The Tragic City: Black Rebellion and the Struggle for Freedom in Miami, 1945-1990

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THE TRAGIC CITY:
BLACK REBELLION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN MIAMI, 1945-1990

by

PORSHA RA’CHELLE DOSSIE
B.A. University of Central Florida, 2014

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of History in the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

Summer Term
2018

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the creation of South Florida’s tri-ethnic racial hierarchy during the postwar period, from 1945-1990. This racial hierarchy, coupled with discriminatory housing practices and police violence, created the necessary conditions for Dade County’s first deadly uprising in 1968. Following the acquittal of several officers charged in the killing of an unarmed black businessman, a second uprising in 1980 culminated in three days and three nights of violent street warfare between law enforcement and black residents in Miami’s northwest Liberty City neighborhood. The presence of state sanctioned violence at the hands of police in Miami’s sprawling black ghetto, Liberty City, set the stage for the city’s second uprising. The oftentimes murky and ambiguous racial divide that made people of color both comrades and rivals within Miami’s larger power structure resulted in an Anglo-Cuban alliance by the late 1960s and early 1970s that only worsened racial tensions, especially among the city's ethnically diverse, English speaking black population. This thesis project uses a socio-historical framework to investigate how race and immigration, police brutality, and federal housing policy created a climate in which one of Miami's most vulnerable populations resorted to collective violence.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“I have hated words and I have loved them, and I hope I have made them right.”

Thank you to the University of Central Florida History Department for their funding of this project. The Student Research Grant enabled me to conduct essential archival research in Washington, D.C. The staff at the Library of Congress and the National Archives deserve my thanks as well. In Miami, the librarians and staff at the Black Archives History & Research Foundation of South Florida and the Main Branch of the Miami-Dade Public Library system were supremely kind and helpful in securing primary source material for this project.

Thank you, Dr. Lester, for your unwavering support throughout the years I have known you. You never let me give up on this project, and most importantly you never let me give up on myself. You have always supported me and been a wonderful mentor full of sage advice and wisdom. I promise one day I will learn how to be more precise when it comes to formatting footnotes, but in the meantime I am eternally grateful for your patience and editing prowess during the revision process. I cannot imagine what this thesis would look like without you, and I am so happy that you agreed to be my thesis chair for the second time. And to my committee members, Dr. French and Dr. Walker, thank you for being part of this process. Your careful reading of this thesis improved the final product immensely.

To my Graduate Teaching Assistant family, thank you for all the fun we had this past year. Matt Patsis, Gramond McPherson, Onyx De La Osa, Carys O’Neill, Kody Whittington,

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Luke Bohmer, and Drew Padgett. Grad school can be extremely isolating, and I’m glad we were able to support one another. Padgett, thank you for talking me off the ledge this past school year. I’m glad you convinced me that I could finish, even when the idea seemed implausible. I’m going to miss all of you, but I know that you guys are going to be just fine (don’t do anything I wouldn’t do in the new GTA office!).

Thank you to my history sisters. Where would I be without the support of my histers? To Sarah Thorncroft, Holly Baker, Erin Shreve, Sarah Schneider, Callie Henson, and Jennifer Davis Rachael Rothstein-Safra. I cannot describe how important you have all been during my time as a graduate student at UCF. You have been such wonderful, important additions to my life and I would not have finished without any of you (or our wine nights).

To my honorary histers, Ana Sanz and Kiana Denise Loyd. Where would I be without our hours-long phone calls every week (or the games of phone tag we play because our 20s are a lot busier than we realized they would be)? Ana, I am so proud of you for finishing your master’s degree and continuing on to your PhD program. You’re going to transform the art world one day. For the past 11 years I have loved seeing you grow into the person you were always meant to be. Kiana, you have so much to offer this world, and I am so grateful to know you. To my two best friends, thank you for everything.

To Christopher. You have dealt with me at my worst during this entire process. I wasn’t always the easiest person to be around, but you met my stress and negativity with kindness,

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2 Thanks for the awesome portmanteau, Holly.
understanding, and unconditional love and support. I am so honored to know and be loved by you, and to love you in return.

Thank you to my parents, who love me and believe in me without fail (and fought the notorious Miami traffic to visit archives and pick up newspaper articles and photographs for me during your free time). I hope I have made you proud.

Lastly – but certainly not least – thank you to the people I have met during my time interning at the National Park Service headquarters in Washington, D.C. Isis Plaza, thank you for letting me vent to you for these past eight weeks. You are the epitome of black excellence and you inspire me every day. Camille Warnacutt, thank you for coming to the rescue the day before my defense and printing out my thesis for me. In the short time I have known you have been such a great friend and I can’t wait to visit you in Tallahassee!

To everyone in the Park History Program, thank you for your advice and support as I neared the finish line. Having the opportunity to work with you all has been one of the greatest experiences of my life. I have learned so much from each of you. Your understanding and support as I tried to finish my thesis these last six months has been incredible and so humbling.

Turkiya Lowe, LuAnn Jones, Kelly Spradley-Kurwoski, and John Sprinkle if you ever see this, know how awesome and supportive you all were and I – and this thesis – are better for it.
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“his brain was bashed
  cranium crashed
  skull fractured/broken
  all the way around
  but they said those who beat him
  didn't kill him
  so who killed mcduffie?”

INTRODUCTION: WHO KILLED MCDUFFIE?

Historical Background

Just before two o’clock in the morning on December 17, 1979 Arthur McDuffie, a 33-year-old black insurance agent, was spotted by a Miami metro police sergeant speeding down the street on a motorcycle. The officer, Ira Diggs, radioed that he was “going to get that guy.” Soon after additional police joined the officer in his pursuit. McDuffie rushed past red lights and a few stop signs before police caught up to him after an eight-minute chase, with McDuffie reportedly shouting, “I give up,” his hands in the air. However, this would not stop officers from pulling him off the motorcycle, yanking his helmet from him, and beating him to the ground. Officers took turns kicking or choking him, as well as beating him with their department issued “kel-lites,” (long, heavy flashlights), and nightsticks. According to officer testimony, McDuffie had made no threatening or aggressive gestures prior to the assault or during the arrest.

While several officers (no more than twelve, but no fewer than six) took part in beating McDuffie, white officers William F. (Mad Dog) Hanson and Mark Meier’s account point to Cuban officer Alex Marrero as the one who struck the killing blows. According to court testimony, Marrero walked over to the battered McDuffie, who was then lying on his side, with his hands handcuffed behind his back and straddled him. He took his kel-lite and struck him three times in the head, cracking his skull “like an egg,” as Dade County medical examiner, Dr. Ronald Wright described it. Nearby officers were splattered with blood from the force of the

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4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
blows. The process of covering up McDuffie’s murder would begin almost immediately as officers were ordered to run over his motorcycle to make the scene appear to be an accident. According to Hanlon’s testimony, the story they all agreed upon was that McDuffie lost control of the motorcycle as he rounded the corner, losing his helmet in the process and striking his head on the curb.

Ultimately, inconsistencies in the official report from officers at the scene would soon raise suspicions at police headquarters.\(^6\) These suspicions would later be confirmed by the medical examiner’s autopsy which dismissed the traffic accident as inconsistent with the severity of McDuffie’s injuries. Dr. Wright and his team determined that McDuffie had been beaten repeatedly by blunt objects, causing his skull to crack open and his brain to swell, leading to his death. When the autopsy was made public it sent shockwaves throughout Miami and the rest of the country. Five months later after a seven-week-long trial, an all-white, all-male jury found the officers not guilty.\(^7\) What had seemed like an open and shut case of police misconduct and brutality, was now another injustice shouldered by an already disgruntled black community. Many in the community felt that the officers’ acquittal represented the failure of the legal system to ensure equal treatment under the law. The system that was supposed to protect them had failed, serving now to reinforce their distrust of that system. If the law would not protect them who would? Local black radio personality Jerry Rushin vocalized this sentiment on air: “When are we going to rise up and be heard?”\(^8\)

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\(^8\) Ibid., 280.
Black Miamians immediately took to the streets to protest the verdict. By nightfall three people were dead and dozens more injured as the city erupted into violence unlike anything it or the nation had experienced since the 1960s. For three days Miami burned and the death toll grew to eighteen men, women, and children, while hundreds more were injured.\textsuperscript{9} White citizens were confused and shocked by the severity of the violence, unable to understand this black rage that had, until then, simmered beneath the surface of Miami’s cosmopolitan veneer. But for black residents the riot was a long time coming.

\textit{Figure 1: City of Miami Neighborhoods, Miami-Dade Gov., 2010.}

\textsuperscript{9} “18 Dead Fell to Cruelty, Happenstance,” \textit{Miami Herald}, May 19, 1980.
Statement of Purpose

I broadly argue the creation of a tri-ethnic racial hierarchy after 1959, coupled with discriminatory housing practices, and police violence, created the necessary conditions for Dade County’s first deadly uprising in 1968. Following the acquittal of several officers charged in the killing of an unarmed black businessman, a second uprising in 1980 culminated in three days and three nights of violent street warfare between law enforcement and black residents in Miami’s northwest Liberty City neighborhood. The presence of state sanctioned violence at the hands of police and racial terror groups in Miami’s sprawling black ghetto, set the stage for the city’s second uprising. The oftentimes murky and ambiguous racial divide that made people of color both comrades and rivals within Miami’s larger power structure resulted in an Anglo-Cuban alliance by the late 1960s and early 1970s that only worsened racial tensions, especially among the city's ethnically diverse, English speaking black population. This thesis project uses a socio-historical framework to investigate how race and immigration, police brutality, and federal housing policy created a climate in which one of Miami's most vulnerable populations resorted to collective violence.

Ultimately, this thesis geographically shifts the standard civil rights narrative from the Deep South to a Pan-American paradigm, asserting that while South Florida has traits that are typically “Southern”, the complex nature of race and ethnicity in Miami makes it more than Southern, complicating our broader understanding of the Civil Rights Movement in a part of the South that is usually obscured in the black freedom struggle. Unlike typical civil rights history which operates on a black/white binary, Miami demonstrates that the introduction of Latinos and other groups outside of this binary disrupts the belief of race as a biological fact, rather than, as this thesis illustrates, a social construction through which power and privilege can be conferred.
Research Considerations

To contextualize the complicated nature of race and power in post-World War II Miami, several research questions serve as an integral starting point for this thesis project:

1. Because the Civil Rights movement did not necessarily mean the end of segregation, how and in what ways did real estate and civic leaders, both white and black, use their power to maintain Jim Crow era systems in Miami's black neighborhoods in the post 1960s period? What was the role of domestic federal policy in this endeavor?
2. What role did large-scale Cuban immigration play in Miami's contentious racial climate? How did the Cuban coalition with Miami's white leaders, and more broadly their relationship with the federal government, reflect and contribute to animosity in Miami's black community?
3. What precipitating factors led to the federal, state, and local governments’ stance on providing increased aid for Cubans after Fidel Castro’s revolution in 1959? What precipitating factors created negative perceptions of Haitian refugees as “boat people?”
4. How did preferential treatment for white Cuban “exiles” during the 1960s versus the handling of Haitian “refugees” and black Cuban “Mariels” during the 1970s and 1980s affect race relations in Miami?
5. How did federal policy create urban ghettos? And in creating these ghettos, what efforts did civic leaders take to demolish them once they became seen detrimental to “progress?”
6. Why did law enforcement become the primary method of social control after World War II? How did this lead to an increase in surveillance of black ghettos and black people?
7. Finally, how do the Liberty City (1968) and McDuffie (1980) uprisings upend our understanding of black rebellions in the post-60s period?
Literature Review

This thesis engages with several historiographical and theoretical foundations, including, but not limited to: black protest and resistance, race in the South, Miami, police violence, housing, and Caribbean colonialism. Miami is often left out of civil rights texts and has received scant attention in broader discussions of race, immigration, and inter-ethnic conflict in the South. Each chapter begins with an overview of the subject’s relevant historiography. An overview of specific texts is present here in the introduction, however certain texts will be explored in further detail in the individual chapters.

Florida & Miami

Paul Ortiz’s *Emancipation Betrayed* dispels the “exceptionalism” thesis and demonstrates the ways in which African Americans in North and Central Florida organized and agitated for their freedom after the failure of Reconstruction, and even when facing the threat of death, went to the polls in 1920 to vote.10 In a similar vein, Chanelle Rose challenges Miami’s erasure in the black freedom struggle in her work *The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights and America's Tourist Paradise, 1896-1968* (2015), providing a new framework which places Miami as both a southern city, but more than southern in its appeal to early white tourists.11 The arrival of Spanish-speaking migrants following the Cuban Revolution irrevocably altered Miami’s civil rights movement, and transformed the city from a whites only manufactured paradise, to a modern tri-ethnic metropolis after World War II. This process enabled Miami’s civic elite to

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employ more insidious modes of racism to control its black population and uphold white supremacy. This allowed South Florida (Palm Beach, Broward, and Dade counties) to appear more “liberal” to outsiders.

Early histories of Miami render the city's black community invisible. Black labor and black votes not only built the area but led to its full incorporation as a city in 1896. Psychologist Marvin Dunn provides the first comprehensive account of the 20th century black experience in metropolitan Miami in his study, *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century* (1997). Organized into four sections, Part One gives an overview of Miami's first black settlement prior to the city's incorporation in 1896. It also addresses the origins and growth of Colored Town, now known as Overtown. Colored Town was nicknamed the "Harlem of the South," as it was the black cultural mecca of the area. Part Two examines the Civil Rights movement and Jim Crow. Part Three examines rioting in the inner city, and finally Part Four presents an intimate portrait of contemporary black life in the city (1990s). Admittedly, there are several weaknesses in Dunn's account, however his work provides a general overview and is helpful for the biographical sketches it provides for historical figures in the city. An earlier work of Dunn's first commissioned by the Ford Foundation, *The Miami Riot of 1980: Crossing the Bounds* (1984), provides background for the riot, and examine its aftermath. Drawing on over 250 interviews,

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12 For more information about this process see: Chanelle N. Rose’s "Tourism and the Hispanicization of Race in Jim Crow Miami, 1945-1965." (2012)  
this report is an anatomy of a communal riot, tracing the failures of the police, civic leaders, and the local criminal justice system.

*Miami Now!* is a collection of essays on ethnicity, immigration, and social change in the urban landscape of Miami, Florida.¹⁵ Edited by sociologist Guillermo J. Grenier and anthropologist Alex Stepick III, the collection features essays which cover a wide range of issues facing the city. This includes: the plight of Haitians in Miami, Cuban immigration, as well as from other parts of the Caribbean and Latin America, and the continued oppression of the city's black population. At time of publication Miami had been mostly ignored by urban scholars. Since then, this collection has stood as a template for subsequent analyses of urban centers with large ethnic pluralities. What makes this work of particular interest to my own study is the discussion of the Cuban exile community and the interethnic conflict between them and Miami's native black population, which I argue contributes to rioting in the early 1980s.

Gregory Bush’s *White Sand, Black Beach* examines the erasure of black history in Miami. Bush details the ways in which black bodies and labor brought Miami into existence as a tourism paradise.¹⁶ Bush's work primarily examines civil rights, the environment, and public space on Virginia Key, Miami's segregated black beach. White anxiety about black bodies engaging in leisure in public space is key to Bush's argument. Black leisure in Miami threatened the status quo of blacks' supposed deference to whites, by demanding access to equal facilities, even if they were separate. Moderate white civic leaders like George Merrick made concessions

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to ensure that Miami's "Magic City' tourism reputation was not tarnished, because Merrick saw the value in placating the area's black labor force.

Race & Ethnicity

Lynn Geldof’s *Cubans: Voices of Change* (1991) consists of thirty-two interviews with Cubans from across the diaspora and political spectrum. Most of the interviews were conducted between 1987 and 1989. Arriving thirty years after the Cuban revolution, the book is a revealing snapshot of not just life on the communist island, but gives further insight into those who fled Fidel Castro’s regime, their anxieties about their new home in the United States, and those they left behind. The group of interviewees is diverse, racially and gender-wise, as well as in political thought. There are those who vehemently oppose Fidel Castro’s regime, and stand by their decision to leave the island. Other disagree with the U.S.’s portrayal of Cuba and regret leaving it, their life in the United States, compounded by poverty and racial discrimination, not what they expected. The failures and achievements of Castro’s communist project directly influence South Florida and the vast Cuban exile community that resides there. Geldof’s interviews are revealing in their candor and vulnerability. Much of the rhetoric surrounding the Cuban revolution is from wealthy, white Cuban exiles. The inclusion of black Cubans, particularly Mariels is essential to this thesis project, making Geldof’s book an integral text.

Felix Masud-Piloto’s *From Welcomed Exiles to Illegal Immigrants: Cuban Migration to the U.S., 1959-1995* (1996) offers an important examination of the United States’ polices toward refugees from the Caribbean and Latin America. Masud-Piloto argues that Cuban refugees,

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later eventually referred to as “exiles,” became pawns in the Cold War. Both the U.S. and Cuba used refugees in their political warfare in the hopes of gaining the upper hand. As evidence, Masud-Piloto explores U.S. immigration policy under several different presidential administrations. For example, President Eisenhower’s open-door policy for Cuban refugees in 1959 and 1960 enabled Fidel Castro to eliminate his opposition, thus enabling him to consolidate control quickly on the island and removing dissidents. Masud-Piloto’s text further demonstrates the contradictions in U.S. immigration policy, especially as it concerned Haitian refugees. While the U.S. gave a privileged status to Cubans, it repeatedly denied Haitians asylum, instead placing them in detention centers and eventually deporting them back to Haitian and the horrors of the Duvalier regime. This discrepancy of treatment between the two groups is telling. The effect of Cuban exiles and Haitian refugees on South Florida is essential to this thesis’ analysis, and Masud-Piloto’s monograph is significant for its exploration of U.S. policy and the biases which created it.

Policing

Arthur Chapman’s master’s thesis, “The History of the Black Police Force and Court in the City of Miami” (1986), is crucial to this thesis project’s examination of law enforcement in Jim Crow Miami. Chapman’s oral interviews with various members of the City of Miami police force and black leaders, most notably the first judge of the ‘Negro Court,’ Judge Lawson Edward Thomas, has been invaluable to this study. His inclusion of legislation, municipal ordinances, and area maps were also useful additions as well. Chapman’s thesis is an essential

text when historicizing Miami’s black community and its struggle for freedom in an ethnically diverse, but highly segregated city. While other examinations of policing in the south have failed to include South Florida, Chapman’s thesis demonstrates that in order to understand the role of black officers in the criminal justice system following the Second World War, Miami must be part of that narrative. The complex, cultural dynamics of the city create problems in policing unique to Miami, however the evolution of the city’s black police force mirrors the struggle of black communities across the country who demanded to be served by officers who looked like them, and understand their lived experiences.

A more recent examination of race and law in Jim Crow Miami is Ernesto Longa’s 2005 article, “Judge Lawson Edward Thomas and Miami’s Negro Municipal Court.” Longa’s work examines the life of Lawson Edward (L.E.) Thomas, Miami’s first black judge, and the first black judge to preside over a court in the South since Reconstruction. Beginning in 1950, Judge Thomas presided over Miami’s Negro Municipal Court, which was the first and only of its kind in the nation. The Negro court handled cases involving black defendants. There was also a black bailiff, Clyde Lee, and a black clerk, F.W. Reynolds. While many leaders in Miami’s black community were involved in seeing the court into fruition, Longa’s work makes it clear that the very presence of the court was indicative of the apartheid conditions present in Jim Crow Miami. Much of Longa’s article focuses on L.E. Thomas’ early years as a black attorney in Miami. The discrimination black attorneys faced in the South made it customary for them to hire white attorneys to present their case to the court. However, in 1937 Thomas became the first black

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attorney in Miami to present his case in front of a judge, even after being threatened with bodily harm.

Longa effectively traces Thomas’ trajectory, from his successful involvement in Florida civil rights lawsuits and political demonstrations throughout the 1940s. In April 1950, Miami Mayor Robert Floyd (1947-1951) appointed Thomas as a judge to the Negro court, which along with the Negro Police Precinct, was a nearly autonomous body. Longa asserts that what made the Negro Municipal Court unique was that for many black defendants, it was the first time in their lives they would come to experience due process and equal protection under the law in the South. In Judge Thomas’ court black defendants were presumed innocent until proven guilty. For thirteen years the court operated undisturbed until it was ultimately integrated in July 1963. Longa’s work uncovers a part of Miami’s black history that has unfortunately been obscured by a significant loss of primary sources. Nearly all the custodial records relating to the municipal court have been lost. However, Longa’s article reveals a crucial development in black Miami’s continued struggle for equality in the postwar period.

Housing

Arnold R. Hirsch’s monograph, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (1978), is an important contribution to urban studies, and demonstrates the interplay of social, political, and ethnic conflict that converged to create black ghettos on the modern Westside and Southside areas of Chicago. Hirsch provides a complex analysis of interethnic conflict, urban renewal, and de jure segregation. By examining Post-WWII Chicago,

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Hirsch unveils the mostly obscured period between the post-Civil War era and the modern Civil Rights movement. This reveals the ways in which whites of all classes ultimately united to preserve residential segregation and uphold white supremacy. Hirsch’s work also demonstrates the development of the frameworks necessary to push urban renewal across the county and serves as an essential model for my own study of urban Miami during the same time period.

Another essential work of urban studies is Janet Abu-Lughod’s *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles* (1999).22 Abu-Lughod’s interpretation is deeply informed and further advances our understanding of how riots, whether large or small, come to be. She examines three comparative cites allow her to answer three central questions: 1) What are the changing conditions of race relations over time? 2) How do we explain variations in riots in three distinct cities? 3) Why do city governments reflect different response strategies? Abu-Lughod stresses space in her analysis of Chicago as it relates to race, for example the Red Summer of 1919 and the uprising of 1968. Race and class are integral to her analysis of riots in New York in 1935, 1943, and 1964. Her third city, Los Angeles is well-known for the Rodney King riots of 1992 and the earlier Watts Riots. Shared commonalities between each of the three cities include, but are not limited to: high unemployment among people color, poor living conditions and economic oppression which were usually underlying causes of riots that were often sparked by police brutality. In deconstructing the cause of the riots in these three metropolitan areas, Abu-Lughod provides an exemplary template in which to study race relations and urban uprisings in American cities.

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Methodology

At the core of this examination is an inquiry regarding the ways in which the American public views urban rebellion as “riots,” or more aptly outbreaks of spontaneous violence. This thesis project attempts a methodological approach which seeks a more nuanced and varied understanding of the socio-historical context of urban uprisings. This approach, which examines two rebellions—the Liberty City Riots (1968) and the McDuffie Riots (1980) respectively—will help to illustrate the evolution of race relations over time in metropolitan Dade County. This focus is particularly on the shifting demographics of Miami, the residential distributions of whites, native and West Indian blacks, as well as Spanish-speaking Caribbean immigrants, and the patterns of segregation within this unique triadic physical setting. Further, the ways in which municipal leaders and their implementation of federal policy have shaped race relations and subsequent outbreaks of collective violence in South Florida will be explored through the engagement of historiographical and sociological frameworks to contextualize black violence within current scholarship. Both foreign and domestic policy in the second half of the twentieth century had a devastating impact on urban communities of color in Miami and scholars in multiple disciplines are still grappling with these effects.

