



RUBICON THEATRE COMPANY

TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992

BY ANNA DEVEARE SMITH

2022 Study Guide



Welcome to Rubicon Theatre Company!

We at Rubicon Theatre Company (RTC) are so pleased that you and your students will be joining us for *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992* by Anna Deavere Smith. RTC is dedicated to our community, and after two years of shutdowns, we have sorely missed our audiences, especially our student groups. We are grateful to you for bringing your students to see this timely production.

This guide is intended to provide you with support materials as you prepare your students to see the play. It contains historical context, information about the playwright, artists, and people who made this play possible, insight into production and design choices, as well as discussion questions for before and after your playgoing experience. This guide was also written with your students in mind, so please feel free to share it with them.

The length of the play is about two-and-a-half hours, including a fifteen-minute intermission, during which light snacks and water will be provided for your students downstairs. There will also be a twenty minute facilitated Talkback with artists directly after the show, giving your students an opportunity to ask questions about the play, the process, or whatever else may have piqued their curiosity.

Theatre Etiquette:

We know this might be the first time some students are experiencing live theatre. Here are some friendly reminders we hope you will review with your students so that they can have the best possible experience in the theatre.

- As a professional theatre, we adhere to the rules of Actors' Equity Association (AEA), the professional union of actors and stage managers in the United States. AEA requires that all playgoers wear masks in the theatre. Please be sure to keep your mask on at all times (except when actively eating or drinking at intermission).
- Please be sure that you are vaccinated or have had a negative test within the past 72 hours.
- Food and drinks are allowed at intermission, but not inside the theatre during the performance.
- Please be sure to turn off all cell phones, watches, and other devices before the show starts, and again after intermission. It can be very

distracting for the actor when electronic devices make sounds or light up during the performance.

- Please do not talk or visit with your neighbors during the performance. If you can see and hear the actor, the actor can see and hear you!
- Authentic reactions, laughs, gasps, etc. are strongly encouraged! You as audience members are as important to the performance as the artists involved. We want you to take a journey with this play and understand that some of the content may be uncomfortable or upsetting. Honest reactions are important and let the actor know that you are paying attention. We just ask that you remain respectful and mindful of how hard the actor is working to share this story with you, and of your fellow audience members.
- Please sit in your assigned seats and return to those seats after intermission. Please stay seated during the performance, unless you truly need to use the rest room, have an emergency, or need a moment to collect yourself. (We understand these things happen.) If you do need to exit the theatre during the performance, please exit at the back of the theatre quietly and be aware of your fellow playgoers. An usher will be glad to assist you. We love feedback! Please let us know your thoughts. We are always looking to create continuing partnerships and relationships with our teachers and students and are continually learning how to create more opportunities to engage with you. Please reach out with any comments or suggestions to tdougherty@rubicontheatre.org.

Advisory: *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992* is recommended for older high school students and college students. The play contains some language that may be offensive and also contains video footage of actual events of violence which may be uncomfortable.

Historical Context: The L.A. Riots

The LA Riots and how this play came to be:

One moment can change the course of history. On April 29, 1992, at 3:15 p.m., in Simi Valley, four police officers are acquitted of any wrongdoing after having been caught on video brutally beating and kicking Rodney King, an African-American motorist who had resisted arrest, long after he had been subdued. Within hours, South Central L.A. erupts in what has been described alternately as “the riots,” “the uprising,” and “the revolution.” Protestors block freeway traffic, attack motorists, wreck and loot numerous downtown stores and buildings and set hundreds of fires. More than 50 people are killed, more than 2,300 are injured and over twelve thousand people are arrested. Property damages total more than \$1 billion.

In the aftermath, playwright, scholar and actor Anna Deavere Smith interviews hundreds of people to try to understand the complex issues that fueled the flames. She fuses the varied accounts of what happened into an unforgettable theatrical experience that becomes *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992*.

Chronology leading up to and after the LA Riots:

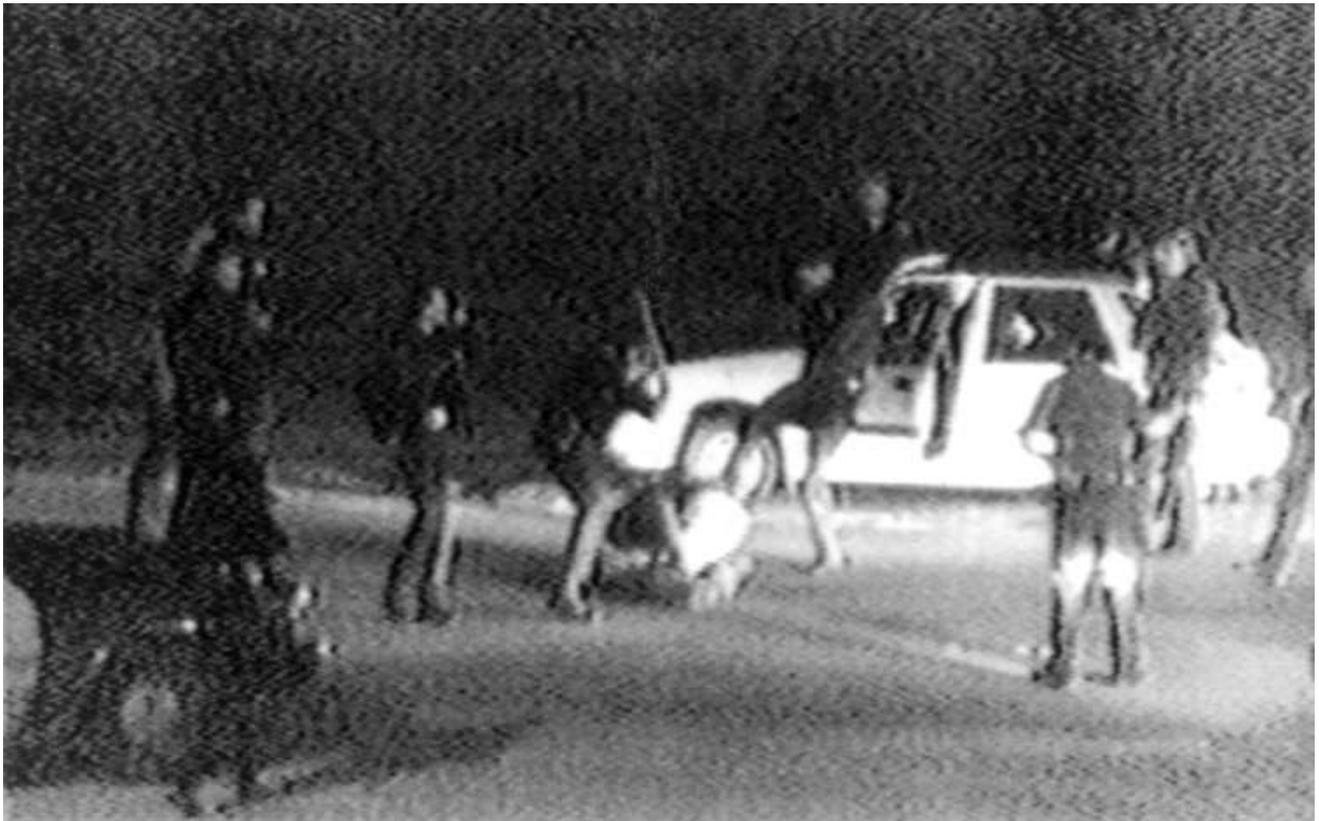
James Baldwin said, “History is present in literally all that we do,” and Anna Deavere Smith’s *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992* is no exception. The events and themes in the play have origins stemming from the founding of California, and the founding of the United States (and beyond.) The play touches on the rich complexity of our collective humanity, including all of the cultures and people that were present in L.A. in 1992. If we were to include every event and movement mentioned in the play, this guide would be hundreds of pages. Thus, this timeline is limited to the events directly leading up to and after what was then called the L.A.riots, April 29–May 4, 1992. Many of the issues investigated by Anna Deavere Smith and the people represented in the play stem from lack of cultural understanding, mutual ignorance, and stereotypes stemming from fear. Please see the list of other suggested historical movements, events, and topics to investigate with your students. The more we know and share about our collective human history – the more we can affect the future.

