

## Transcript for Present Tense [“Community Remix in Progress: Retelling the History of the Crips.”](#)

*(Please note that many of the elements listed are short samples that are layered on top of each other and repeated. The nature of this type of project makes it difficult to transcribe. I noted everything in the order it first appears, and I tried to be as faithful to the original as possible.)*

2Pac (“California Love”)<sup>1</sup>

KRS 1 (“Sound of da Police”)<sup>2</sup>

*Gang Member (“Gang Members”):* We want to tell the people of the city right now, Baltimore City, that the image they are trying to portray of the gangs in Baltimore—the BGFs, the Bloods, the Crips—we did not make that truce to harm cops. We did not come together against the cops. We are not about the allow you all to paint this picture of us.<sup>3</sup>

*Black Panther Protestors (“Black Panther Chants”):* No more pigs in our community. Off the pigs!<sup>4</sup>

*Ben Harley (reading from George Jackson’s “Blood in my Eye”):* The power of the people lies in its greater potential violence.<sup>5</sup>

*Kershaun “Lil’ Monster” Scott (“Inside Bloods and Crips”):* They were rounding people up whether you were in a gang or not. If you got caught in that sweep between a Thursday and a Sunday you went into the computer as a gang member.<sup>6</sup>

*Watts Resident (“Watts Riots Aftermath”):* You’re going to create a Black monster down here, and this Black monster is going to get larger and larger, and pretty soon he’s going to eat all of us up even the negroes that’s wearing neckties and accusing themselves of being intellectuals and all the white men who are accusing themselves.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tupac Shakur’s iconic track “California Love” alludes to the Crips’s origins in Los Angeles as well as the gang’s complex and intertwined relationship with popular culture, gangster culture, and Black liberation.

<sup>2</sup> KRS-One’s scathing indictment of the American police force discusses Black struggle against state sanctioned racist violence.

<sup>3</sup> This sample comes from an interview gang members gave to WBALTV in Baltimore to discuss the “gang truce” to protect their communities after the Freddie Grey protests turned violent in April of 2015.

<sup>4</sup> While the previous quote discussed gang members not wanting to harm police as they protected their communities, this quote provides a chorus of community voices demanding to be protected from the police. Note the stark contrast between the individual voice of the interviewee in the last sample and the collective voice of the chant in this one.

<sup>5</sup> This quote from the intellectual militant George Jackson demonstrates the ways in which some in the Black Power movement believed communal violence could be used to benefit the revolution. How does this compare to the collective voice in the previous sample? What problems arise from having a white man read this passage?

<sup>6</sup> This is first-hand testimony about how Los Angeles police dealt with the violence of the Crips by attempting to demonstrate their greater capacity for violence. Along with gang related arrests, sentences for drug possession were being increased at this time, which resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of Black men sentenced to prison.

<sup>7</sup> The Watts Revolution of 1965 was a response to the many structural problems in the predominantly Black neighborhood of Los Angeles. The inciting incident was the violent arrest of Marquette Frye on August 11. This event was the beginning of a string of race revolutions that marked the summers of 1964-1968. One consequence of these events was President Lyndon B. Johnson’s establishment of the National Advisory Commission on Civil

*Snoop Dogg and Pharrell Williams (“Drop it like it’s Hot”)*: I’m Snoop Dogg, but ya’ll knew that. The big boss dog, yeah, I had to do that. I keep a blue flag hanging out my backside, but only on the left side. Yeah, that’s the Crip side.<sup>8</sup>

*Lomax Prison Recording (“Prison Songs”)*<sup>9</sup>

*Sandra Kolder (reading from Colton Simpson’s Inside the Crips)*: That book on slavery they got in the module, you ain’t read it yet, cuz? You got to read this book. It tells all about what the slave master did to us. The first thing you do is make the slave feel your power—your control. Then, you degrade him. That’s why you jerk his shorts in his ass. He feels like a bitch then, less than a man. With threats and shows of aggression, fool ready to do anything. You saw, he would have sucked my dick. Then, you tie his ass up to let him know you the master.<sup>10</sup>

*James Brown (“Say it Loud—I’m Black and I’m Proud”)*: Say it loud. I’m Black and I’m proud. Say it loud. I’m Black and I’m proud.<sup>11</sup>

*Stokely Carmichael (“Stokely Carmichael”)*: We are building a concept of peoplehood. We do not care about honkeys, but if in building that concept of peoplehood, the honkeys get in our way, they got to go, there is no question about it.<sup>12</sup>

