verdicts in the first Rodney King trial. Its publication falls one year after Los Angeles returned to what must ironically be referred to as normal. Hopefully, it provides a glimpse, however brief, into the city whose thousands of fires captured the entire nation's, and much of the world's, eyes last April.*

*Although media attention to social problems like those that led to the Los Angeles Riots or rebellion, depending on your point of view will rise and fall with time, the issues themselves obviously do not go away so easily. These eight pages aim to bring some of the concerns surrounding inner-city L.A. once more to the attention of UC Santa Barbara students and those in the community who read this paper. It may well be, in an age of instantaneous global information-swapping, that it is far too easy to forget even monumental events like those of last year. Anniversaries seem like a good time to remember.*

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## STILL LOOKING OVER THEIR

# SHOULDERS

A Year Later, Students Reflect on Urban Hometowns, What Has Changed, and What Hasn't

By Charles Hornberger

When Aaron Jones thinks back on the night of April 29, 1992, the whole thing seems a bit unreal to him. He was elected UCSB Associated Students president that evening, and as the campus voting results came in buildings began burning in Los Angeles.

"It doesn't even seem like it was me sometimes," Jones said. "I don't even know if I handled all that right. I don't even remember everything. I remember bits and pieces."

Within hours of the results, Jones, bullhorn in hand, was leading hundreds of students from Storke Plaza into Isla Vista to protest at the Foot Patrol office.

Now he looks back and sees an outbreak of student activism that "showed the potential that we as students have and, in a broader sense, the potential that society in general has."

The rebellion in L.A., as Jones and many others call it, was both uplifting and, in the long run, somewhat disappointing. The activism on campus flared up and then died down again. As often happens when major events stir such public outcry, things have — perhaps inevitably — settled back into a more normal pace, both here and in Los Angeles.

Although Jones, who is from South San Francisco, believes that while this year's federal civil rights trial has kept attention on urban problems in the country and espe-

*It's kind of geared so that it's going to take time. ... I think that if you talk to people in the inner city, everybody realizes it's not going to change that much.*

Aaron Jones

cially in L.A., the significance of the unrest — one of the worst in the nation's history — isn't quite as strong as some might like it to be.

"As far as the larger community, like the people who were protesting here, it's falling off in importance," Jones said. "For the Black community, it's still very important."

But diminishing intensity doesn't mean some change won't happen in places like South-Central L.A., Jones believes, even though that may be difficult to attain.

"It's kind of geared so that it's going to take time — we've got to do this and do that and go through all this bureaucratic red tape," he said. "I think a lot of people realize that. I think that if you talk to people in the inner city, everybody realizes it's not going to change that much."

Jones does think small gains can be achieved. In a larger sense, what he believes is necessary is a wholesale reorganization of society. But he also adds, "That's me being idealistic, if you want to call it that."

Similar feelings have been echoed by students from inner L.A. Some, like Claudia Mon-

terossa, who works at the Chicano component of UCSB's Educational Opportunity Program and grew up near Watts in Southgate, feel they are up against the media and other divisive forces when they think about what needs to happen there.

She sees the press as ignoring Central Americans in L.A. especially, although there are a million of them in the country now, she says.

"We're invisible. It's like, the Blacks did this and the whites did this, or the Koreans did this," she said. Things like that, among other factors, could contribute to more unrest, she believes.

"I think the rebellion showed the whole country what people were capable of doing and what they will do if the most pressing issues are not addressed," she said. Concerns like health care, housing, urban development and a strong business base top her list of the problems that still need to be dealt with.

"Every time I go to L.A., I see everything getting worse," she said.

For her, the new attack on undocumented residents, which has been renewed in

the California Legislature recently, is a symptom of things getting worse rather than better. "It's amazing that in a time like this, when we're supposed to be taking care of people, that we're having another scapegoat," she said.

Further, the Reginald Denny case, in which four Black men are accused of severely beating a white truck driver during the unrest, is another cloud on the horizon. "We still need to see what happens with that case," she said.

Dashaun "Quick" Evins, a recent UCSB graduate from Watts, also looks to the Denny case as another friction point for the area.

He doesn't condone the accused for what they are alleged to have done, but if they're convicted, Evins said, "my community is going to be highly upset."

"People down here don't want things to erupt like last year. But when the system fails, Malcolm X says you have to go to the next step. That's how change is made in this country. If those four gentlemen are convicted it will be a slap in the face. If the system hadn't failed in the first place it wouldn't have happened. It's a delicate situation," he said.

The mood is made all the more delicate by an uneasy relationship between the community and the police.

"People were discouraged and upset that the chief brought in the National

See STUDENTS, p.8A

## INTERVIEW

# L.A. Times Police Writer Heads Out

By Bonnie Bills

Los Angeles Times reporter Richard Serrano is moving to Washington, D.C., next week. He's got a new job — not that his old one was bad. Hot on the LAPD beat for five years, he covered some of the biggest news this side of Hurricane Andrew — the Rodney King beating, the trial, the riots, the second trial and the stillness that followed.

But when the Times announced a D.C. opening, he jumped at the chance to apply for a new beat in a new city. Maybe the smog got to him. Perhaps he believes his new assignment will have him reporting on a much kinder, gentler institution. (He'll be covering the Pentagon.) Maybe his reporting left him with little hope for the future of the thirsty metropolis called Los Angeles.

Q: So, you wanted to get out of Los Angeles, huh?

A: Yep, sure did.

Q: When you first started covering the trial, did you have any inkling of what an explosive issue it would become?

A: Nah, I thought they were going to be found guilty. ... I thought it was going to be guilty verdicts and that was going to be the end of it.

Q: So you were surprised at the verdicts?

A: Very much so.

Q: Did you guys have to do a crash course in inner city life and problems once the riots happened? Was it an area you were prepared to deal with?

A: Well, we knew a lot of the problems that were there, but unfortunately we didn't have enough people to cover all those things. But we've expanded our efforts down there — we've started a new edition called "City Times." ... It runs once a week and is devoted to just news in South-Central and the inner city.

Q: I know there was kind of a controversy among the L.A. Times staff about sending Black reporters, and others of color, to cover the riots. Some people felt they were just being sent because of their color.

A: Some people said that, but I don't know; we sent people of all different colors to the troubled areas.

Q: Do you think that if there is a situation where a Black person, for example, would be less likely to be injured or killed, that the newspaper should send a Black person or do the risks just go along with the job and skin color shouldn't be a factor?

A: I think that there's something to be said both ways. First, safety's the most important concern. You don't want to send a white person into a Black area, or vice-versa, a Black person into a white area where they're all upset and there's a lot of racial strife, and having the person get hurt — that's the last thing you want. You have to think about those concerns, but you also want to get the best coverage you can.

Q: One of the criticisms of the media coverage at the time of the riots was that journalists all of a sudden became "instant experts" and were commenting immediately on what they thought was going on in rioters' heads — saying things like "these rioters are just criminals, they don't care about Rodney King" — as opposed to merely reporting. Did you see that happening?

A: Well, there was some of that, but some of that was true, because some of [the looters] did say that it was an excuse to get out and raise hell and do some looting and that kind of thing. ... A lot of it was Blacks against Koreans and Koreans against Blacks, and that has nothing to do with Rodney King.

Q: Another concern is the media portrayal of inner city problems as specific to Blacks, as well as the depiction of South-Central as a Black neighborhood, when in fact it's at least 50% Latino. Did you see that at all?

