

# A mainstream story and non-mainstream story about the events of the rodney king v...

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SCHOOL A Mainstream Story and Non-Mainstream Story about the Events of the Rodney King Verdict During the Rodney King uprising in Los Angeles (LA) in 1992, the front page of newspapers focused on the videotape showing how black motorist Rodney King was badly beaten with nightsticks by four police officers after resisting arrest. The mainstream story primarily attributed the violent uprising with this incident and the announcement of the verdict in which the police officers involved were all acquitted. Most people believe that the Rodney King beating and the perceived biased results of the trial were the main triggering factors that brought about these riots which were apparently racial in nature.

However, apart from this mainstream story, there were also underlying causes which barely made it through the headlines. For instance, the article relative to the LA riots in Wikipedia cited that the plummeting employment rate within the local population in the South Central region of LA, which had been severely affected by the nationwide recession, had caused much civil unrest. Furthermore, there was the lingering perception that the LA Police District (LAPD) has long been engaged in racial profiling and using of excessive force. The reported union between influential LA street gangs, known as the Crips and the Bloods, to make political demands also aggravated the brewing street war.

Probably the most notable reason mentioned in the same article would be the changing demographics within the region. Previously, the said region was predominantly inhabited by the black population. However, the neighborhoods experience drastic changes due to the increasing number of Hispanics and Korean residents. These immigrants were deemed to have

displaced their black counterparts in terms of employment and business undertakings. Such condition goaded the economic competition and animosity between these racial groups.

In the Wikipedia article, people of color such as the blacks, Hispanics and Koreans were depicted as communities constantly at war and greatly divided. Due to the above cited reasons, these racial groups were described as if they were always up to no good and that a possible truce seemed hopeless given the deep rift that had been created. As the story presented the racial composition of the arrested mob, it somehow imparted to the readers that the people of color are relatively more inclined to looting, arson and other unlawful activities.

Aside from these, the article also described the victims and heroes in the LA riots. It provided an account of how numerous innocent people caught in between the uprising were assaulted by the angry mob. For example, the article relayed how Reginald Denny, a white truck driver, was dragged from his vehicle and beaten senseless by riotous black youths. The same thing happened to another innocent victim, Victor Lopez, a self-employed Guatemalan construction worker, whose head was cut smashed with a car stereo as his ear was being sliced off by one rioter. There are also the businessmen whose unguarded establishments were ransacked as the looters threw bricks to destroy the windows and arsonists hurled Molotov cocktails to start fires.

On the other hand, those people who helped their neighbors regardless of race, as in the case of Reginald Denny, were cited for their heroic act. In addition, the United States Army and Marines, who were deployed from Fort

Ord to control the unruly activities and restore order, were depicted as the heroes. This is because with their presence, violence was controlled and sense of normalcy was eventually reinstated. On the contrary, the article was openly critical about the LAPD for its much delayed reaction and failure to respond in full force at the onset of the riot.

#### Work Cited

" 1992 Los Angeles Riots." Wikipedia. 24 October 2005