

THREE CHANNELS

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almost exactly two years ago (at the time of writing) protests erupted in response to the most recent round of state sanctioned murder of its own citizens. An outpouring of sentiment that, in New York City alone, roused thousands from Covid quarantine lockdown. Dozens (probably many more than that, but for sake of argument) of demonstrations marched across the city that last week of May, made clear and repeated declarations of anger, frustration, exhaustion (w/ police that keep killing us, w/ a system that despite its new facade still clings to the foundational ideas of the slave society in which it was borne,— namely, anti-black racism used to fuel the need for cheap if not free labor and, thus, the creation of a permanent underclass, a socially dead class, w/in USAmerican society). For some reason (maybe the hyper plugged in vibe of Lockdown that had many ppl glued to their phones sending out digital tendrils in attempts to connect, stay connected, reconnect w/ ppl both inside and outside their Pods®) that iteration of protests felt Big and Significant in a way that eclipsed previous versions of Black Lives Matter associated moments—tho maybe that's how every protest moment feels as it's happening: like we're at the precipice of the whole world changing for the better, like we're finally gonna make it to the Promised Land. It's easy to see why that was a brief belief: the dramatic image and energy of streets that had been all but deserted for months suddenly filled w/ masked thousands holding banners blindly following a person w/ a megaphone; exchanging the 7pm applause for chanting, clapping, banging on pans up and down the avenues of manhattan and across the brooklyn bridge. // Online chatter and irl organizing continued for weeks, then lingered a few months, but by the end of the year it was as tho most ppl had forgotten they were budding, up-and-coming activists (to be fair, tho, there are some projects that originated and/ or picked up steam during and following the George Floyd protests, thinking specifically of mutual aid organizations in Brooklyn, that have set up community fridges and other drives around Brooklyn/ NYC). Worst part is that the impassioned pleas for police/the State to stop killing unarmed Black ppl quickly softened (in a matter of days, maybe a week or so) into requests to give police slightly less money. In the end we got neither, the Promised Land remained unreachable. // I got a peek at it during the nightly riots of the early (first five) days: following the dregs of a protest to soho, where mobs of 'kids (~15-21) were crashing the gates and storming every high-end store around the Mercer/Greene + Prince/Spring quadrangle. People riding thru the busted door of the Trek bike store, fires burning in trashcans rolled into the street, kids in orderly lines clambering in and out of Moncler, Dior by Pop Smoke blasting out

of a speaker as a crowd swelled behind volunteers attempting to break the glass protecting the goods branded Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci bandanas lay abandoned in the gutter. // This scene stuck out then and it sticks out still. (The moment was visceral, whole body awash w/ adrenaline, primed to fight or probably run once the police decided to put an end to things.) It ran counter to the narrative that peaceful protest will save us—a ridiculous thing to hear and even wilder to repeat, as it implies that we (Black ppl in America) haven't gotten all our rights because we don't ask politely enough. We've clearly hit the point where new modes of resistance are needed. Peaceful, non-confrontational mass gatherings in the streets bring connections and catharsis, but it will not lead to liberation. The moment calls for sth radical. // It might be nearly impossible, under 'normal non-emergency circumstances', to make a positive case in defense of looting (namely busting thru the window of a store in the midst of a riot and walking off with the goods). All the same, those brief moments in which symbols of the system that oppresses us were destroyed (i.e. burnt out cop cars tagged ACAB, the brick flying thru the 7-11 door, or the crack of the bat against the extra thick D&G glass) felt like the only ones in which some change was possible, in which change was coming; the only moments that created cracks thru which change could one day possibly emerge.