Sources

This thesis project utilizes oral histories from the Black Archive History and Research Foundation of South Florida. In the first two chapters it was essential to employ a ‘history from below’ approach as both focused on marginalized communities and the complicated nature of race, ethnicity, and class. Oral histories strengthened this approach because marginalized communities can tell their narratives through oral interviews, which are able to capture not only
the ways in which these communities were disenfranchised, but also resisted this subjugation. In addition to oral histories, historical newspaper articles from the *Miami Herald*, the *Miami Times*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* are also utilized. Historical newspapers are useful in understanding popular, mainstream perspectives, and can reveal what the establishment at that time found significant. More importantly, they reveal biases and partisanship from editorial boards and newspaper publishers, whose perspectives shaped these mainstream beliefs, especially as it concerned race, ethnicity, and immigration in Miami.

**Conclusion**

The thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One examines the history of black Miami. It focuses much of it analysis on issues of class, public housing, and the devastating effects of the interstate highway system on Overtown, which was then the nucleus of black Miami. Chapter Two examines the effects of large-scale immigration from the Caribbean basin to South Florida. This chapter specifically examines the discrepancy between the privileged treatment of the Cuban exile community versus how Haitian refugees were treated by the federal government. The influx of Cuban exiles after Castro’s revolution in 1959 challenged some previously held notions about where people of color could and could not live under the auspices of Jim Crow and enduring postwar racism. It also posits that the arrival of 250,000 Cubans during the 1960 short circuited the civil rights movement for Miami’s black community. Chapter Three examines the history of policing in South Florida, with an emphasis on the segregated police force during WWII, and the integration of the force during the 1960s. It also explores the expansion of the carceral state and the impact that had on local law enforcement. The fourth and final chapter compares two of Miami’s most notorious riots, the Liberty City Riots (1968) and the McDuffie
Riots (1980). This chapter uses government reports and newspaper coverage to understand the scope of both riots and their lasting effects on Miami.

“do you suppose it may have been those/who didn't kill/the indians and mexicans/who didn't steal african peoples/halfway across the planet/who didn't loot our customs/cultures/religions/languages/labor and land/who didn't steal a continent/and claim that they discovered it/[Who Killed McDuffie?].”

In the course of the twentieth century Miami transformed from a frontier town at the edge of the Florida Everglades to a Pan-American city. By the 1970s in tandem with demographic changes brought on by globalization and the Cold War, the city of Miami employed its own brand of Pan-American racism as a technology of economic dependency and social control. White civic elites employed legal innovations in federal housing policy to maintain control over black residents, while using foreign policy, commerce and tourism to court non-American whites, particularly those from the Caribbean and Latin America. Further, in the post-civil rights era, Jim Crow did not disappear once it met its “legal demise”, rather it was modernized through the advent of a series of events and policies ushered in by an ethnic reordering which irrevocably shifted the balance of power in Miami. As a result, this process worsened the disenfranchisement of the city’s ethnically diverse black populace, which had always been at the bottom of its social and racial hierarchy.

However, for others this transformation eventually upended generations of white-Anglo rule and made possible the socio-political ascendancy of white Cuban influence and power. The English-speaking black community continued to shoulder the burden of this new Jim Crow, and watched in disbelief as recent newcomers enjoyed unparalleled access to much of what they had

been denied due to the color of their skin, leading to unresolved animosity and violent ethnic tensions, most notably the McDuffie uprising. These complex social interactions are important in unpacking the histories of these communities, and the social conditions which created South Florida’s tri-ethnic racial hierarchy. In order to understand this process, it is necessary to begin with Miami’s first major ethnic enclave, the Bahamians.

Ethnicity in Early Black Miami

From the beginning Miami and its immediate environment were a borderlands for the Caribbean, the American South, and Latin America. Bahamians arrived very early in Miami’s history, and were already economically and culturally integral in other parts of the state, especially Key West which had a vibrant Bahamian community as early as 1870.24 In the 1890s, the expansion of Henry Flagler’s Florida East Coast railway brought new modes of economic opportunity for both native blacks and black Bahamians who immigrated to the area.25 The Bahamas, a Caribbean island nation off the coast of South Florida was a British colony for most of its recorded history.26 As a result, Bahamians in Miami exerted a certain degree of control in their lives which their American counterparts struggled to do under Jim Crow’s white power structure, because they had the protection of the British Crown, insofar as they could appeal to the British government when local whites in Miami abused them and authorities turned a blind


25 It is important to note, the Bahamas still had an oppressive labor system, similar to sharecropping, which locked many into a cycle of poverty and indebtedness. See “‘I Am a Stranger Here’: Black Bahamians and the Garvey movement in Miami, Florida, 1920-1933” in Claudrena N. Harold's The Rise and Fall of the Garvey Movement in the Urban South, 1918-1942.

eye. Many settled in what became known as Coconut Grove, and also a small village known as Railroad Shop’s Colored Addition, the latter of which was torn down to make way for a “whites only,” fire station, school and park after World War II.²⁷ Others remained in Colored Town, essentially the first stop in Miami for those who racially coded as “negro,” “colored,” “mulatto,” or as “persons of color.” Julia Tuttle, considered the “Mother of Miami,” effectively created Colored Town by specifying in her land deed that the western part of Miami would serve as the primary area for “industry.” As such, it would be closed to tourists, and by requiring the black labor force to reside there, it would render them invisible to vacationing tourists. Miami’s physical layout reflects the fact that white capitalists needed a poor, black labor force at the turn of the twentieth century to build what would become known as the Magic City. However, labor and the tourist public would interact in on the most circumscribed situations.²⁸

Early on, issues arose between African Americans and Bahamians due to the employment of the islanders across the city to the detriment of native-born blacks.²⁹ This made inter-ethnic cooperation between Bahamians and African Americans strained in the early years. Both American-born blacks and whites viewed Afro-Bahamians as “ uppity,” while some Bahamians viewed their American counterparts as weak and subservient.³⁰ Ira Reid, captured the Bahamian view of 1920s/1930s black Miami in his work, *The Negro Immigrant* (1939). Interviewing a Bahamian immigrant who came to Miami in the early decades of the 20th century, his remarks

³⁰ Ibid., 80-81.
were typical of early Bahamian immigrants who found themselves at odds with their new country and countrymen:

Having passed the immigration and custom examiners, I took a carriage for what the driver called ‘Nigger Town’… How unlike the land where I was born. There Colored men dressed as gentlemen, here as ‘Niggers’. There policemen were dressed in immaculate uniforms, carried no deadly weapon save for a billy; here shirt sleeved officers of the law carried pistols and smoked and chewed tobacco on duty. Colored Miami certainly was not the Miami of which I had heard. It was a filthy backyard to the Magic City.  

Newly arrived Bahamians encountered violent racism, inadequate housing conditions, and police brutality. Radical Bahamian-born activist James Nimmo once bitterly quipped, “Coming to Miami was like coming into slavery.” Vagrancy laws, enforced by a racist police force brought many young Bahamian men into direct contact with the South’s dehumanizing and unequal justice system. “If you didn’t have a job they would lock you up. Farmers would come and bail you out and they would take you to their farms and work you for a period of time. The farmers would give you a minimum salary.”

Social and racial uplift organizations like the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) would come to serve as the backbone of the Afro-Bahamian community. The UNIA was a militant black organization founded by Marcus Garvey in 1914 in Jamaica, his native country. It emphasized Pan-African identity, independent black nationalism and a materialist economic self-sufficiency. The first chapter in Miami began in 1920, and quickly resonated with

33 Ibid., 65.
Bahamians whose experiences in the United States caused them to reimagine their identity and nation, refashioning both with Pan-African rhetoric straight from the papers of the *Negro World*. The UNIA made some inroads in Miami, although some tensions remained.

Nevertheless, by the 1930s African Americans and Afro-Bahamians were able to reach some accommodation as a result of living in the close proximity of Colored Town, which forced American blacks and islanders were forced to negotiate with one another to resist against the ravages of white supremacy together. While the exclusive societies did remain, those who came to represent Miami’s black community were a coalition of ethnically diverse men and women. They worked together toward a common goal of racial uplift and equal justice which in a number of ways was able to transcend ethnic conflicts when it mattered. However, more devastatingly, issues of class came to divide the black community, as middle-class blacks living in Colored Town overwhelmingly became the “race representatives,” and were able to make crucial decisions with the white civic elite, a power that affected poorer blacks in both positive and negative ways.

**Public Housing in Black Miami**

The “interdependency of race and economics,” as termed by NDB Connolly allowed some (not all) blacks a seat at the negotiating table. These black men and women were able to exercise, to an extent, certain levels of autonomy and control in their community, gaining enough influence and clout to participate in discussion with white civic elites about the fate of Colored

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34 Marcus Garvey’s the *Negro World* was the major newspaper publication of the UNIA for much of the organization’s history. Field officers from all over North America and the Caribbean contributed opinion pieces, as well as journalistic reports on racism and police brutality.

Town. However, it was not without its problems, as many of those who positioned themselves as the intermediary between the black community and the white civic elite did not necessarily have the community’s best interest at heart. The collusion of black elites and white public officials, both of whom worked together to weaken Colored Town through intentional municipal neglect had dire consequences, of which Colored Town would not recover.

From its inception, Colored Town lacked proper municipal facilities. As Colored Town’s population grew, the area experienced a severe housing shortage as a result. More disturbingly, the quality of available housing was at best poor, and at its worst was extremely unsafe and shoddily constructed. Historians researching Miami have focused at length on the proliferation of inadequate housing in South Florida for the black community. Paul S. George’s 1978 article “Colored Town: Miami’s Black Community, 1896-1930,” was one of the earlier attempts by scholars to examine housing conditions in Black Miami. George’s critique uses contemporary newspaper coverage to examine black efforts to acquire municipal services, access to land development, in addition to multiple requests for black police officers. As the black community fought for these small freedoms, public officials and the editorial sections of the local papers increasingly disparaged their efforts.\(^{36}\)

As Colored Town’s population continued to grow exponentially during the 1920s and 1930s, the overcrowded conditions in area worsened. Raymond A. Mohl’s “Trouble in Paradise: Race and Housing in Miami During the New Deal Era,” (1987) explores how New Deal era housing reforms took shape in Miami. Mohl uses government records from the Home Owner’s

Loan Corporation (HOLC) to demonstrate that the policies put forth by the Roosevelt administration reinforced segregation when applied by local officials in the South. The HOLC’s original purpose was to help low income homeowners to survive the Great Depression, however local public officials and the real estate community in Miami used the HOLC’s findings to effectively redline black residents. As a result, redlining hastened the decay of the urban city center and Colored Town. The rapid physical deterioration of the black inner city took place not just in Miami, but across the United States. Mohl effectively places Miami’s narrative in this context. Further, he illustrates the connection between inadequate housing and the urban uprisings that occurred as consequence.37

Mohl’s findings are indebted to the work of earlier historians, particularly Arnold Hirsch’s *Making the Second Ghetto* (1983). Hirsch wrote one of the earliest historical accounts of how the racially segregated city was not only maintained through government intervention, but expanded through these policy decisions as well. Social scientists, mostly sociologists, focused heavily on examining the black inner city in the 1960s and 1970s, while Hirsch’s fellow historians at the time researched the urban cityscape at the turn of the twentieth century, examining African Americans’ transition from slavery to segregation during the postbellum period, culminating in the first wave of the Great Migration (1900-1930). Breaking from this mold, Hirsch looks at the post-World War II era to understand the formation of the black ghetto and the second generation of the Great Migration that encountered it. Hirsch viewed Chicago as the pioneering city where the “second” ghetto was engineered, however the aforementioned

Raymond Mohl article clearly demonstrates that the collusion between the federal government, local public officials, and the real estate industry occurred in Miami as well.

Finally, N.D.B. Connolly’s “Colored, Caribbean, and Condemned: Miami’s Overtown District and the Cultural Expense of Progress, 1940-1970” (2006), delivers the most insight into how black residents in Colored Town both struggled and survived under ethnic and class-based tensions, urban renewal, and postwar suburbanization. Connolly’s tempers his analysis with economic and sociological data, though his emphasis is on using oral histories from individuals who grew up in Colored Town and remember what the area was like during this period. These individuals speak to Colored Town’s uniqueness, its cultural mixing across the African diaspora as Afro-Bahamians, Jamaicans, American blacks and others experienced love and loss in the community Connolly refers to as a “nation within a nation.” Connolly posits that Jim Crow unintentionally nurtured a black cohesion, though with some caveats – class in particular. Nevertheless, blacks in Colored Town worked together to survive under white supremacy, until a new postwar “nation-making project” modernized Jim Crow following World War II, irrevocably transforming Black Miami.

If Connolly had chosen instead to begin his study by examining Colored Town in the 1930s, it was clear that the process of modernizing Jim Crow began to take shape by 1937. That year Congress ended the Public Works Administration (PWA) housing program, the same year as the Liberty Square housing project finally became a reality in Miami. The newly created United States Housing Authority continued on in its stead and was arguably even more explicit about maintaining the practice of imposing segregation in order to create racially homogeneous

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38 Connolly, 8.
neighborhoods. Three years earlier, the Federal Housing Administration, created by an act of Congress in 1934, wrote segregation into national policy, relying on local officials to maintain the color line through a practice of keeping blacks in slum conditions, or moving them to unincorporated areas where municipal services were underserved at best, and scarce at worst.  

In Miami, this New Deal housing program provided white public officials an opportunity to deal with slum conditions in Colored Town (also known then as the Central Negro District, and later referred to as Overtown). The first step was to get rid of Good Bread Alley, a process that began as early as 1933. One black resident described the area to members of the Greater Negro Civic League: “If you didn’t live in Good Bread Alley, don’t go to Good Bread Alley.

Figure 2: "Colored Town" Image from the Florida Photograph collection, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Florida.

Police didn’t go into Good Bread Alley alone.”

Considered the worst section of Colored Town, Good Bread Alley, also known as "Perry Quarters," and derisively, "Buckets of Blood," was an area of land which housed a series of tenant quarters that were shoddy, with very little, if any amenities in the 168 units surveyed at the time. Very few had municipal garbage cans, none had bathroom facilities, and most depended on contaminated well water from a communal pump. The average weekly rent was $2.50, with landlords bringing in $420 a week, and approximately $21,840 a year. This meant that slum housing was a veritable goldmine for landlord, black or white, at the expense of the health and dignity of their tenants. White developers who crammed as many shotgun houses as possible onto available lots built Good Bread Alley. As the area continued to deteriorate, both black and white elites, through local and federal policy, argued that they had the right to clear the land to rid the area of poverty and disease.

In general, many of Colored Town’s buildings lacked electricity, hot water, and municipal services, as streets remained unpaved, there was no garbage collection, and contagious disease like tuberculosis were at near epidemic levels. Civic elites in their correspondence with federal officials used concerns about public health to justify moving the Liberty Square project five miles from the city center, towards the northwest section of Dade county. Communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis, influenza and syphilis were widespread in the area at the time. Reverend John E. Culmer explained to the Greater Negro Civic League in 1934: "...Every young person that I have buried during the last five years died of tuberculosis." However, rather than worrying about the effects of these diseases on the city’s vulnerable black population, Gramling

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40 John E. Culmer, "Good Bread Alley," Greater Miami Negro Civic League 1934, Black Archives, Miami, FL.
42 Ibid., 12.
noted that the real cause of concern was how these diseases would impact white Miamians, as “…the white people of Greater Miami draw their servants…from this cess-pool [sic] of disease.”

To put it matter of factly, white civic elites wanted to destroy Overtown and further expand the Central Business District, displacing blacks, thus forcing them elsewhere, away from the eyes of tourists and the visiting public. Public housing reform had less to do with helping blacks, and more to do with profits and maintaining white security.

Figure 3: From Architecture and Design: This issue presents a selection from the work designed in the office of Paist and Steward, architects 5, no. 15 (C) (August 1941).

At the time of Liberty Square's construction during the mid 1930s there were only four established black communities within or near the City of Miami: Colored Town, Black Coconut Grove, Brownsville, and Davis Subdivision. The proposed location for Liberty Square was few blocks east of Davis Subdivision, though it did not reside in any "recognized" territory designated specifically for blacks. The project's proposed location on twenty acres of

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43 Ibid., 11.
unincorporated Dade county land between Northwest 12\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th} Avenues, and 62\textsuperscript{nd} and 67\textsuperscript{th} Streets became an issue for the all-white Dade County Commission and white residents alike. One enraged citizen wrote in a letter, "Negro settlements are like bonfires during dry season. They spread like fury."\textsuperscript{44} In July 1935, County commissioners attempted to veto the Liberty Square project due to its proposed boundaries:

\begin{quote}
...the existence of such established recognized boundaries [between black and white communities] has to a large extent been responsible for the harmony which has existed between the whites and Negroes in this county... the location of said proposed negro colony...is separated from all existing negro settlements, is surrounded on three sides by densely populated white residential district, and is so located as to lower the assessed value of the property of several thousands of white home-owners... and realizing that ultimate development and expansion of the city of Miami, to the North, would be definitely retarded...\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

As a result, the project was moved to the western one twenty-acre block, west of the original site between Northwest 13\textsuperscript{th} and Northwest 15\textsuperscript{th} Avenues.\textsuperscript{46} The commission approved the plan after the relocation in 1935. This is officially when a black advisory board was created by Gramling. A separate committed was organized in order to name the project. They suggested "Utopia," or "Toomeyville," both of which were rejected by the directory of the Housing Division, Angelo R. Clas. Another name, Liberty City Gardens, was also rejected in favor of "Liberty Square."\textsuperscript{47} Another source of contention was the cost of the project. White residents

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 194.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 196.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 199-200.
were vocal about the inclusion of a pool “for negroes,” and other “unnecessary” amenities, especially with the available beachfront South Florida was so famous for. However, at the time, there were no recreational facilities, nor any beachfront available for black leisure activities.\textsuperscript{48} White developers wanted to finish the project with minimal costs. Building facilities that would convey any sort of comfort or “leisure” for black residents did not seem reasonable under Jim Crow sensibilities.

Soon after the dedication ceremony for the Liberty Square project, the Dade County Planning Council unveiled its “Twenty-Year Plan for Dade County.” While the plan included new recreational facilities such as “Colored Only” parks and swimming pools, it had much more insidious intent, expanding upon existing patterns of segregation to maintain black subjugation. This came in the form of Coral Gables developer George Merrick’s Negro Resettlement Plan. Merrick led the Dade County Planning Council as it sought support from the City of Miami in removing the Central Negro District and establishing three model towns far away from Miami's city center and business district. According to this plan, slum clearance would, "...effectively remove every Negro family from the present city limits,” as they impeded “logical white development.”\textsuperscript{49} In order for the city to achieve its planning goals through modernization, removing blacks from Overtown to Liberty Square and similar projects was “vitaly essential to [their] long-range Dade County Plan.”\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{48} Virginia Key Beach was designated as a “colored-only” beach, and officially open to the public eight years after Liberty Square was complete, in 1945. For a more detailed look at the "wade in" to desegregate South Florida's beaches, see Gregory Bush's \textit{White Sand, Black Beach: Civil Rights, Public Space, and Miami's Virginia Key} (2016).

\textsuperscript{49} Stuart, 190-191.

While the plan was enthusiastically supported by the *Miami Herald* and the Dade County Commission, which unanimously adopted the planning report, the Dade County Planning council felt it was important to gain support from black elites to create, what historian N.D.B. Connolly
has termed “a Caribbean utopia for Miami’s Negroes,” planners visited the Bahamas, Cuba, and other parts of the West Indies to envision what this “utopia” would look like for Miami’s ethnically diverse black population. The three model towns were to be self-sufficient and blacks would be able to live off the land as it “had soil that was either generally good for tree and vegetable purposes, or similar to the Bahamas Islands…” More importantly they would serve as a labor pool for white benefactors and further white development along South Florida’s beachfront from northern Dade County to the South of neighboring Broward County.  

It should not be hyperbolic to say that these city planners expected blacks to be no more than sharecroppers, subsisting off the land and still as impoverished if not more so as they had been in Colored Town. So, why did black elites come to support it?

“[The] environment in which our children are growing up is revolting to the educated, well-bred colored people of Miami.” Property owning black elites wished to segregate themselves from poorer blacks for a number of reason. Immediately concerned about the success of the Liberty Square project, which was the first of its kind in the South, black elites knew that it was too important to allow a “criminal element” to taint it. Leading black figures, including some of the wealthiest black men in the country who resided in Dade County, Kelsey Pharr and George Sawyer, proposed income restrictions to keep the poorest blacks from even living in the project, establishing an income ceiling that only the upper echelon of working blacks could afford. For example, only families that could afford to pay between $2.85 to $5.25 per week were allowed to rent.  

In many ways Liberty Square was structured as a halfway house for those

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51 Connolly, 124.
52 Stuart, 192-193.
53 Ibid., 126.
blacks on their way out of poverty, with dreams of the middle class. City planners like George Merrick had believed that Liberty Square would serve as the nucleus for “model” Negro towns, however it is clear that the construction of Liberty Square engendered decades of racial tension in Northwest Miami, becoming the nucleus of an expansive ghetto, following the construction of I-95, becoming a battleground for black racial politics that both the community and the city were unprepared for.

Unlike the shacks of Good Bread Alley in Colored Town, Liberty Square had more amenities and real municipal services and even landscaped parks. Whereas Colored Town had paper floorboards or dirt floors, Liberty Square had sturdy tiles (though they were not insulated, or reinforced), electric refrigerators, and indoor bathrooms. But these services and amenities were only for those who “deserved” them and had submitted themselves to the notion of “racial progress,” and the costs associated with the concept. Those who could not afford it or were outside the realm of black respectability politics were to remain in the worst parts of Overtown, where they had to contend with the complicity of black elites in their continued subordination by Jim Crow politics. It should have been clear then that white civic officials and black elites attempted to use federal policy and housing programs to shape the Greater Miami to their own liking. So, while the Negro Resettlement Plan never came to fruition, Liberty City and Colored Town, in addition to the emerging areas of Brown Sub (Browns Subdivision, or Brownsville) and Opa-Locka, these areas would remain squarely as the few places where blacks in Dade County were allowed live, without facing the wrath of the city, or disgruntled white property owners. Curtailing black residential expansion was seen as necessary to the city’s civic

54 Connolly, 128.
infrastructure as Overtown continued to be a thorn in everyone’s side, an impediment to “progress” in the new Pan-American city.

White Men’s Roads Through Black Men’s Homes

Figure 5: Aerial view of I-95 under construction in Miami (1960). Image from the Florida Photograph collection, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Florida.

The final nail in the coffin for Overtown (formerly Colored Town) was the arrival of the Dwight D. Eisenhower highway system in 1960. However, Overtown was not originally the intended route. The original route for the Interstate 95/395 interchange was supposed to follow the Florida East Coast railroad tracks, largely bypassing most of Overtown, however white resistance to the original route, and the long-standing goal of local planners to remove Overtown from near the city center. This eventually led to the selection of Overtown as the primary route, bisecting the community and irrevocably destroying it, something the white civic elite had wanted for almost three decades. The I-95 was to serve as the centerpiece of “the Capital of the Americas,” connecting South Florida’s suburbs to the downtown area, beaches, and airports,
bringing Miami to further prominence as an internal hub of commerce and trading, the progressive jewel in United States’ new globalist crown.