*Malcolm X (“The Ballot or the Bullet”)*: Today it’s time to stop singing and start swinging.<sup>13</sup>

*Dead Prez (“Hell Yeah”)*: Hell yeah. Yo, ain’t you hungry, my nigger? Hell yeah. You want to get paid, my nigger? Hell Yeah. You tired of starving, my nigger? Hell yeah. Let’s ride, then.<sup>14</sup>

*Sanyika Shakur (“War Stories”)*: See, that’s the whole thing with us and the Amerikans: property relations. They got property and we don’t. We rent; we don’t own. As consequence of them owning and us renting, they’re our landlords. And because they’re our lords, they can call

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Disorders (better known as the Kerner Commission), which blamed white racism for the violence and outlined a bold plan for dealing with economic, legal, and social inequalities. These recommendations were never acted upon.

<sup>8</sup> Snoop Dogg and Pharrell Williams’s hit single refers explicitly to the former’s involvement in the Crips.

<sup>9</sup> Recorded sometime between 1947 and 1948 at Mississippi State Penitentiary (better known as Parchman Farm), this song is very different from the one sung by Snoop Dogg. The chorus of voices accompanied by the sounds of manual labor tools speaks to the oppression that the six million Black Americans who participated in the Great Migration out of the southeastern United States were attempting to leave. For more information on Black prison recordings of this era, see Jonathan W. Stone’s article “Listening to the Sonic Archive.”

<sup>10</sup> These words were allegedly spoken by Capone, a gang member Colton Simpson shared a cell with in Los Angeles County Jail. The authenticity of this scene is suspect, and an almost identical story appears in Sanyika Shakur’s autobiography *Monster*. What does it mean for this passage to be read, along with this music, by a white woman?

<sup>11</sup> With its use of children singing the hook, “I’m Black and I’m proud,” James Brown’s joyous track does not look towards an abusive past but rather towards a beautiful future. Art plays an important role in revolution.

<sup>12</sup> Stokely Carmichael is credited with popularizing the term Black Power during the 1966 March Against Fear. Note how his voice resonates in this speech.

<sup>13</sup> The importance *The Diary of Malcolm X* has for the historical and social education of imprisoned gang members cannot be understated. It is also important to note that the memoirs of Sanyika Shakur, Colton Simpson, and Stanley Williams all follow X’s general narrative arc: youthful crimes, prison education, and empowered adulthood. Josephine Metcalf’s book *The Culture and Politics of Street Gang Memoirs* is an in-depth analysis of these connections.

<sup>14</sup> Dead Prez is well known for their socially conscious, if not occasionally militant, hip-hop. This song demonstrates both “singing” and “swinging” as they discuss ways of subverting the white supremacist power structure through credit card fraud, muggings, petty theft, and welfare programs.

the police because they pay taxes, and their coming to defend the lords. The avenging angles of the pigs, the police, 5-0, one-time rollers, the enemy soldiers.<sup>15</sup>

*Marvin Gaye (“Inner City Blues (Make me Wanna Holler)”)*: Make me want to holler and throw up both my hands. Yeah, it makes me want to holler and throw up both my hands.<sup>16</sup>

*Unverifiable (“Crips and Bloods Made in America”)*: What you are seeing is guerilla warfare, but the reason that you can’t say it is because you never gave the so-called-negro credit for having enough intelligence to be strategist enough to practice guerilla warfare.<sup>17</sup>

*Curtis Kelly (“Watts Mafia Crip Gang Member”)*: You see, the white man think he slick, and he trying to get us Black people away from here so they can move in and try to, you know, make things because, you know what I’m saying, they don’t want us to have anything.<sup>18</sup>

*Anderson .Paak feat. Talib Kweli & Timan Family Choir (“The Dreamer”)*: This one’s for all the little dreamers and the ones who never gave a fuck. I’m a product of the tube and the free lunch. Living room watching old reruns.<sup>19</sup>

*Anonymous Prisoner (“Murda Murda”)*: Murder. Murder man. Murder murder. Murder murder murder murder. Murder. Murder man. Murder murder. Murder murder murder murder.<sup>20</sup>

*Narrator (“Superfly”)*: He’s got a plan, to stick it to the man. He’s super hood, super high, super dude, superfly.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Sanyika Shakur, more commonly known as “Monster” Kody Scott, is a famous Crip who dedicated himself to the New Afrikan movement while in prison. Kody was a gang member during the Rampart Scandal of the 1990s in which officers in the Los Angeles Police Department’s anti-gang unit: Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums [CRASH] were being publicly implicated in multiple murders, rapes, and robberies. Marc Levin’s 2015 documentary *Freeway* explains the corruption clearly.