sometimes I catch glimpses of what it must feel like to be an android with implanted dreams, memories of a life u never led: vivid flashes of moments that rocked yr world, marking time as Before and After, appearing in the mind's eye as realer than Real: leaned against a rustic fence in the State, down in the Deep South between Alabama and Mississippi, bearing witness, along w/ what seems to be the rest of the town of Sutton, to what can only be described as 'a series of symbolic actions' (taking place on a parcel of land displayed toward the road like a stage): namely a man of short stature neatly dressed as small town farmer walking back and forth across his estate, systematically destroying every piece of his property, in a process so calm, careful, and dispassionately violent it could equally be called a dismantling. Replenishing a small satchel from a ten-ton mound delivered just hours before, the man, silently salts the deep furrows in his fields in a killing stroke that mimics (the typical, yearly, life-sustaining) seed sowing. Once he's finished, glittering flakes crunching quietly underfoot as he completes the Death March across his own, hard-won land, he leads his livestock to the corral in

front of his house and, after brief loving caress, aims his rifle and fires off one round between each of their eyes. Our farmer, a small Black man sporting round glasses, then goes inside his house to retrieve an axe, w/ which he chops down the old, dead sycamore tree towering over the corral that once marked the boundary of the Wilson-Dewitt(?) plantation, the place where his ancestors were held hostage and forced to labor under constant threat of capricious violence. Moments later, he, w/ the assistance of his wife, emerges from the open house w/ an ornate, heirloom European grandfather clock—the same one that arrived on the ship that trafficked his first known ancestor, The African (bought but never owned, guerilla leader till his betrayal and death), to the Americas. He lays it on the ground by the chopped tree's salted roots and uses the axe to smash it to springs and wood chips. Lastly, he and his wife, each holding a small suitcase and their infant son, walk away from their clapboard house engulfed in flames he lit himself. As they leave, walking down the country road past the stunned townsfolk, they don't stop to offer any last words, some clarifying comment on motivations or goals: they just step around the salted, blood soaked splinters and dirt and never look back.//

What is this text? I'm not sure where it's going, it's not turning out much like i planned. I started typing where the thoughts began and it turned into this rambling memory and book summary (more chapter summary really,) {A Different Drummer (William Melvin Kelley, 1959)}. It was supposed to be an erudite weaving: placing the Symbolic Actions of Tucker Caliban as an exemplar of destituent insurrection (a neutralization of institutions, emptying them of their substance as one steps to the side and watches it expire; from Now by The Invisible Committee, p48). The argument being: Tucker's actions strike a decisive blow in "the struggle against state and capital" which allow him to "exit capitalist normality." (46) A version of this exit being, in my opinion, maybe the last most best option left for (Black ppl in) America. As, the old romantic vision of revolution in the French Jacobin mold—i.e. to take up arms and storm the institutions of State—seems,

on its face, at this moment in Time in USAmerica, like a bad doomed idea. Like an ant threatening the magnifying glass. An incitement to mass State murder.// My question, after seeing progression (more digression) of peaceful protests in 2020 and how i've personally grown lazy over the past few years w/ imperialist decadence and creature comforts, is: is there a genuine will for revolution in USAmerica? Do we really want Big Change? Are we (am I) willing to give up comforts and/or privileges in the pursuit of a more just and equitable nation-state? Would I be willing to walk away from it all after the promise of sth, anything, better on the 'other side'? If there was some kind of guarantee, then yeah sure easy. But, if this proposal was made to me in my real lived life and I had to take a leap of faith out into the void and trust that i'd land, alive, on the other side, there'd be a long hesitation. It's not even the material things that would throw me, i don't think. It'd be giving up the more nebulous, qualitative things like 'prestige'. For example: if u go to a 'good school,' yr probably less likely to want to destitute that institution in favor of creating a smaller, more dynamic higher education setup. As that prestige places u closer to Power, even if just in the same building, making it hard to willingly give up. (This concern with Power Access is sth to be addressed, as, in this university thought, if students with less Power Access (@ insert Any College here) decide to destitute their universities and create autonomous learning communities that can effectively replace the rigor and breadth of a University education, but at the same time the students at universities w/ higher Power Access (insert Ivy here) decide to continue w/ business as usual, they will still be able to wield their networks of Power Access to rise to the top of an unchanged (Power) system...)// That's it, there's no conclusion, yet. Just those questions to ask ourselves: what action are we willing to take? What are we willing to risk/ give up in the pursuit of liberation? Are we willing to salt the field of USAmerica in order to grow sth somewhere else?//

■ Tilghman Goldsborough's forthcoming book with 1080PRESS is titled *The Western*.

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