Chronology

Rodney King Beating and Events Related to the L.A. Riots

March 3, 1991

Rodney King, a Black motorist, is pulled over by California Highway Patrol officers for speeding on the 210 Freeway. King later admits he tried to elude authorities because he had been drinking and was on probation for a robbery conviction. He eventually pulls off the freeway and stops his car in front of a San Fernando Valley apartment building. George Holliday, who lives in the building, is awakened by the noise. He sees and videotapes four white officers beating and kicking King dozens of times, even after he is subdued and on the ground. Holliday turns over the video to a local TV station, and it airs over and over again on broadcast news, causing an international outcry.



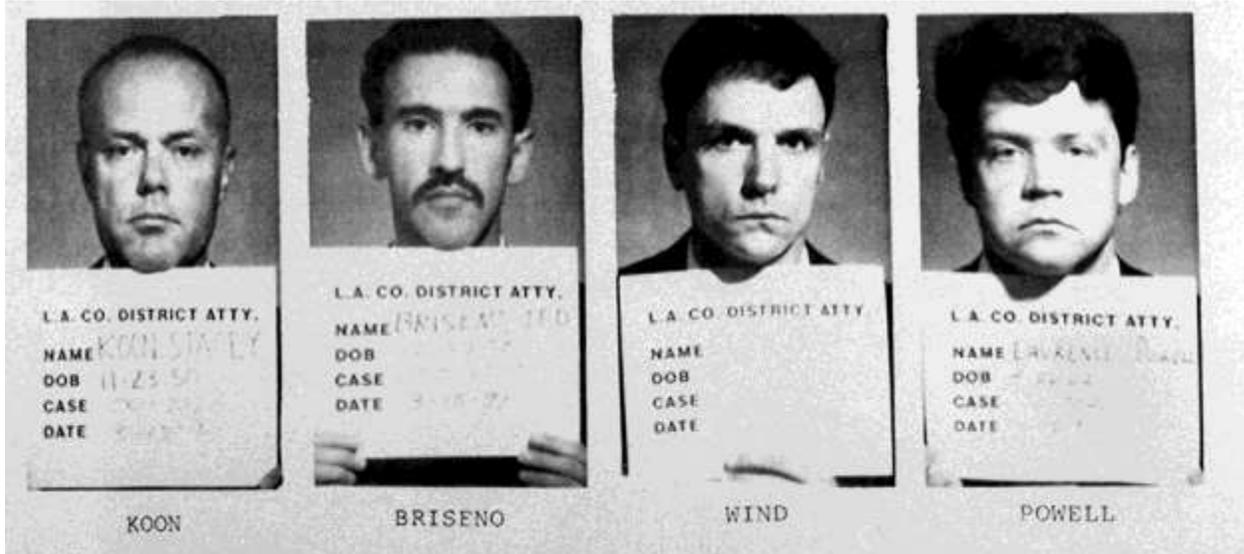
The Beating of Rodney King

Photo: George Holliday/KTLA via AP

A few days later, LAPD Chief Daryl F. Gates calls the Rodney King beating an “aberration” as the community clamors for his resignation. King is released from custody.

March 15, 1991

A grand jury charges the four officers seen in the video with felony assault and other offenses.



Left to right: Sgt. Stacey C. Koon, Officer Theodore J. Briseno, Officer Timothy E. Wind and Officer Laurence Powell. Photo: L.A. County District Attorney via AP

The same night, 15-year-old African-American teenager Latasha Harlins is shot in the back of the head by Korean-American Soon Ja Du in a South L.A. convenience store at 91st and Figueroa. Du states she believes the Westchester High School student was stealing a \$1.79 bottle of orange juice. Harlins dies with \$2.00 in her hand.



Latasha Harlins

March 26, 1991

The four officers charged in the King beating enter their innocent pleas on the same day Soon Ja Du is arraigned for murder.

April 1, 1991

L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley empowers a special commission under Warren Christopher to investigate the LAPD.

April 4, 1991

The L.A. Police Commission places Gates on leave. He is immediately reinstated by the City Council. Gates takes disciplinary action against the four indicted officers, firing Wind and suspending the other three.



*Police Chief Daryl Gates and Mayor Tom Bradley
Photo: Sidney Brink, L.A. Herald Examiner Collection of L.A. Public Library*

May 10, 1991

A grand jury refuses to indict 17 officers who stood by at the King beating and did nothing.

July 9, 1991

The Christopher Commission releases its report on July 9, recommending that Gates and the whole Police Commission resign.

July 16, 1991

The Police Commission orders Gates to reinstate his assistant chief David D. Dotson, whom Gates had forced to step down after Dotson complained of the chief's failures to discipline police officers. About a week later, Gates announces his intention of retiring in 1992.

November 15, 1991

After a court finds Soon Ja Du guilty of involuntary manslaughter, she is sentenced to five years' probation, four-hundred hours of community service and a \$500 fine.

November 26, 1991

Based on the massive publicity and the highly charged political environment surrounding the case, Judge Stanley Weisberg of the California Court of Appeals approves a change of venue to Ventura County, and the Rodney King Trial is moved to Simi Valley. As racial tensions continue to grow, the choice is

criticized because Simi Valley is largely populated by Caucasian-Americans and because of the large number of L.A. Police officers who live there.