Following WWII, the Cold War created an imperative for the United States to deal with racial discrimination towards blacks, which the Soviet Union used as political fodder against the capitalist U.S. And as the United States attempted to win over the “hearts and minds of the Third World,” the continued treatment of African Americans, and other marginalized groups as second-class citizens did not go unnoticed. In 1955, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said that a major concern for Indians at the time, was that if they were to side with the Western world against the Russians, would then then “…eventually be treated as Negroes are in the United States?” Soviet operatives were already emphasizing racial injustice in propaganda literature they sent all over the globe, reminding the Third World that while the United States may present itself as a free democracy, not all who lived within its borders were truly free.

Urban renewal became an important tool in the cold-war era neoliberal project of progress insofar as it made possible, the destruction of “blighted” communities of color, and as it helped to “revitalize” the country, especially the South and its infrastructure through federal funding. The construction of I-95 was integral to this narrative, because it would effectively remove the ghetto and the negative connotations associate with it. The belief that automobility created a “model Negro,” was a common refrain among white liberals searching for a progressive way to address the plight of the poor living in slum conditions. The destruction of the black ghetto was supposed to be part of the impetus for the upward mobility of black people demonstrated to the world that the “…economic rise of the Negro in the United States is a
flattering example of Democracy in action.”55 The appearance of racial equality, real or not, was necessary to offset the political costs of Jim Crow during the Cold War.

It was in 1956 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act, though more popularly known as the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act. The interstate highway system became the most expansive public works project ever undertaken at that time. So, how did this impact the state of Florida, more broadly, and Miami superficially? The rising affluence of the middle class and greater leisure time for Americans after WWII combined to create a tourism boom for Sunbelt states like California and Florida especially. At the time, approximately 83 percent of long distance trips were conducted through automobile travel, and Florida. Made sure to accommodate this with an increase in highway construction. The vast majority of this growth was concentrated along the coast of Florida and the state’s southern counties.

Growth was an important characteristic of the postwar Sunbelt period. So was modern racism. Out of World War II emerged a new, modernized form of white supremacy, characterized by “benevolent” growth liberalism and globalism. With the rise of Pan-Americanism in this period, it was, in a multitude of ways, nothing more than an extension of American imperialism, and in Miami it became the overarching policy that governed the city, transforming both race and housing Miami. While this thesis has not fully unpacked the discursive reality of Pan-Americanism in Miami during the postwar period, it bares mentioning because it was through this policy that the City of Miami had to expand the definition of whiteness, and in doing so, jeopardize the color line. As a result, whites felt compelled to protect

55 Seiler, Cotten. ""So That We as a Race Might Have Something Authentic to Travel By": African American Automobility and Cold-War Liberalism." American Quarterly 58, no. 4 (2006), 1099.
their interests in the face of an increasingly globalized Miami, its Caribbean aesthetics and racial ambiguity too out of sync with the South’s black/white dichotomy.56

Urban renewal was the chosen method to maintain the South’s color line, while moving towards “progress.” The Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954, respectively established nationwide programs of slum clearance through urban renewal. In 1959, The Florida Supreme Court, with a four to three vote, ruled that a city government could condemn any slum area through eminent domain within an area considered to be within an urban renewal zone. The case, Grubenstein v. Urban Renewal Agency of the City of Tampa helped to strengthen eminent domain in the state of Florida. With enthusiastic backing from Florida Governor LeRoy Collins (1956-1961), the state of Florida gained access to funding from federal urban renewal programs. Governor Collins pushed urban renewal forward at the legislative level as well. In Miami, this allowed the city to condemn “blight,” which in turn allowed them to begin condemning areas in Overtown, in order to begin interstate highway construction.

This led to the creation of the Magic City Center Plan, an urban renewal agenda that would “unmake” the Jim Crow system in Miami and reimagine it through a racial liberalism, the center of which was the I-95/395 interchange; literally building on top of one of the most glaring reminders of Miami’s Jim Crow past, Overtown.57 Approximately 136 blocks of downtown Miami real estate, Overtown was, in the words of one Miami Herald columnist, “a blight on the glittering metropolis of Miami.”58 The only solution that made sense in the context of postwar

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57 Connolly, 182.
58 Ibid, 183.
liberalism was eminent domain and urban renewal. Black elites could not agree more. Willard T. Fair, who served as the president and Chief Executive Officer of the Urban League of Greater Miami defended I-95’s construction: “We are living in a progressive state. We cannot afford to take a backward step.”

African American leaders agreed with this particular idea of progress, as did organizations such as the NAACP, and more explicitly the local Urban League chapter because both groups firmly believed that urban renewal would pave the way for black prosperity through suburbanization and homeownership. Fair, made it clear where both he and the Urban League stood on the matter:

What we [the Urban League of Greater Miami] attempted to do once again was to make sure that as, we as a community responded to ah the need for us to develop and expressway system. You know and that's, that's part of progress...so it wasn't about race, it was about where you were located because of race...its expedient and in the best interest of the larger community to build its connective system called highways and byways, and roadways. We lived in those cores because of racism and that's how we got impacted, not because they were trying to get rid of us, but we stood in the way of progress...  

Black leaders actively sold urban renewal to black homeowners and residents in Overtown. Urban renewal was more than revitalization, they argued that it was the answer to black suburban homeownership with fewer “concrete monsters,” more green lawns and single-family homes. They may have argued this point more persuasively due to Dade County’s urban renewal program donating handsomely to their organization. The Urban League of Greater Miami received approximately $56,000 in payouts from the federal government. City officials offered low-income families federal relocation payments as well, and access to FHA backed

mortgages. Black businesses in the path of I-95 were promised both state and federal assistance. Further most homeowners took any federal money at a loss, as the money they were paid was not nearly as much as their homes were worth or the land on which the houses were constructed. Over the course of the next decade the number of people displaced from Overtown rose to nearly 20,000. They were absorbed into the Northwest area of unincorporated Dade County, which was suffering from its own growing slum condition. Those who had once owned their property in Overtown, now became members of a landless tenantry, paying rent for homes and apartments that were already deteriorating from shoddy workmanship and poor materials. Starting all over again, especially for older individuals, was hard. Dorothy Graham, a former resident of Overtown explained:

Figure 6: Miami Model City Program (1966). The Model City Program was created under the federal government’s 1966 Cities Demonstration and Metropolitan Development Act. Image from the Florida Photograph collection, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Florida.

61 “The “Model Neighborhood Area” was bounded by Northwest 79th Street, the Airport Expressway, Northwest 37th Avenue and Interstate 95. The idea was to concentrate money and effort into blighted neighborhoods to
I have never caught up financially. It came through, it took what you had, you had to start all over again, and at the time that I started over, I was too old to start over again, trying to get comparable living accommodations. You never...finally I accepted it...it just [sort] of wrenched you apart, they didn't cut you apart, you just wrenched apart.62

White landlords who owned property in Overtown fared much better, making upwards of a $100,000 or more, allowing them to purchase property in the areas where displaced persons from Overtown moved, namely Liberty City, Brownsville, and Opa-Locka. Some 12,000 residents fled Overtown in the early years of the interstate highway project. According to one
historian’s estimates, by 1970 whites collected 92 percent of rent in Liberty City’s suburbs. Further, they owned 97 percent of the businesses. What little capital black Miami had, was now in the hands of white slumlords, no different than it had been during the Jim Crow era.

Conclusion

In summary, Miami fell to a progressive growth liberalism that ultimately sealed the community of Overtown’s demise. The interstate highway system and urban renewal iniatives transformed most urban communities following the Second World War. In effect, blacks became

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casualties of “progress and eminent domain.”63 The continuities between state sponsored Jim Crow law and the later Pan-American progressivism is hard to deny. This is evidenced most tellingly by the city of Miami’s attempt to destroy Good Bread Alley and remove blacks entirely from the city center out of a Jim Crow sensibility on one hand, while less than thirty years later it bulldozed through Good Bread Alley to build I-95, becoming a symbol of a new regional identity and the power of Cold War liberalism and progress.

This emphasis on neoliberal progressivism found new allies in arriving Cuban exiles as Miami transitioned from a world defined by Jim Crow and its proximity to the Anglophone Caribbean world to one immersed in the follies of Cold War politics. Miami had never fit comfortably within the expectations of the Deep South’s paradigm due to its interactions most notably with Afro-Bahamians, however the increase in Spanish speaking residents during the period following the Second World War further complicated matters and disrupted the city's racial binary. The arrival of Cuban exiles in large numbers latinized Miami, creating a racial climate unique to the city. While these demographic changes challenged Miami's existing color line, it also perpetuated oppressive conditions for blacks in a number of ways. In Miami's quest to fashion itself as a progressive global city in the postwar period, it worked to accommodate tourists and new residents from Latin America, while leaving the area's blacks to fall behind.

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63 Connolly, 40.

“who didn't bomb the japanese/vietnamese and boriqua too/do you think it might have been those/who didn't kill at/attica/watts/dc/detroit/newark/el barrios/at jackson state, at southern u/at the algiers motel [who killed McDuffie?].”

Cubans

"I believe that there is no country in the world including any and all the countries under colonial domination, where economic colonization, humiliation and exploitation were worse than in Cuba, in part owing to my country's policies during the Batista regime,” president John F. Kennedy, speaking to Algerian-French journalist Jean Daniel a month before his assassination, discussed how the foreign policy blunder under Eisenhower by supporting Cuban President Fulgencio Batista y Zaldivar, whose strong opposition to communism made him a likely ally to the U.S., but whose military coup in 1952 made him a unpopular despot and dictator to his own people.

He [Batista] turned Democratic Cuba into a complete police state—destroying every individual liberty. Yet our aid to his regime, and the ineptness of our policies, enabled Batista to invoke the name of the United States in support of his reign of terror. [The Eisenhower] Administration spokesmen publicly praised Batista—hailed him as a staunch ally and a good friend—at a time when Batista was murdering thousands, destroying the last vestiges of freedom, and stealing hundreds of millions of dollars from the Cuban people, and we failed to press for free elections.66

66 Ibid.
Fidel Castro's successful overthrow of Batista and his right wing authoritarian government in 1959 would transform Cuba's relationship with the United States, a country which had continuously intervened in the island nation's economic and political affairs since the Spanish-American War. The revolution provoked retaliatory measures by the U.S. government, including a trade embargo, and most notably the unsuccessful 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion by U.S. backed Cuban exiles. The failed invasion helped to solidify Castro's position and popular support at home. It also strengthened the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union. By late 1961 Castro had declared himself a communist.

Cubans with ties to Batista's regime, including, but not limited to, high-ranking government officials, military officers, political leaders and family members, fled the island soon after Batista left, fearing torture, imprisonment, and death. Two years later nearly 250,000 Cubans had entered the United States, with most relocating to Dade County. This was due to the city's close proximity to the island, and the Cuban Refugee Emergency Center which was established in Miami using $1 million from John F. Kennedy's Contingency Fund under the Mutual Security Act (1951). Kennedy also set up a Cuban Refugee Program, with a budget of approximately $4 million, which also helped with resettlement.

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67 There was a continual U.S. military occupation of the island since the late 1800s (Spanish-America War). Most presidents were supportive of the U.S., at least in public due to the U.S. sugar lobby which enriched the island, though that wealth was mostly concentrated in the upper echelons of Cuban society.
69 The Mutual Security Act replace the Marshall Plan, its main imperative was to contain the spread of communism in poorer, developing countries. The Act was signed into law by President Harry S. Truman. The plan offered increased funding and military assistance to democratic nation seeking to mitigate the rise of communism in their own country. It was through this plan that the United States hoped to curtail communism and encourage more capitalist economies globally.
70 Ibid., 168-169.
Cubans were resettled both in South Florida and outside of it, though the federal government incentivized those who were willing to move away from Miami.71 Most chose to remain however, because they believed they would be able to return Cuban.72 What made this policy unique was that this was the first time in U.S. history the federal government did not use refugee camps to deal with mass immigration and political refugees.73 Historian Melanie Shell-Weiss notes this may be due, in part, to the negative experience of Hungarians in the camps during the early 1950s. More importantly, however, Cuban arrivals viewed themselves as "exiles" rather than refugees or immigrants and believed that it was only a matter of time until they returned back to the island once Castro was deposed. As a result, the federal government worked closely with local aid agencies like the Cuban Refugee Emergency Center to ensure that their stay, which many believed would be only temporary, was comfortable. In addition, the international optics of successfully relocating Cuban exiles, most of whom were "fleeing the atrocities of communism," worked in the United States' favor.

72 Ibid., 506.
73 Shell-Weiss, 171.
Not to be outdone, the local government welcomed Cuban arrivals with certain initiatives as well, which local blacks would take notice of in relation to their own second-class status. The federal government program worked with groups such as the Florida State Department of Public Welfare, the Catholic Welfare Bureau, and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. These groups assisted in providing food, housing, and employment for Cuban exiles in Dade County and elsewhere across the state.74 Miami high schools began offering Spanish-language classes, training courses, and the City of Miami offered day and night courses on local traffic rules and regulations.

74 These groups also took care of over 8,600 unaccompanied children who were sent ahead by their parents, but were unable to reunite with them after the cancellation of direct flights from Cuba following the disastrous Cuban missile crisis in October of 1962. An additional 14,000 were brought over as part of the undercover Operation Pedro Pan. It was operated through a coalition of the federal government and various Catholic and welfare agencies over a two-year period from 1960-1962.
The infrastructure for this humanitarian effort was in place long before the Cold War or the Cuban Revolution. Beginning in the early 1930s, Miami and Miami Beach began courting wealthy Cuban tourists. This was influenced by early Cuban exiles who moved due to the regime of President Gerado Machado y Morales, a Cuban dictator in the mid-1920s. As Miami transformed from a whites-only haven for Northern clientele to a diverse, pre-dominantly Spanish-speaking Pan-American Gateway to the (Latin) Americas, the white civic elite began to establish multicultural programs to accommodate this transformation for their own financial gain.

However, this diversification, or more aptly Latinization of Dade County did not encourage city officials to improve the plight of Caribbean-born, English-speaking blacks or their African American counterparts who were already stateside. As historian Chanel N. Rose rightfully notes, civil rights organizations and black community leaders took it upon themselves to gain certain concessions due to the white civic elites' arbitrary accommodation to Latinos, even those who were darker skinned and who could be considered 'black'. As former European colonial possessions, islands in the Caribbean have historical social identities which I argue made Miami's twentieth century triadic racial hierarchy possible. The centuries long construction of race produced categories through which new social relations were spawned between white Europeans, indigenous peoples, and African slaves.

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75 This exodus was small in comparison to exodus after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, though their wealth and connections make it important to mention here.
This racial classification is found throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and is part of a system termed by Peruvian anthropologist Anibal Quijano as the "coloniality of power." People of African descent faced discrimination similar to those in the United States. Because white, and white passing Latinos, particularly Cubans, have benefitted from the marginalization of black people in their own country for centuries, Jim Crow Miami was not a new phenomenon, rather a familiar system which they could not only benefit from, but uphold and maintain, even to the detriment of other Spanish speaking Latinos, especially non-Cubans. Further, within the triadic racial hierarchy in Miami it is important to acknowledge there are a multitude of ethnic and cultural identities. So, to invoke the category of African-American for example, obscures the ethnic and cultural differences of Bahamians, Haitians, and Afro-Latinos, etc. as does the category of Latino. Quijano’s notion of “coloniality of power” is a useful theory as it places the making and unmaking process of race in the United States within the racial hierarchies created by European colonialism. The social problems of Cubans, African Americans, Bahamians, and Haitians were created by diverse historical experiences on one hand, and the opportunities and disadvantages created by the Cold War on the other.

While other theoretical frameworks of race and ethnic identity in the social sciences and humanities tend to focus on the degree of assimilation an ethnic minority has undergone while living in the United States, coloniality helps to frame these processes as part of U.S. empire and the extension of its global power. An example of this is the use of the Monroe Doctrine and President Theodore Roosevelt’s corollary to the doctrine, which dominated the Caribbean and

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Latin America, exerting economic and political control in a host of countries, most notably Cuba and Puerto Rico. The Latino-Caribbean experience in the United States differs for both Cuban and Puerto Ricans. For instance, why have Cubans been able to succeed as arguably the most powerful minority ethnic enclave, while Puerto Ricans continue to experience neo-imperialism at the hands of the U.S.?78

And what of blacks, both American and not quite, living in the United States as second-class citizens? One could argue that they occupy a quasi-colonial status. Segregated and discriminated against, blacks have been called a “colony within a nation.” Quijano does not explore that African Diaspora in the U.S. in his texts, however I posit that blacks living in the ghetto are subjects under domestic or internal colonialism in a nation dominated by elites who have created conditions which continue to subjugate them. This concept is neither new nor unique, as black power theorists like Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael) have said as much, as did Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., both of whom represent two very opposing positions on the civil rights binary (militant black power vs. nonviolent interracial cooperation).79 While the colonial status of blacks (of varying ethnicities) remained so in Miami, for Cubans exiles, their alliance with whites allowed them, to a certain degree, escape the kind of subordination Puerto Ricans and other Latinos faced; and it surely protected them in a way not possible for blacks at the time.

78 Robert Chrisman, "THE CASE FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF PUERTO RICO." The Black Scholar 9, no. 2 (1977), 49.
This power was predominately economic. Cold War policy made sure that Cuban exiles were a success story in order to make them a symbol of the superiority of capitalism. As the U.S. worked to appeal to the “hearts and minds of the Third World,” they gave over a billion dollars in aid to the Cuban Refugee Program to ensure the success of the Cuban exile community to the detriment of Miami’s black residents. While there were a number of legislative successes in the postwar period, most notably the Brown v. Board decision (1954), the Voting Rights Act, and the Civil Rights Act, the U.S. government’s acquiescence to civil rights reforms was out of a fear that segregation would invalidate its claims to a moral high ground as the leader of the “democratic free world.” This thesis is asserted most cogently by Gerald Horne in what historian Erik McDuffie terms the “Horne thesis” in his examination of Horne’s scholarship entitled: “Black and Red: Black Liberation, The Cold War, and the Horne Thesis,” (2011). Horne concludes that anticommunism and white supremacy worked together to shape the trajectory of freedom movements globally during the Cold War. In the U.S. this created a rupture in black life while simultaneously advancing yet impeding the black freedom movement.  

While multiple scholars have advanced a similar argument, Horne’s thesis and scholarship challenges the notion by more recent neo-Cold War scholarship from Mary Dudziak, Thomas Borstleman, and Manfred Berg that the Cold War was beneficial to the Civil Rights movement. Horne asserts in his work Fire this Time (1995) that there were political and

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personal costs from the U.S. government’s anticommunists raids on black radicals.\textsuperscript{82} The removal of black radicals such as Claudia Jones from the political stage, and the weakening of black communist organizations created an ideological vacuum that was ultimately filled by the likes of the Nation of Islam and the Black Panther Party, both of which rejected interracialism and embraced a hyperblack masculinity and “muscular nationalism.” Anticommunism hysteria further weakened mainstream, middle class civil rights organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).\textsuperscript{83}

In Miami, anti-communist hysteria during the McCarthy era greatly weakened the civil rights struggle in South Florida, notes historian Raymond A. Mohl in his work, “\textit{South of the South?}” Jews, Blacks, and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960.\textsuperscript{84} The NAACP was threatened and intimidated by the FBI and local authorities. Miami passed its own anti-communist ordinance, which brought the NAACP under intensified scrutiny as a procommunist group, greatly undermining its activities and stymieing any move toward militancy or left-leaning activism. In its place the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) headed by an interracial coalition of white Jewish activists and Bahamians-Americans escalated “militant” activities by pushing for school desegregation, voter registration drives, and organizing lunch counter sit-ins. In effect, McCarthyism was used to discredit the work of civil rights activist as communist. However, the influx of Cuban exiles fleeing from Castro’s communist Cuba became an opportunity for the government at all levels (federal, state, and local) to assist Spanish speaking

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 11-12.
Latinos of European descent in successfully acclimating to their new environment, and this included making the color line less rigid. The byproduct of the Kennedy administration’s emphasis on civil rights specifically for Cuban exiles in Miami allowed groups such as CORE and the NAACP to claim moderate success, but also further marginalized Miami’s black community as structural equality continued to be pervasive.

This is exemplified by the fact that blacks continued to live in substandard housing in over-policed communities, the Cuban enclave was quickly becoming a model minority pitted against the black community, assimilating into the upper echelons of Miami society, from boardrooms to the best restaurants and nightclubs, Spanish soon became the language of power and political currency in South Florida as Cubans became ascendant.

[The] entire tone of the city, the way people looked and talked and met one another, was Cuban. The very image the city had begun presenting of itself…was that of pure revolutionary Havana, as perceived by Americans… There were Cubans in the board rooms of the major banks, Cubans in clubs that did not admit Jews or blacks…

Cuban immigration to South Florida additionally coincided with the rise of globalization and Miami’s emergence as a world city. The Cuban enclave was, “an integral and essential part of a realigned, international, urban growth machine.” The 1970s saw the acceleration of globalization processes, and certain cities became linked by global financial networks, including Miami. The foundation it set with its Pan-American growth strategy, and its proximity to the Caribbean and Latin American markets made the city attractive to multinational corporations.