<sup>16</sup> “Inner City Blues (Make Me Wanna Holler)” was the last track on Marvin Gaye’s 1971 album *What’s Going On?* This album was a departure both instrumentally and lyrically not only for Gaye but also for Motown Records. The new sounds found on this record emerged after Gaye wrested creative control from Berry Gordy, enabling him to utilize more jazz orchestration in creating this concept album about a young man returning home from Vietnam and questioning the state of his country. For more information on the creation of this album, listen to *Sound Opinions* episode 571, “Marvin Gaye’s *What’s Going On.*”

<sup>17</sup> This quote was taken from an interview about the Watts Revolution in 1965, but the sentiment also speaks to the ways in which Sanyika Shakur describes the Crips in the 1980s and 1990s.

<sup>18</sup> This is a 1998 interview with a Crip member that was posted to *YouTube* by Street Gangs Media in 2008.

<sup>19</sup> This song is a fusion of funk, hip-hop, and soul that creates a distinct connection between contemporary Black music and that of the 1970s while also emphasizing the important role television played not only in .Paak’s life but also, as suggested by the chorus of children, in the lives of many Black youth.

<sup>20</sup> This sample comes from a prison rap video allegedly recorded by Crips incarcerated in Alabama. The video was posted to *YouTube* and *World Star Hip-Hop* in 2014. Rap videos recorded in prison on smuggled cameras constitute a unique genre of music that is both similar to and different from earlier forms of Black prison and slave music.

<sup>21</sup> A regular feature of both Crip histories and gangster autobiographies is a discussion of the famous Blaxploitation film *Superfly*. The cool individualistic ethos it presents is regularly credited with having an astounding amount of influence with the Black youth of the 1970s.

*Denver Lanes Blood 1 (“War Stories”)*: Yeah, niggers like us man we get up every day with the same attitude—with the same attitude—to do the same shit. You know what I’m saying? We get up every morning, get dressed, get flamed, however—<sup>22</sup>

*Kanye West (“All Day”)*: All day, nigga. <sup>23</sup>

*Denver Lanes Blood 2 (“War Stories”)*: Get high, get loaded

*Denver Lanes Blood 1 (“War Stories”)*: Pop a smurf<sup>24</sup>

*Big Girch (“Crips and Bloods Made in America”)*: I’m not going to see my nephew, my son, my momma, or nobody starve because these motherfuckers won’t give me no job. So, I got to do what I know how to do.<sup>25</sup>

*Snoop Dogg (“Pimp Slapp’d”)*: A day in the life of a rolling 20 Crip, I’m just a stubborn type of fella with a head like a brick. And just because I sip Moet, the say that I’m hopeless, but I don’t give a fuck, so blame it on the loc’ness.<sup>26</sup>

*Caddy (“Crips and Bloods Made in America”)*: I didn’t get jumped into this. I grew up in this. My mom grew up in my neighborhood. My dad from my neighborhood. All my uncles from my neighborhood. So, I don’t look at it as no gang thing, it’s just family.<sup>27</sup>

*James Brown (“Funky Drummer”)*<sup>28</sup>

*Malcolm X (“The Ballot or the Bullet”)*: We got a new generation of Black people in this country who don’t care anything whatsoever about odds. They don’t want to hear you old Uncle Tom handkerchief heads talking about the odds. This is a new generation.<sup>29</sup>

*Black Panther Protestors (“Black Panther Chants”)*: Power to the people<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> These quotes from the sensationalized documentary *War Stories*, which is itself a type of Blaxploitation film, discuss the monotony of gang life. This is a common theme in the autobiographies of gang members, who discuss gang life as relentlessly repetitive.

<sup>23</sup> Kanye West’s “All Day” invokes the constant repetition of gang life.

<sup>24</sup> This is a reference to killing Crips, who are identified as Smurfs because they wear blue. Note the word play between the character “Papa Smurf” and the action “pop [shoot] a Smurf.”

<sup>25</sup> This quote demonstrates how material conditions can drive someone to commit crimes they might not otherwise commit. It is a pathos-laden enthymeme.

<sup>26</sup> This Snoop Dogg lyric from “Pimp Slapp’d” on his 2002 album *Paid tha Cost to Be da Boss* is a rewrite of DJ Quik’s LA anthem “Tonight” from his 1991 album *Quik is the Name*.