A: Yeah, that's a real interesting point, because I understand Latinos are the largest minority in Los Angeles. I've of-

See SERRANO, p.8A

## Local Architects Pitch Into Rebuilding

By Rebecca Eggeman

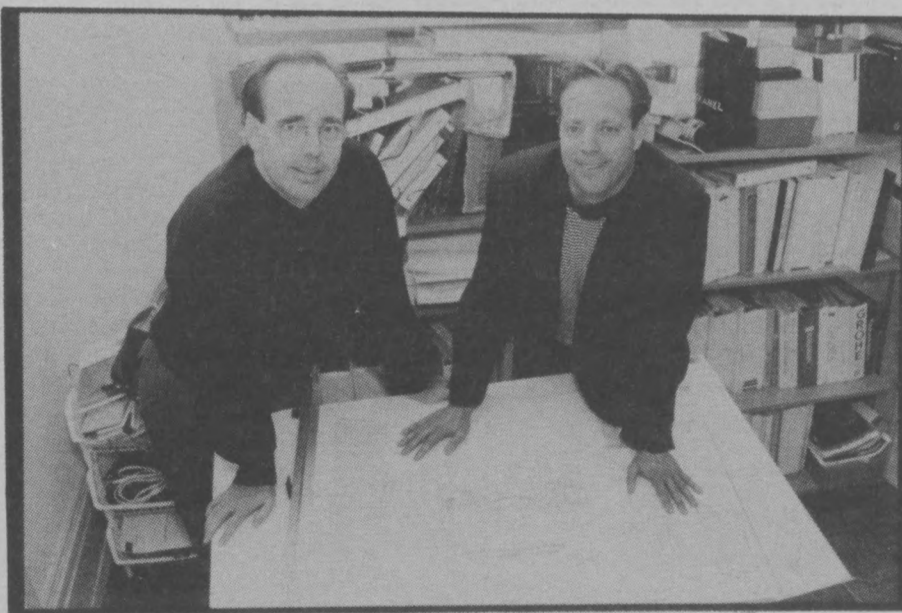
A cut of a ribbon last Thursday marked both the opening of a community youth center in a still riot-scarred South-Central L.A. neighborhood and the end of a seven-month labor of love for three Santa Barbara architects.

The renovation and expansion of an existing building to create the Audrey and Sydney Irmas Youth Activity Center was taken on by local architects, Robin Donaldson, Russell Shubin and Tim Steele. The improved center, in the Athens area of L.A., will continue to house the Sheriff's Youth League, joining the community's young people with law enforcement officers who staff the program along with volunteers.

In addition to expanding the center with a new multipurpose center, restroom facilities and playgrounds, the existing building was rehabilitated, landscaping was added, and the facility was painted in bright colors. "It's been called an 'oasis of color,' because it stands out in an area full of drab gray-colored buildings," said Shubin.

The facility will also start providing after-school activities, tutorials, classes and recreational programs for both children and adults, said Deputy Sheriff Glen Mayer, one of the officers assigned to the youth center.

Funded by private donations, the facility was designed and built in response to issues faced by South Central L.A., Donaldson said. "We had to take into account challenges such as small budgets and tight time constraints," he said, adding that the project's construction only took 10 weeks.



STEVE OLSEN/Daily Nexus

Santa Barbara architects Robin Donaldson, left, and Russell Shubin.

Donaldson said designing the community center was one example of the changing priorities of many architects. "In the '90s, architects aren't going to just focus on building homes for rich people. They can take bigger social and political roles as leaders in shaping the social environment," he said. "We felt that serving on the project in South-Central L.A. was our way of contributing at a social level."

Shubin said contributing to building the youth center became particularly gratifying when he saw the reactions of the community children during the dedication ceremony. "You could see the

appreciation and excitement on their faces," he said.

The positive reaction from other local residents also impressed Shubin. "The community was very receptive and very open to outsiders making contributions to their neighborhood," he said.

The residents living near the youth center left the previous facility untouched during last year's uprising, Mayer said. "Buildings across the street and next to the center were burnt to the ground but members of the community feel that [the youth center] was their building."



During the long process of recovery, many Los Angelenos carry on as usual, still amid the wreckage of burnt-out buildings. Nearby, the opulence of Beverly Hills gleams under a Southern California sun, and in between are the downtown offices of the police chief and Rebuild L.A.

# The State of the City

Life goes on in Los Angeles. Black Muslims, donning dark suits and bow ties, select their podiums on South-Central street corners or weave through traffic on foot, spreading the Word according to Allah to motorists who neglected to run the red light.

Capitalism has found its way to freeway exits, where you can get your car washed for a small donation or buy oranges and peanuts for a buck a bag. When Angelenos aren't driving like maniacs on freeway shoulders during the perpetual rush hour traffic, they're flirting with the motorists next to them.

Ladies primp, perm and prattle within the subculture known as the hairdressers'. Playgrounds become heartless battlegrounds as kids engage in heated bouts of dodgeball.

But intertwined with the activities of everyday business are reminders that just a year ago dark-

ness descended, tearing the City of Angels apart with hatred and anger. On every block lies a fire-ravaged skeleton of what was once the local grocery store or a popular lunch-hour eatery. Now they serve as temporary hovels for the homeless. Signs reading "Need work. Have wife and family to feed" are held up by the malnourished, rag-clad poor on street corners.

Youth drop out of school and take up full-time jobs to help their families survive. Prostitution, drugs, alcoholism, and Black on Black and brown on brown killings continue to plague inner-city existence.

Life definitely goes on in Los Angeles. And the hunger, poverty and lack of education that continue to saturate the inner city as they did prior to the uprisings cast doubts in some people's minds as to whether the city will rise from the ashes.

I think we can have a better L.A. I don't like how it is now. It's scary with people robbing and stealing. Some people work hard for their money, some don't, but you have to do what you have to do to survive," said Tanya Kelley, a 33-year-old mother of four, who was born, raised and now lives in South-Central.

Kelley's eldest son is one of those who did what he had to do to keep his family alive. In an area where survival precedes education, where there are no opportunities to learn skills, and where earning a living at McDonalds for \$4.50 an hour doesn't keep you above the poverty level, easy money is often the only way out.

"He didn't think we were rich enough. He went for the big, quick money. Now he's in jail for robbing three banks," Kelley said. "I'm not ashamed of him. He did it because he loved us and he had no other choices. The young are our future, but what kind of future

can we have if we don't respect them and give them a chance?"

Skeptical of programs like Peter Ueberroth's "Rebuild L.A.," which promise to create jobs, bring larger industries and increase the flow of capital into the impoverished neighborhoods, Kelley wants to see more programs focusing on the needs of children.

"Rebuild L.A.? They are not rebuilding L.A.!" she exclaimed as her gaze swept over rubble, dilapidated buildings and broken glass covering the intersection at Western and 21st.

"They burnt this all down. Black people burnt down their own neighborhoods, and who is it hurting? The children. They didn't even think about the children. There needs to be more programs for the children to give them an education and jobs," she said.

Seventeen-year-old Jabol Knox agreed with his Aunt Tanya.

"They have a Summer Program for junior high and high school kids. We learn what we need to know to find jobs. That's all right, but what about the rest of the year? If you only work during the summer, that's only money for the summer," the L.A. High School junior said. "L.A. is going to crumble unless there are jobs. This gang truce isn't going to do anything. People will keep selling drugs to survive if they know no other way."