While some of these corporations were Latin American, the vast majority were North American,

87 Ibid., 93.
but took an interest in Miami in order to expand into the growing Latin American market. As a result, they sought out Spanish-speaking Latino employees to be the brokers for these business dealings, thus helping to expand an emerging first generation Cuban professional class that could succeed both inside and outside the ethnic enclave.88

However, it is important to examine federal government policy which specifically impacted the Cuban enclave at the local level.89 Anywhere Cubans settled in large numbers, the Small Business Administration (SBA) disproportionately gave loans to Cubans, while discriminating against blacks and Puerto Ricans. In Miami between 1968 and 1979, the SBA gave Cubans 66% of its total loans, while 8% were given to blacks.90 Between 1961 and 1974 the federal government gave 1.3 billions dollars in assistance to Cubans, which scholars note, is close to half of the U.S. total foreign aid to Brazil in a 38 year period (1945-1983).91 By the late 70s, however the Cuban Refugee program was phased out, though its successes continue to this day. This change impacted the hundreds of thousands of Mariels who would come in 1980. Pre-1980 Cubans were not perceived as a burden by the federal government, but Mariels who came in the landmark year of 1980, and those that came after were less educated, poor, and darker-

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88 For a more in-depth look at this discussion of globalization and Miami’s emergence as a world city see Jan Nijman’s Miami: Mistress of the Americas (2011).
89 In Miami, Cubans mainly settled first in Little Havana and Hialeah in the western part of Dade County. A number of garment factories near Hialeah turned the neighborhood from an all-white working class suburb, into a bustling Cuban city by the 1980s. The cities of West Miami and Sweetwater also became integral centers of Cuban life and influence by the 1980s as well. While Cubans were not barred from living in predominately white Anglo areas the way blacks were, they chose to self-segregate. For a deeper analysis of Cuban residential patterns see: Ramon Grosfoguel and Chlo S. Georas, "Coloniality of power; and racial dynamics: Notes toward a reinterpretation of Latino Caribbeans in New York City," Identities, 113. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2000.9962660
90 Ibid., 114.
skinned in comparison to the earlier exiles.\textsuperscript{92} Reporter for El Nuevo Herald, Mirta Ojito a light skinned Mariel spoke openly about the discrimination that she and other Mariels faced:

Being a Marielita…is different to being a Cuban in Miami. I feel first of all Cuban, not specifically Marielita, But I can’t deny that I left Cuba in 1980 and that sets me apart from other people that came here at the beginning of the Revolution…being a Marielita was hard at the beginning. A lot of people didn’t understand us, didn’t care for us, we were different. We were darker. Some of us were black, poorer people, working class.\textsuperscript{93}

Ojito left Cuba during the first wave of Marielitos, between April and early May of 1980. A woman and fair-skinned, she represents \textit{Los Rezagados}, or those left behind who stayed after the Revolution, but had never rally accepted it and longed to be with family who left for Miami. \textit{Los Rezagados} were the majority of exiles coming off the boat early on. However, those who came after, \textit{Los Desencantados} (the disenchanted), \textit{Los Embullados} (those whose were carried away by the mood), \textit{Los Secuestrados} (the kidnapped ones) and finally \textit{La Escoria} (the scum, criminals) the majority of whom were rejected by the Cuban establishment and largely the United States, particularly \textit{La Escoria}. “The people that left in 1959 or immediately after were in a better economic situation in Cuba. So of course, they tended to be white and better educated and they didn’t quite understand the people who were coming here.” \textsuperscript{94}

Andres Santana, who went North to New York instead of Miami represents \textit{Los Desencatados}, though his time in the United States made him less critical of Cuba and Castro as he encountered old guard exiles: “They were surprised that we were all in such good health.

\textsuperscript{92} Mariels are named for the Mariel Harbor, which is where Cuban exiles already living in Miami sailed to pick up those wishing to leave Cuba in 1980. Approximately 125,000 Cubans entered the U.S. in the first six months of 1980 alone.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 297-298.
They were also surprised that none of us had tuberculosis. They couldn’t believe it. And that’s where they began to ask me a series of such stupid questions about what was happening in Cuba…like they didn’t know Cuba had television…they were at the point of asking me if it was true they killed people in the streets. (Hoots) The rubbish they asked.”95 The disconnect between those who escaped the revolution and those who lived through it negatively affected family as well. “…my older sister now lives in Miami. But she’s old-guard, like most of the Cubans who live in Miami. I don’t like speaking to her much because she has a rather backward mentality.”96

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95 "Andres Santana" in Lynn Geldof's Cubans: Voices of Change, (New York: St. Martin, 1992), 310
96 Ibid., 312
discrimination, job insecurity, and eventually bankruptcy, something unheard of in communist Cuba:

I began to suffer, not as a Cuban, but as a human being… I don’t care where they are born, or about their race, and I owe a lot of that to my education in Cuba. So, I began to see that hatred they have of Hispanics, that lack of acceptance of Hispanics or blacks or poor people…in Cuba although there were bad moments, it was much different and more beautiful in the end.97

For a number of reasons, darker skinned Mariels lacked state sponsorship, financial support, and the social resources available to earlier white exiles.98 While familial connections are of obvious importance in making the transition to a new country, the importance of race should not be overlooked. Anti-blackness within the white Cuban enclave made it difficult for nonwhite Mariel’s to remain in Miami. The discrimination they faced, along with their perception in the media made an alliance with white Cubans difficult. Their status as “Cuban-Haitian entrant” married them in the eyes of white Cubans who did not want their success tarnished by La Escoria. “I have yet to see Cuban mulattos or blacks who occupy high jobs in Cuban-owned businesses in Miami. The individuals who are in control of the Spanish language media here and other so called Cuban community leaders don’t talk about discrimination, but they practice it.”99 Demographic studies demonstrate that between 1980-1990, the majority of non-white Mariel’s lived outside of Miami. They migrated to Tampa, New York, and Los Angeles, while white Cubans in those metropolitan areas migrated to Miami.100

97 Ibid., 312-313.
100 Skop, 462.
This feeling of displacement, or not feeling as if you belonged was common for non-white Mariels. Caught between two worlds, their experience in the U.S. seemed to confirm what Castro had told his people back in Cuba, that America was racist towards the darker skinned, towards blacks. Their Cuban identity, coupled with the language barrier caused them to have little in common with native blacks. They would not be absorbed into Miami’s black community, nor did they want to be. For many non-white Mariels, a lack of community would remind them of what remained behind in Cuba, those things they had lost: “…I don’t know how people would accept me if I went back for good,” Santana begins when asked if he would ever go back to Cuba. “I feel as if I have committed a crime, having gone and left my family, my friends, the places I love so much. My country.”

Haitians

Cubans were not the only ethnic group impacted by United States Cold War policy. During the 1960s, under President John F. Kennedy, there were several unsuccessful invasions of Haiti, similar to the more widely known Bay of Pigs failure in Cuba in 1961. These invasions by Haitian exiles were backed by the State Departments Special Operations Branch and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Unable to successfully overthrow President Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier, the United States began to encourage Haitians to immigrate. Similarly, to the first wave of Cuban exiles, those in the upper classes and professional classes who were opposed to Duvalier and his regime were the first to leave as the had the wealth and means to do so. Many

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101 Geldof, 315.
would go on to become permanent residents in the U.S. while others would move to Canada, France, and various countries in West Africa.

However, following Kennedy's assassination in 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson changed course on the policy to focus more on combating communism in Southeast Asia. While Duvalier's dictatorship was problematic, he was just as anti-communist as the U.S. and had backed the country against Fidel Castro, making him less of an immediate priority to Johnson than Ho Chi Minh. So, when the first boatload of Haitian refugees arrived in 1963—they were less wealthy than their earlier counterparts who had arrived via airplanes in the 1950s—they were summarily sent back by the INS, their claims of political asylum rejected.

Between 1977 and 1981 around sixty thousand Haitians arrived in South Florida. These Haitian “boat people” were derided and rejected by native whites and the mainstream media as diseased degenerates. Outlets like the Miami Herald emphasized the group’s threat to the wellbeing of metropolitan Miami. The Herald’s coverage evoked fears about the sheer number of Haitian refugees, their efforts to evade the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and most importantly, their blackness. Before 1977, Haitian immigration to the United States first began in earnest with the consolidation of power under dictator President Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier in 1957.

Haiti’s government was for most of its history rarely democratic in practice and rife with government corruption, leaving it unable to protect the majority of its citizens, who remained

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103 Yven Destin, “Modifying Haitian Images in the Miami Media from 1979 through 2010 in Advent of Social Media,” (Dissertation: University of Pittsburg 2016), 98.
104 Prior to 1957 about five hundred Haitians permanently emigrated to the United States. These numbers would swell to the hundreds of thousands in the coming decades, with the image of dark-skinned "boat people" washing up on South Florida's shores seared into public memory.
poor and subject to the rule of a few prosperous elites. The Duvalier regimes, however are
notable for their violence and repression against their citizens, and the use of the infamous
Tonton Macoutes, a special operations unit within the Haitian paramilitary force created in 1959
by Papa Doc. Jan Mapou, an author and playwright who escaped Haiti in 1969 after he and his
organization, Sosyete Koukouy (Society of Fireflies) were attacked by the Tonton Macoutes for
promoting Haitian Kreyol, which angered the Duvalier government, spoke about his experience
at the Fort Dimanche prison, which sheds light on the genuine persecution faced by Haitians,
which the U.S. government ignored as it sought to spin Haitian refugees as economic asylum
seekers coming from an allied nation.

The were twelve of us and they put us in a keep and took us straight to Fort Dimanche.
Fort Dimanche [pause] is the saddest story of my life. And I was there for four months.
They never asked me questions. They never asked me…I never knew why I was there,
who put me there. They just grabbed me and put me I this cell…we were seven to start
and then at a certain time we were twenty-three. When we went there, there were a lot of
young people they locked up…Duvalier had started arresting a lot of people…everybody
was afraid of everybody…this is the type of environment they created in order to scare
people and they were killing them…

Jean, another Haitian refugee who came to the United States in 1978, was interviewed by
sociologists Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick about his experience in Haiti and the terror and
persecution which influenced him (and thousands of others) to make the journey to the U.S.:
“…A Macoute…had taken one of my brothers [and] when he couldn’t tell them where I was they
took him to a park in front of everybody and killed him. I spent two or three months hiding, and

105 “Interview with Jan Mapou,” Haitian Diaspora Oral Histories, University of Miami Libraries Digital Collection,
http://merrick.library.miami.edu/cdm/ref/collection/asm0085/id/196
then I went Northwest to find a boat that wasn’t hard, but I had to get the $1500 for the passage.\textsuperscript{106}

![Image](image.png)

\textit{Figure 9: “A group of Haitian migrants is approached by a U.S. Coast Guard Ship,” (1990). U.S. Coast Guard Historian’s Office.}

Boat captains charged twice the airfare rate, meaning those who wished to make the journey and had little means to do so, sold everything they had, including land that had been in the family since the revolution ended in 1804.\textsuperscript{107} By 1980, the military commandant of the Northwest Province began receiving kickbacks, and he allowed outmigration to continue with little interference on the part of Duvalier’s government. The boats that left the shores of Cap-Haitien on the North coast of the island were packed past capacity, making an already dangerous journey in shark infested waters even more tenuous. Thousands of Haitians would continue to travel to South Florida in the hopes of receiving asylum. They would continue to be turned away.

\textsuperscript{106} Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, \textit{City On the Edge: The Transformation of Miami}, (Berkeley, Calif.: University of Press of California, 1993), 50.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, 50.
Soon, they would come to be seen as harbingers of disease, souring the American public to their plight. During the 1970s, tuberculosis was the main cause of concern, while in the early 1980s, the Centers for Disease Control identified Haitians as one of the primary groups at risk for HIV/AIDS.  

Additionally, Haitians were left out of certain immigration legislation. For instance, when Congress passed an immigration law, The Refugee Act of 1980, which permitted a number of Central Americans to obtain legal immigration status, a Haitians were completely ignored. Later, when a law was passed specifically for Haitians, known as the Cuban-Haitian Entrant Act of 1980 (H.R. 7978), the INS delayed issuing regulations on who could qualify for the measures. Through advocacy a small number of Haitians did gain short-term benefits. In 1980, refugees who arrived before October 10 of that year were granted the same terms as Cubans exiles who had also come to the country prior to that date. After that, newly arrived Cubans exiles would continue to receive that same treatment while Haitian refugees were discriminated against once again. In 1982 a group of Haitian refugees who had been detained by the INS were ordered to be released by a federal court, though subsequent refugees were detained and not released from detention center their requests for asylum rejected at a historic rate. Additionally, the Coast Guard continued to intercept boats before they left Haitian waters, and those refugees who did arrive safely to South Florida’s shores were incarcerated at a disproportionate rate. The bias toward Haitian refugees in comparison to Cuban exiles is painfully obvious.

110 Ibid., 114.
Unlike the Marielitos, Haitians did not have ethnic or familial networks on which they could readily rely once they made it ashore. Neither the city of Miami or federal government were willing to sponsor Haitians as had been done with earlier waves of Cuban exiles, and the first initial wave of Mariel’s. The INS, citing Haiti’s poverty, argued that Haitian refugees were not fleeing political persecution, rather their migration was economic in nature, portraying them as migrant laborers seeking economic refugee away from the Western hemisphere’s poorest nation. The various kinds of government programs available to refugees are much more lucrative than the minimal assistance offered to labor migrants, making that distinction very devastating to Haitians seeking refuge from Duvalier. Advocates for the Haitians cited the brutal regimes they came from as their true motivation for fleeing. Haitian arrival en masse between 1977-1981 coincided with an economic recession, which contributed to a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment, with many Americans in Miami and nationwide viewing immigrants as competition for what was perceived as job scarcity. If the government was to allow another stream of foreigners so soon after Mariel, how would that impact white Miami? Already frustrated by the mass exodus of Mariel’s to Miami, the average white Miamians felt under siege in an increasingly foreign land that had once felt like home.

Black leaders, to a certain extent, were more supportive of Haitians than whites at the time. Writing in late 1963, the black newspaper the Miami Times addressed how poorly Haitian refugees were treated, while asylum seeking Cubans were welcomed with open arms. The article, “Miami Welcomes Cubans, Boots Haitian; Cubans? Si? Haitians? No?,” asked a question which sheds light on how coloniality worked in Miami, increasing the access of Cuban exiles, while limiting and restricting non-Latino blacks. While the article concedes than 10,000 refugees could
pose an economic burden, mass Cuban migration has impacted the city as well, and both the city and federal government continued to support Cubans unconditionally.111

While prominent black leaders both national and local, defended Haitian refugees and advocated for their well-being and the creation of a “Little Haiti,” some segments of the black community viewed Haitians as competition for manual labor jobs. Seen as docile and subservient to white employers, willing to work for any wage. Many had also accepted the pariah status of Haitians, depicted in the media, as fact, especially as the HIV/AIDS crisis continued to ravage the group. Haitians began calling Liberty City, the area in Miami with the largest concentration of African Americans as ‘Black Power’ and refused to live there if they could help it.112 Haitians did not melt into the larger black community, instead becoming their own ethnic enclave. Unlike the Bahamians before them, a group which eventually came together with the native black population to create a rich, cultural hybridity forged by the crucible of Colored Town, Haitians and native black Miamians were worlds apart.

Conclusion

Nineteen-eighty proved to be a landmark year in South Florida’s history. The monolingual white majority began to see their primacy slip, as Cubans became ascendant, their size and political clout in Washington leaving the white Anglo community disenchanted with the transformation of their city, causing many to flee North. However, the alliance between powerful, wealthy whites and the new Latino majority continued uninterrupted, though it had shifted to favor Cubans overwhelmingly who were newly empowered by Washington and the Regan administration. The success of the Mariel boat lift in comparison to the Haitian refugee

112 Portes, 55.
crisis speaks to this. However, the treatment of non-white Mariel’s should give pause to the idea of the successful monolithic Cuban enclave.

Non-white Mariel’s were forced outside of the enclave because of the color of their skin and their reception as degenerates and criminals. Rejected by white Cubans, non-white Mariel’s were rejected by Miami’s black community as well, and they too rejected the black community in return. Most would leave Miami and resettle elsewhere. In what has undoubtedly become a quadratic racial hierarchy, blacks of every ethnicity in Miami still occupy the lowest rung. Decades of discrimination by Anglo whites and now white Cubans with the added pressures of immigration and job competition—among other factors—brought Miami’s black community to its breaking point. Jobs and new housing could not absorb the influx of Mariels and Haitians. Miami’s longstanding “answer” to the problems of race was force, first in the form of mob action and then in law enforcement. While civil rights law produced changed in the police personnel it did not transform the use of force in Liberty City or Overtown. As a result, blacks would come to express their outrage in a way that words had not been able to: they rebelled.
"Our history is full of cases where we attack nightsticks with our heads/choke billyclubs with our throats/till we die/jump in front of bullets with our backs/throw ourselves into rivers with our hands and feet bound/hang ourselves on trees/in prison cells by magic [who killed McDuffie]."

I contend that police, both in Miami and across the country have, historically, used racial prejudice and their own personal bias to discriminate against communities of color, particularly black and non-white Latino groups. This becomes especially problematic when one takes into consideration the use of weapons. The ability of the police to use deadly force to maintain law and order has caused issues in the past and well into contemporary times. In an increasingly diverse and divided United States, police and community relations may grow further strained. By examining Miami, a city whose police force has undergone multiple transformations over the course of a century—from a ragtag frontier militia to a complex, bureaucratic, and overtly militaristic force—we can better understand how racial, political, and social changes affect those who serve as officers, and the communities they are charged with serving.

In the South, there have been two distinct periods in which African Americans have participated in law enforcement: the Reconstruction era and the post-WWII period. These two intermittent periods are separated by several decades of tumultuous race relations, black disenfranchisement, and the overall weakening of African Americans' status in civil society. Black exclusion from law enforcement was simply another consequence of Jim Crow and the

endurance of white supremacy, as the maintenance of Jim Crow was the most important function of a southern police force. Barring African Americans from becoming officers of the law in effect excluded blacks from enjoying the coercive power of the state and its apparatuses, which allowed their white counterparts to recreate a rigid caste system which discriminated and marginalized people of color across the South for almost a century, even after emancipation. Because of this, black communities that experienced crime during Jim Crow faced both the problem of being victimized by law enforcement, but also needing police to protect them from criminals, both black and white.

This examination of law enforcement in Dade County must be placed in a larger narrative of policing and violence. There is a dearth of historical works on the impact of southern police forces on the communities they police, particularly communities of color. Additionally, this reflects the general lack of humanities literature on law enforcement, and their development throughout the nation's history. Scholarship on twentieth century policing in the South is limited, and most studies were completed by urban sociologists and criminologists and are not examined through an historical lens. However, Dwight Watson's Race and the Houston Police Department, 1930-1990: A Change Did Come (2005) is one of the few works on the oft-neglected southern city as it attempted to enter modernity in the twentieth century. Watson's monograph traverses the sociopolitical landscape of Houston, Texas from Jim Crow politics to the growth of its Sunbelt economy. Houston, like Miami is multicultural and features a significant Latino population (in this case Mexican and Central Americans).

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115 Dwight Watson, Race and the Houston Police Department, 1930-1990: A Change Did Come (College Station, Tex.: Texas A & M University Press, 2005).
Houston like Miami had an identity in which it was both southern and more than southern. The rapid growth of both cities, for different reasons, made it, at times, difficult for local and municipal governments to effectively maintain Jim Crow, especially as it concerns racially and ethnically diverse populations which can be seen in both cities. Urbanization and modernization after the Second World War affected both cities and had far-reaching consequences across the South, good and bad. Both cities benefitted from the shift in federal policy to "uplift" the South during this period. The major issue with Watson's work is that he fails to differentiate between the varying identities and ethnicities present in Houston at the time, and the role they each played. He does discuss brutality against Mexican-Americans, black Americans, and even white victims of extrajudicial killings; however, he does not explore race and ethnicity in a satisfying way, especially as it features so prominently in the title of his work.

Geoffrey Alpert and Roger Dunham's study, Policing Multi-Ethnic Neighborhood: The Miami Study (1988), is one of the few book-length studies which takes a critical look at policing in a diverse urban center in the South.\textsuperscript{116} Alpert and Dunham's work, along with a 1976 document entitled Policed by the White Male Minority (1976) are some of the few works on policing and law enforcement in Miami specifically, though it focuses on the 1970s and 1980s respectively, and don't make use of any historical frameworks.\textsuperscript{117} Rather, using statistic, charts, graphs, and surveys conducted with various demographics within metropolitan Dade County (later changed to Miami-Dade by voters in 1997), these studies, in part funded by the federal

government, focus on a specific problem(s) and suggest ways to alleviate the issues compounded by a predominantly white male police force, racism within the department, and distrust of police within communities of color. These studies are illuminating and provide a quantitative approach to issues within policing, but do not always place these problems in a broader context, making them no less useful, but obviously limited in scope.

The complexity of police violence in the United States occupies the intersection of race and law enforcement in a way that is more complicated and nuanced than its black/white dichotomy suggests. This chapter examines police violence against black Miamians during the post-World War II period. This period is of special importance for a number of reasons: 1) the black community began to assert its demands for freedom and equal protection under the law in larger and more visible numbers after the Second World War; 2) escalating crime rates across most urban areas in the country due to the modernization and use of crime reporting technology which created the perception that blacks and the working poor were becoming increasingly criminal and dangerous; and 3) law enforcement became seen as the primary method of social control used to surveille and limit black people and their mobility.

Throughout the country, blacks in urban areas, emboldened by their service and sacrifices made overseas, confronted police departments to demand for equal justice after World War II. As whites began to flee the urban cityscape for the safety of the suburbs, police officers evolved into vanguards of white privilege, opposing black progress insofar as it threatened white safety and the social order. The violence perpetrated against black bodies is commonly referred to as police brutality, which is an all-encompassing term which can refer to racial profiling, police homicides, unlawful arrests, sexual exploitation, threatening language, etc. As white mob
violence of earlier periods became less visible, law enforcement came to serve this function within society as they were seen as a more socially acceptable force to restrict black mobility in public space. Instead of the lynch mobs of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the police—with the support of the criminal justice apparatus—became the conduit through which legal violence was carried out against blacks and other communities of color.

The ability of law enforcement officers to kill black with impunity is part of a long history of police violence in the United States. The use of deadly force by the police has had a social and political impact that is far reaching, yet scholars have not readily conducted much research on the history of violence and the American police force. Other fields, mostly sociology and criminology, have examined police violence and this phenomenon. Moreover, these studies tend to focus on contemporary incidents in society and rarely present the issues within a historical framework. Jeffrey Adler notes that the dearth of historical scholarship may stem from the difficulty of locating these sources in the historical record. Additionally, “cop culture” tends to protect this data if it is even recorded at all.  

As an essential apparatus of the state, police departments adhered to policies of segregation that upheld white supremacy during the postwar era. This, coupled with anti-black sentiment among individual officers which emphasized blacks, particularly black men, as innately criminal, institutionalized a toxic culture in police departments that some argue is still present today. However, in many ways the socialization process for law enforcement begins at home. Gunnar Myrdal's quote from his seminal 1944 work, An American Dilemma: The Negro

Problem and Modern Democracy, while general, corroborates much of what African Americans argue they have experienced at the hands of white police officers:

The average Southern policeman is a promoted poor White with a legal sanction to use a weapon. His social heritage has taught him to despise the Negroes, and he has had little education which should have changed him...The result is that probably no group of Whites in America have a lower opinion of the Negro people and are more fixed in their views than Southern policeman.119

Conditions in late nineteenth-century Miami possibly worsened police violence in the emerging city. The rapid influx of people into the area looking for work with Henry Flagler’s Florida East Coast Railroad created a demographic imbalance.120 The Miami of the 1890s was mostly comprised of white and black men. Black men from Georgia, the Carolinas, and the Bahamas worked as laborers. Incidents between black men and white men, usually over some sort of vice, led to early acts of violence. Miami police did very little to intervene when white mobs enacted their own brand of justice against the black community. One of the earliest examples of this occurred in 1898. U.S. servicemen stationed at Camp Miami, which was adjacent to Colored Town, shot and killed a black resident, while severely injuring several others. A rumor began to spread throughout the camp that black residents had killed a service member in retaliation, although this turned out to be false. Nevertheless, soon after several hundred soldiers marched on Colored Town, terrorizing the community. The raid forced many black residents to flee for fear of being killed. Miami police refused to interfere after being made aware. This passiveness reared its head again, particularly during lynchings. During the first two decades of the twentieth century law enforcement allowed white mobs to enact violence against

blacks. Police officers allowed white mobs to extract blacks from their jail cells to be lynched by white mobs seeking revenge for a slight (whether real or perceived) against the color line. Such cases permeate the early publications of the Miami Herald and the Miami Metropolis papers.