<sup>27</sup> This is a common explanation for why people joined gangs, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. The quote speaks to the ways in which material and social environments influence people and their actions. Humans are thrown into the world; we do not choose our contexts.

<sup>28</sup> This drum beat was originally played by Clyde Stubblefield on James Brown’s 1970 track “Funky Drummer.” It is widely regarded as one of the most sampled pieces of music because of its popularity among early hip-hop DJs.

<sup>29</sup> X’s words referred to the Black Power movement specifically, but they have a universality in that they discuss inter-generational differences. How does hearing these words next to Cady’s quote change their meaning?

<sup>30</sup> Note your own affective reaction to hearing a multitude demanding their power be acknowledged. There is power in the collective voice. For more on the power of chanting see Erin Rand’s “What One Voice Can Do.”

*stic.man feat. Divine* (“*Back on my Regiment*”): I could get swole like Tookie with it.<sup>31</sup>

*Kumasi* (“*Crips and Bloods Made in America*”): They ran them down. They chased them down. They hunted them down. They murdered everybody that they could and made everybody else either go to exile, or they locked them up in the penitentiary. And when all that was over with, a new element rose up called the Crips, and the shit started again.<sup>32</sup>

*Sandra Kolder* (reading from Stanley Williams’s “*Blue Rage, Black Redemption*”): Unlike those ashamed to admit their motivation or too blind to recognize it, I forged through much of my life locked into a hostile intimacy with America’s wrongness. Conditioned and brainwashed to hate myself and my own race, other Black people became my prey and the Crips my sword.<sup>33</sup>

*James Brown* (“*The Payback*”): I’m mad. The big payback. Got to get back. The big payback.<sup>34</sup>

*Anonymous Prisoner* (“*Lockdown San Quentin*”): The living conditions is nasty!<sup>35</sup>

*Rick James* (“*Ghetto Life*”)<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Stanley “Tookie” Williams claimed to be the co-founder of the Crips, and while this claim is disputed, his importance in expanding the gang’s influence to the West side of South Central Los Angeles is not. Williams was convicted of murdering four people in 1979, but he always claimed he was innocent of these charges. His book *Blue Rage Black Redemption* tells the story of his life including his childhood, the founding of the Crips, the abuse he suffered in prison, his self-education in solitary confinement, his work towards social justice, and his commitment to his African heritage. The book, along with his series of anti-gang children’s books, helped to make Williams an important figure among some Black activists. His execution in 2005 was heavily protested, with many people asking Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to grant clemency. This bass heavy song by stic.man, a member of the group Dead Prez, is a workout anthem that holds Williams up as an idol for education, justice, and physical fitness. Williams was a weightlifter with an extremely muscular physique.

<sup>32</sup> Kumasi is discussing how the fall of the Black Panther Party due to, often illegal, FBI campaigns led to the growth of the Crips, who are a street gang formed in 1969 by Raymond Washington. The gang seems to have been modelled after the car gangs of the time period, but their style and history also suggest influence from the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, though the alleged co-founder Stanley “Tookie” Williams claims that he had never heard of the BPP prior to being sentenced to jail in 1979. The gang’s name is something of a mystery. Some of the explanations include it being a reference to Washington’s brother Reggie who walked with a limp, a mispronunciation of the gang’s original name *the cribs*, a portmanteau of the words *cradle* (birth) and *R.I.P* (death), and acronyms such as Community Revolution in Progress, Community Revolution Inner-Party Service, Community Resources for Independent Peoples, and Clandestine Revolutionary Internationalist Party Soldiers. While some of these explanations seem more realistic than others, the Crips neither have an official power structure nor an official history—their history is multiple. There is no one valid Crip history but rather many valid Crip histories. These histories explain the gang as a childish mistake, an inevitable result of white supremacist policies, a political revolution, and/or a response to material conditions in southern California after the Great Migration. Currently, the Crips are one of the largest gangs in the world. In 2002 their numbers were estimated at 35,000 in the United States.

<sup>33</sup> This quote from Stanley Williams speaks to one way that ideologies of white supremacy can become embodied and made material even within those who are oppressed by it. This is a reoccurring theme in *Blue Rage Black Redemption*. Sandra Kolder’s reading has a pathos here that is different from that of Williams.

<sup>34</sup> This 1973 song from *The Godfather of Soul* was a favorite of Stanley “Tookie” Williams. According to Williams, “The Payback” was the unofficial Crip anthem during the 1970s.