Born in Texas, Knox and his mother moved to L.A. to find a better life and to be with his father. Not sharing his aunt's belief the city may get better, Knox is working as a bank teller to save enough money for college. After that, he plans to be an engineer in Atlanta, Ga., where there are "more Blacks and less gangs. They treat outsiders like family. Here everyone is against each other."

"I want to move out. This city is crumbling. It's dangerous. I have to get out. I don't know if I can save enough money. I'm going to look for scholarships, too. If that doesn't work, I'll go into the Air Force. I don't care where I go, as long as I finish my education and get out of here."



Louis Welch, above, lived through both the Watts Riots and last year's, which raged outside the South Central religious shop she works at. Below, participants in a quinceañera wait outside Santa Cruz church after the ceremony.



Spectators and an LAPD officer look at a car.

Ten years ago, Poin Rojch left Thailand to share the wealth promised in the American Dream. Spending most of her life in the States tending a liquor store in Koreatown, where she is held up two or three times a month, Rojch's idealistic vision of a better life has been shattered.

"All my family was here. They said America is very good. They were wrong. People in Thailand come here because they hear there is work and money. There is no work and money here," she said. "Things are better in Thailand. When my kids are finished with their school, I will go back home. I don't know what is wrong with this city. It's not safe."

Despite the economic instability and predictable violence, optimism slowly settles in the minds of some of L.A.'s citizens, who look to the children for hope.

"The only hope anybody can have is an individual hope for themselves and for their children. I have both," said 41-year-old Beverly Fuqua, a salesperson at Circuit City.

Living in South-Central has been a struggle for Fuqua, who has tried to teach her four children to keep their noses out of trouble and work hard for things she could never have achieved in her own childhood. But in a society where money and fame are everything, inner-city youth are teased by the cellular phones, the BMWs and the Benzes that mark the glamorous lifestyle of drug dealers.

Fuqua's 16-year-old daughter, Tayari, didn't take her mother's advice to look beyond South-Central, and chose the road to quick money.

"She got caught up in the materialism. I didn't have the materialism to hang over her head like a carrot, so she looked for it her own way. She saw the flashy cars and quick money, but never thought about where the car or the money came from, how long those people would have that car

BY ANITA MIRALLE





er look at the results of a hit and run on Crenshaw, as the victim (wearing the tie) listens to a witness explain what happened to his parked

and their money and whether that person would even be alive to enjoy it."

Dealing drugs caught up with Tayari. But after spending time in juvie, Tayari decided to change her direction, and asked to be sent to continuation school.

"It was her choice. She realized you can't affect society unless you affect yourself. When she strayed away, it was the hardest time of my life, but I had to give her up so she could figure out where she wanted to go. I let her go with love," Fuqua said.

After finishing up her final courses at continuation school, the future law student will enter UCLA this fall on a full scholarship.

"She wants to be a judge. She's got a little bit of street in her and a little bit of church in her. She's got compassion, but she's a take-charge person. That's what a judge ought to be," Fuqua said, betraying her pride. "She's one of the top students in her class. She truly wanted to make a change and they gave her the break she needed. I wish more children had that break."

"If people would reach out for more education and training they would be able to find jobs. The more welfare, the more people get lazy and complacent and fall in a hole. The only way they see as out is quick money," Fuqua said.

More and more, it seems people are listening to suggestions like Fuqua's, and programs are sprouting up throughout the Southland to keep kids off the streets and give them a reason to take pride in their community.

The L.A. Conservation Corps, which started in 1986, employs more than 100 junior high school students and young adults to help clean up the inner city and give the young ones a sense of community.

For six months, students age 13 to 17 accepted into the Clean & Green Program — a subdivision of the LACC — receive minimum wage to recycle waste, plant trees

and paint over graffiti four days a week. Once a week, the kids attend classes to discuss environmental and political issues, sexual education, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, said Mt. Vernon Jr. High student Yvette Delatorre, who works on ridding the city of graffiti.

"We are taught how to mix and blend colors, and then we paint murals with positive messages over the graffiti. We draw things about the environment and about our community. If we put murals up, the taggers won't mess with it. If they do mess it up, we go back out and fix our work. After that, they don't come back," she said.

The idea to replace tagging with art for the community was the brainchild of John Zender, who began the program Creative Solutions immediately after last year's unrest. Since then, approximately 35 murals have found their way to walls of condemned buildings, freeways and factories.

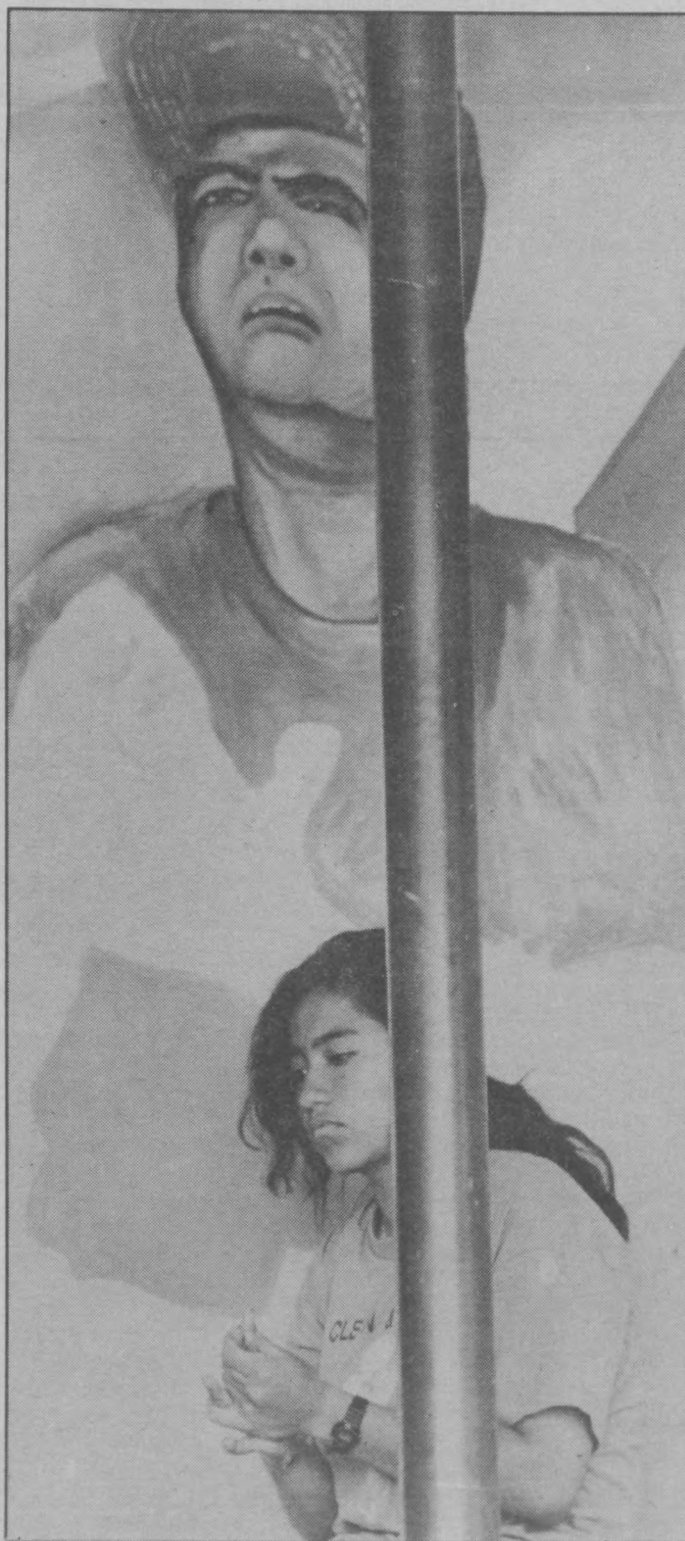
"There were two main problems we had to attack. The first one is the disharmony within the community. The second is the graffiti and vandalism," Zender said. "Giving the kids the skills and the creative outlet to improve themselves and their community through these murals was the answer."