As Miami continued to grow and develop, white fears about black residential expansion led to increased police surveillance of Colored Town. The law enforcement department continued to modernize, relying less on mob justice for fear of alienating South Florida’s northern tourist base. Instead, the police, empowered by state legislation written during the Redemption era, used deadly force and incarceration to maintain control over Miami’s black community.121 These tactics were authorized both by workplace custom, but more importantly by state law, in effect making police violence against black bodies sanctioned by the state, unlike mob violence. For vacationing tourists, the optics of police officers “maintaining control” and “administering justice” was more palatable than the imagery of southern whites performing a ritual lynching.

However, the police maintained ties to white vigilante groups, and police officers were active members of these organizations. In the 1920s the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) became very active in Miami and boasted the second largest “klavern” in the state, John B. Gordon lodge No. 24.122 The group originally entered the state through Jacksonville in the 1910s.123 Florida would go on to be one of the Klan’s most violent strongholds boasting nearly 400,000 members across the entire state at one point, nearly half of the state’s 962,000 overall population. By 1922 it had

121 For more information about this state legislation see Jerrell H. Shofner’s "Custom, Law, and History: The Enduring Influence of Florida’s "Black Code (1977).
123 Ibid., 209.
emerged as an effective force in local state politics. The next year, Orlando’s Cherokee No. 9
hosted a statewide “klanvocation” to mark the inauguration of Florida as a new self-governing
body in the empire.\textsuperscript{124} Across the country the Klan enjoyed a massive following after World War
I. In the South this was due to the growth of black social and economic mobility, as well as anti-
Catholic sentiment which rose sharply after the war. Additionally, joining the Invisible Empire
served as an avenue through which white society attempted to cope with the effects of
industrialization, urbanization, and immigration.\textsuperscript{125} In Miami, as in other southern cities, the
Klan was initially well-received by city officials and the white public. The Klan would go on to
serve as the civic arm of the police force as many of its officers, including its Chief of Police
were active Klan members.

One of the longest serving police chiefs in the city’s history, Howard Leslie Quigg (1921-28 and 1937-44) ran Miami’s police department for most of the 1920s while being an open
member and leader of the local Klan chapter. Quigg recruited untrained white men, mostly from
Georgia, to serve as officers of the law. He placed many of them in Colored Town. It was not
uncommon for Quigg to get his hands dirty. He was known to arbitrarily "interrogate" black
individuals by torturing them with electrical devices which he would apply to their genitals. This
sexual violence was common knowledge to many in the force.\textsuperscript{126} A Dade County Grand Jury
charged Quigg with “under world alliances, summary executions, revival of the tortures [sic] of

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 211.
\textsuperscript{125} For additional information on the Ku Klux Klan and its revival during the 1920s see: Linda Gordon’s \textit{The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition} (2017); William Rawlings’ \textit{The Second Coming of the Invisible Empire: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s} (2016); Thomas R. Pegram’s \textit{One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s} (2011); Nancy K. MacLean’s \textit{Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan} (1994); Kathleen M. Blee’s \textit{Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s} (1992).
the Middle Ages and despotism of such nature as to destroy the freedom of our citizens.” The 1925 murder of H. Kier under Quigg’s leadership would not receive attention until three years later in 1928. Illuminating the public to the seedy underbelly and corruption of Miami’s police force and its overt involvement with the Ku Klux Klan, the revelation of Kier’s murder marked a shift in the department, at least temporarily. Kier was a black bellboy at the El Comodoro Hotel in downtown Miami. Officer E.W. Pierce arrested Kier in the hotel lobby after he reportedly spoke to a white female patron. Kier was taken to police headquarters where Quigg ordered Pierce and another officer to take him north and beat him. Pierce refused and four other officers William Beechy, Melville Tibbits, Thomas Nazworth, and John Caudill took on the task instead. In court testimony Beechy would described a scene in which Nazworth shot Kier dead and left his body on the highway. After Beechy told Quigg what happened he said that Quigg urged them to cover it up and to get their story straight.  

In March of 1928, after an external investigation, charges were brought against lower ranking officers who would eventually tell investigators of Quigg’s direct involvement in the cover up of the murder. Both he and the other officers were acquitted, even though the grand jury had pronounced him unfit to lead the department due to its obvious corruption. However, sometime after the trial, all were relieved of duty with Quigg replaced as Chief of Police by former detective Guy Reeve. That victory, however, was short lived. In a matter of a few years Quigg would be reinstated, becoming one of the longest serving police chiefs in the city's history, a platform from which he would go on to serve in Miami’s municipal government as a  

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127 Ibid., 13.  
prominent city commissioner well into the 1950s. Notwithstanding, this chapter will mostly explore the creation of the ‘Negro’ Police Precinct in 1944, and additionally, the "Black" judiciary, which was created in 1950 – with the help of Quigg’s influence no less—by a city resolution and was the only one of its kind in the country.

Figure 10: Possibly the first black officers hired by the Miami police department (1940s). State Archives of Florida.

The 'Negro' Police Precinct

Black resistance to police brutality would take on a new incarnation in Miami after the creation of the "black precinct" in 1944. In order to alleviate a crime wave which had been plaguing Colored Town since 1942, a Grand Jury of Dade County recommended that the county begin to employ "colored men" to serve in Colored Town (Overtown).129 Blacks in and around the area, while hesitant about the implementation of black officers, were nonetheless supportive

129 “A Sensible Idea,” Editorial, Miami Herald, November 16, 1943, p. 6A.
of the measure. An editorial by Otis Mundy of the Negro Citizens Service League in a November 1943 edition of the Miami Herald argues in favor of hiring black officers: "We know the usage of qualified Negro policemen to patrol the area is the only and certainly most feasible solution to the problem." Due to the Second World War, there was a shortage of officers, not just in Miami but across the country. Mundy's editorial also notes that there was a seventy-three-man shortage already, and the department was anticipating an additional thirty-one vacancies because of the military draft. The inability of the department to protect Colored Town's residents during the crime wave incentivized the possibility of hiring black men and made it palatable to those who may have been initially apprehensive, both black and white.

Taking advantage of war-time measures, Don D. Rosenfelder, the Director of Public Safety met with several black leaders, including Reverend John E. Culmer, a black Bahamian born minister who was the de-facto leader of Miami's diverse black community at the time, to discuss a list of possible men and their qualifications. A fifteen name list was submitted to the Chief of Police Walter E. Headley and the Director. After all were interviewed, five men were selected and trained over a six-week period. The first public announcement regarding the black precinct was finally made on August 29, 1944. A few days later on September 1st the

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130 "Negro Policeman," Editorial, Miami Herald, November 16, 1943, p. 6A.
131 Ibid., 6A.
133 Arthur E. Chapman, The History of the Black Police Force and Court in the City of Miami, University of Miami, 1986, UMI PROQUEST, 45. Miami's black community had first requested that a black police force be created as early as July of 1920 through the Colored Board of Trade but were dismissed by city officials.
134 Chapman, 45.
new recruits were sworn in. While a success in many ways, the new recruits would not join their white comrades as brothers in arms, rather they were segregated from the rest of the force and did not have the same power as their white counterparts. They comprised a small department and were supervised by Sergeant R. W. Tanner, a white detective.136 Leroy Smith, a black patrolman who came on the force in 1950 remembered how officers were initially received by the black community at large: “The…community was very receptive as crime was everywhere on the streets, the white police officers would run off the dice game, pick up the money and put it in their pockets. They didn’t really try to stop crime.”137

Walter Headley, who served as chief of police from 1948-1968, spoke glowingly about the black police precinct, believing it to be a model for other southern cities. When asked about it sometime during the 1950s, he stated: “Miami was a good place to start using Negro police because its population has such an odd makeup. Some of the white population objected to the police at first... [but] there was no organized objection, and it has worked well and is serving as a model for other cities all over the South.” Jack Henderson, then the Director of Public Safety, had a much different interpretation of white acceptance and black patrolmen:

The use of Negro officers either now or in the future downtown is impossible. The [white] people would not permit it. The first Negro officer on Flagler Street would be run down on purpose within an hour. This is because of the South’s heritage, not that Miami is typical of the South, but the tradition is strong enough here to be rough on Negroes.138

136 Chapman, 221.
137 Ibid., 221.
138 Walter Headley, Miami, Florida Interview, 136.
Figure 11: Portrait of Miami police officer Johnnie Young (1947). Young was the second black police officer in Miami to be killed in the line of duty. *Florida Memory, State of Florida Archives.*

Operations of the black police force were restricted to black areas only, by special orders of the Chief of Police, and they were not allowed to arrest whites, or have any authority over them for that matter. This is reflected in the name they were called, “patrolmen,” rather than police officers. Because blacks could not attend the police academy—they would not be allowed to do so until Governor Leroy Collins (1955-1961) and Mayor Robert King High (1957-1967) arranged for black patrolmen to begin formal training at the academy in 1960—this delegitimized them in the eyes of white officers who did not see them as equals. Leroy Smith, a black patrolman, explained the practice: “Patrolmen learned their lesson on the street and police
officers went to the academy.” Shortly after they began operations, the men were cautioned against wearing the uniform to and from work, and were eventually barred from doing so. Moreover, black patrolmen did not have the same protections as white police officers who worked under the civil service system. This meant that black men had no job protections, pension, or retirement benefits, making their only safeguard the Florida State Workman's Compensation Act. Black officers were both empowered and adversely affected by the separate and unequal law enforcement practices.

By 1947, the dual law enforcement system in Miami employed more black officers than any other city in the South, yet it legitimized the discrimination of not only black officers, but black people by treating black officers as inadequate and inferior. The second-class status of Miami's black law enforcement reflected the experiences of black police officers across the South. A 1959, a survey conducted by sociologist Elliot Rudwick found that few southern cities had given their officers of color the same treatment and opportunities as their white counterparts. The gains made during what W. Marvin Delaney argues is a transformative period for officers in the South, really did not go far enough. By 1959, only three cities in the South had black police officers with ranks above that of sergeant. Miami was not one of them.

The 'Negro' Court

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139 Chapman, 219.
140 Ibid., 219.
141 Ibid., 224.
143 Ibid., 61-63.
City of Miami Mayor Robert Floyd (1947-1951) declared in 1948: "Miami will become the first Southern City with a Negro judge and a Negro prosecutor to try Negroes in its municipal court!"144 City Manager, O.P. Hart requested the City Commission provide funding for the establishment to a 'Negro Court," specifically for black law offenders. In April 1950, the City Commission passed two special resolutions, one which provided funding for the fixtures necessary to add on a court room to the newly-completed black police precinct. The other resolution appointed Lawson E. Thomas as the Municipal Judge of the Court. A month later the City Commission passed an ordinance which amended Chapter 32 of the Code of the City of Miami, which established the court and commenced its operation on May 22, 1950.145 Reactions to the court varied from both the white and black communities. Edward Graham, a black reverend and leader in the community was unsupportive of the court: “I was and still am opposed to it. It is merely a new pattern of segregation. A Negro Judge is only half a judge if he cannot hear cases involving white people. The [Downtown] know this, and if a case were appealed to the Supreme Court this court here wouldn’t last a minute. It is clearly unconstitutional.”146

Others in the black community saw it as a necessary step toward progress, including Reverend James E. Culmer who had worked behind the scenes to make the black judiciary a reality. More conservative community members believed a black judge would punish all law-breakers with the same degree of severity, supposing white judges to be too charitable when it came to doling out punishments; they viewed blacks as too irresponsible to make sound moral

144 Chapman, 70.
145 Ibid., 72.
146 Ibid., 73.
decisions, which they took that into consideration when making their judgements.\textsuperscript{147} One white judge agreed with this sentiment, stating: "Frankly, I was probably a little more lenient," he goes on to say, "I took into consideration that they were uneducated and that they have to shift for themselves at a very early age."\textsuperscript{148}

Judge Thomas also agreed with prominent black figures and acknowledged his role as a black judge was not only that of an interpreter of the law, but also one of moral guidance: "This court and judgeship is more than just administering the City ordinances. It is a rare opportunity to train a large mass of Negroes, who have no proper schooling, in their general attitude toward law and order. We must remember that our people are no different from others, and that we are no more prone to being criminals than any other people."\textsuperscript{149} Historian Leonard N. Moore argues that the black middle and wealthy classes were inconsistent in the fight against police brutality during the postwar period, seeking rather to support white civic elites in their crusades against black lawbreakers. As "respectable" blacks, they were just as in favor of "tough on crime" approaches in order to protect themselves and their property from black criminals as whites were.\textsuperscript{150}

Additionally, their support of these measures resulted from the preexisting relationship between black elites and the local government and its leaders. In many ways, the black elite existed as an intermediary between the white power structure, and the rest of the black masses; in historical materialistic terms black elites are the petty bourgeoisie that act as a buffer between

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 71.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{150} Leonard N. Moore, \textit{Black Rage in New Orleans: Police Brutality and African American Activism from World War II to Hurricane Katrina} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 9.
bourgeoisie and the proletariat. So, while the black middle class may have led the charge to create a black police force, they were largely silent or ineffective in the fight against corruption and police brutality, which would come to negatively affect their relationship with the black poor and working classes, who were the main victims of police violence throughout the postwar period and the turbulent decades of the 1960 and 1970s.

For many white criminal justice professionals, the black judiciary appeared promising, mostly because of what they believed were the inherent pathological differences between whites and blacks:

The use of a colored judge is a great step forward. He knows and understands their problems. He thinks their way; their way of life differs from ours. They are more closely related to their savage forefathers of the jungle...when we have a full moon, there is always more crime in the Negro areas because they are closely related to the jungle where they worshipped the moon. Statistics will prove that the rate of crimes increases when there is a full moon.\textsuperscript{151}

The above quote from City of Miami assistant attorney Olavi Hendrickson is jarring in its antiquated rhetoric. However, this belief in the "deviant pathologies" innate in black cultural and familiar patterns was not uncommon at the time. Whether black criminality stemmed from poverty or inadequate resources or was innately ingrained in those of African descent was a question even postwar academics were debating within their circles as they helped to craft domestic policy initiatives at the federal level. By emphasizing black criminality, both blacks and whites failed to address the complicated history of racism that allowed the criminal justice

\textsuperscript{151} Olavi Hendrickson, City of Miami Assistant Attorney, Miami, Florida Interview, 133.
apparatus to fail marginalized groups. It was inherently racist and unequal system that the hiring of black police officer or judges could neither adequately address nor solve.\textsuperscript{152}

The constitutionality of the court was fervently debated during the 1950s, with the Chief of Police Walter Headley and city officials weighing in with the affirmative. City of Miami Assistant Attorney Hendrickson supported the court: “It is constitutional without a doubt. The change in the City Code establishing the Court in no way mentions race. In its operation white persons do appear before it as witnesses and as defense attorneys.”\textsuperscript{153} Those in favor of the court further argued that: "...if the city had set up the court with an ordinance which limited the action of the court by race or color it would be unconstitutional. This court is not established that way, and any appeal carried from it on that basis would not be upheld."\textsuperscript{154} Nevertheless, the court was never found to be unconstitutional and very few judgements were overturned by a different or higher court. In its first year the municipal court handled 6,374 cases, and collected approximately $60,396.50.\textsuperscript{155} in fines and forfeitures. These cases mostly included infractions against municipal ordinances, for example noise, liquor, gambling, etc.\textsuperscript{156}

To combat what they viewed as the intrinsic criminality of the black body, Miami employed its own mode of social welfare and justice through the creation of its segregated black police precinct and judiciary during the 1940s and 1950s. As Miami made meager attempts to undo its racial caste system, in reality it reaffirmed Jim Crow and added another mechanism of

\textsuperscript{153} Olavi Hendrickson, Assistant Attorney, Miami, Florida Interview in Arthur E Chapman, The History of the Negro Police Force and Court in the City of Miami, 133.
\textsuperscript{154} Editorial, “Judge Thomas’ Court,” Miami Times, June 2, 1951, 4.
\textsuperscript{155} “Photo Article,” Miami Times, May 26, 1951, 3.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
social control, which did very little to undo generations of discrimination and inequality or advance the city's black community. The belief that law enforcement and criminal justice institutions are the primary public programs to address the problems of those living in inner-city ghettos was gaining steam in the post war period. Black communities in Miami and across the country believed that having a police force that mirrored their own community, would solve most of these problems. In actuality, blacks and other members of historically marginalized groups who joined law enforcement agencies were thrown into the midst of the greatest law enforcement transformation in the twentieth century. While many of them would go on to succeed in this new field in spite of discrimination that pervaded these law enforcement agencies, their communities would soon be under occupation, as the 1960s ushered in a period of widespread militarization of urban police forces, which decimated urban communities in the name of "law and order."

**Policing the Ghetto**

Coinciding with the largest federal policy initiatives since the Roosevelt administration, the 1960s and 1970s saw the unprecedented expansion of the welfare state. This expansion, which first sought to fight black poverty, laid the groundwork for the “War on Crime,” which in turn expanded the carceral state and produced mass incarceration. What precipitated these changes was the demographic transformation brought on by the third wave of the Great Migration, which concerned whites who were both uncomfortable with blacks moving into urban centers and the gains they had made at the mid-century mark through the civil rights movement.

As blacks became more assertive about the changes that needed to be made, policy makers influenced by contemporary academic thought accepted black poverty and crime as
pathological. This, as historian Elizabeth Hinton persuasively argues, makes the war on poverty less about addressing structural inequalities and more about the fear of urban disorder in city centers and the kind of people who live there, particularly young black males. During the 1960s the increase surveillance of black bodies within the city center coincided with the rise of black power. In June 1966, James Meredith, the first African American to enroll at the University of Mississippi, was ambushed and shot while attempting to engage in a peaceful march. This incident became transformative for Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), then the chair of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). As he, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and other leaders walked through Mississippi to complete Meredith’s walk, they were antagonized and attacked while local law enforcement turned a blind eye. Carmichael began to reject passive nonviolence, as it became clear to him that little had changed despite federal intervention and legislation. At a large rally in Mississippi, he used the phrase black power, and it resonated with blacks across the county. The persistence of discrimination, the continued violence from an increasingly militarized law enforcement, the deteriorating condition of the inner city combined to create a visceral discontent in the black community. Black power became ascendant after the death of Dr. King. With a target on their backs, young black men in Dade County and across the country became increasingly enamored with black power and violent self-defense.

"Community Relations and all that sort of thing have failed," Chief of Police Walter Headley told reporters in late 1967. "We have done everything we could, sending speakers out and meeting with Negro leaders...it has amounted to nothing." This statement was in contrast to comments made by then Dade County Sheriff E. Wilson Purdy who believed that his department’s community relations program was succeeding at preventing any type of civil disorder or unrest. However, the mayor and other city officials supported Headley’s stop and frisk policy wholeheartedly. Florida Governor Claude Kirk echoed his own support for similar measures across the state: "Not long ago, a trooper could stop a motorist and pull him over for a highway violation. Now it's an invitation to a skirmish... [both public and law enforcement officials] should get militant."

So, what brought about this shift in policy in Miami? At the street level, Miami’s crime rate continued to increase each year from 1960 onward, and to many it felt like the city was under siege. The holiday season of late 1967 was particularly busy, as the city experienced an uptick in violent crimes including a dozen or so murders in a matter of two months. On December 27, 1967 law enforcement began enforcing "stop and frisk," a measure which allowed officers to search persons on the street without any type of warrant, a practice many activists believed was unconstitutional and violated the Fourth Amendment. "Ninety percent of our Negro population is law abiding and wants to eliminate our crime problem, but ten percent are young hoodlums who have taken advantage of the civil rights campaign," Headley explained to

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161 The following year the United States Supreme Court would rule in *Terry v. Ohio* that the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which holds that citizens cannot be subject to unreasonable searches and seizures without probably cause, does not apply to law enforcement if the officer has "reasonable suspicion" to stop and frisk."
reporters. "We don't mind being accused of police brutality. They haven't seen anything yet."  

Headley was right.

The extraordinary expansion of the "carceral state" during the second half of the twentieth century had deleterious effects on inner cities across the country, the ramifications of which can still be seen and felt today. By the mid-1960s the successes of the Civil Rights movement, a burgeoning free love movement and anti-war demonstrations on college campuses around the country had disenchanted white voters of all classes. Both major political parties expressed concern about the direction in which the country was headed and their role in it. The emergence of groups such as the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and the Young Lords as a response to the expansion of the police state made whites uncomfortable about what they perceived as anti-white aggression and a challenge to the status quo. In many ways they were correct, as activists advocated for more control over policy that affected their communities and a seat at the negotiation table, positions that challenged the autonomy of law enforcement officers. Young black and brown men held the primary leadership positions in these groups and organizations. Federal policymakers targeted young black men between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, believing them to be the primary instigators of civil unrest in the inner cities and other acts of criminality, including drugs and theft. Historian Elizabeth Hinton argues that the Lyndon B. Johnson administration’s introduction of a comprehensive antipoverty program in low income black communities coincided with anticrime intervention. “By expanding the federal government’s power in the pursuit of twinned social welfare and social control goals, Johnson

162 Doherty, 187.
paradoxically paved the way for the anticrime policies of the Nixon and Ford administrations to be turned against [Johnson’s] own antipoverty programs.**164** However, at no point did any administration point out race explicitly, preferring to target "the inner city," and using other forms of coded language that implied black and poor bodies as they created policies and legislation.