<sup>35</sup> This quote comes from a documentary on the maximum-security prison in San Quentin, California. The quote was shouted at the production crew from an anonymous prisoner as they were walking down a hall interviewing an officer. Did the prisoner think anyone would hear it? Did he think anyone would care?

<sup>36</sup> Rick James’s 1981 song “Ghetto Life” discusses the poor living conditions of inner-cities in a romanticizing, if not glamourizing, way. How does this song compare with the characterization of South Central Los Angeles in this collage?

*Anonymous Pelican Bay Prisoner (“Pelican Bay”): Bitch!*<sup>37</sup>

*Malcolm X (“By Any Means Necessary”): By any means necessary*<sup>38</sup>

*Anonymous Prison Warden (“George Jackson”): Let me try to think of how to put this. If he was trying to help his people—the people—the Black people that are straight people and are never looking for trouble outside of their—they’re radicals—George Jackson was a radical period.*<sup>39</sup>

*KRS One (“Sound of da Police”): Overseer, overseer, overseer, ofirseer, offiseer, officer, officer, officer.*<sup>40</sup>

*Watts Resident (“Watts Riots Aftermath”): Do I think I can make it through rioting? Do you think we can make it on promises?*<sup>41</sup>

*ABC Reporter (“Watts Riots Aftermath”): What bugs you the most?*

*Watts Resident (“Watts Riots Aftermath”): White man.*<sup>42</sup>

*Big Girch (“Crips and Bloods Made in America”): There’s really no room in this world for soft motherfuckers, man. Soft motherfuckers don’t eat.*<sup>43</sup>

*Parliament (“Chocolate City”): Gaining on you!*<sup>44</sup>

*Sampson (“Founder of Crips and Bloods Put Snoop Dogg on Blast”): Along with my homeboy Raymond Washington, I am one of the godfathers and the founder of the Crips. I’m going to do*

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<sup>37</sup> When this is screamed in the background of the prison documentary, no one flinches. This kind of outburst has become normalized in this environment. Compare this to your affective reaction when hearing it.

<sup>38</sup> This is a commonly referenced quote from Malcolm X. What does it mean in these contexts? How do we know the necessary means, and might the means change the ways we perceive our ends?

<sup>39</sup> Note the way the warden stammers in his attempt to discredit the revolutionary actions of George Jackson. Unable to delegitimize the motivations that led Jackson to commit his crimes, the warden merely ends up reifying the white power structure with the phrase “George Jackson was a radical period.” Can we understand anything about the officer by paying attention to his embodied voice as he says this?

<sup>40</sup> While the linguistic roots of the two words are different, the connection between slave patrols and police is well documented.

<sup>41</sup> Taken from an interview conducted after the Watts Revolution, this question of “making it on promises” is a constant throughout Black history in the US, and it is one of the reasons the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s most famous slogan was “Freedom Now!”

<sup>42</sup> This exchange is particularly interesting not only because of the use of the diminutive word “bugs” by the interviewer but also because of the long pause before the response by the interviewee. Note the difference in volume between the two speakers.

<sup>43</sup> Specifically speaking to the conditions in South Central Los Angeles’s gang territories, Big Girch’s response seems to speak to the same concerns as those of the man interviewed about the Watts Revolution forty years earlier. Perhaps the world Girch is referring to is the white supremacist power structure that continues to propagate itself.

<sup>44</sup> Released in 1975, Parliament’s “Chocolate City” specifically refers to Washington D.C., a nickname made popular by Black AM DJs throughout the decade. The song affectionately refers to other Black majority cities, and the refrain of “gaining on you” looks forward to the rise of Black utopias.

ten to twenty movies on Crips and Bloods with positive messages teaching kids you don't want that gang life. Positive!<sup>45</sup>

*Parliament* (“*Chocolate City*”): C.C., they say you jiving game and can't be changed. But on the positive side, you're my piece of the rock, and I love you C.C.<sup>46</sup>

*William De Vaughn* (“*Be Thankful for What You Got*”)<sup>47</sup>

*Laura Marquez* (“*!The \$65 LA Gang Tour*”): Welcome to LA Gang Tours. For sixty-five bucks a head you get a two-hour trip through what organizers call the forbidden streets of LA.<sup>48</sup>

*Denver Lanes Blood 1* (“*War Stories*”): Yo, we going to give you a little something about what happens on the everyday life over here, man. Each and Every day it's the same niggers, the same people, the same community. Whatever, we don't change.<sup>49</sup>