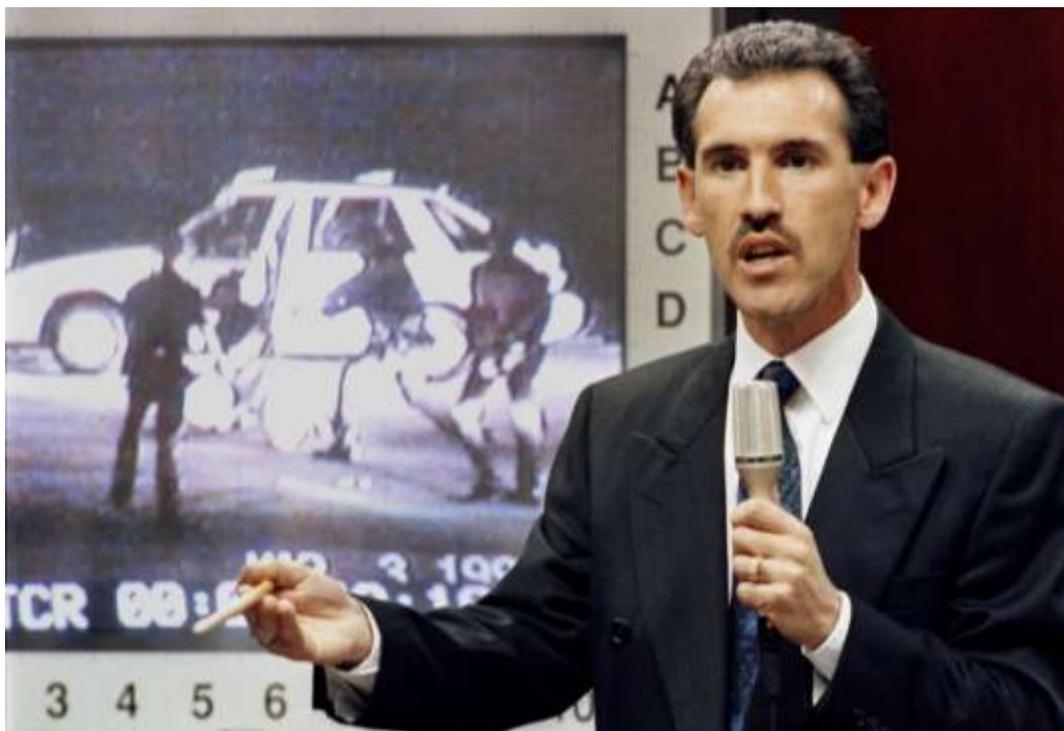
November 29, 1991

Tensions continue to rise when LAPD officers kill a black man, leading to a confrontation with nearly a hundred housing-project residents in the Watts area of L.A.

February 3—April 28, 1992

Pretrial motions precede the actual trial of the four LAPD officers in the Rodney King case, which begins with opening arguments on March 4 before a jury which includes ten white people, one Filipino person and one Hispanic woman. None are African-American. And none are Simi Valley residents. Two weeks later, the prosecution rests its arguments. On April 13, Briseno admits that King was never a threat to the arresting officers. Meanwhile, on April 16, Willie L. Williams is named as Gates' successor as Police Commissioner. On April 23, the King-trial jury begins its deliberations.

Officer Briseno defends his actions during court testimony in Simi Valley on April 3, 1992. A scene from the video of the assault is shown.



Mark J. Terrill/AP

April 29, 1992

The jury returns a verdict on April 29. The officers are found innocent, except for one charge against Officer Powell for the excessive use of force. The verdict, which results in a mistrial, is widely publicized on television.

Shortly after the verdict, Mayor Tom Bradley calls the verdict “senseless,” and states, “The jury’s verdict will never blind the world to what we saw on the videotape.”



The feared reaction comes the same day. A peaceful protest rally of over two-thousand people at a South-Central L.A. church breaks into violence, spreading in a widening circle of shootings, beatings, and looting. Vandalism eventually leads to arson, engulfing a large section of Central L.A. in fire. Reginald Denny, a Caucasian truck driver, is pulled from his cab and severely beaten in an episode caught on video tape and broadcast on television. L.A. Mayor Bradley declares a local emergency, and Governor Pete Wilson brings in the National Guard.

Mass protests break out around the country. On May 3, the *L.A. Times* announces the toll paid by the community: more than 150 fires, 58 dead, almost 2,400 injured, over 12,000 arrested, 3,100 businesses damaged, and property losses in excess of \$1 billion.



Several buildings in a shopping center are engulfed in flames on April 30, 1992.
Photo: AP/Reed Saxon



A fire burns out of control in South Central L.A. on April 30, 1992.

Photo: AP/Paul Sakuma

May 1, 1992

Rodney King pleads for calm, stating, "People, I just want to say, can we all get along? Can we get along? Can we stop making it horrible for the older people and the kids?"

June 28, 1992

Under massive public pressure to resign, Police Chief Daryl Gates retires from the LAPD after 43 years on the force, and 14 as chief.

August 4, 1992

LAPD Sgt. Stacey Koon, and Officers Laurence Powell, Theodore Briseno and Timothy Wind are indicted on federal charges of violating Rodney King's civil rights.



Jonathan Nourok/AFP/Getty Images

February 25, 1993

The federal trial begins.

April 7, 1993

Koon and Powell are convicted of civil rights violations. Briseno and Wind are acquitted. No civil disturbances follow the verdict.



Photo: Douglas C. Pizac/AP



Photo: Pool/AFP/Getty Images

December 7, 1993

Damian "Football" Williams, who was seen in the video assaulting white trucker Reginald Denny with a brick, is convicted of assault and other charges and sentenced to ten years in prison.

August 3, 1994

After a long legal battle between King and the city, the City of L.A. agrees to a \$3.8 million dollar settlement to King for medical bills, pain and suffering sustained as a result of the beating.



Photo: Chris Pizzello/AP

June 1, 1994

Rodney King is awarded nothing in punitive damages in a civil trial against the police officers. He had asked for \$15 million.

August 4, 1994

Koon and Powell are sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison

April 16, 2010

Daryl Gates succumbs to cancer at the age of 83.

June 17, 2012

Just a few weeks after the 20th anniversary of the uprisings, and shortly after King's memoir "The Riot Within: My Journey from Rebellion to Redemption" is published, Rodney King drowns in his backward swimming pool at age 47.