Six months after Chief of Police Headley’s comments, President Johnson signed the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 into law on June 19, 1968. The legislation established the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), a federal agency housed in the Department of Justice; LEAA increasingly provided block grant funding to state and local law enforcement agencies to create job training programs, and build community centers across the country. Following the creation of the LEAA, the federal government invested $400 million in the War on Crime.**165** This helped to create both federal research funding, as well as funding in states could use to construct their respective criminal justice systems. An additional $50 million was earmarked to assist local police forces in dealing with urban unrest and organized crime syndicates. According to Hinton’s estimations, by the time the LEAA was dissolved during the early Reagan administration, it had funded around 8,000 crime control projects, awarding 155,370 grants for upwards of $10 billion—nearly $25 billion in today’s dollar amount.**166** In addition, the states themselves dedicated hundreds of billions of dollars of to their respective criminal justice apparatuses during the same years. This rush of money and monetary incentives resulted in the expansion of the carceral state in the U.S., a perverse federalism born out of

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164 Ibid., 14.
165 Ibid., 307.
166 Ibid., 307-309.
assumptions and fears about communities of color living in the inner city, rather than crime reduction and control.\textsuperscript{167}

\section*{Miami Police and the “Tri-Cultural” Program}

Latinos were regarded as white officers with no restrictions placed on their arrest authority or the ability to attend the police academy. However, no Latino achieved a rank beyond that of sergeant until 1975, a statement on the continued significance of “Anglo” power and supremacy and the importance the city and county placed on maintaining aspects of Miami’s southern heritage. Both Cubans and Puerto Ricans argued at the time that police treated them differently than they did white citizens. One Cuban sergeant indicated that while there was little physical violence enacted against Cubans in comparison to other groups, white officers addressed them with an air of superiority that created "negative feelings." White officers’ inability to speak Spanish, which many Latinos spoke exclusively with little or no understanding of English, also created a rift between the two.\textsuperscript{168} A Puerto Rican social worker told members of state’s Civil Rights Commission that treatment of Puerto Ricans was harsher than that for other ethnic groups. They were harassed, discriminated against, and subjected to identification checks when “too many of them” gathered on street corners. Many had come to regard the police as their “worst enemy.”\textsuperscript{169} Police also made a habit of going into black clubs and checking

\textsuperscript{167} For an example of this phenomenon see: Michelle Alexander, \textit{The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness} (2010); James Forman, \textit{Locking up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America} (2018).
\textsuperscript{168} Policed by the white minority, 62. At a routine traffic stop, a Spanish-speaking Cuban woman received a minor injury as a result of a misunderstanding between her and the arresting officers both of whom did not understand or speak Spanish.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.,
identification. One interviewee in a study of police-community relations in Miami for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights spoke plainly of the discriminatory treatment:

They don’t raid the Fontainebleau, that prostitute spot…they come downtown and they catch a woman walking down the street and they stop her and question her---because she’s standing at a bus stop where, possibly prostitutes are supposed to be. 170

Dominant assumptions have constructed black women, especially young black women, as inherently hypersexual jezebels, which compounded how they have been perceived by the mainstream. The assumption that a black woman waiting for a bus stop at night or in the early morning was somehow engaged in prostitution is part of a larger set of white racist constructions which subjected black women to higher rates of surveillance than their white counterparts, for example, the white and Latina women who service white male patrons at the famed Fontainebleau hotel. 171

Similarly, to the way some black leaders advocated for black patrolmen in the 1940s, the black community demanded fairer treatment for black officers who continued to face discrimination in hiring practices and pay. In 1973, a black police officer filed a class action lawsuit (Cohen v. the City of Miami), alleging discrimination by city of Miami officials in recruitment, work assignments, pay and promotion for black officers. When the black police precinct was abolished and the forces integrated sometimes in the early 1960s, some whites on the force were uncomfortable with the change. One female officer, whose father served as Assistant Chief for 18 years, explained her father’s reservation about the change: “He had an awful time time [sic] swallowing, [swallowing] accepting the change…when I went through the

170 Ibid., 64.
171 On historical constructions and stereotypes of black womanhood see: Melissa V. Harris-Perry, Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America (2011); Deborah G. White, Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South (1987).
Police Academy we had blacks in the Academy, he told me I wasn’t going to the [graduation] party, he wouldn’t care who I was, because it was a niggers’ party. ‘Your daughter was not one to association with blacks.’”\textsuperscript{172}

The suit resulted in a partial final settlement that was limited to black male police officers, though a provision of the decision known as the Cohen consent decree allowed for an independent agency to be hired to devise, administer and score both entrance and promotional test. However, sex discrimination was not mentioned in the decree, which left black, white, and Latina women outside of what seemed to be a new opening for diversity. As a result of the Cohen consent decree, Lieutenant Leroy Smith became the first black man appointed to the rank of major. The Industrial Relations Center (IRC) of the University of Chicago was asked to handle the entrance and promotional exams per the decrees orders as well. However, the most significant outcome of the decree was the court’s order that the city hire persons from other minority groups in proportion to their representation in the population. Because those of Latino heritage were the majority in Miami at the time, at an estimated 52% percent -- twice that of blacks or whites—they would become the majority of officers on the force if the decree was followed to the letter. This created controversy, as whites who had long held occupational autonomy and dominated the force since its founding, felt threatened. When asked about the most significant change to occur in the department in the last few years, an officer replied, “…the recent promotions where they picked a black [or a Latin] way down at the bottom of the list and put him up here because the government said so…”\textsuperscript{173}

\textsuperscript{172} Chapman 186.  
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.,186.
In February of 1979, 10 months prior to the death of Arthur McDuffie, a 48-year-old black junior high school teacher, Nathaniel LaFleur, was severely beaten by Metro-Miami officers in a drug raid gone wrong—the officers raided the wrong home. Five officers smashed the front door and then broke through another wooden door to the bedroom, LaFleur said, adding that they threw him on the bed, beat him and demanded to know where the drugs were. He said he wasn’t read his rights or taken to a hospital until police finished searching his northwest Miami home nearly three hours later.\(^{174}\) The encounter left LaFleur with several broken ribs and a fractured skull. This lead to an investigative report from the \textit{Miami Herald}, which determined that in South Florida on average, three police brutality complaints were filed in the Miami area every week. Most of the complaints centered around the same group of officers. Few were fired and even fewer found guilty of any wrong doing by the internal disciplinary board. However, nearly a quarter of citizens’ claims for damages are awarded by the civil courts, so while law enforcement determined the accused officer was not guilty, the courts settlement imply otherwise. For example, the five officers involved were cleared of wrongdoing by the state attorney’s office, though the municipal court awarded LaFleur $20,000 in damages.\(^{175}\) The \textit{Miami Herald} also noted that while the police department's liability insurance was almost canceled, hundreds of thousands of dollars were paid out to settle police brutality claims.\(^{176}\)

One women officer, speaking with a University of Miami graduate student in 1980, presented an interesting argument that offered some insight into this issue concerning aggression and excessive force.

\(^{174}\) “His Skull Cracked as Police Raid Wrong House,” \textit{Miami Herald}, February 14, 1979, 1A.

\(^{175}\) The officers were identified as Vincent Farina, Russell Fischer, John Mullally, Robert Singer, and James Leggett.

\(^{176}\) Policed by the white male minority, 81.
A man automatically, and it's something about the badge, and I've caught myself doing it too, you have a feeling of power, you know? And a man will automatically get that antagonism in his voice when he is going to arrest another man because I'm God and or nothing and don't give me any trouble 'cause I'm going to deck you with this night stick if you do.177

The phenomenon the female officer describes is best summarized by the following: “A significant ideological component of police culture teaches [officers] that any challenge to their authority from marginalized groups should be met with an iron fist.”178 This institutional culture which created an "us vs. them" mentality is ineffective and dangerous for marginalized groups as a whole, not just African Americans, though in Miami and other urban metropolitan areas they were focus of such ire. The brutality of misconduct present in the LaFleur case led to a proposal for a Civilian Review Board, which had been rejected previously by law enforcement as early as 1964 when the American Civil Liberties Union first prepared the measure.179 When the measure was first brought up to a grand jury, Sgt. W.E. Farr, president of the Miami lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police, dismissed the measure, telling the Miami Herald “Communists like to see these boards.”180

Seen as ineffective as evidenced by its failures in other urban centers, law enforcement did not like the challenge to the authority. A proposal by the Chairman of the Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council, Seymour General, argued that a Civilian Review Board demonstrated to a disenchanted public that the criminal justice system in South Florida was not beholden to a privileged few, but rather served as a mechanism guaranteeing that citizens’ voices would be

177 Arthur Chapman, Interview XXII Mrs. Sandy Weilbacher.
178 Moore, 6.
179 Ibid., Chapman.
heard as it concerned their community.\textsuperscript{181} By using only internal investigation through the police and State Attorney office, argued Gilbert, the credibility of those investigations and law enforcement suffered as it gave the perception that law enforcement protected itself from full public scrutiny when it comes to alleged misconduct.\textsuperscript{182} However persuasive, the measure did not pass, and as of this writing, there is still no civilian review board sponsored by the City of Miami.\textsuperscript{183}

\textbf{Conclusion}

The punitive policies put in place during the postwar era in Miami only served to reinforce the problems facing communities of color, and in many ways exacerbated them. Miami was no different than Newark or Detroit in the North, but has been left out of literature concerning police brutality and misconduct in the civil unrest of the 1960s and 1970s, even as it too experienced the militarization of urban police force first hand as the modern carceral state began to take shape. The multitude of transformations that swept the South as it attempted to "shed" its regressive Cottonbelt politics for the more "progressive" and insidious racism of the Sunbelt, may conceal the effects of the War on Crime on southern cities like Miami, but upon a closer look the federal policies under liberals like LBJ and conservatives like Nixon only empowered local law enforcement to subject communities like Overtown and Liberty City to increased surveillance and social control. As police forces across the South integrated and modernized, Miami too, had to contend with the way it treated blacks and women as inferior to their white male counterparts. While Latinos were treated as white and allowed to exist in the

\textsuperscript{181} Seymour Gelber, \textit{A Proposal for a Citizens’ Review Board Submitted to the Criminal Justice Council}, 2.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 1.
force as a "model minority," they too faced discrimination, proving that Miami was still not far removed from Jim Crow and its early Southern heritage. As the War on Crime became the War on Drugs during the Reagan Administration, Miami would be at the forefront of the battle, turning South Florida into a warzone, and law enforcement into soldiers battling a dangerous insurgency. By 1980, the United States had the largest law enforcement system in the world. In a matter of two decades the promises of postwar liberalism had been swept away in favor of bipartisan draconian legislation, which turned impoverished urban blacks into enemy number one.
"our history is full of cases where we attack nightsticks with our heads choke billyclubs with our throats till we die/jump in front of bullets with our backs/throw ourselves into rivers with our hands and feet bound/hang ourselves on trees/in prison cells by magic..."184

Historiography

August 1965 saw the largest event of urban unrest since the 1940s during what became known as the Watts Riot. The subsequent state-generated McCone Commission report entitled Violence in the City – An End or a Beginning, not only summarized the events of the riot, but also offered a series of prescriptive recommendations to address the problems of the inner city.185 The underlying thesis of the report focuses on what the commission perceived as the black community’s role in its own destruction. The report charged that single mother homes and absentee black fathers created an environment ripe for deviant and criminal behavior, and identified black violence and criminality as pathological.

This conclusion was stated more explicitly in Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s The Negro Family: A Case for National Action (1965). Moynihan, then the Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Johnson Administration, believed the civil rights legislation alone was not enough to completely rectify racial inequality. Rather, social policy should also address economic inequality, the root cause of which rested within the black community itself.186 Moynihan’s

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185 “Emergency” literacy and preschool programs were prescribed to improve police-community ties, increase low-income housing, more job-training projects, upgraded health-care services, more efficient public transportation. These remedies would be echoed in subsequent reports on other riots across the country.
thesis, that a “culture of poverty” bred by black woman headed households, trapped blacks in an unending cycle of economic subordination and racial inequality. While some liberals saw the report as advocating for federal policy aimed at alleviating race-based economic inequality, it further emboldened conservative rhetoric. Conservatives used the report to rationalize black marginalization. It reinforced the “loose morals” they already believed were endemic to the black community.

Both Violence in the City and The Negro Family placed much of the blame on African Americans, while minimizing the impact of systemic racism, structural inequality, and the United States’ history of anti-black racism. Both represent a more conservative, ahistorical interpretation of urban unrest. As foundational texts on riots in the postwar period, their interpretation proved far reaching and perseveres to this day in how those events are remembered by both the mainstream media and the public. The turmoil of the 1960s divided the country, and the riots were a flashpoint for this uncertainty and discontent. Between 1964 to 1968 over 200 separate urban riots occurred. At least 200,000 people participated, and nearly 200 people were killed according to estimates by social scientists and historians.187

In July 1967, President Johnson created the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. The eleven-member council was headed by Illinois Governor Otto Kerner. The commission sought to address the hundreds of outbreaks of inner city violence. Its report, published in 1968, offered a more liberal interpretation than the McCone report. It placed the riots in an historical context, examining American racism from the colonial period onward. It included the more recent developments of the white exodus out of the inner city, suburbanization, and police-

community relations. More significantly, it condemned white society for creating apartheid like conditions in the black community, thus enabling a nation of “two societies – one black, one white – separate and unequal.”

The McCone and Kerner reports sought to understand the cause of the unrest, the motives of the participants, summarize the events, assess the economic costs and damages, and most important to prevent further violence. The historical and sociological influence of both commissions has created a hegemony within the history and sociology fields, creating a rich, interdisciplinary historiography. Earlier riots in the 20th century produced the Chicago School which examined the sociology of race in an emerging urban landscape. The 1960s riots increasingly renewed an interest in the racialized city. In general, the Kerner Report’s account of rioting has gained prominence over the years and the urban disorders of the 1960s have increasingly been treated as rational protests against a racist white power structure. Numerous volumes of social science literature arose in the wake of the riots and from 1965 through to 1975 debates about variables and controls, theories, methodology and testability were published with frequency. The studies were predominantly empirical or detailed case studies. These kinds of studies failed to historicize the riots, instead focusing on empirical and statistical analysis to find a common variable. While historical studies were rare, some historians began to examine earlier

189 Chicago School
uprisings at the turn of the twentieth century, a focus which informed how they viewed the McConne and Kerner studies.\textsuperscript{191}

Richard Wade argues that blacks in the middle class were supportive of the ghetto riots in the 1960s because the black consciousness formed by the conditions of the ghetto forced them to identify along racial lines, not class status.\textsuperscript{192} Wade’s broad assumption is inaccurate. While racial bonds can create a kinship between black people of differing class backgrounds, and even ethnicity, the black middle class has rarely allowed racial bonds keep them from maintaining the most problematic aspects of their class consciousness. Wade cites the work of middle class social organizations in actively participating in the clean-up of the ghetto by helping the poor and less fortunate through various programs. However, this remains unconvincing.

Established by studies of other southern cities, it is clear that the black middle class concerned itself chiefly with maintaining law and order in order to protect their property and livelihoods. Crime and unrest in the urban ghetto directly affected them, unlike whites holed up in the safety of the suburbs. Black elites had to contend with the ghetto, because at the time it was where they primarily conducted business, owned property (though not necessarily where they lived), and still maintained family ties to the “old neighborhood.” As discussed in chapter three, as a group the black middle class favored a tough on crime approach to the ghetto in order to protect themselves, though individually they may have more complicated feelings as they watched rioting unfold in real time.\textsuperscript{193} Further, middle class black organization such as the Urban

\textsuperscript{191} In 1965, historian Geroge B. Tindall noted that historians had "forfeited" certain areas to the sociologists in his essay, "Southern Negroes since Reconstruction."
\textsuperscript{193} Leonard N. Moore, \textit{Black Rage in New Orleans: Police Brutality and African American Activism from World War II to Hurricane Katrina} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 14
League and NAACP failed to engender full, unwavering support from lower class blacks. Especially young black men who were becoming disenchanted by accomodationism, and increasingly enthralled by the idea of militant ‘Black Power.’

In his examination of the Watts Riots, Gerald Horne’s *Fire this Time* (1997), argues that riots can be looked at through a gendered lens. For instance, Horne contends that the increase of black militancy among African Americans, through the presence and influence of the Black Panther Party (1966) and the Nation of Islam led to a heightened system of patriarchy and gender inequality between black men and black women. The hyper-masculinity present in the Black Power and nationalist movements further subordinated and brought violence against black feminine bodies. Moreover, the second part of Horne’s thesis cites the political vacuum that created a lack of left-leaning political options for blacks as a major culprit as well. This part of his thesis is equally convincing when one takes into consideration the crackdown on unions due to McCarthyism and the Cold War during the postwar. By placing the city of Los Angeles in a broader Cold War context, Horne posits that the second Red Scare limited union effectiveness, which he argues further enabled Black Power groups to take hold in black communities. These groups were able to address the frustrations of black youths and channel their rage to rally against the white male hegemony; mostly through demonstrations and radical, homegrown social programs and directives.

Exactly three years after the Watts riot rocked Los Angeles, the city of Miami experienced is first riot. In comparison to the ravages of Watts, the Liberty City Riots in 1968

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195 Ibid., 10
have scarcely received scholarly attention. Unlike the uprisings in Newark or Detroit, the demographic makeup of Miami more closely mirrored Los Angeles’ quadratic hierarchy, especially the large Latino population. Residential segregation and poor relations with local police are striking characteristics of both areas. Additionally, both are major cities and tourism hubs in the Sunbelt region and a similar economy, which further deepens their similarities. The examination of the Liberty City Riots in this chapter focus more on historicizing the event in the context of other postwar rebellions, and the failure of Civil Rights era, interracial accommodationism in the city.

This chapter demonstrates that the Liberty City and McDuffie rebellions were a deliberate attack upon a system perceived as unresponsive to black needs. While the Liberty City riot has been labeled as an “accidental hot summer incident,” this characterization renders invisible black agency and the limited use of violence to initiate what they hoped would drastic changes in the black ghetto. What makes the 1980 rebellion more significant were the coordinated attacks on white business and nonblack. The justice system’s failure to convict law enforcement of any wrongdoing further alienated blacks. It became clear to Miami’s black community that there was no justice when a black life was taken. This created a climate in which some blacks resorted to extreme measures of violence to exact their own form a recourse and justice.

**Postwar Race Relations in Miami**

White and black elites alike sacrificed Miami's black community in the name of "progress." As the country sought to transform itself in the postwar era, the South entered into a period of "post-Jim Crow" racial politics. Historian NBD Connolly notes that the region began to
employ more insidious forms of racism as opposed to the more overt images of police dogs and fire hydrants of Bull Connor's Birmingham. The "ghetto riots" of the 60s period in South Florida are the results of federal, state, and local policy which emphasized a "progressive" modernization of the South. In Miami, these policies engendered white flight, suburbanization, and the relocation of hundreds of thousands of Cuban exiles into Dade County, a process that irrevocably altered the course of Miami's civil rights movement. Using a number of sources, including government reports and oral histories, this study attempts to develop a historical narrative which illustrates that the two major riots in South Florida after 1960, the Liberty City Riots (1968) and the McDuffie Riot (1980) were the result of a Cold War neoliberal project that required the subjugation of poor black communities through race, housing, and police brutality to achieve modernity in an increasingly competitive and globalized 20th century.

Cuban exiles arriving in the city exacerbated pre-existing tensions with the federal, state, and local white power structure which blacks argued weakened them and left them economically and politically disempowered. As Cubans continued to gain access and privilege in ways that Miami's black community was barred from, and discriminated against, blacks saw as indicative of the government's privileging of Cubans over them, making the alliance between whites (Anglos) and Latinos even more conspicuous. This served to further marginalize an already resentful black working class, which felt abandoned by a city government that had promised sweeping changes but had delivered none.

By exploiting white civic leaders preoccupation with "southern progressivism" and the Cold War, which ultimately undermined the traditional 'biracialism' of the Deep South in favor of a more triadic racial hierarchy; organizations like the NAACP, and CORE were able to
successfully challenge the color line in Miami through the desegregation of lunch counters and
department stores in 1960. However, as the 1960s wore on, these successes would be fewer and
farther in-between. Instead, the city would experience its first of several uprisings, something
John B. Tuner, the President of the Miami Chamber of Commerce warned about in 1963.

The one point on which everyone could agree on is that Miami cannot afford a riot.
Tourists don't take vacations where there are riots. Birmingham can have one and open
the steel mills the next day after it's over. Miami could open its hotels the next day, but
there wouldn't be anyone in them for about the next five years.196

In Miami’s northwest section, very few blacks felt that they were treated like human
beings. Segregated by government policy, beaten and killed by police, and relegated mostly to
the bottom run of Miami’s emerging triadic racial hierarchy the social disruption of the postwar
period weighed heavily on blacks. This produced a climate ripe for rebellion. The economic and
social consequences attached to Interstate-95’s construction displaced nearly 20,000 black
people from Overtown. This created a mass exodus to Liberty City, increasing the suburban
community’s population to approximately 45,000 people by 1968, thus making it Miami’s
largest black community. Liberty City was once a symbol of homeownership and black upward
mobility but had now succumbed to slum conditions reminiscent of Overtown’s Good Bread
Alley. Rife with (sub)urban decay, it was no effectively the nucleus of a fifteen-square mile
black ghetto. This area stretched from Brownsville subdivision to Opa-Locka. Due to white
flight, this corridor continued to expand at the rate of a block or so a week, according one
geographer’s estimates.197 The unintended consequences of Miami’s plan to remove blacks from

196 Chanelle N. Rose, *The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights and America’s Tourist Paradise, 1896-
74, no. 4 (Spring 1996), 445.
the city center created a ghetto to rival Overtown, and its residents were no longer placated by promises from black leaders they now viewed as allies to white officials. Under these circumstances, racial tension began to mount, and were worsened by several factors.

Police Chief Walter Headley's "get tough' on crime approach to the "thugs and criminals" of Liberty City angered residents who viewed it as a racist assault on an already disenfranchised community.198 Marvin Davies, head of the NAACP, said he would see Headley in court over the matter if necessary.199 However, not all Black Miamians felt negatively about the policy, with some giving their support to the measure. "Ma" Athalie Range, Miami's only black city commissioner at argued "...if these measures occurred in the Negro area, then this is the area where the policy needs to be enforced at this time."200 Two years earlier the city passed a "stop-and-frisk" law one month after the Watts Riots in LA.201 This prompted then-president of the Miami chapter of the NAACP, attorney Donald Wheeler Jones, to make an inquiry into the matter. He ultimately warned city officials that by limiting the mobility of blacks and subjecting them to increased surveillance, they ran the risk of inciting racial violence, especially when coupled with inadequate housing and limited job opportunities when compared to the success of the new Cuban arrivals.

The next year, in July 1966, Commissioner Range recommended the appointment of an interracial twelve-member committee to calm tensions in Liberty City. Many blacks perceived this move as reinforcing the establishment and status quo. Range, as a landlord who was a member of the middle class, was viewed as part of the larger power structure by the more

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199 Ibid.
201 Ibid.
militant black youth who were no longer placated by a civil rights movement they were starting
to see as ineffective, especially as they continued to bear the brunt of violence inflicted by
Headley and his department’s crack down on Dade County’s already impoverished black
communities.202

When scholars examine African-American social and political life in the South during the
twentieth century, they tend to frame the experience through organizational histories of middle
class political groups like the NAACP, the National Urban League, or labor unions like the
American Federation of Labor.203 This is particularly true when documenting the black
resistance to the ravages of white supremacy. However, this lens does not adequately address the
political activities and experience of blacks in South Florida during the twentieth century. The
NAACP under the leadership of Theodore Gibson, and Congress of Racial Equality under the
leadership of people like Shirley M. Zoloth were active during the 1950s and 1960s. They
coordinated sit-ins and other non-violent forms of protests to integrate public space across South
Florida. More substantial concessions gained by the black community from the city and county
came about through political negotiations made by small interracial groups of elites who worked
together with a common goal of avoiding racial tension and unrest to protect South Florida’s
tourism integrity.

There is now more readily available secondary source literature on individuals like James
Nimmo, a Bahamian-born Miami radical. The actions of Nimmo, slum clearance proponent

203 For example, see: Chanell N. Rose’s The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights and America’s
Tourist Paradise (2015) and Patricia Sullivan’s Lift Every Voice: the NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights
Movement (2009).
Elizabeth Virrick, and the aforementioned Theodore Gibson have all been explored by recent scholarship. However, strong anti-communist rhetoric among the white civic elite rendered a number of labor and civil rights groups ineffective, weakening their influence on the black community and its demands. While South Florida during the postwar period was no less racist than other parts of the South, it did need a racial climate progressive enough to navigate a new modernity created by Cold War politics. The United States focused on projecting liberty and equality abroad in its war of optics with the USSR, as Soviet propaganda emphasized American lynchings, black disenfranchisement, and Jim Crow violence. Within this polarized context, American blacks continued to challenge the color line. The eventual success of the Civil Rights movement demonstrate that blacks were the real winners in employing visual media to garner support for their cause.