*Todd Boyd* (“*Crips and Bloods Made in America*”): Young Black men in this society have always been represented as the most threatening figures across the board.<sup>50</sup>

*Watts Resident* (“*Watts Riots Aftermath*”): I'm not afraid of bloodshed.<sup>51</sup>

*Gerald Horne* (“*Crips and Bloods Made in America*”): They're viewed as being people who will commit crime.<sup>52</sup>

*Sanyika Shakur* (“*War Stories*”): We get our kicks off killing motherfuckers.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> None of the literature I have read on the Crips discusses Sampson as a major player in gang, especially not in its early formation. There are, however, several *YouTube* videos about him, and he is alluded to in histories with some regularity. Most people interested in the Crips seem to agree that he was an acquaintance of Williams and Washington who is now attempting to make a profit on popular interest in the gang. However, because Crip history is so disputed, there is a possibility that he was a key figure in the gang's founding.

<sup>46</sup> The song refers to Black majority cities as Black society's “piece of the rock,” a way of establishing power similar to that outlined in Stokely Carmichael's book *Black Power*.

<sup>47</sup> Often misattributed to Curtis Mayfield, as with the *YouTube* video from which this sample was taken, William De Vaughn's “Be Thankful for What You Got” reached number one on the U.S. R&B charts and number four on the *Billboard Hot 100 Chart* in 1974.

<sup>48</sup> LA Gang Tours was started in 2010 and is still in business. The founder, Alfred Lomas, is from South Central Los Angeles. He claims that his business provides people the opportunity to see a space and lifestyle they usually wouldn't see while also benefitting the community through his outreach programs. Critics of Lomas say that the tours are clearly exploitative, treating residents of the area as exhibits rather than people.

<sup>49</sup> The movie *War Stories* operates in the same economy as LA Gang Tours and Sampson—charging audiences for the chance to gaze into this Othered space and observe people who are different from the audience. In all of these cases, the question of authenticity hovers overhead.

<sup>50</sup> Dr. Todd Boyd provides some insights to the representations of Black men throughout the media being used in this collage, especially LA Gang Tours and *War Stories*.

<sup>51</sup> This quote demonstrates Boyd's point in the previous sample.

<sup>52</sup> Dr. Gerald Horne elaborates on the position articulated by Boyd.

<sup>53</sup> This quote from Sanyika Shakur from the movie *War Stories* demonstrates Horne's point and should invite the audience to rethink the relationship they have had thus far with the collage.

*Stokely Carmichael* (“*Stokely Carmichael*”): We have no alternative but to fight whether we like it or not. On every level in this country, Black people, you got to fight.<sup>54</sup>

*Tupac* (“*Tupac Shakur on Life and Death*”): My definition of thug comes from half of the street element—just straight street—and half of the Panthers.<sup>55</sup>

*Anonymous* (“*Crip Anthem*”): If you Crip throw it up. If you Crip throw it up.<sup>56</sup>

*Chris Card* (“*Santa Rita County Jail*”): It’s mostly respect your race. You always try to stick with your race, you know what I mean?<sup>57</sup>

*Anonymous Prisoner* (“*Lockdown San Quentin*”): But you never forget where your loyalty lies.<sup>58</sup>

*Stokely Carmichael* (“*Stokely Carmichael*”): We have to recognize who our major enemy is.<sup>59</sup>

*Narrator* (“*Pelican Bay*”): The prisoners here are made up of four ethnic gangs. They call themselves the Blacks, the Whites, the Northern Mexicans, and the Southern Mexicans.<sup>60</sup>

*Todd Boyd* (“*Crips and Bloods Made in America*”): Black men are disproportionately represented. That’s the new cotton field right there: the pen.<sup>61</sup>

*Bloods and Crips* (“*Banging on Wax*”): Oreo-ass Black motherfuckers!<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Note how Carmichael’s tone is both determined and calm. What does fighting mean in this context? Consider how material conditions have offered “Black people” no choice but to fight either politically or physically.

<sup>55</sup> Tupac Shakur’s interview with Benjamin Svetkey for *Entertainment Weekly* demonstrates not only the relationship between revolutionary thought and violence but also Tupac’s relationship to popular culture, gangster culture, and Black Power.

<sup>56</sup> This supposed Crip Anthem was posted to *YouTube* on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2007. There are a lot of Crip anthems, and as with everything with the gang, its authenticity cannot be verified with complete certainty.