Presently, Zender is developing a similar project for youth at risk — children who are homeless, in gangs or on drugs.

"I've been conducting some studies and they have shown that after these high-risk youths become involved with Creative Solutions or similar programs, three-fifths of them quit tagging or banging and set high goals for themselves," Zender said. "One of the guys who used to work for us used to be a tagger. Now he is employed downtown by a graphics firm."

Tanya Kelley isn't the only one critical of Rebuild L.A. Over the past year, the program has been at-

See CITY, p.6A



A clean and green employee takes a break from the mural she is working on.

## INTERVIEW

# 'Violence Is a Political Instrument'

By Charles Homberger

Recently published in an anthology of essays entitled *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprisings*, Professor Cedric Robinson sees the events of last April as both a food riot and a democratic movement.

His readings of the King verdicts, the unrest and the federal trial bring in the viewpoints of those who actually reside outside the mainstream and who might be among those who looted in Los Angeles or elsewhere.

"There's a public that gets jacked up every day on the streets, gets jacked up every day in the traffic courts and in the criminal courts," says Robinson. "These are parts of that public which knows differently, which experiences something alternative to the official, imaginary social world."

The unrest, he says, symbolized the absence of any need to serve a society that has lost its claim to justice. On that level it was like a food riot. On another level, the verdicts were "a declaration of war."

Q: What did you write about in the unrest and the trial?

A: The beating of Rodney King was a fragment, a much larger apparatus of our political culture, our moral culture, that we have to in effect deconstruct in order to look at its constituent parts. If we're looking at race, we're also looking at class, and on a more subtextual level, we are also looking at gender.

What I related it to was the Persian Gulf War — the slaughter — that is, the use of violence as a rhetorical device, as a way of talking to people, as a way of teaching people lessons, a way of instructing them, a way of constructing the imaginations of other people...

[Officer Lawrence] Powell is a creature of a hierarchical organization whose declared purpose is security and justice, but whose existential, routine day-to-day purpose boils down to surveillance and control. So what they were doing, according to Sheriff's Dept.'s — the police department's — data ... was a routine act of human rights violation, something that takes place every day, something that is a crucial constituent element of the identity of too many police officers.

So on one level you see a kind of inversion of morality taking place. ... Police are supposed to be this, but in reality they're that. For a moment it provides a glimpse into that — a public glimpse, but of a face that is routinely exposed to the poor, whether they be white or Black or Asian or Latino.

What are we learning through the media and through journalism about violence? We learned that it is a political instrument. We use it not for moral purposes, but to gain advantage. ... [It relates to the] Persian Gulf War — the Persian Gulf slaughter — where the parade of mask and masquerades provided as rationale for that slaughter were in a sense a kind of exposure of how arbitrary and artificial all the justifications were, that they were an attempt to conceal other motives and other interests. I think that what we were concealing is, in effect, this vast corruption of American society.

If you look at 1990 we see Baker and Bush trying out all kinds of ways of explaining why they went to war: national security, jobs, defending our oil interest, our supply of oil, et cetera. This clear impetus that they're building is similar to the impetus built over the past eight years — actually, the previous 15 years — to conceal this massive transfer of wealth from the many to the few.

It's called Reaganomics, but it went back much further than Reagan.

Q: It seems like the beating caught, on videotape, a glimpse of one side of the face of law enforcement that the majority of society routinely isn't supposed to see. Was the unrest after the verdicts also a window into the problems plaguing urban America?

See ROBINSON, p.8A





Doug Carroll, who sells rare historical documents in his Beverly Hills shop, recently moved to the area from Manhattan. He likes Willie Williams, he says.

## CITY: Rebuild L.A. Looks for Cures in the Private Sector

Continued from p.5A

tacked by skeptics in civil service positions and residents of the inner city who can't understand why the local AM/PM mini-market is still a heap of rubble.

But RLA officials defend their program's record. The objective of RLA is not to clean up the mess left behind. Rather, the organization attempts to revitalize the economy in neglected areas of the city, said RLA Press Secretary Mable Solarez.

"We encourage the private sector to go into the inner city and establish businesses there and hire members of the community. Doing the physical rebuilding of property destroyed is not our goal," Solarez said.

By pointing out that any kind of service is desperately needed in the inner cities, RLA convinces entrepreneurs the inner city is an excellent business investment.

In less than a year, the program has rounded up over \$500 million for Los Angeles from more than a hundred businesses.

According to Solarez, participating companies and organizations are:

- investing their dollars, time and business experience by constructing new supermarkets, stores and shopping malls;
- providing job training programs and promising to hire individuals living within a three-mile radius of the new businesses;
- employing residents of the city to help construct the new buildings;
- and providing loans and equity funds for existing business so they can expand.

"Chief Auto Parts will rebuild their 20 stores destroyed during the riots, plus 15 additional stores over the next four years. Vons has committed over \$100 million to build 12 supermarkets and create 12,000-15,000 new jobs. General Motors has donated 100 vans to distribute throughout the city to community based, non-profit groups. Over 100 other bu-

sinesses are putting their resources into L.A.," Solarez said.

"We're dealing with 40 years of neglect. Things can't be rebuilt overnight, but we have been successful so far. Other cities in the U.S. that experienced similar riots have not been anywhere close to what we've been able to do. In the 1967 New Jersey riots, it took more than 25 years to bring even one supermarket into the city. If we continue what we've been doing, by the end of our five-year deadline, L.A. will be a better place to live.

Every third car costs as much as your college education. Times four. Valet parking is available at Pizza Hut. Ivana Trump look-alikes with their fake 'n' bake orange-tinted skin, fake breasts, fake noses and fake acrylic nails stroll through the posh malls to buy faux furs for the price of a small island. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the land of 90210 — Beverly Hills, USA — a mere 10 minutes from South Central.

At Shauna Stein, a clothing boutique in the Beverly Center, new age opera music wafts through the air, teasing delicate eardrums, as potpourri tingles the cilia in the best noses money can buy. Scooter, the precious poodle, romps behind the counter and drools on customers. Mannequins model outrageous skirts made of miles of flowing material, or bustiers covered with dried flowers, or pants that come up to your neck.

Every day Jean Panelli, assistant manager of the boutique, greets customers with her winning smile and charm, as she dresses others or pushes a \$350 felt hat on a fashion conscious patron.