Rodney King becomes a symbol of police brutality and the events around his trial spark a flame that continues to burn. Following King's death, his daughter Lora King works on bridge-building projects with the LAPD between the police and the African-American community. The Rodney King Foundation, the non-profit Lora starts in his name, remains her father's legacy

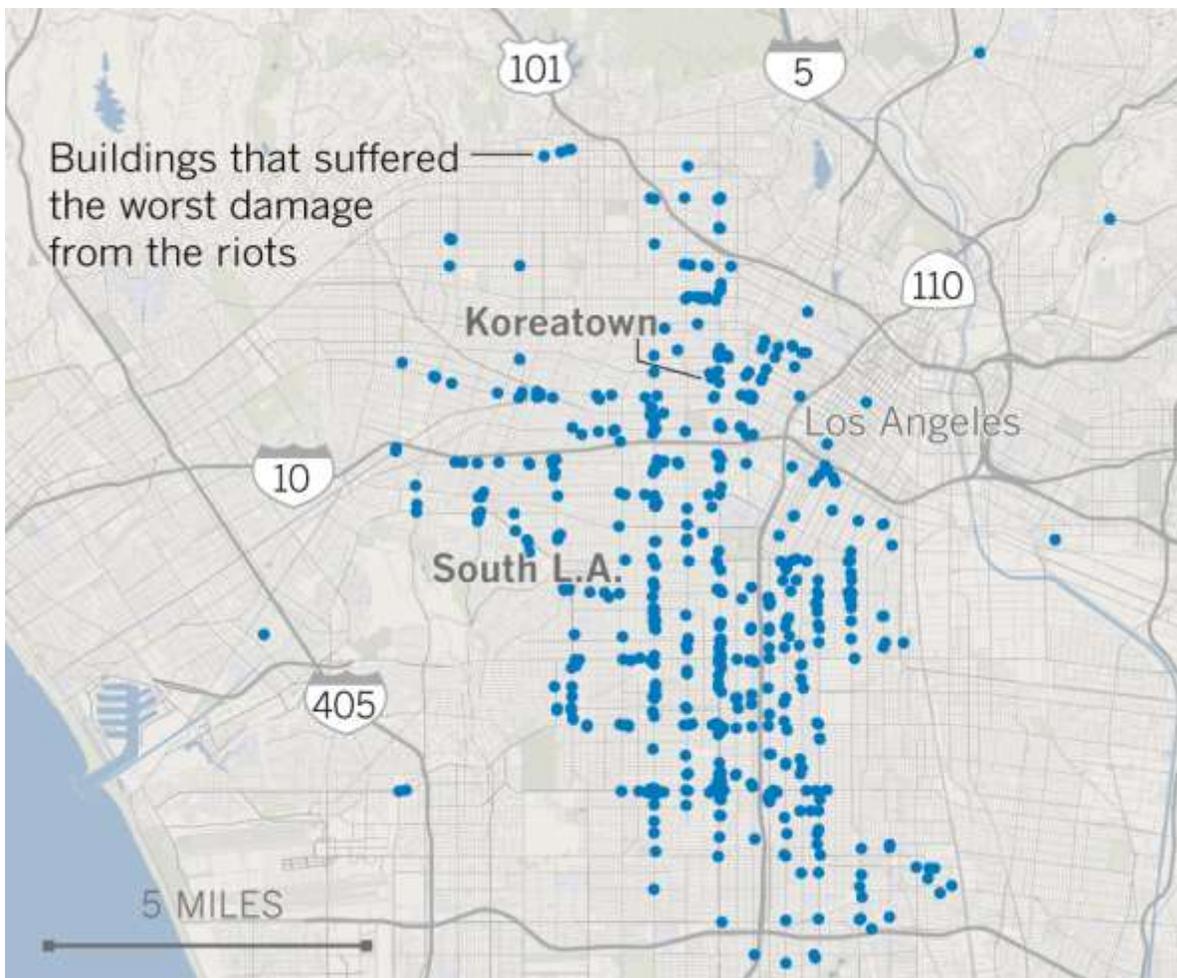


Rodney King.

Photo: Joe Klamar/AFP/Getty Images

Aftermath of L.A. Riots: The Numbers

- 64 people died (2 Asian, 28 Black, 19 Latino & 15 white). No police officers or National Guard members died.
- 2,283 people were injured, 228 critically.
- 12,111 people were arrested (51% were Latinos, 36% African-American. Only 12% were women.)
- Over \$1 billion in property damage
- 2,300 Korean stores were looted or burned, making up 45% of the \$1 billion total damage.



L.A. Times map shows sites in Central and South L.A. that were hit the hardest, including buildings that were at least half damaged or deemed unsafe according to city records.

Other Moments in History to Explore:

“History, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do. It could scarcely be otherwise, since it is to history that we owe our frames of reference, our identities, and our aspirations.” — James Baldwin

These are some suggested topics that are mentioned in the play and contribute to the history of how we got to the L. A. Riots, and do not come close to broaching the full spectrum of our collective history.

- ❓ Before seeing the play, ask your students to research one, two or several of these topics.
- ❓ After seeing the play, revisit this list and ask your students how these events might have led or contributed to the events of 1992 L.A., and how they might still be affecting us today.

Suggested research:

- Spanish Occupation of California
- Gaspar de Portola
- Pobladores
- Founding and History of L.A.
- 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
- 1984 Olympics
- Operation Hammer
- Reaganism–The War on Drugs
- Republic of Korea Armed Forces
- Korea under Japanese rule
- Treaty of San Francisco
- Japan–Korea Treaty of 1910
- Zoot Suit Riots 1942
- Watts Riots 1965
- *Inter Caetera* (Papal Bull 1492)
- Doctrine of Discovery
- Chinese Massacre of 1871
- Manifest Destiny
- Executive order 9066
- Chinese Exclusion Act
- Immigration Act of 1924
- Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965
- 1968 Kerner Commission Report
- Civil Rights Movement
- Black Lives Matter Movement
- The California Land Act of 1851
- The Watts Truce 1992
- Insurrection Act

Recent Events in the News:

March, 2020

Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old emergency medical technician is shot eight times when officers raid her apartment in Louisville, Kentucky. Louisville police say they returned fire after one officer was shot and wounded. Taylor's family files a lawsuit, and in September of 2020 reaches a settlement of \$12 million with the city authorities. The lawsuit states that Ms. Taylor's partner - who was with her at the time - had fired in self-defense because the police did not identify themselves, and he thought the apartment was being burgled. A grand jury charges one police officer not with Ms. Taylor's death, but with "wanton endangerment" for firing into a neighboring apartment. Three officers involved in the raid are eventually dismissed from the police force.

May, 2020

George Floyd dies after being arrested in Minneapolis and held down by police officers, one of whom has his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes. Floyd pleads that he cannot breathe, and after his death, protests break out across the U.S., with demonstrations in other parts of the world. Former police officer Derek Chauvin - who had knelt on Mr. Floyd - is convicted on charges of second-degree murder, third-degree murder and manslaughter after a three-week trial.