That said, Jim Crow modernized rather than ended. As black gains seemed more and more likely, white sympathies to their plight dissipated. Their concern now focused on the war in Vietnam among other political scandals. Moreover, the power vacuum created by the weakening of CORE and the NAACP was not filled by a similar mainstream organization. Rather figures like Athalie Range acted as the intermediary between blacks and white public officials. While her accommodationism should be understood in the context of figures such as John E. Culmer and similar black race representatives, it must be said that the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April of 1968 had galvanized support for more radical approaches to securing social

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205 For a lengthier discussion see Chapter One. Historian NDB Connolly’s 2009 article, “Timely Innovations: Planes, Trains and the ‘Whites Only’ Economy of a Pan-American City.”
equality, and the upending of white control of the black ghetto. As the 1968 Miami Report noted, demands by black protesters strengthened: “We demand and will insist on nothing less than black control of black ghetto [sic] – politically, economically, and educationally; guaranteed annual income; program for poor people controlled by the poor; black policemen and firemen for black communities. Until these demands are implement Black America will be heard!!”206 For most white immigrants to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the ‘ghetto’ served as a temporary place, the first stage in their eventual assimilation into American culture and society. The inability of many black Americans to undergo this same process was by design. The growth of the ghetto was facilitated by a number of underlying social forces as discussed in chapter one of the thesis. Blacks, excluded from progress grew embittered at their alienation. The 1960 riots are the result of this process, the Liberty City Riots included.

Liberty City Riots

On August 7, 1968 an audience of approximately 200 people gathered at the Vote Power location in the northwest section of Liberty City to hear Wilt Chamberlain and Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy speak. The men were in town for the Republican National Convention which was being held in Miami Beach at the same time. In direct response to the convention and the increased presence of white conservatives, black political groups organized rallies in the community, with an emphasis on voting and civil rights. A flyer advertising a “black mass rally” listed Chamberlain, a famous basketball player, as one of the key speakers at the event, and Reverend Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) as well.

While it is difficult to make a direct link between the 1968 Republican National Convention and the Liberty City Riots, it is clear that their appeared to a higher rate of political organization in the black community at that time in response. However, tensions between law enforcement and Liberty City residents were already high due to Police Chief Walter Headley’s “stop and frisk” policies, in addition to other direct engagements with the police.

Ibid.
According to the *Miami Report*, the crowd eventually grew restless once the celebrities failed to show. When white reporters attempted to enter the rally, which was a “Blacks Only” event, they were ejected, except for one who refused to leave and had to be forcibly removed. Two undercover black officers from the Department of Public Safety had already infiltrated the meeting earlier that afternoon and alerted police once attendees ejected white reporters.\(^{209}\)

As a result, police dispatched a heavily armed detail to the Vote Power headquarters. The large police presence agitated attendees, some of whom began trading insults with police officers. Nevertheless, things did not begin to devolve until a white motorist drove through the scene with a “Wallace for President” bumper sticker around 7 p.m. The car was showered with rocks and bottles, causing the driver to crash into a separate vehicle. The driver abandoned his car, fleeing the scene on foot as a group of young black men descended on the car, flipping it over and then setting it on fire.\(^{210}\) Over the next several hours nearly 300 people looted the shops along 62\(^{nd}\) Street, targeting mostly white owned businesses. Over the next two days four black men were killed in the violence, with dozens injured. Numerous arrests occurred as a coalition of law enforcement and the National Guard attempted to put down the rebellion and restore order, which they successful did by the morning of August 10. After the 1968 rebellion, Dade County appropriated a $62.5 million grant, an open and fair housing law, and three job training programs specifically for black residents.\(^{211}\) However, this did very little to improve the economic plight of blacks.\(^{212}\) During the 1970s there were several outbreaks of violence, including the Rotten Meat

\(^{209}\) Ibid., 8-9.
\(^{210}\) Ibid., 10-11.
\(^{211}\) Tscheschlok, 445.
\(^{212}\) O’Hare, 2.
Riot of 1970. 213 There were twelve other subsequent violent racial skirmishes between July 1970 and January 1979 in Dade County.

**McDuffie Riot**

![Figure 13: Family photograph of Arthur McDuffie, (1970s). Miami Herald.](image)

Just before two o'clock on the morning on December 17, 1979 Arthur McDuffie, a 33-year-old black insurance agent and father of two small children, was spotted by a Miami metro police sergeant speeding down the street on a motorcycle. The officer, Ira Diggs, radioed that he was “going to get that guy.” 214 Additional police soon joined the officer in his pursuit. McDuffie rushed past red lights and a few stop signs before police caught up to him after an eight-minute

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chase, that ended with McDuffie reportedly shouting, “I give up,” his hands in the air. This would not stop officers from pulling him off the motorcycle, yanking his helmet from him, and beating him to the ground. Officers from the Department of Public Safety took turns kicking or choking him, as well as beating him with their department issued “kel-lites,” (long, heavy flashlights), and nightsticks. According to officer testimony, McDuffie had made no threatening or aggressive gestures prior to the assault or during the arrest.215

While several officers (no more than twelve, but no fewer than six) took part in beating McDuffie, white officers William F. (Mad Dog) Hanson and Mark Meier’s account point to Cuban officer Alex Marrero as the one who struck the killing blows.216 According to court testimony, Marrero walked over to the battered McDuffie, who was then lying on his side, with his hands handcuffed behind his back and straddled him. He took his kel-lite and struck him three times in the head, cracking his skull “like an egg,” as Dade County medical examiner, Dr. Ronald Wright described it.217 Nearby officers were splattered with blood from the force of the blows. The process of covering up McDuffie’s killing would begin almost immediately as officers were ordered to run over his motorcycle in order to make the scene appear to be an accident. According to Hanlon’s testimony, the story they all agreed upon was that McDuffie lost control of the motorcycle as he rounded the corner, losing his helmet in the process and striking his head on the curb.

Ultimately, inconsistencies in the official report from officers at the scene would soon raise suspicions at police headquarters.218 These suspicious would later be confirmed by the

215 Ibid.
217 Porter & Dunn, 5.
218 Ibid., 36.
medical examiner’s autopsy which dismissed the traffic accident as inconsistent with the severity of McDuffie’s injuries. Dr. Wright and his team determined that McDuffie had been beaten repeatedly with blunt objects, causing his skull to crack open and his brain to swell, leading to his death. Once the authorities made the autopsy public shockwaves reverberated throughout Miami and the rest of the country. The Public Safety Department's Internal Review Section notified the state attorney's office of the case.219

The severity of the autopsy's findings revealed a major police cover-up. As the story broke in the Miami Herald, one of the officers involved in McDuffie's death decided to come forward. Officer Charles Veverka went to police headquarters, turning himself in. His retelling of the night's events led to the suspension of four additional police officers in connection with McDuffie's killing. PSD Director Bobby Jones suspended an additional five officers after that two days later, totaling nine officers overall: Joseph Del Toro, Ira Diggs, Herbert Evans Jr., William Hanlon, Alex Marrero, Mark Mier, Eric Seyman, Charles Veverka, and Michael Watts.220 On December 28, State Attorney Janet Reno charged Diggs, Marrero, Hanlon, and Watts with manslaughter and tampering with evidence. A fifth officer, Sergeant Evans, while not charged with manslaughter, was charged with leading the cover-up and tampering with evidence.

Black media outlets accused State Attorney Janet Reno of racism for her refusal to bring murder charges against the officers and called for her immediate resignation for her handling of the case. On January 2, 1980 Reno increased the charges to second-degree murder for one of the

219 “Cops Role in Death Probed,” Miami Herald, December 1979, 1B.
220 Porter & Dunn, 37.

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offending officers, Alex Marrero. Assistant State Attorney Anthony Yoss told reporters, “We increased the charges. Not because of pressure from the black community…but because we now have evidence that Marrero acted in a way that was ‘eminently dangerous to another, evicting a depraved mind regardless of human life,’ which is second-degree murder.”

Over the next two months as the case continued to gain national attention, coupled with the graphic, hourly coverage on local news stations, on February 29 defense attorneys for the officers asked that the case be moved out of the county. Judge Lenore Nesbit agreed, believing that the officers would not receive a fair trial in Dade County. Blacks in Miami were concerned about the move, believing there was a greater chance for the officers to be found not guilty. Tampa's NAACP agreed, pointing out that an eerily similar case had occurred just months before McDuffie's death. White officers fatally beat a black motorcyclist and were acquitted of all charges.

On March 3, the case was moved nearly 300 miles away to Tampa, Florida. The defense did not stop there. Once the trail began on March 31, the lawyers made it difficult to place blacks on the jury by using thirty-four of their peremptory challenges to remove African Americas from serving on the six-person jury. George Yoss, Dade County Assistant District Attorney explained the prosecutor’s dilemma:

We wanted a black on that jury as badly as they didn’t want one. We knew how many blacks were in the group of potential jurors waiting to be called in. We would send someone down to the room to look. By about the third week of jury selection we realized

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221 Interview with George Yoss, Dade County Assistant State Attorney, April 14, 1983.
222 Ibid.
223 “Trial Moved to Tampa,” Miami Herald, March 3, 1980, 1B.
224 Ibid.
that they had enough challenges left to bump all the blacks waiting to be called. Realizing we were going to have an all-white jury we tried to get the best six we could.225

Over the course of nearly fifty days, the McDuffie trial captivated a national audience. On Saturday May 17 at 2:36 p.m. the jury returned with its verdict after having deliberated only for two hours and forty-five minutes: thirteen verdicts of 'not guilty.' Jury Foreman David H. Fisher said that it was not an easy decision: "We're not saying there was nothing wrong. Something was wrong. But it doesn't necessarily mean pin it on somebody in the courtroom."226 During deliberation several jurors were convinced that two of the immunized officers, Veverka and Hanlon, both of whom received immunity for cooperating with the state at different points in the trial, were more culpable than Marrero and the other officers on trial. This was a key strategy used by the defense to weaken the immunized officers' credibility. Their credibility was further called into question when another immunized officer Mark Mier gave conflicting testimony about which officer struck McDuffie when cross-examined by the defense.227 Veverka claimed to have been assaulted by McDuffie, beating him in an act of self-defense. Mier contradicted this, saying at no point at McDuffie resisted arrest or attacked Veverka.228 Another witness for the prosecution, Miami Police Department Officer John Gerant was also present the night McDuffie was killed. During his initial testimony he parroted Veverka's account.229 However, when asked who dealt the killing blow, he pointed to officer Michael Watts, not officer Alex Marrero. It destroyed the prosecution's case.

225 Interview with George Yoss, Dade County Assistant State Attorney, April 14, 1983.
226 “Cops Freed in McDuffie Case" Miami Herald, May 18, 1980.
227 Ibid.
228 Porter & Dunn, 50-51.
229 Ibid, 51.
When the first news bulletins began to come in after the verdict reverberated through Miami's black community, particularly in Liberty City. Young black men congregated in African Square Park, across the street from the James E. Scott Houses, the largest housing project in the city of Miami. As cars passed through the area, some began to throw rocks and bottles at the vehicles. Police from the Public Safety Department attempted to set up barricades to close off the area. However, a patrol car left its post guarding the western entrance to 62nd street, a major artery, to assist an officer who had called for backup. This led to several vehicles operated by white drivers to enter the area.

A Dodge Dart was showered with rocks and bottles as it drove east along 62d Street and 13th Avenue. Eighteen-year-old Michael Kulp was driving with his twenty-two-year-old brother and a friend, Debra Getman, twenty-three. According to Getman they had not heard the verdict as the radio in the car was broken. A large chunk of concrete slammed into the windshield of the car, striking Michael. He swerved across several lanes of oncoming traffic and came to a stop on the sidewalk where his car struck ten-year-old Shanreka Perry, and seventy-five-year-old Albert Perry. Shanreka was pinned between the car and a wall. Her pelvis was crushed, and right leg completely severed. This further enraged the mob, which dragged both men out of the car, beating them severely with bottles, concrete rocks, and even a Miami Herald newspaper dispenser, which was brought down over Jeffrey Kulp's head. The brothers were shot several times and run over by a green Impala four times. Debra Getman managed to run to a different part of the Scott Projects where residents helped her safely leave the area. The severity of the violence is one of the ways the McDuffie riot is notable as whites were targeted during the

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230 Porter & Dunn, 51-52.
violence by black residents. During three days of unrest 417 people were treated in the area's nine hospitals. Eighteen were killed.231

The structural damage also took its toll on the city. One black resident who participated in the riot, told local news camera: “All the white people’s places is burned down, so we don’t need them national guard, you see what I’m saying? So, what they should do is just pull them crackers on out, we don’t need no curfew. Ain’t nothing else round here for us to burn down.”232

For nearly three days parts of northwest Miami burned which resulted in nearly $100 million in property damage.233 Approximately 42 percent of the 240 businesses affected by the riot were completely destroyed.234 Manufacturing plants were targeted to the same degree as liquor stores, pawnshops, and drug stores. This may be due to the lack of employment opportunities these businesses provided for the surrounding black community. Of the companies targeted the vast majority (seven total firms) employed no black workers. According to one scholar’s estimates, of the 102 stores destroyed by fire, only one was black-owned.235 It was a black hair salon next to a white-owned pawn shop, which had been torched and burned down as well. So, while black-owned business were looted, it is clear that they were not damaged or destroyed to the same degree as nonblack businesses.

“Ain’t Nothing Left for Us to Burn Down”

After the dust had settled Miami’s political figures attempted to gain control. Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre explained to a crowd: “…Because what we have here is a problem, that no

232 Porter & Dunn, 53-354.
233 “Assessing the Damage: Miami Herald, May 25, 1980, 1B.
234 Porter, 131.
one person, or no one organization, or no one government can assume full responsibility for the failure. We’re all responsible. And the solution for the problem is in us all.”236 On the national front, President Jimmy Carter visited Miami in the weeks following the riot. In a press conference Carter told reporters: “We have long term problems here to address: the prime initiative must come from this community. It cannot come from Washington. And the community must realize that violence and dissension and destruction hurts most those who are least able to afford it.”237 When President Carter left the meeting the limousine he was riding in was pelted with bottles from an angry crowd outside., with one bottle smashing into the roof of the car. “The incident itself was an ignorant act, but there was point behind it. Maybe they don’t another way of expression themselves or getting particular attention. [the point is] we need help!”238

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236 Ibid.
238 Ibid.
Black leaders saw the political sphere as the avenue through which change could be most expedited. “We’re not going to throw bricks, we’re going to throw ballots.”

But as previous instances had shown, the political power of black Miami was weakened and continuing to decline as blacks as Cubans continued to win local office. The gains made by black police officers following an investigation by the federal government in the 1970s were not as transformative as black residents had hoped. Tensions between law enforcement and black Miami had been increasing even before the McDuffie verdict. The McDuffie incident was the most recent example of injustice in a series of incidents between law enforcement and blacks: In February of 1979, Nathaniel LaFleur, a black Dade County Public Schools teacher was beaten by
police during a raid on his home, which they had mistakenly identified as belonging to a prominent drug dealer.\textsuperscript{240} Officers received a slap on the wrist for their “sloppy police-work.”\textsuperscript{241}

In September 1979, a black, 21-year-old named Randy Heath was shot by an officer during an arrest. The officer claimed the gun had gone off accidentally while he was putting handcuffs on Heath.\textsuperscript{242} Although an inquest judge did recommend that criminal charges be brought against the officer, a Grand Jury claimed to find no reason to move forward with prosecution. In spring 1980, Johnny Jones, the first black superintendent of Dade County Public School was found guilty by an all-white jury of using schools fund for his own personal use. Jones was an important leading figure in the black community, and his conviction for corruption was upsetting to blacks, because of what they saw as a double standard.\textsuperscript{243} The last, most troubling incident for many in the black community was the molestation of an eleven-year-old black girl by a white highway patrolman. While the patrolman admitted his guilt, he was allowed to resign without the incident going on his record.\textsuperscript{244} So, while these abuses of justice were the precipitating causes of the rebellion, it is important to note that there were structural issues that created the conditions in which blacks, particularly poor blacks felt hopeless. It was from this sense of hopelessness and loss that violence ultimately erupted.

\textsuperscript{240} “Four Suspended for Raiding Wrong Home,” \textit{Miami Herald}, February 15, 1979, 1C.
\textsuperscript{241} \textit{Miami Riots}, May 1980, U.S. Department of Justice National Institute of Justice, NCJRS, 18.
\textsuperscript{244} “Florida Highway Patrol Trooper Molested Girl, He’s Cured Before His Victim,” \textit{Miami Herald}, January 21, 1980, 1A, 16A.
Conclusion

Black residents living in the congested, squalid conditions in Miami’s decaying city center viewed the ghetto as an exploitative tool created by a white hegemony. White control over the black ghetto kept blacks in slum conditions, which in turn, kept them economically dependent and powerless to the whims of the larger white society. This sentiment has its roots in 1960s black power rhetoric, which advocated black control of the black ghetto, or more
concisely independence and autonomy for black people.\textsuperscript{245} This desire for control and self-determination is evident in both rebellions that occurred in Miami during the latter half of the twentieth century. Neglect from absentee white property owners, the failure of the metropolitan government to deliver municipal services, and an increase in police surveillance of black residents in the ghetto proved to be a disastrous combination in 1968. While white Miami residents may have been surprised by the violence, black residents told a different story.

The arrival of Cuban exiles complicated racial tensions in Miami. By 1965, Cuban newcomers began competing for jobs, housing, and municipal services, displacing blacks in Miami’s tourism industry. Blacks asserted that the black to Cuban turnover in the hotel, restaurant, and domestic businesses was a form of “economic oppression.”\textsuperscript{246} As previously discussed in Chapter Two, the federal government demonstrated preferential treatment to arriving Cuban exiles as part of a Cold War strategy of optics between the United States and the Soviet Union. The local, metropolitan government in Miami provided education programs, employment services, and housing assistance to ensure a smooth transition once the first subsequent waves of Cuban exiles arrived in the 1960s. In contrast, Miami schools had not even been desegregated by 1968, and black children continued to attend schools with few resources, lived in concrete high-rise buildings known as “concrete monsters,” some of which had no running water, garbage services, or street lights.\textsuperscript{247} Additionally, the unemployment rate for black men was exceptionally high during this period, and even with the help of county welfare,

\textsuperscript{246} H. Daniel Lang, “Testimony for the Senate Sub-Committee on Cuban Refugees,” December 1, 1961, National Urban League Papers, Part 2, Series 2, Box 15, Library of Congress.
\textsuperscript{247} Raymond A. Mohl, “Elizabeth Virrick and the ‘Concrete Monster’: Housing Reform in Postwar Miami, \textit{Tequesta} no. 61, (2001), 30.
there was little relief. Meanwhile, unemployed Cuban exiles received payments through the Cuban Refugee program which far exceed the maximum amount native blacks could receive. The legislative victories brought on by the Civil Rights movement did not come to fruition for the poorest residents in black Miami. The rapid success of the newly created Cuban enclave only served to heighten racial tensions, and the righteous anger blacks felt in Liberty City.

Cubans had largely ignored the unrest and violence in the South Florida's urban enclaves, though their presence undoubtedly contributed to the 1980 uprising. Old Guard Cubans had crafted a mythic past for their lost homeland, characterized by economic prosperity and most notably racial harmony, which belied the endemic history of colonialism and racism on the island. With no racist past to hold them back, the idealized version of pre-revolutionary Cuba they created, Chanelle Rose notes, exempted the Cuban exile community from taking responsibility for their part in the racial tension and disparities present in Miami during that time. Any critique of the United States racial hierarchy was not useful. As a "model minority," and arguably the most successful ethnic enclave in the latter half of the 20th century, Cuban-Americans felt that it reflected poorly on them if they were to talk ill of the United States, and would possibly give further ammunition to Fidel Castro, whose regime continuously spotlighted the brutality faced by people of color in its anti-capitalist, anti-American rhetoric.

Arthur McDuffie’s death at the hands of a Cuban police officer, and the officer’s subsequent acquittal served as another example of the preferential treatment Cubans received to the detriment of blacks. Generations of black death and trauma were never addressed with any real weight by the larger white society in Miami, and the arrival of 250,000 Cuban exiles only

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248 Rose, 245-246.
served to further marginalize the black community. Cubans could ascend into the upper echelons of Miami’s economic, social, and political spheres. Cubans, like white-Anglos, were able to kill blacks with not only impunity, but with the support of the criminal justice apparatus.

So as Miami burned during the McDuffie uprising, Cubans looked on passively, though they resented the mainstream press (the *Miami Herald*, the *New York Times*), for depicting them as one of the major causes for the riot.\(^{249}\) First wave Cubans viewed themselves as worlds apart from new Cuban exiles who flooded Miami in 1980.\(^{250}\) The ugly backlash from black residents against Marielitos, they felt, had nothing to do with them. They too, were no fans of the Mariel boat lift. One store owner, speaking with *TIME* magazine said this: “I tell my employees that if a black comes here asking for money, give it to him. If an Anglo comes to rob us, give it to him. But if a Marielito comes here, kill him. I will pay for everything.”\(^{251}\) Marielitos, derided as La Escoria, carried the burden of the riot by proxy, even though the racial tension that erupted in 1980 was decades in the making. As the 1980s ended, the decade was marked by warfare between rival drug lords, numerous assassination plots and undercover CIA operations focused on Central and Latin America, and four more violent uprisings.\(^{252}\)

In summation, when black Miamians took to the streets in May 1980, they felt that they had nothing else to lose, a sentiment summed up most succinctly during the riot by a black Vietnam veteran:

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We went to war—for whom? We came back and asked for a job and were told to ‘learn Spanish!’ We paid our taxes but got few of the services. We told you things were bad—but nobody listened. Well, you’ve had your shot, and now it’s up to us. We’ll either change this lousy system or we’ll blow the whole damn thing up. We have nothing left to lose!253

For those still living on the margins in Black Miami, the McDuffie incident was just another example of how elusive justice could be for black people. Metro Public Safety Director Bobby Jones, an African American, bitterly summed it up when speaking to Herald reporters after the trial, shaking his head: “That’s the American system and that’s the way it is.”254

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CONCLUSION: THE TRAGIC CITY

“nobody did it intentionally that's the nobody we're looking for the one with the motive to kill mcduffie and you see, we MUST find this nobody who slew mcduffie because the next person nobody will beat/stomp/hang or shoot to death won't be mcduffie it'll be you or someone close to you so for your own safety you should know the pedigree of who killed mcduffie you should know the reason of who killed mcduffie you should remember all those forgotten who died of the disease nobody makes a claim to so we won't be here asking who killed you.”