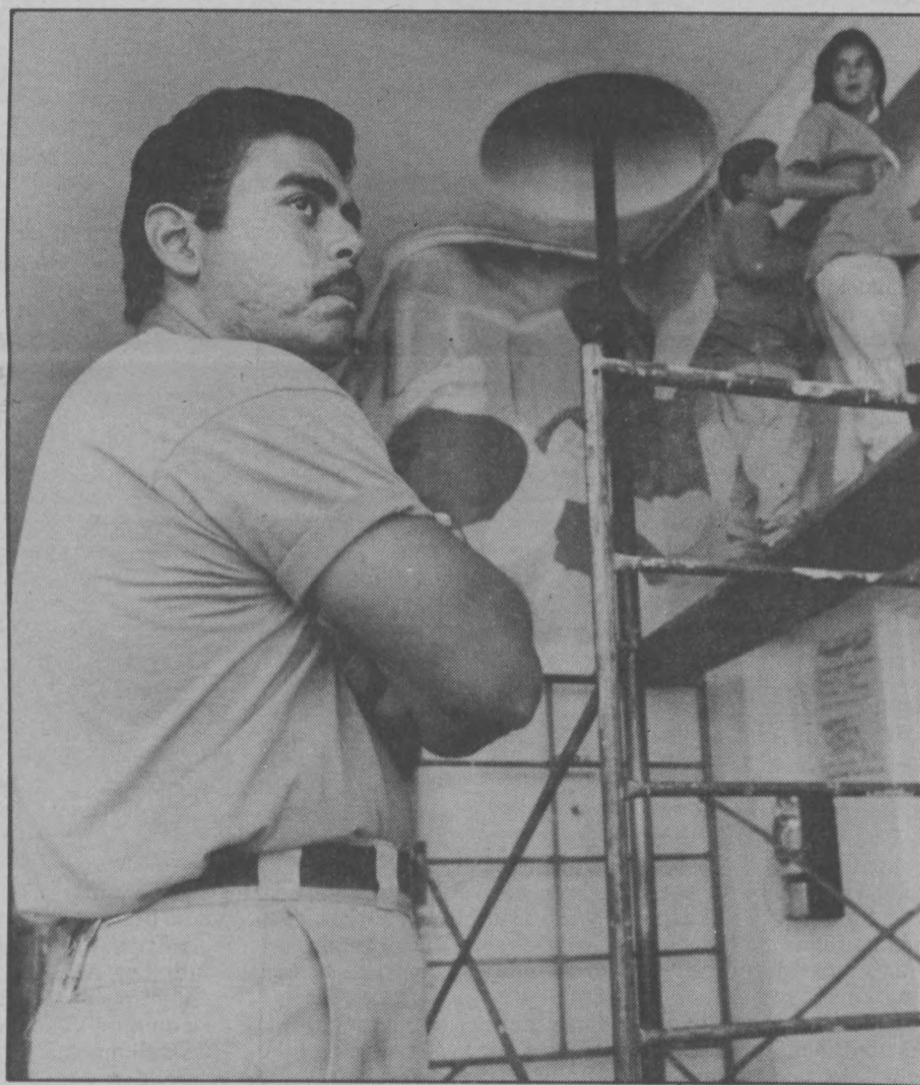
"I came to L.A. from Wisconsin 24 years ago because the city is so exciting. I wanted to come to the city for its beautiful weather, sunny beaches, the eternal California dream."

However, Panelli's dream went sour when she witnessed the destruction of L.A. on the evening news reports.

"It was utter disbelief. I'm sad it happened. It was a small group of people that got out of control. ... People were upset with where they are in life. They are upset with what life dealt them. It's definitely a dollars and cents issue. We have very poor people working with very rich people. When you feel oppressed, you rebel."

Lack of jobs, gangs and police brutality are the three factors Panelli attributes to the revolts. While she does not believe much is being done to remedy the first two ailments, she has faith the Los Angeles Police Dept. will see some much needed reform under the care of Chief Willie Williams.

"I don't know if there is racism there, but there is definitely abuse of power amongst cops. Not to make a blanket statement, but most people who go into police work go into it for a reason. They have a macho mentality and believe they are above the law. This doesn't apply to everyone, but to most cases."



Creative Solutions project coordinator John Zender steps back to check out the art of the junior high students he supervises.

"I'm very optimistic about Williams. He seems very down to earth. I like how he's taken control. This last time around, he was prepared to take care of anything that may have happened. Gates didn't care if anything happened," Panelli said.

As the city continues to dress its wounds, Panelli shares the hope many in L.A. expressed, and believes that with proper care, the city will be on its way to recovery.

"I'm optimistic. A lot of people want to make this place a better place to live," she said. "L.A. is rebuilding, and it will come out better in the future, but it won't happen overnight."

"Right now we are in a state of healing. We've gone through a tough time. People are certainly cautious and some people are even fearful. It's sad to live in a society like that."

Last spring, as he watched his future home go up in flames and saw the death count rising, Doug Carroll began doubting whether he and his wife should leave Manhattan. He had a job offer to become the curator for the Los Angeles branch of

The Gallery of History.

They made the move.

After living in Beverly Hills for 10 months, Carroll does not regret his decision, and is impressed with Williams' leadership in the LAPD and efforts from the community to pick up the pieces. However, in his mind, not enough has been done to deal with Los Angeles' serious and deeply ingrained problems.

"They need to take care of the urban problems. Race relations have to be improved. People need to feel secure to live here so businesses will stay," Carroll said. "They need self-help programs, economic zones for money to be available for more inner-city businesses."

Until he can be sure L.A. can promise peace, a sense of uneasiness will continue to hang over Carroll's head.

"I'm still a little nervous. More so than I was in Manhattan, especially with the [Reginald] Denny case still coming up. The full impact of the last riots are horrific. It will take a while for the city to heal, but I believe it eventually will."



Yvette Delatorre, Clean & Green employee.



**Wayne Frisbey  
Thinks Some People  
Might Be Jealous of  
His Town. The  
Mayor Likes His  
Law Enforcement.  
Many Were Worried  
During the Riots and  
the Federal Trial.  
It's...**



## Fear and Loafing in Quiet Simi Valley

**SIMI VALLEY**—Before last year, Simi Valley was just another quiet and isolated little community that few people had heard of. But when the Rodney King trial was first tried in Simi Valley, it earned a reputation as an overly conservative city that sympathizes with law enforcers.

It's the kind of place police officers from all over the state come to to escape the crime and violence that plagues most cities. With its reputation as the second safest city in California, Simi Valley is a typical suburb with a strong police force patrolling its streets.

"A lot of people think it's where you can go to get away from things," said eight-year Simi Valley resident Margaret Delbruegge.

But since last April, Simi Valley residents have been living down the reputation as the city that acquitted the four police officers who beat Rodney King and caused the L.A. riots. Many who live here believe the entire community was unfairly blamed for one jury's verdict.

"From listening to the radio and television, we've gotten a bad rep out here," Delbruegge said. "I've gotten a lot of comments since the trial."

"I think that it's unfair that they're blaming the city," said Rita Gurevich, who has lived in Simi Valley for 17 years.

Simi Valley rests in a valley an hour's drive north of Los Angeles. Aside from the tract homes that fill the area, the biggest development projects are the dozens of mini malls lining the main road.

But amid this suburban calm, the rage displayed in Los Angeles — and the new equation between Simi Valley and white racism — has haunted residents.

Even as the riots of last April destroyed parts of Los Angeles, some Simi Valley residents waited for the violence to hit their community as revenge for the jury's verdict. Delbruegge describes the night of the riots as frightening even from 40 miles away.