<sup>57</sup> According to several Crip biographies, prior to entering prison, most gangsters are aligned predominately with their set, a small neighborhood unit within a larger gang such as the Crips, who may fight with sets from their same gang or sets form another gang. In prison, set loyalties are mostly replaced by racial identifications due to the prison politics discussed in note sixty. This change in affiliations does not mean that set loyalties do not matter, as discussed in note sixty-four; rather, this new affiliation demonstrates the complex levels of alliances within the prison system.

<sup>58</sup> Delivered as advice for surviving prison, these words are complicated by the collage, which demonstrates the ways that loyalties, especially in the world of gangs, can shift as material and social contexts shift.

<sup>59</sup> Delivered as advice for gaining political power, the collage demonstrates the ways in which this advice is difficult to follow. How can anyone recognize their “real enemy” when there are so many potential enemies attacking them at any given time for any multitude of reasons?

<sup>60</sup> In the autobiographies of Colton Simpson, Sanyika Shakur, and Stanley Williams, as well as the prison documentary from which this quote is taken, San Quentin State Prison is described as racially segregated. Though the quote describes four racial groups, these groups have alliances with each other to form two extremely large gangs: white men are traditionally aligned with Hispanic men from Southern California (Sureños) whereas Black men are traditionally aligned with Hispanic men from Northern California (Norteños). Further complicating this system, the four primary racial gangs are also composed of a variety of smaller gangs (including the Crips) that are composed of smaller neighborhood gangs called sets (like the Rolling ’60s). See note sixty-four for more information on gang hierarchies.

<sup>61</sup> See Michelle Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow* for more details.

<sup>62</sup> This slur invites the audience to question what it means to be Black. Does an “accurate” performance of racial identity change depending on material and social contexts?

*Jail Background Noise (“Lockdown San Quentin State Prison”)*<sup>63</sup>

*Ben Harley (reading from Sanyika Shakur’s “Monster”)*: Tribalism was most prevalent amongst new Afrikans, who began as one and then split into Crips and Bloods. The Crips, ever the majority, were then plagued, indeed traumatized, by the internal strife of set tripping. There was also struggle within each set for leadership. In prison, beginning in Youth Authority, sets tried to organize themselves on some level to deal with the new complexities of institutionalization.<sup>64</sup>

*Georgia Bea Jackson (“George Jackson”)*: I raised my children to love people. I raised them to mingle in American society, but American society didn’t want them.<sup>65</sup>

*Grandmaster Flash (“White Lines”)*<sup>66</sup>

*Malcolm X (“The Ballot or the Bullet”)*: Because if you’re Black you should be thinking Black, and if you’re a Black and you’re not thinking Black at this late date, well, I’m sorry for you.<sup>67</sup>

*Anonymous Blood (“War Stories”)*: White folks got the game out here fucked up. You all want us to keep killing on each other.<sup>68</sup>

*Dead Prez (“They Schools”)*: But their classes weren’t interesting. They seemed to only glorify the Europeans, claiming Africans were only three fifths of human beings.<sup>69</sup>

*Stokely Carmichael (“Stokely Carmichael”)*: We have to understand that unless we control the education system where it begins to teach us how to change our community where we live like human beings, no need to send anybody to school. That’s just a natural fact.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> What is your affective response to these sounds, and how would constant exposure to them change that response?

<sup>64</sup> While many think of street gangs like the Crips as homogenous units, they are better understood as a confederacy of mostly unrelated smaller neighborhood units referred to as sets (eg. Eight Tray Gangster Crips, The Rollin 60s, Hoover Street, Grape Street, etc.) . Shortly after Raymond Washington’s imprisonment, sets within the Crips began fighting with each other, a practice that is referred to as “set tripping.” According to Sanyika Shakur, by the mid-1970s the main killer of Crips was other Crips. It is worth noting here that the Bloods were founded in 1972 as an alliance of smaller gangs who banded together in order to defend themselves from the Crips.

<sup>65</sup> Georgia Bea Jackson is talking to a film crew about her sons George and Jonathan. The former was killed in 1971 during a failed escape from San Quentin Correctional Facility and the latter was killed in 1970 while taking a judge and four others hostage in an attempt to free his brother from Soledad Prison.