*Protests and demonstrations in Minneapolis as the trial of Derek Chauvin gets underway.
Photo: Getty Images*

April, 2021

Daunte Wright is shot and killed in Brooklyn Center, just north of Minneapolis. Police pull Wright over for a traffic violation and tell him he is being arrested for an outstanding warrant. He breaks free and tries to re-enter his car, at which point an officer is heard shouting "Taser" several times before firing a shot.

Local police say that the killing appears to be accidental, and the officer Kim Potter, meant to use her Taser and not her handgun. In December, Potter is found guilty of first- and second-degree manslaughter in the young Black man's death.



Clashes erupted following Daunte Wright's killing, which occurred during the trial of former police officer Derek Chauvin.

Photo: Getty Images

April, 2022 (Last Month)

Patrick Lloyla, a Black Congolese refugee is killed by a Grand Rapids, Michigan police officer during a traffic stop, sparking protests in the city. Lloyla is shot in the back of the head according to a forensic pathologist who performed an independent autopsy. The investigation is ongoing.

About the Play:

Karyl Lynn Burns
Producing Artistic Director

Stephanie Coltrin
Executive Producer

James O'Neil
Artistic Director Emeritus

in association with
Mary Ann Cohen
presents

Chris Butler*
Starring in

TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992

BY ANNA DEAVERE SMITH

APRIL 27 – MAY 15, 2022

Co-Directed by
Chris Butler and Jenny Sullivan**

Scenic Design
John Iacovelli+

Costume Design
Abra Flores

Asst. Projection Designer
Sam Clevenger+

Lighting Design
Brian Gale+

Illustrations
Matt Kish

Production Stage Manager
Jessie Vacchiano*

Projection Design
David Murakami+

Voice & Dialect Coach
Roderick Menzies

Technical Director
Frank Bowles

Original Music & Sound Design
Randall Robert Tico

Properties & Furniture Design
Kevin Williams

Public Relations
David Elzer/Demand PR

Running Time:
Approximately two hours with a 15-minute intermission

*Member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA), the professional union for actors and stage managers in the United States.

**Member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers (SDC).

+Member of United Scenic Artists United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 of the IATSE, union representing Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Sound and Projection Designers in Live Performance.

About the Playwright



ANNA DEAVERE SMITH is an actor, author, playwright, scholar and speaker. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Smith was one of only seven African-American students in her graduating class at Arcadia University. She completed her M.F.A. at American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco before embarking on a successful career as a performer. Smith is often recognized for her recurring roles on "The West Wing," "Nurse Jackie," and for her work in films including "Philadelphia," "Dave," "The American President," "Rent," "Rachel Getting

Married" and "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" She is considered the creator of a documentary style of theatre, also called "verbatim theatre." Smith was nominated for two Tony Awards for *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992* (Best Actress and Best Play), winning a Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Solo Performance and a Theatre World Award. She was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1993 for *Fires in the Mirror*, for which she won her second Drama Desk. Smith was a recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship, often referred to as the "genius grant." She also won a Fletcher Foundation Fellowship for her contribution to civil rights issues. Smith is the founding director of the Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue at NYU, where she teaches in the Department of Art & Public Policy at the Tisch School and the School of Law. She has also served on the faculties of USC, Stanford and Carnegie Mellon. Smith won The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize in 2013. In that same year, she received the National Humanities Medal from President Barack Obama. In 2015, the NEH selected her for the Jefferson Lecture, the U.S. federal government's highest honor for achievement in the humanities, delivering a lecture entitled "On the Road: A Search for American Character." Smith was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2019.

What is Verbatim Theatre?

According to the HowlRound Theatre Commons, "Verbatim theatre is a branch of documentary theatre in which a playwright or group of devisers interviews people who are connected to the subject matter at the heart of the piece. Documentary theatre is theatre that tells a true story using materials, such as news articles, interviews, reports, letters. So, these interviews become threads that are used to construct the play. Verbatim theatre can differ from other forms of documentary theatre because it only uses quotes from interviewees to construct the piece of theatre. Everything is written into the script verbatim, while non-verbatim documentary theatre often blends interviews with other source material and possibly original narration as well. But it's not like verbatim theatre or documentary theatre don't have a point of view. The playwright edits and compiles the interviews. So really the way that those interviews are put together and what's chosen to be included or not included can really highlight a certain point of view on the subject. One of the most famous verbatim pieces in the US is Anna Deavere Smith's *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992*."

How the Play came to be:

In May of 1992, directly after the riots, Anna Deavere Smith was commissioned by the Mark Taper Forum in L. A. to create a one-person performance piece about the uprisings that happened after the Rodney King verdict. Smith interviewed over 300 people over the course of a year, and *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992* is the product of that search for the character of the city in the wake of the King verdict, which was later referred to as a "riot," an "uprising" or a "rebellion." Smith was particularly interested in "how the events in Los Angeles gave us an opportunity to take stock of the changing racial landscape in America."

This version of *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992* was created for a touring production of the play at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. In its original form, *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992* was produced by the Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum in L. A. It premiered on May 23, 1993, and closed on July 18, 1993. It was subsequently produced as a work-in-progress at The McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey. The original New York production was provided by the Public Theater. It opened at the Public Theater in March, 1994 and was directed by George C. Wolfe. *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992* opened on Broadway at the Cort Theatre on April 17, 1994.

About the Actor/Co-Director



CHRIS BUTLER (Co-Director/Actor) is a two-time L.A. Ovation, NAACP, LADCC and Garland Award-winner for *Yellowman* (Fountain Theatre) and *Stick Fly* (Matrix Theatre). He appeared as Noah on Broadway in *110 in the Shade* starring Audra McDonald (Roundabout Theatre Company). His credits with Rubicon Theatre Company include *Gem of the Ocean*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *You Can't Take It With You*. Other regional theatre credits include *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *How to Catch Creation*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *The Piano Lesson* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *District Merchants* and *Death of a Salesman* (South

Coast Repertory); *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Shakespeare Center L.A.); *Race* (A.C.T.); *Julius Caesar* (Shakespeare Santa Cruz); *Blue* (Pasadena Playhouse); and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Globe Theatre). On television, Chris most recently played Rayfield Mooty in the television mini-series "Women of the Movement." He played recurring characters on all seven seasons of CBS's "The Good Wife" as well as its spin off "The Good Fight," "Designated Survivor," "True Blood," "Major Crimes" and "24." Chris has been a series regular on TNT's "King & Maxwell" and several pilots, and has guest-starred on more than 50 television shows, including "NCIS," "Superstore," "Modern Family," "Scandal," "True Detective," "Longmire," "Shameless," "True Blood," "NCIS: Los Angeles," "Rizzoli & Isles," "Criminal Minds," and "Law & Order: SVU." Film credits include: "Rescue Dawn," "Cradle 2: The Grave," "Burning Dog" and "30 Nights." Directing credits include *A Song* (Rubicon Theatre Company), *Two Trains Running*, *Top Dog Underdog* (Bonnie Franklin's CCAP) and *Six Degrees of Separation* (Company Carolina). Chris holds an M.F.A. in Theatre from the University of California at San Diego and a B.A. in Dramatic Arts from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