"I was working at an all night gas station during the riots. It was not fun being a woman working alone in the middle of the night," she said. "There were a lot of things happening. It was scary."

When Simi Valley Mayor Greg Stratton, who has lived here for 25 years, comes across someone who questions his community, he tries to explain the misconception America has of his home town. "There was a lot of terrible misrepresentation," he said. "There was this implication that somehow it was a racist community."

The problem, according to Stratton, is due to the media's representation of the first jury being comprised only of Simi Valley residents, rather than residents from all over Ventura County.

He added that most people don't realize that even during the second trial, one Simi Valley resident sat on the jury that found two officers guilty of violating King's civil rights.

"Simi Valley is one of the most unracist communities in America," he said. "But it did force us to look at our community and we are proud of it."

Most people in Simi Valley believe the jury's decision should not reflect the opinions of an entire city's population. "I think it's rotten, we got taken. We loaned them our facilities, we didn't create the problems," said 30-year resident Wayne Frisbey. "Whatever the outcome of the verdict, I don't think the verdict had anything to do with the riots."

Frisbey believes the anger toward his city has stemmed from the envy people feel toward their sanctuary from crime. "I think

they're jealous of this area. You've got this quiet little community and you've got a combination of people," he said.

Part of Simi Valley's reputation may be attributed to the high number of police officers, working and retired, who live in the city. "We have a lot of cops, more than an adequate force, I'd say," Delbruegge said. "They do an overkill with police."

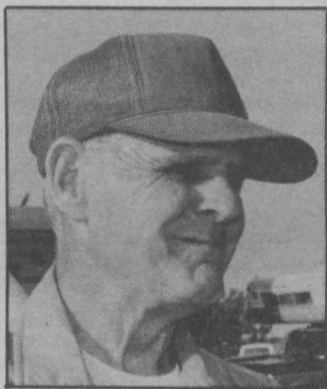
But law enforcement, according to Stratton, is one of the city's highest priorities. "It is a law and order community," Stratton said, adding that the entire city supports its police force.

"I don't believe the people in L.A. don't want to be safe; I think they don't like the police," he said. "To us, that's a foreign concept. We enjoy being safe."

As the second trial came to a close last month and the nation waited for the second verdict to

*I think they're jealous of this area.*

**Wayne Frisbey  
resident  
Simi Valley**



*We have a lot of cops.*

**Margaret Delbruegge  
resident  
Simi Valley**



be released, Simi Valley residents worried that their community would become the battleground for a second riot. "We were very worried that they would come here and cause trouble from South Los Angeles," Gurevich said.

Other residents armed themselves in anticipation for an attack on Simi Valley while the second jury was in deliberations. UCSB alumnus David Viggiano, who moved to the city a month ago, had a vested interest in the results of the trial.

"We were concerned. My roommate had a gun and he was ready for it," he said. "The people in L.A. weren't going to burn down their city again. My thought was Simi Valley."

With all the exposure Simi Valley received after the first trial, Viggiano never expected to move there. "With the first verdict, I had the conception of Simi Valley being very conservative," he said. "When I moved here, the people I have encountered have actually been down to earth."

See SIMI, p.8A

### INTERVIEW

## 'Hey, You Haven't Done Diddly-Squat'

By Dan Hilldale

Dr. Laura Pulito, a professor of geography at Cal State Fullerton, grew up in Los Angeles and received her doctorate in urban planning at UCLA. Her career has combined research with activism in environmental issues and social justice, allowing her to embrace the communities most affected by last year's riots.

Pulito's activism is widespread. She chairs the city's Community Environmental Affairs Committee, which is attempting to channel city funds into underprivileged areas in the wake of the riots. She also works with the Labor Community Strategy Center in advocacy for social and labor justice. Her ties within Los Angeles and her activism both before and after the riots offer a broad overview of the year since the unrest in L.A.

Pulito's research recently has centered on how different ethnic groups are able to form multi-ethnic groups for community activism and the impediments to this process. She is driven by a political belief in building a multiracial, progressive social movement. "It just seems to me that's the only way we have to go," she says.

**Q:** What are the most positive developments you've seen in the year's aftermath of the riots?

**A:** There have been some good things, there absolutely have. I think one of the good things we've seen among all people of L.A. is an increased awareness of our racial and income inequality and the problem of a lack of capital, a lack of social mobility for certain segments of the population. That has been very pervasive.

On another level, I think an important thing we have seen is a change in the discourse about race and politics in L.A. All of the racial discussion in the U.S., I think, is very much of a Black/white discussion, and this really completely spells out for the public that this is a multiracial situation here, when half the people arrested were Latino. This has changed our consciousness and awareness. We have to learn how to get along; we have these serious income inequalities which are overlaid by very complex racial and ethnic issues.

More specifically, I think the city has really increased its sensitivity and increased its efforts in a small way to rebuild the area. And when I say rebuild I don't just mean fiscal infrastructure, but community development, education, resources in a variety of different ways. The city is very much constrained in what they can do in a period of such fiscal crisis.

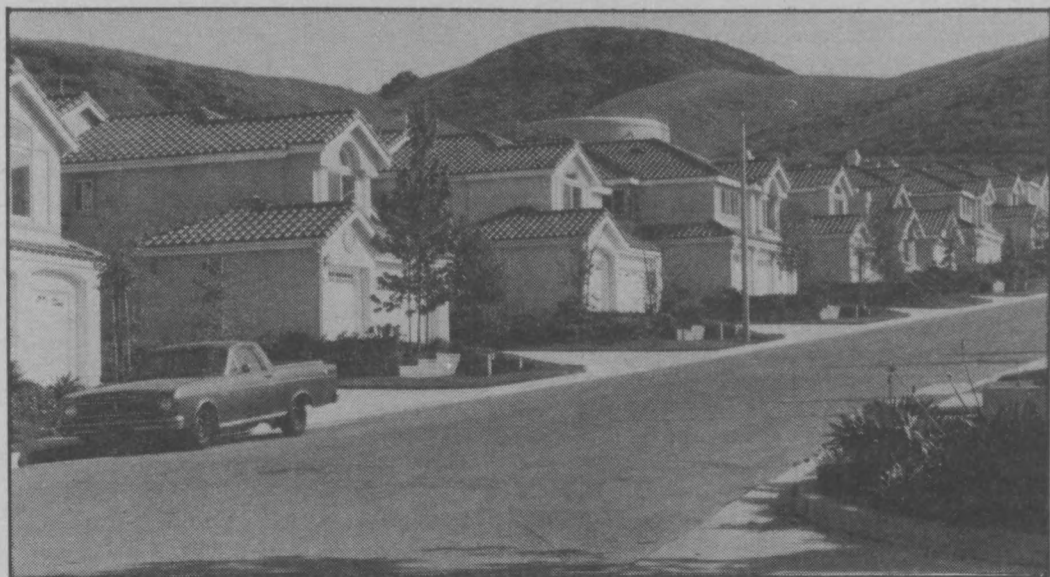
The most impressive response has been at the community level, where you have seen people in different organizations who have really tried to come together at a certain level and realize this is the mess we're in, and we've got to deal with it.

There's also been a real effort by people like architects, some environmentalists, and community groups, to focus on development, realizing there is a need for more community or neighborhood development. And I'm talking buildings here. You know, let's create housing, let's create a recreation center. And hopefully those will materialize. There's been a real effort there as well.