<sup>66</sup> Supposedly written as a warning about cocaine, Melle Mel’s 1983 song “White Lines (Don’t Do It)” has often been criticized for glamorizing the drug. The bass line being sampled here is a cover of the Liquid Liquid song “Cavern.” It is difficult to overstate the economic, social, material, medical, political, and legal effects of cocaine and crack on the Black community in the 1980s. What makes the travesty worse was the role the United States Central Intelligence Agency played in supporting the drug trade through its support of the right-wing radical Nicaraguan Resistance. See Marc Levin’s 2015 documentary *Freeway* for more information as well as Robert Asen’s “Representing the State in South Central Los Angeles.”

<sup>67</sup> What does it mean to hear this in response to Georgia Bea Jackson’s statement?

<sup>68</sup> Notice the delivery and the background voices as this young Blood expresses the ways in which a white supremacist society, either actively or passively, enables gang violence.

<sup>69</sup> Consider the affective significance of the music beyond the lyrics.

<sup>70</sup> It is noteworthy that white educational structures failed Malcolm X, Sanyika Shakur, Colton Simpson, and Stanley Williams, all of whom educated themselves later in life.

*The Isley Brothers (“Fight the Power”)*<sup>71</sup>

*Marion Stamps (“Fred Hampton BPP”)*: It is our responsibility to see to it that our people have a decent place to live, decent food to eat, and quality healthcare, not the system’s.<sup>72</sup>

*Bandana (“Crips and Bloods Made in America”)*: When he hooks up with his crew, they feed him, they’re looking out for him, putting clothes on his back, ok. But now it’s time to get in his car and go get these niggers who just shot up my house. What you going to do? You obligated to do; that man just fed you.<sup>73</sup>

*Angela Davis (“George Jackson”)*: It was certainly reminiscent of slavery.<sup>74</sup>

*Sanyika Shakur (“War Stories”)*: I ain’t in to sports! I wear this shit because it’s gang shit!<sup>75</sup>

*Fred Hampton (“Fred Hampton BPP”)*: We are an organization that understands that politics is just nothing but war without bloodshed and war is nothing but politics with bloodshed.<sup>76</sup>

*H. Rap Brown (“H. Rap Brown”)*: We did not make the laws in this country; we are neither morally nor legally confined to those laws. Those laws that keep them up keep us down. You got to begin to understand that.<sup>77</sup>

*Mahalia Jackson (“How I Got Over”)*: Tell me how we got over, Lord. Had a mighty hard time coming on over. You know my soul look back and wonder, “how did we make it over?” Tell me how we got over, Lord. I’ve been falling and rising all these years, but you know my soul look back and wonder, “How did I make it over?”<sup>78</sup>

*Sandra Kolder (reading from Stanley Williams’s “Blue Rage, Black Redemption”)*: Through experience I knew the futility of trying to subvert or outfox these existing conditions. I would have to bend it to the will of my determination to rise above the madness.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Formed in the late 1950s and still together today, the Isley Brothers have had one of the longest and most diverse careers in popular music. See the *Sound Opinions* interview with Ernie Isely to learn more about their iconic career.

<sup>72</sup> Marion Stamps worked with Fred Hampton at the Black Panther Party headquarters in Chicago, Illinois. Fred Hampton was assassinated on December 4, 1969 during a raid organized by Cook County State’s Attorney Edward Hanrahan in conjunction with the FBI and Chicago Police Department. The Black Power movement was largely built on the idea Stamps is articulating.

<sup>73</sup> Note the frightening music being played in the background (not the Isley Brothers’ sample); this comes from the original source material—consider its rhetorical affect.

<sup>74</sup> Davis is referring to seeing Black prisoners in the 1960s, but it takes on a different tone when preceded by the sample from Bandana. Is the hierarchy of the Crips, as Williams suggests, one based on internalizing anti-Black ideologies? Does this help explain Capone’s actions from note ten?

<sup>75</sup> In the gang memoirs and interviews, gang identity is understood as all consuming. There are no aspects of life that are separate from gang affiliation.

<sup>76</sup> See *The Assassination of Fred Hampton* for more information.

<sup>77</sup> What does this sentence mean to you after engaging this sonic collage?

<sup>78</sup> Mahalia Jackson was a Gospel singer and civil rights activist. “How I Got Over” was composed and published by Clara Ward in 1951 and recorded by Jackson in 1961. The song is a staple of Gospel music and the title of a 2010 album by the hip-hop band The Roots.

<sup>79</sup> Stanley Williams advises bending the material world to our individual wills in order to transcend the madness of the complex associations that compose it—especially when those associations are toxic. After reading the new

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materialist argument and listening to this collage, do you think it is possible or advisable to bend the material world to our wills? What options do we have outside of control and madness?