About the Co-Director

JENNY SULLIVAN (Co-Director) emerged from the pandemic blues to direct Rubicon's production of *The Gin Game* with Jobeth Williams and Joe Spano, Ensemble Theatre Company's (ETC's) *Tenderly: The Rosemary Clooney Musical* with Linda Purl and David Engel, and *Unjust* with Gregory Harrison and Chris Butler for The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation. Favorite work before 2020: Tom Dugan's *Jackie Unveiled* at the Wallis Annenberg in Beverly Hills, and the Acorn Theatre Off-Broadway run of Tom Dugan's *Wiesenthal* (which moved to The Wallis and the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre). Jenny's Rubicon credits include *The Baby Dance: Mixed; Women Beyond Borders; The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance; A Moon for the Misbegotten; Our Town; Steel Magnolias* (Indy Award); *Food Confessions; The Mystery of Irma Vep* (2012 Ovation Nomination for Direction); *Tea at Five; Doubt; Trying; Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Indy Award) with Joe Spano, Karyl Lynn Burns, Jason Chanos and Angela Goethals; *Spit Like a Big Girl; You Can't Take It With You; Hamlet* (Indy Award) with Joseph Fuqua; *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* with Chris Butler; *Tuesdays with Morrie; Defying Gravity; Happy Days; Art* (Indy Award); *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Indy Award) with Susan Clark and Bonnie Franklin; *The Rainmaker* with Stephanie Zimbalist and John Bennett Perry; *The Little Foxes*; and *Old Wicked Songs* with Harold Gould and Joseph Fuqua. Solo productions include the successful ETC and Laguna Playhouse runs of *I Am My Own Wife* (Indy Award) featuring John Tufts, *The Year of Magical Thinking* with Linda Purl, and Rubicon's production of *Clarence Darrow* with James O'Neil. Other credits include *The Dresser* with Len Cariou and Granville Van Dusen at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre; *Steel Magnolias* at Laguna Playhouse; *The Legend of Georgia McBride, Baby Doll, Good People, Dublin Carol* (Indy Award), *The Lion in Winter* (Indy Award), *The Memory of Water* and *Tea at Five* at ETC; *Listen for Wings* at Access Theatre; *The Elephant Man* for San Jose Rep; *Death of a Salesman* (AUM) with Stuart Margolin and Wendy Phillips; six seasons of new plays at Williamstown; Nora and Delia Ephron's *Love, Loss, and What I Wore* at The Geffen Playhouse; and *The Vagina Monologues* for the Canon and Coronet theatres. Jenny directed the World Premiere of Jane Anderson's *The Baby Dance* at Pasadena Playhouse, which then moved to Williamstown Theatre Festival, Long Wharf Theatre (CT Critics' Directing Award) and the Lucille Lortel Off-Broadway. Jenny's film credits include "Access All Areas" and "The Next Best Thing."

About the Characters in the Play

The characters in the play are all real people, who are alive or who have lived. All words in the play were taken from the interviews Anna Deavere Smith conducted, are performed verbatim from those interviews.

The play has 37 different characters of diverse backgrounds, ethnicities and socioeconomic statuses. This play is performed by one actor, Chris Butler, who transforms into each character using dialect, costume elements, physicality, the magic of theatre, and most importantly, language. According to the production notes, "the actor is performing the specifics of race and identity and working towards those specifics by paying attention to accuracy of language. Ethnicity, age, gender, class identity are all meant to be variables that the audience sees shifting...The idea of the play is to suggest that even in a volatile situation, where tribes, counties, cultures, races clash, it is important to walk in the shoes of someone different from them, even an enemy. The theory of the play is that an actor has the ability to walk in another person's 'words,' and therefore in their hearts."

- ❓ Some of the characters in the play are in the public eye and can be easily researched. Ask your students if they recognize any of the names in the list of characters before they see the play, and research those they might recognize.
- ❓ Revisit the list of characters after seeing the play. Research characters you might not have known. How did the actor capture the spirit of the real person? How does speech, language and physicality work to create the essence of the real person?

List of Characters

- **Jessye Norman**, Opera Singer, African-American
- **Ted Briseno**, Police officer, Accused of Beating Rodney King, Latino
- **Angela King**, Rodney King's Aunt, African-American
- **Stanley K. Sheinbaum**, Former President, L.A. Police Commission, White, 70s
- **Rudy Salas, Sr.**, Sculptor and Painter, Mexican-American, 60s
- **Elaine Young**, Real Estate Agent, Beverly Hills, White, 50s
- **Charles Lloyd**, Attorney, African-American, 50s
- **Gina Rae aka Queen Malkah**, Community Activist, African-American, 40s
- **Jay Woong Yahng**, Former Liquor Store Owner, Korean, 40s
- **Josie Morales**, Clerk Typist, City of L.A., Witness to Rodney King Beating
- **Sergeant Charles Duke**, Special Weapons and Tactics Unit, LAPD, Use-of-Force Expert for the Defense/Witness, Simi Valley and Federal Trials, White, 30s
- **Anonymous Man**, Juror in Simi Valley Trial, White, Late 30s
- **Joe Viola**, Television Writer, White, 40s
- **Keith Watson**, Former Security Guard, Co-Assailant of Reginald Denny, African-American, 20s
- **Shelby Coffey III**, Editor, L.A. Times, White, 40's
- **Katie Miller**, Bookkeeper and Accountant, African-American, 40s
- **Octavio Sandoval**, Occupation Unknown, Latino
- **Federico Sandoval**, Octavio's Brother, Latino
- **Talent Agent**, Anonymous Hollywood Talent Agent, White, 40s
- **Elaine Young**, The Beverly Hills Real Estate Agency, White
- **Judith Tur**, Ground Reporter. L.A. News Service, War Zone
- **Daryl Gates**, Former Chief of L.A. Police Department, White, 50s
- **Elvira Evers**, General Worker and Cashier, Canteen Corporation, Black Pan-American, 40s
- **Cornel West**, Scholar, African-American, 40s
- **Reginald Denny**, Semi-Truck Driver, Victim, White, 30s
- **Paul Parker**, Chairperson, Free the L.A. Four Plus Defense Committee, African-American, 20s
- **Walter Park**, Store Owner, Gunshot Victim, Korean-American, 50s

- **Chris Oh**, Medical Student, Stepson to Walter Park, Korean-American, 30s
- **Mrs. June Park**, Wife of Walter Park, Korean-American, 50s
- **Maxine Waters**, Congresswoman
- **Alice Waters**, Chef, Chez Panisse Restaurant, Berkeley, CA, White, 40s
- **Jin Ho Lee**, Korean-American, 30s
- **Elaine Brown**, Former Head of the Black Panther Party, African-American, 40s
- **Bill Bradley**, Senator, D-New Jersey, White, 40s
- **Maria**, Juror #7, African-American, 30s
- **Mrs. Young-Soon Han**, Former Liquor Store Owner, Korean-American, 40s
- **Twilight Bey**, Organizer, Gang Truce, Crips Gang, African-American, Early 30s

Play Structure

The play is structured into two acts, each with five sections. Each section is made up of a series of interviews, with each interview given their own title by the playwright. The play is not linear, and jumps back and forth between characters, moments in time, and locations.