**Q:** What are the worst aspects of the aftermath?

**A:** One thing I really don't like, and this is a personal thing about my politics, is that when Rebuild L.A. was formed, there was the illusion for a moment that there was going to be federal monies coming into L.A., which never happened. But the moment you saw that, it was all these groups, community as well as other types of sprung-up kind of coalitions competing for money. It's understandable why they were competing for money, but on the other hand, it was very much a "Let's get our share" type of a deal, and I think people were forgetting the larger picture and it

See PULITO, p.8A



*Rows of tract homes, along with a few mini-malls, make up the biggest local development in Simi Valley.*

**BY LISA NICOLAY-  
SEN • PHOTOS  
BY RICK BESSEY**



## STUDENTS

Continued from p.3A  
Guard [during last April's events]. It was telling people regardless of what the verdict is they will still imprison the community. They showed no respect or regard to the people who might reconsider and do things differently this time. To me they said you have a low intelligence level," Evins said.

And like Monterossa, the past year has kept Evins distrustful of the media. "I hate the media, because they instigate everything. They feed off trouble, corruption," he said.

Karen Miner, a teaching assistant from L.A., shared Evins' concerns about the police. "The LAPD is looking out at the inhabitants of South-Central as perpetrators of crime and it's not fair for the Blacks to be looked at generally as criminals," she said.

That sort of experience was gained firsthand by Derek Johnson, a senior

political science major from South-Central who says he was picked up one day by LAPD officers who said they suspected he was a gang member involved in a murder.

They threw him in a squad car, took him to a gang unit station and left him sitting handcuffed to a bench for three hours, he said. "Meanwhile, two other guys are giving me shit. One of them's like, 'You're not in a gang, are you. You must be selling drugs. You selling drugs?'"

Johnson, a vice president in A.S., said he recently looked over some of the things he had written last April and May when he realized the anniversary of the verdicts was coming up. He found a lot of anger there, he said, especially over things like the Lataasha Harlins case — where an unarmed teenage Black girl was shot by a Korean grocer who went on to receive only probation — and the LAPD.

These days, Johnson seems guardedly optimistic about his hometown.

The verdicts in the federal trial "were empty," he said. "You've got no big show of support for the verdicts [because two officers were found not guilty], and you've got no riot because two were found guilty," he said.

And beyond that, he thinks the city could feel the stress of unrest again.

"No one really got to let out their frustrations or happiness, so everyone's just waiting," he said. "I think everybody is waiting on the future, no one is making it happen."

But at least, he says, "in city politics you see people talking about the same stuff that we've been talking about for years."

He feels the problems that have plagued L.A.'s most urbanized areas are finally getting addressed, albeit after a long wait.

That — along with the beginnings of rebuilding efforts, a gang truce and new LAPD Chief Willie Williams' efforts to clean up his department — is at least a start, he says.

## SIMI: Growing Up Too Fast

Continued from p.7A

As for the crime rate in the city, Viggiano has not been let down. "I see a lot of policemen on the streets and I don't hear about a lot of crime," he said. "I think they deter crime because of the number of police on the streets. People also know there are a lot of retired people here."

However, seasoned residents have seen a change take place in Simi Valley and they claim it's not the safe haven it used to be. As the impact of the Rodney King trial fades, residents aren't so afraid of revenge as they are that their community's crime rates will catch up with L.A.'s.

"There's too many people," Frisbey said. Thirty years ago, the 20,000 residents made up the entire city, but that number has grown to more than 100,000. He plans to leave Simi Valley in the next few years if things become

worse.

There is a consensus among most Simi Valley residents that they will flee from the city as it continues to grow and becomes overcrowded. "It's growing so fast," Gurevich said. "We don't think we're staying here that much longer."

Delbrugge agreed that what was once the American Dream for her is fading. "Eight years ago, it was a little milder and a little more pleasant than it is now," she said, adding that gangs are showing up in the city and crime is escalating.

"It's breaking down more and more as the years go by. It will eventually catch up to L.A. Simi Valley is supposed to be a safe place but it's just going to get worse." If the area begins to resemble urban L.A. too much, she plans on leaving in the next 10

years.

But Stratton argues that as long as safety is Simi Valley's highest priority, it will never deteriorate into a city infested with crime. "The difference between here and L.A. is that the public would not accept the crime rates that occur in L.A. If we felt we needed more police, we would get more," he said.

The mayor does say, however, that it's tough to keep the city from falling into the hands of what he considers bad elements. "It is a problem we have to work at and fight to keep it out. Our goal is to keep the bad elements of L.A. out," Stratton said. "I think we've been successful and I think we can stop it."

Viggiano, who grew up in Huntington Beach, agreed. "The area that I do know of I can't even compare to Los Angeles," he said.

## Robinson

Continued from p.5A

A: Well, the uprising caught several moments. On one level it was a food riot, that is it was the kind of riot that we have seen the poor undertake in the Western experience for almost 12 centuries. Since the emblem of a just society has been evacuated by the system's acts of injustice and immorality, made in public, then all wealth, all property, all things are denied under a social contract which no longer obtains. Why should we remain poor and deprived in an unjust society? So that's one moment of the riot.

I quoted [in the essay] one Black person's reaction to the verdict, one person interviewed I guess by *Time* or *Newsweek* right after the verdict, and he said, "I don't want to see any white people today." You're talking about another moment. The Simi Valley verdict was seen by many of us as a declaration of war.

Q: Was that an overt declaration?  
A: Not an overt declaration. It meant that it had evacuated all possible appeal for justice. There was no institution left through which justice could obtain.

So King was nearly publicly executed, that video presentation provided almost a public exposure to an execution, and it did nothing — it didn't really happen.

The third moment [in the riot] was of course the police withdrawal. Most of us watching the first hours of the uprising saw the police acting as a body in its own interest, it had no community responsibility, it had no social responsibility. They at best were indifferent to all the violence that took place. ... It was calculated; it was perceived as calculated to let anarchy do what they could not.

Q: If we go forward to now, to the second trial's attempt to do what another failed to accomplish...

A: The second trial was the result of a democratic action — the uprising. It disciplined the ruling class. All the obscenities which are a regular part of the judicial system, as far as the poor are concerned, it suspended for a moment.

Q: Is it possible that this could be a politically dangerous moment, in that it might give an illusory vision of a victory?

A: It was simply a suspension, and all the routineness of the injustice may very well be restored in the next trial, the Denny trial.

Very few of our public officials have any moral authority at this stage. So their only option is to increase the police.

Q: Why don't they have any moral authority?

A: Because their corruption is public, their incompetence is public, their indifference is public. And their resort to violence is immoral.

Q: When you say public officials, who are you talking about?

A: Presidents, senators, congressmen, mayors, corporate executives and of course their intellectual minions. You cannot justify contemporary American society.

I think our policymakers ... won't reverse this transfer of wealth. So their major resource is repression, and an attempt to manufacture some broad consent for that repression. So structurally, uprisings and resistance are going to continue to be a part of our experience. But they cannot teach policymakers because the policymakers have no imagination for any alternatives for what they do and what they're selected to do.

The alternative is really the democratization of American politics; that is, those in resistance must traumatize the state. And I

think that will take more strikes, civil disobedience and social violence.

Q: As far as the social machinery goes and the "transfer of wealth" you're talking about, do you see all officials in public officialdom — or at least many levels — as complicit in that?

