

Current Event: LA Riots 1992.

Matthew Vasquez

Mark Wyse

Los Angeles Riots of 1992

The L.A. riots began April 29th, 1992 and lasted approximately 5 days. South Central Los Angeles's crack epidemic was at its worst. There was a man named Rodney King who was severely beaten by police on March 3, 1991. The police were trying to pull him over while going 100 MPH in the San Fernando Valley. He led them on a pursuit because he was on parole for a prior robbery. The police officers were under the impression that he may be high on cocaine. They pulled him from the vehicle and beat him for approximately 15 minutes. He had severe bodily injury. All of this was caught on video. The police officers were sent to trial and the verdict of "not guilty" came on April 29th 1992. People were outraged. The riots started quickly, largely due to the media. Liquor stores, chain stores, fast food restaurants and white people were the main targets. A white truck driver was pulled out of his truck and nearly beaten to death. The media covered this white man beating, but didn't cover a similar beating of a Guatemalan man. The media fueled the race issue. For the safety of all police officers they were pulled out of the city.

On day two of the riots, smoke and flames filled the streets. It was hard to see through all the smoke. Even the news shots from the sky were a big billow of gray smoke. Fires had been set and most of the stores in South L.A. and they were burning. Stores had shattered glass scattered all around because people were breaking the windows in order to get in and steal or "loot" all of the stores merchandise. Most Korean storeowners took their guns to their stores and protected them in gun battles. They would climb to the top of the building and hide behind the

store signs. They peered out with their rifle tips showing ready to shoot at any trouble makers. There was still no law enforcement on the scenes.

On day three, the riots and looting continued. There was a massive power outage. Orange flames threw themselves from buildings while reckless people filled grocery carts full of electronics and anything else they could get their hands on. Buildings were abandoned and spray paint graffiti on the walls would read "This is for Rodney King. We love you brother." Rodney King was put on television in a courageous, but failed attempt to quiet the rioters, "can't we all just get along?" he asked. This Statement would be a quote that was repeated over and over and would go down in history.

On day four police began patrolling South Central L.A. The Army National Guard was also deployed that day. It was time to take back control and restore order. There were random people in the streets carrying guns. The violence lasted five to six days in total. On the sixth day South Central L.A. looked like an abandon war zone. Not a person in sight. Buildings were empty with no windows or doors. Most buildings were not even standing. Puddles of water were left over in the streets; reminisce of the fire fighters exploding hoses. There were no longer clouds of smoke but the smell of smoke and burned wood lingered. The sky was brown with tinges blue. With fifty-three people dead and over one billion dollars in damages, the city slowly began to rebuild physically, emotionally, and most importantly mentally.

Due to the outrage and retaliation, police officers are required to follow different rules. All police vehicles are now equipped with video cameras. The police and cities know there will be no tolerance for brutality.