ACT ONE

ONCE UPON A TIME

JESSYE NORMAN.....Humming Tunes

TED BRISENO.....A Broken Heart

ANGELA KING.....Hand Fishin'

SMOKE

STANLEY K. SHEINBAUM.....These Curious People

RUDY SALAS, SR.....My Enemy

ELAINE YOUNG.....Safe and Sound in Beverly Hills

NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE

CHARLES LLOYD/GINA RAE aka QUEEN MALKAH/JAY WOONG YAHNG....The Story of Latasha Harlins

THE STORY OF RODNEY KING

THE FIRST TRIAL/SIMI VALLEY, FEBRUARY, 1992

JOSIE MORALES.....Indelible Substance

SERGEANT CHARLES DUKE.....Control Holds

ANONYMOUS MAN.....Your Heads in Shame

ROCKED

JOE VIOLA.....Butta-Boom

KEITH WATSON.....A Movie

STANLEY K. SHEINBAUM.....Hammer

SHELBY COFFEY, III.....Big and Dreadful Things

KEITH WATSON.....Rocked

KATIE MILLER.....Pep Boys

OCTAVIO SANDOVAL.....Bunk Beds

FEDERICO SANDOVAL.....Channel 2, 4 ...

KATIE MILLER.....I. Magnin

TALENT AGENT.....Caesar Salad
ELAINE YOUNG
KEITH WATSON.....Rage
SHELBY COFFEY III.....Beirut
JUDITH TUR..... War Zone
KEITH WATSON.....Make My Mark
DARYL GATES.....It's Awful Hard to Break Away
TALENT AGENT.....Absorb a Little Guilt
ELVIRA EVERS.....To Look Like Girls From Little
JESSYE NORMAN..... Roar

ACT TWO

LOSSES

CORNEL WEST, Scholar.....Chekhov/Coltrane
REGINALD DENNY.....A Weird Common Threat in Our Lives
PAUL PARKER.....No Justice, No Peace/My Room
WALTER PARK.....Kinda' Lonely
CHRIS OH.....How Things Used to Be
MRS. JUNE PARK.....And in My Heart for Him
CHRIS OH.....Execution Style
ANGELA KING.....Here's a Nobody
THEODORE BRISENO.....Not Their Hero Anymore

THE NATIONAL GUARD COMES TO L.A.

MAXINE WATERS.....Washington

AFTER DINNER

ALICE WATERS.....A Civilizing Place
PAUL PARKER.....Slavery
JIN HO LEE.....Seven Names
PAUL PARKER.....Weapons
ELAINE BROWN.....Ask Sadaam Hussein
PAUL PARKER.....In a Way that was Just
BILL BRADLEY.....You're Being Held Against Your Will, Aren't You?
RUDY SALAS.....How Do You Think a Father Feels?
PAUL PARKER.....What I'm Doing For, Say, Justice

BILL BRADLEY.....Application of the Laws

ALICE WATERS.....Marching Orders

JUSTICE

MARIA.....AA Meeting

MRS. YOUNG-SOON HAN.....Swallowing the Bitterness

TWILIGHT

TWILIGHT BEY, Organizer, Gang Truce.....Limbo

About the World of the Play

The world of the play is created through the actor and the elements of design, including scenic design, lighting design, projections, sound, and costume, among others. These elements come together to help you understand the world that the play is evoking, as well as the choices from the designers and the directors that aid in the story telling. Because this is a one-person show, the design elements become very important in helping the audience know where we are, who we are talking to, and what the play is attempting to communicate.

Set Design:

The set was created to be an industrial and practical playground that was useable, including cubbies, multifunctional playing levels and lots of playing space for the actor. The designer and directors wanted to create a feeling of L.A. in 1992, but also wanted to evoke a ground zero quality, to harken to the aftermath of the riots.

Projections:

The projections in this play not only serve in identifying the 37 different characters in the play, but also aid in creating the world and evoking a feeling of the many locations within the play. Projections allow us to quickly change scenes and locations, creating the mosaic of varied perspectives and areas of L.A. in the play. They serve to locate and transport. Rather than using real images of L.A., this play uses illustrations to construct a theatricalized experience of these verbatim interviews, allowing the videos to be the only “real” or unaltered thing about the play.

Sound:

The play uses original music with nods to all of the cultures represented within the play. The sound reflects the music of the era and of the various communities, including references to NWA, Body Count, Los Lobos, and John Coltrane, among others. Music and sound effects are also useful and important for the flow of the play.

Costumes:

This play has one actor playing 37 different people, and the costumes are intended to further inform the audience about each of the characters, giving specificity and detail to real people. The costume pieces are easily taken on and off as the actor flows from one character to the next, serving to communicate location, class, culture, and character. The costumes in the play serve the practical function of allowing for quick changes and were thoughtfully chosen to specifically enhance the audience's ability to see each character. There was a trial-and-error process to discover what "felt right" for each character, determining what was necessary to the story telling, what kept the play moving forward and added to the momentum, ultimately serving the flow of the play.

Lighting:

The lighting design serves to enhance each of the environments and locations in the play, setting up the environment as much as the set and projections. Notice how the lights change with each character and location.

Photos from the play:

These photos from the play give an idea of how all the elements of design, the directors and the actor come together to tell the story. Look for how each one of the elements of design mentioned above are represented in the photos.