A: I think public and corporate officials. Here we have a governor in California who keeps on blaming the budget crisis on undocumented immigrants. He knows that they bring \$90 billion nationally into government revenue. He knows that they cost only \$5 billion in social services. We have a Legislature apparently destined to build more prisons. We have mayors and city councilpersons crying for larger and more sophisticated police. We have corporations privatizing prisons, transporting hundreds of thousands of jobs...

So you find the corporate or public figure who's willing to address the real problems. The real problem's not the national debt. That's another scam. That's this decade's S&L. Who are we going to pay this debt to? Who do we owe it to? Banks? Financial corporations? It's another scheme for a massive transfer of wealth.

So until you find public officials who are articulating something alternative to repression, surveillance and disciplining the American people, until you find that you are listing into the rhetoric of repression.

## Serrano

Continued from p.3A

ten wondered about that. ... I think it's a false image that gets out.

Q: What do you think can be done to prevent that from happening?

A: Well, I don't know, I think we do as much as we can on the other communities; however, it takes special skills to cover those other communities — there's language barriers and there's cultural barriers that are harder to bridge than getting into South-Central. I think we do need to do more in those other areas.

Q: As far as coverage of the second trial went, a lot of concerns were voiced over media "hype" — extensive coverage of white suburban fear and people buying guns, as opposed to focusing on more positive things, like rebuilding efforts.

A: I think with that we did write a lot about guns, and I think it is guns that hurt people. But I also think we did a tremendous amount of stories about Rebuild L.A. and the effort to restore the burned-out areas. And we also wrote stories about the fact that they were having problems rebuilding L.A., so I think it pretty much got equal coverage, maybe more so than the guns.

Q: With a huge issue like this, what kind of discussions go on in the newsroom as far as coverage goes? Do you ever step back and take a look at your coverage as a whole?

A: We do. As stories break, we sort of sit back and wonder whether we should do a longer piece on what this all means or why a certain trend seems to be developing, or if some person is emerging, suddenly, as somebody we should profile. We do that quite often.

Q: Oftentimes journalists are described as being "out-of-touch" with the people they're writing about. How do you "get in touch" with the people you report on while still maintaining a level of distance and objectivity?

A: Well, I covered a beat, I covered the police department, so I spent a lot of time with cops and I tried to get their perception of what was happening, so that that way my stories can speak with some authority and tone.

Q: Lately, the media has been talking about the media. Is this a reaction to recent polls that show that no one trusts the media anymore?

A: Well, I don't think *no one* does. I think a lot of people are skeptical about the media because there's a lot of media around that have their own agendas. There's these TV talk shows where people are paid to go on, so people are skeptical of that. There's all the tabloids that people are skeptical about. You turn on the TV and you see a lot of Washington Journalists on TV panels all the time, getting paid just to talk about issues, so people become skeptical about what the reporters' own agenda are.

Q: When you came and spoke to our staff a few years ago, you said "one of the best skills a reporter has is an overdeveloped sense of outrage." Did that particular skill serve you well over the past couple of years?

A: Sure. First of all, I think you have to be real skeptical and you have to question everything, but you have to be very un-trusting. You have to be very distrustful of what people say and you can't take everything they say at face value.

Q: Both L.A. mayoral candidates are now calling for an increase in the police force. Do you think that's a good answer?

A: It's a way to win votes. Safety is like the biggest issue ever.

Q: But, is it the best answer?

A: No, it's not the best answer — education is. ... The thing about crime is you can throw a million cops out there and it's not going to stop all crime. It's got to stop within people, it's got to stop in their homes and that kind of thing. I think you educate kids and get families staying together — that's how you deal with crime.

Q: Do you think the plans to rebuild the inner city will work?

A: I hope so, but so far it doesn't look like they're going to. They're collecting a lot of money but they're not really doing much of anything. ... I still drive through South-Central and I see the same vacant lots and I see the same burned down buildings and I see people hanging out on street corners but I don't see people going to work; I don't see any visible signs.

Q: Looking ahead to the Reginald Denny case, do you anticipate...

A: They'll be found guilty.

Q: What do you think will happen?

A: I think there will be some trouble; I don't think there will be anything as bad as the riots we had last year, but I think there will be some trouble.

Q: And what about the cops' sentencing? What if they get off lightly?

A: Then there will be some trouble.

## Pulito

Continued from p.7A

just became an opportunity. A lot of times it gets also to a thing of people perpetuating what they're doing for the sake of perpetuating what they're doing.

Q: Directly following the riots, we saw politicians from George Bush down to local officials trying to respond to the uprising. How well have politicians and government agencies responded in the last year to the problems behind the unrest and to the destruction? Also, do you see their consciousness of the problems L.A. faces as a short-term reaction or as a long-term awareness and concern?

A: Absolutely I would say that it was a short-term reaction and the politicians have been the worst. They haven't done anything.

Some of the politicians in the L.A. area have come up with deregulatory bills. They use this as an opportunity to say, "Ah, you know the reason why we don't have businesses in South-Central is because of all the complicated city environmental regulations." They saw a political space, and you saw them use it to their advantage in the worst way.

And then you just saw the usual grandstanding whenever anything good happens. "Oh, I did this, I did that." Hey, you didn't do diddy squat.

Q: Politicians aside, how do you see people's opinions of the LAPD and the justice system after the riots? Has the department improved its profile under the leadership of Chief Willie Williams?

A: People were much more willing to give Willie Williams a chance. Most people were so glad that Gates was gone, and they have in a positive way said, "OK, we have a new chief of police, he has a new idea, a new philosophy, let's give him a try." People have good feelings about the effort Willie Williams has put out.

There's still a lot of problems, especially with weed and seed. That was the federal response to the riots. "We're going to weed out the criminals and seed in money." It was very scary to me and a lot of people. It would have applied federal laws to parts of L.A. It could get extremely arbitrary, and there was a tremendous outrage over this because many people thought, "Well, we know they're going to be focusing on Black and brown men who fit a certain profile in their efforts to weed them out." They were going to give community dollars to community service organizations and that's how you bring in their support for the programs.

We [the Labor Community Strategy Center] are part of a major campaign to get weed and seed stopped. But it's hard to do because there are people who are tremendously suffering from crime and gang activity. People want better police service and protection, and police respect. We don't want to usurp all of our local powers to the federal government to come in and do whatever they want and make that a condition for funding for community organizations.

That's the Bush solution. I heard on the radio that [Clinton Attorney General] Janet Reno supports weed and seed still, but they haven't done anything on it. So community groups did get some money so far, but they didn't implement the weed part.

Q: What kinds of things need to happen in the community to deal with the problems that fueled the riots?

A: We need a continued improvement in police relations. It's essential that this happens. I would like to see more community people becoming interested and involved with economic development. A lot of times we see people saying, "We want jobs, we want jobs, we want jobs," and I think communities have to become a little more responsible and create a strategy: How are we going to create jobs? That may mean starting a cooperative, that may mean waging a boycott against, say, Toyota, to get them to build a plant in the area. It can take a whole variety of forms, but it's that way that you will get empowerment, community involvement and economic development in this region. I also hope to see continued improvement of the schools, which are deplorable throughout L.A., but particularly in South-Central and Pico-Union. We also need to work on better ethnic relations through finding something in common to grab onto. It can only get better.