Miami has always been a city chiefly concerned with its outward image. A commodity born of the railroad and Northern ingenuity, Miami’s survival is dependent on image, or more precisely what that image symbolizes for consumers. Promoters and boosters have sold Miami in whatever way the occasion has called for, initially as a "whites only' “playground of the U.S.A.,” during the 1910s through the 1930s, and as the more international and inclusive “Gateway to the Americas,” in the 1940s and 1950s respectively. But following the Cuban Revolution, the atrocities of the Duvalier Regime, and finally the myriad uprisings in Central and Latin America, the city of Miami increasingly found it difficult to maintain its leisurely image in the face of mounting crime waves, shores awash with refugees, and urban unrest. By 1980 a new nickname had emerged, one that for the first-time promoters and the tourism board had not approved for consumption: “the murder capital of the world.”

This thesis has established that Miami’s promotional image has always belied the city’s complicity in the Jim Crow system, the pervasiveness of violence against black bodies through

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social control, and by the 1960s the eruption of violence from blacks in Miami’s urban ghetto, their rage a reaction to the continued constraints of white supremacy. As previously discussed, the Cold War era complicity between the federal government and White Anglo power structure in Miami latinized the area after Castro's Revolution, resulting in a tri-ethnic hierarchy that further marginalized blacks. While the influx of Cubans and other Spanish-speaking Latinos undermined the black/white dichotomy endemic in South Florida at the time, this thesis has further argued that an analysis of federal policy, law enforcement as social control, and discriminatory housing practices at all levels of government demonstrate a more complicated social history for Miami in the immediate postwar era, rather than a triumphant story of civil rights as it has been framed.

It is increasingly clear that the gains made by black and Jewish civic elites during the 1950s and early 1960s did little to buffer the black working poor from economic hardships. Instead, the significant political gains, coupled with the transformative demographic shift of the 1960s and 1970s, irrevocably empowered Cuban ascendancy into the social and political life of South Florida. Blacks became resentful of the success Cubans found in Miami. Their anger was further directed at civic elites from all racial/ethnic backgrounds, whose canned talking points provided few solutions to the systemic issues the black community face. As a result, the first of two major uprisings occurred in 1968. The Liberty City riot that occurred in the nucleus of Black Miami was more than some “hot summer incident.” Some black residents were galvanized by the upcoming November election to use their “vote power,” while others had grown tired of politics as usual. The legislative gains made in the years leading up to the Liberty City riot were not as transformative as one would have hoped. Miami schools were still segregated, municipal services were far and few in between, and economically black Miamians still greatly lagged
behind whites. The growing power of the Cuban enclave pushed them to the bottom rung of the city’s tri-ethnic hierarchy. With the Republican National Convention only a few miles away in Miami Beach, and thousands of politicians, journalists, and other people of note, the nation received first hand coverage of Miami’s first large scale uprising. They could see for themselves that blacks felt they had nothing left to lose.

While the Liberty City revolt resulted in some promises from the local and state government, conditions in Miami changed relatively little. The economic downtown during the 1970s should also be attributed to the lack of jobs and economic conditions in Liberty City and Overtown, however it is clear that the city’s focus on Cubans and other Latino exiles was to the detriment of black residents. The systemic failures of Miami were decades in the making, and the McDuffie verdict lit the fuse on a powder keg of issues and failures that the city refused to address. This explosion of violence became the deadliest riot in the state of Florida’s history. Blacks attacked white property and white people with a fervor some have characterized as belonging to an earlier period in our history when enslaved people fought back against their masters. The criminal justice systems failure to convict any of the accused officers for the McDuffie’s death proved what many black residents already believed: that officers could kill black people with impunity. Black rioters attempted to enact this type of violence on innocent whites in much the same way. The resulting violence, again changed little in the material conditions of black residents in the city’s urban ghettos. Economically, blacks were not keeping pace with other groups in the city.

Interviewed by the New York Times in 1981, former Dade County school superintendent Johnny Jones summed up how many blacks felt as they watched Cubans surpass them socially
and most notably, economically: “The only things blacks have in Miami are several hundred churches and funeral homes. After a generation of being Southern slaves, blacks now face a future as Latin slaves.” By the 1980s, while other major cities with large black and Latino populations experienced conflicts between themselves and the white establishment, in South Florida Cubans had become the dominant power, ushering in a mass exodus of whites out of the Greater Miami area. Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre quipped to a New York Times reporter: “We’ve become a boiling pot, not a melting pot. The Anglos can’t adapt. They can’t take it, so they’re moving.”

Some 95% of election registrations now being canceled by citizens leaving the region come from white voters. Says Jeff Laner, 26, a native of Miami who moved this year to work as a stockbroker in Kansas City: “I was going to be damned if I had to learn a foreign language to get a job where I had lived all my life.”

While the white civic elite had initially welcomed Cuban exiles (and the federal dollars they brought with them), many battled—and lost—to stay in power during the 1970s and 1980s, as Cuban political power became increasingly dominant. By 1981, there were only two white city commissioners left. The rest were Latino, mostly Cuban-born. Monsignor Bryan Walsh, who ran a resettlement program for Cuban children in the 1960s told a New York Times journalist, “I wonder who really upsets whites the most; the poor Cuban on welfare or the rich Cuban with three Cadillacs and a Mercedes out buying the county.”

Most Cuban elites did not concern themselves with Miami’s negative image. This is largely indicative of Miami’s race problem. Rather than confronting these issues head on, city

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258 Sherrill.
259 Ibid.
260 Ibid.
261 Ibid.
leaders ignored it, or in the case of former Florida International University, Cuban-born President Modesto Maidique reframed it in order to shed light on the contributions of Cubans to Miami, though deemphasizing the very real racial tension and underlying social forces that made those contributions possible:

The bad image of Miami comes from a crime rate, racial tensions, racial disturbances that are half a decade or more old. That was a long, long time ago. Yet that is the kind of image that lingers in a lot of boardrooms because images lag behind reality and the press is slow to catch up. The reality is that Miami is no longer the murder capital or the crime capital of anywhere. The reality is that ethnic tensions are going down. What you hear more than anything today is that young Cuban-Americans and other Hispanics are becoming more involved in their community...

Miami's gilded veneer completely gave way in the wake of shows like NBC's *Miami Vice* (1984-1989), which reveled in the sordid details of Miami's criminal underbelly. Flager's Miami of the early twentieth century was scarcely recognizable draped in the bright flashy pastels of the 1980s, and further juxtaposed with municipal corruption, drug cartels and machine gun fire. Rather than addressing the social ills that created this negative image which studio executives were now capitalizing off, Miami did what it has always done, it remade itself. Initially uncomfortable and occasionally out right hostile toward *Miami Vice* as it had been to *Scarface* a year earlier, city officials and boosters eventually figured out a way to spin the show's imagery in its favor.

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262 Ibid.
A 1988 article in *Newsweek* best sums up what Miami spin doctors had concocted: "Miami: America's Casablanca." "Stylish”, “exotic”, and “fashionable,” this Miami was no longer "God's Waiting Room," at best, or "the murder capital of the world," at worst. While the article dealt self-effacingly with Miami's drug and homicide problems, it ignored the very real economic hardships, interethnic conflicts, and the continued housing issues of which Black

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Miamians and other marginalized groups had been railing against for generations. The inability of city officials to adequately address the underlying social issues facing the city’s most vulnerable communities is what makes Miami tragicomedy of errors. Its response to unrest has always been better marketing, luxurious hotels, a higher skyline. The public spectacles only becoming grander with each passing decade. Miami's willful neglect is almost pathological; still immature with respect to other metropolitan areas, with each new crisis, particularly as it concerns race, it fails to achieve anything other than a shallow response. For example, in June 1982 Miami spent $5 million on an international arts and cultural festival, the "New World Festival of the Arts." Prominent playwrights, artists, and the introduction of the Miami City Ballet were supposed to create levity in the midst of those tumultuous times. It served as nothing more than a self-congratulatory pat on the back for city officials, and another slight against the black community.

**Paradise Lost**

Ultimately, this thesis geographically shifts the standard civil rights narrative from the Deep South to a Pan-American paradigm, asserting that while South Florida has traits that are typically “Southern”, the complex nature of race and ethnicity in Miami makes it more than Southern, complicating our broader understanding of the Civil Rights Movement in a part of the South that is usually obscured in the black freedom struggle. The black/white dichotomy of the South proves unstable and the color line mutable in Miami, a place that valued tourist dollars over maintaining aspects of the Jim Crow hierarchy, although it still found ways to marginalize and subdue its black population. Miami demonstrates that the introduction of Latinos and other

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264 Ibid., Sherrill.
groups outside of this binary disrupts the belief of race as a biological fact, rather than, as this thesis illustrates, a social construction through which power and privilege can be conferred.

This thesis has persuasively demonstrated that real estate and civic leaders used federal housing policy, particularly urban renewal and the construction of the interstate highway system to maintain segregation in Miami, even after the legislative end of Jim Crow. The destruction of Overtown, under the guise of slum clearance and progress, resulted in the creation of a sprawling black ghetto in the city’s northwest section. This area, Liberty City, experienced an influx of well over 25,000 new arrivals displaced from Overtown. Unable to accommodate this influx, the population density of the area exploded. Concrete monsters – cinderblock apartment buildings – sprang up as a result. The buildings were poorly constructed, did not have regular municipal services, and became overcrowded relatively quickly.265

Issues of unemployment, sparked by the influx of 250,000 Cubans into South Florida, contributed to a growing animosity in the black community. The preferential treatment Cuban exiles received as part of the U.S. Cold War project angered blacks who were still experiencing racial discrimination in jobs and housing. Both the U.S. and Cuba used Cuban refugees in their political warfare. When Fidel Castro allowed 125,000 Cubans to leave the island via the Mariel Harbor between April and October 1980, this massive exodus created political problems for President Jimmy Carter’s administration. Locally, the city of Miami and its non-Cuban residents felt that the city was under siege. Arthur McDuffie’s death at the hands of a Cuban police officer, Alex Marrero, and his acquittal in May 1980 became the final straw for blacks in the city.

Both the Liberty City and McDuffie uprisings challenge our broader understanding of the success of the Civil Rights Movement. Black rebellions in the post-1960s period demanded that the United States hold itself accountable for the continued atrocities marginalized communities faced at the hands of the state and criminal justice apparatus. If the Civil Rights Act (1964), Voting Rights Act (1965), and the Fair Housing Act (1968) intended to right the ‘un-rightable wrong’ of nearly a century of Jim Crow discrimination for the poorest of Miami’s black residents, then that legislation had failed.\textsuperscript{266} When black residents took to the streets, some consciously or not, their bodies and actions implored the larger society to reflect the ideals it purported to believe in: equality and equal justice before the law.

Further studies of urban unrest in Miami must focus on a grassroots activism and resistance to the larger Anglo-Cuban power structure. Resistance by groups that came in the period directly after the prominence of organization such as the NAACP and CORE is a necessary addition to scholarly debate and mining that archive would present a broader view of the long Civil Rights movement across the South, especially in communities with a large Latino population. As civil unrest becomes more commonplace in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, or at least more visible through mobile technology, these histories become increasingly important as both scholars and citizen seeks to contextualize the eruptions of black rage in response to police killings of unarmed black people in places like Ferguson, Missouri and Baltimore, Maryland. So, while the conditions of Miami are clearly not unique, it does emit a special brand of vapid hedonism which has favored false advertisement, spectacle, and illusion in its bid to promote itself. Miami presents an opportunity for scholars to explore race relations in a themed city.

many ways what has transpired in Miami over the last six decades is a microcosm for what is happening across the United States now. Some may take it as a warning.
EPILOGUE: THE BLACK MIAMI MEMORY PROJECT AND ARCHIVE

The Black Miami Memory Project and Archive will serve as a major research and teaching collection focused on the history of Miami’s ethnically diverse black community from the city’s inception in 1896 to the late 1980s, focusing predominately on those living in Colored Town (now Overtown), Liberty Square (now Liberty City), and various black suburbs such as Brownsville, Richmond Heights, and others that grew out of these communities in the post WWII period. The website will be broken into four parts: A mapping project, an archive, a series of wikipages, and various exhibition projects, all of which will emphasize the black struggle for civil rights and freedom in South Florida, an area long obscured in comparison to other parts of the South in historical literature.

Miami, like the rest of the state of Florida, caters to a tourist clientele that is more interested in forgetting it worries by the beach, or at a commercial theme park, than one that wants to immerse itself in the seedy underbelly of the state's Jim Crow past and its continued failings in bringing about racial justice and equity. I have argued in this present thesis that this is by design, as the city and its boosters have promoted the area as such for the last century. Housing numerous primary sources, including oral histories, images, and various documents, the website will incorporate some of these items in a timeline and slideshow on the home page, which will provide a necessary historical background for those unfamiliar with Miami’s black history, placing it in its proper context as an ethnically diverse borderlands between the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States, which present both triumphs and difficulties that mainstream narratives of civil rights cannot adequately address. Several historical essays—pulled from this MA thesis—will serve as additional guides to the complexity of housing, police-
community relations, and racial uprisings across South Florida. For example, a historical essay on housing in Black Miami, “Concrete Monsters Dressed in Lilac: Public Housing in Miami’s Tropical Environment,” would delve into the contested history of memory and housing, particularly in Miami’s Liberty Square, the oldest and largest public housing system in the United States.

I chose to use a digital website because it is the most effective medium for accessibility to both the general public and scholars alike. This is chiefly a public history project, and ideally a collaborative effort between local community groups, public libraries, and a physical repository with items related to Miami’s black history, such as the Black Archives History and Research Foundation of South Florida, Inc. The website will aid in counteracting the erasure of Miami's black heritage and history both in public memory and from the city's physical landscape as gentrification and redevelopment are presently transforming the Miami’s black enclaves. The website consolidates otherwise inaccessible materials and publishes them so that communities and patrons can access it for research and learning. Because Miami’s black history has largely been omitted in many ways, there is a hunger from those in the black community to hear these stories told, in order to address this dual marginalization, which has always been my impetus for working on my MA thesis project.

When users go to the website (blackmiamimemory.com) they will be greeted by a slideshow of images in the collection on the cover page. Once they scroll down, they can click to enter the site which will take them to the homepage where a timeline of events will scroll at the top of the page. On the top of the right-hand corner are several tabs—Essays, Archive, Exhibits, Maps. Users can click or hover over each tab and select a specific essay, exhibit, or map
respectively. Clicking on the archive button will take users to the online archive where they can navigate to various collections: "A Liberty City Christmas 1941," or "Black Girlhood in Overtown," for example. Other collections are organized by name, such as the Athalie Range Collection or Walter Headley Collection.

The mapping portion of the website focuses on both the Liberty City Riots and the McDuffie Riots, with two primary goals in mind: The first is to determine the diffusion of the event by plotting incidents (looting, fires, deaths, etc.) on a map, and secondly, by mapping the spread of occurrences, I can create a comprehensive narrative of the entirety of each rebellion, and can compare the two for connections, similar individuals who may have been involved in both, etc. The map makes visible the collective violence of the uprising and the targets of the violence, which in turns allows me to substantiate my hypothesis that neither uprising was a riot for “fun or profit,” as it and others in the latter half of the twentieth century have been characterized, rather it was a deliberate and rational decision on the part of the oppressed in a display of frustration and despair.

StoryMapJS is a free tool from KnightLab at Northwestern University that allows individuals to craft narratives on maps through GIS. This map (or multiple maps) allows users to tell a narrative and show important locations within that story using media from Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, Twitter and countless other sites from across the web. Using this tool allows me to build the foundation for my mapping project(s). This form of narrative visualization has enabled me to further conceptualize the mapping project in its early stages. In the future, this visualization will appear on the homepage of the website. I chose StoryMapJS because of its
user-friendly interface. Their authoring tool makes it easy for novices to create mapping projects. For individuals with a background in GIS, HTML, and JavaScript, StoryMapJS give users an option to create a unique, personalized map of their own through editing its source code. As I do not have this background I prefer a tool that allows me to a cohesive, comprehensible narrative visualization that also offers user support in the event that I need help in retooling the project. Additionally, it is compatible with Squarespace which is the website builder and content management service I have chosen to use for the website.

“Wikipages” on Overtown, the Liberty Square Housing Project, and important figures such as George Merrick, Athalie “Ma” Range, will be included on the site. Other sections for individuals would include contributions to Miami's black community, as well as controversies or issues that arose during their tenure as politicians, activists, etc. While a truncated version of the Liberty Square Housing Project page would look something like this:

![Liberty Square Housing Project](image)

**Figure 17: Liberty Square Housing Project Landing Page**
Figure 18: Wiki Entry for the Liberty Square Housing Project

As users navigate the map they can also learn more about the individuals and places mentioned by hovering over different dots on the map. Clicking on the map dot, it will take you straight to that item’s corresponding wiki page or exhibit, allowing visitors to further browse these content pages. Concise, but informative Digital Exhibits will also serve as an additional resource on the website and would be expanded if it became part of a larger physical exhibit at a museum. Some working titles, as well as a panel example include:

**Biography**

- The Liberty Square Housing Project is a 751-unit Miami-Dade public housing apartment complex in Miami’s Liberty City neighborhood.
- The development was built as part of the New Deal by the Public Works Administration and opened in 1937.
- It was the first public housing project for blacks in the Southern United States.
“TO PROTECT US FROM THE COLORED RACE”:

MIAMI'S COLORED POLICE PRECINCT IN JIM CROW MIAMI

Figure 19: To Protect Us From the Colored Race Exhibit Example

“The one point on which everyone could agree on is that Miami cannot afford a riot. Tourists don’t take vacations where there are riots. Birmingham can have one and open the steel mills the next day after it’s over. Miami could open its hotels the next day, but there wouldn’t be anyone in them for about the next five years.”

- MAYOR ROBERT KING HIGG

Figure 20: The McDuffie Riot Exhibit Example
The audience for a project of this nature is ideally for interested scholars and residents, especially adolescents and young adults who would not otherwise know this part of Miami's history. Miami in many ways is both historical—in its architecture, the cafes and small boutiques that line the sidewalks of Miami-Dade County's more picturesque municipalities and
neighborhoods—but the area largely presents itself as just another tropical destination, but with the added bonus of experiencing dozens of tantalizing cultures at once. So, while Miami is comfortable acknowledging its melting pot status as it concerns predominately Latin America and the Spanish speaking parts of the Caribbean, it distances itself, as it always has, from difficult history that may compound its otherwise hospitable façade.
APPENDIX A WHO KILLED MCDUFFIE, A DEFINITIVE QUESTION
Who Killed McDuffie?

a definitive question

his brain was bashed

cranium crashed

skull fractured/broken

all the way around

but they said those who beat him

didn't kill him

so who killed mcduffie?

maybe it was the same ones who didn't kill

clifford glover/randolph heath/jay parker

claude reese/randolph evans/luis baez

arturo reyes/bonita carter/eula love

elizabeth magnum/arthur miller

and countless others

when their fingers slipped or

they musta tripped

maybe it was the same ones

who didn't kill

jose torres/zayd shakur/fred and carl hampton

jonathon and george jackson/joe dell

twyman myers/spurgeon winters

and a few hundred others

perhaps it was those who didn't kill

lumumba/che/amilcar/biko/fanon/

mondlane/marighella/cordero

and quite a few thousand more

do you suppose it may have been those
who didn't kill
the indians and mexicans
who didn't steal african peoples
halfway across the planet
who didn't loot our customs/cultures
religions/languages/labor and land
who didn't steal a continent
and claim that they discovered it
who didn't bomb the japanese/
vietnamese and boriqua too
do you think it might have been those
who didn't kill at
attica/watts/dc
detroit/newark/el barrios
at jackson state, at southern u
at the algiers motel
who didn't shoot mark essex for
16 hours after he was dead
ask them and they'll tell you
what they didn't do
but they can't tell you
who killed mcduffie
maybe it was one of those
seizures unexplainable
where he beat himself to death
it wouldn't be unusual
our history is full of cases where we
attack nightsticks with our heads
choke billyclubs with our throats
till we die/
jump in front of bullets with our backs/
throw our selves into rivers
with our hands and feet bound/
hang ourselves on trees/in prison cells
by magic
so it shouldn't be a mystery
that nobody killed mcduffie
he just died the way
so many of us do
of a disease nobody makes a claim to
the police say they didn't do it
the mayors say they didn't do it
the judges say they didn't do it
the government says it didn't do it
nixon says he didn't do it
the fbi/cia/military establishment
say they didn't do it
xerox/exxon/itt say they didn't do it
the klan and nazis say they didn't do it
(say they were busy in greensboro and wrightsville)
i know i didn't do it
that don't leave nobody but you
and if you say you didn't do it
we're right back where we started
looking for nobody who killed mcduffie

you remember nobody don't you
like with de facto segregation
where they said the schools were segregated
but nobody did it on purpose
like when they said there's been
job discrimination for years
but nobody did it intentionally
that's the nobody we're looking for
the one with the motive
to kill mcduffie
and you see, we MUST find
this nobody who slew mcduffie
because the next person
nobody will beat/stomp/hang or shoot to death
won't be mcduffie
it'll be you or someone close to you
so for your own safety
you should know the pedigree of
who killed mcduffie
you should know the reason of
who killed mcduffie
you should remember all those forgotten
who died of the disease
nobody
makes a claim to
so we won't be here asking
who killed you.
Survey Overview

The Miami Herald-Behavioral Science Research Institute of Coral Gables, FL polled 444 black residents from five riot areas in Dade County. Of the 444 people surveyed, 114 admitted to participating in the rioting. More than 50 percent of the survey participants were male and approximately two-thirds were single. Respondents had to be fifteen years or older to be interviewed in order to “help avoid misleading results.”267 The Miami Herald’s poll is significant because as the leading publication of South Florida it presented to its primarily white audience the black community’s grievances. Whites that claimed to be oblivious to the plight of black Miami, were confused by the severity of the violence. The Miami Herald poll confronted both its white and white Cuban readership with an articulation of black rage that condemned the precipitating systemic factors blacks felt kept them in a subjugated status.

*The category “don’t know” includes those who refused to answer the question when asked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helped</th>
<th>Hurt</th>
<th>No Effect</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the Cubans who came here over</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the past 10 or 15 years have helped black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chances, hurt back chances, or had no effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on black chances?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

267 “Portrait of a Riot: He’s Young, Single, Dissatisfied with Home,” the Miami Herald, June 22, 1980, 22A.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2%</th>
<th>87%</th>
<th>6%</th>
<th>5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What about the new wave of Cuban refugees? How do they affect black economic chances?</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitian refugees have also moved into Miami over the past 10 or 15 years. How have the Haitians affected black economic chances?</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What about the new wave Haitian refugees? How do they affect black chances?</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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• LIVER; RIOTS BEGIN REACTION MCDUFFIE VERDICT; METRO JUSTICE BUILDING ON FIRE; CARS BURN; POL SGT; POL SGT JOE ERAND MPD; LOOTING. 00:45:29:00 - 1980/05/17
• RIOT; METRO POLICE BRING OUT RIOT GEAR; PATTY STRAIN AND POLAND ECKHOFF SOT CAR ATTACKED; HENRY WITHERSPOON PSD ABOUT POSS JUSTICE DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATE 5 COPS IN MCDUFFIE CASE. 1980/05/17

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