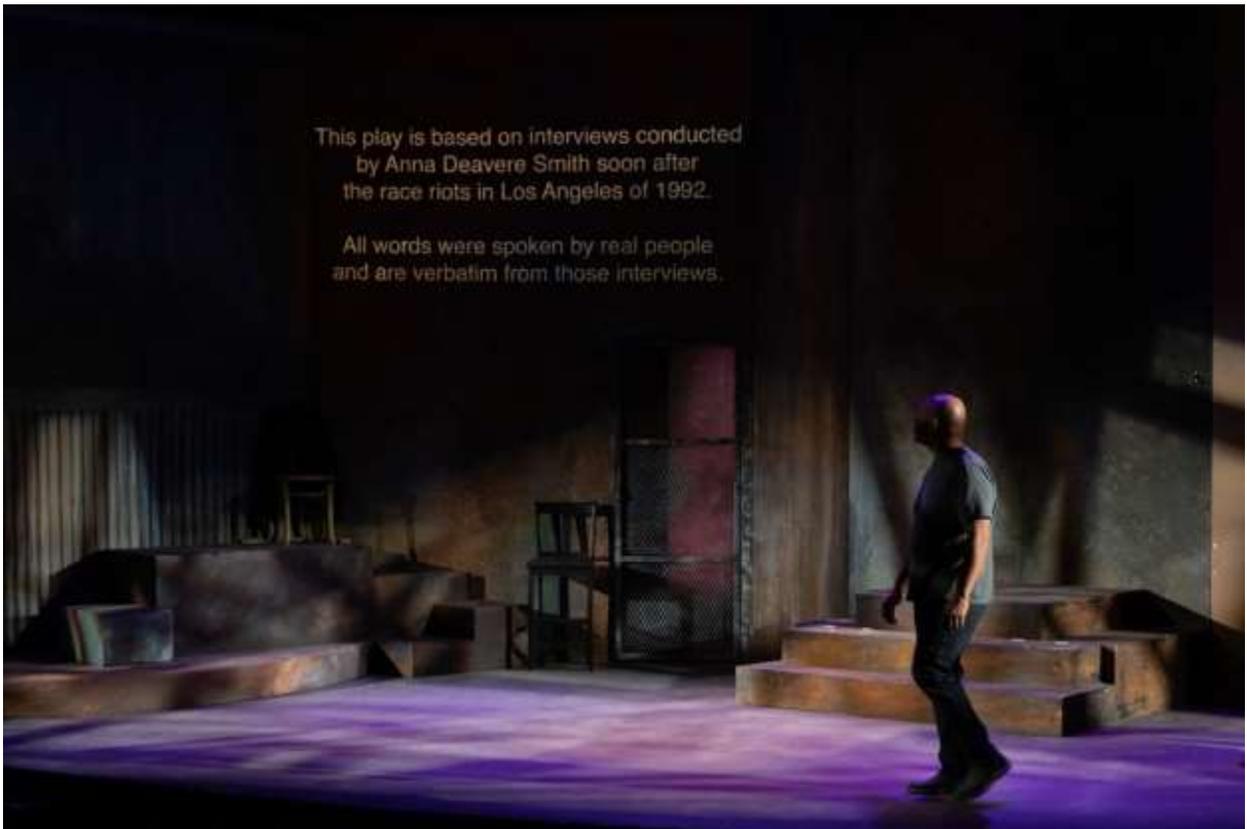


Photo Credits: Loren Haar @LorePhotographyVentura

Questions to Consider Before and After Seeing the Play

- What is progress? How much has changed since 1992? What hasn't changed?
- What is a riot? A rebellion? A revolution? An uprising? An insurrection? What is the difference between the terms? Who decides what is a riot and what is an insurrection?
- Research other riots, revolutions, insurrections and uprisings in history. How do they compare to the L. A. Riots?
- What happened to the Korean-Americans in L.A. after the events of 1992? How did the riots change their culture?
- When sentencing Soon Ja Du, Judge Joyce Karlin said "I know a criminal when I see one. I know a person who presents a danger to the community when I see one." How can we know a criminal when we see one? Can we tell a person's history or potential for violence by just looking at them?
- After the Watts Riots, the 1968 Kerner report said "This deepening racial division is not inevitable. The movement apart can still be reversed. Choice is still possible." What do you think it meant by "choice"? What can we do now to reverse the division deeply affecting our country?
- The video of the Rodney King beating was one of the first "viral" videos in history. How does recording an event hold people accountable for their actions? Or does it? In our modern age, we have deep fakes, A.I. and artful editing of videos. How do we know what is true or real?
- This play can be described as a history or memory play, with each character being interviewed and asked to recollect their experiences during 1992, knowing that these interviews would be dramatized. Many of the characters give conflicting accounts of the same moment. How do we know what is true? We can't help but filter our memories through the lens of our experiences, but how can we tell if a character is elaborating or adjusting their story to be seen in a certain light? If so, to

what angle? How can we know what is true? What really happened?
Who benefits from changing the story?

- What is a hero? A villain? Can heroes be villains and vice versa?
- In the play, Bill Bradley asks “Who’s got a responsibility here?” Who has the responsibility of righting many of the inequities examined in the play? He also mentions “moral power.” What is moral power? How do we use it?
- Justice is one of the most frequently used words in the play. What is justice? Is it the same for everyone?
- Charles Duke, Elaine Brown, Alice Waters and Paul Parker all discuss the impact of the change one person can or cannot effect. Can one person effect change? Why or why not? What does it take to make change?
- Maxine Waters and Mrs. Young-Soon Han bring up issues of representation (or lack thereof.) What is the importance of representation? How does the inclusion or lack of representation in our media, our television shows and in our government leadership affect our communities?
- Keith Watson and Daryl Gates both justify their actions and inaction in the play. How or why do we justify our harmful behaviors and inaction?
- What is fear? Bias? Prejudice? Racism? Hate? What is a stereotype? How did these contribute to the L. A. Riots and Black Lives Matter Movement?
- Anna Deavere Smith titled this play, *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992*. Why do you think she called this play “Twilight?” What is twilight?

Other Resources

The following is a list of websites, documentaries, and other resources that aided in the creation of this study guide. This study guide only scratches the surface of the rich history and complexity of America and how the riots happened. These resources include photos, maps, news articles, timelines, information on how the riots of 1992 mirrored the Black Lives Matter Movement and more.

Facing History & Ourselves *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992* Study Guide for PBS movie:

<https://www.facinghistory.org/books-borrowing/twilight-los-angeles-study-guide>

Websites about the L.A. riots:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1992_Los_Angeles_riots

<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/want-understand-1992-la-riots-start-1984-la-olympics/>

<https://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2012/04/los-angeles-riots-remember-the-63-people-who-died-.html>

<https://spreadsheets.latimes.com/la-riots-deaths/>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/insurrection-act-was-last-used-1992-los-angeles-riots-invoking-n1224356>

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-la-riots-jeff-beall-los-angeles-uprising-20170427-htmlstory.html>

https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-la-riots-unity-meeting-20170429-story.html?_amp=true

<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/02/08/home/rodney-report.html>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/05/02/much-of-blame-is-laid-on-chief-gates/a19f266d-e9a3-419e-a0bb-c0bd73974971/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20181123043203/https://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/22/us/failures-of-city-blamed-for-riot-in-los-angeles.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killing_of_Latasha_Harlin

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Los-Angeles-Riots-of-1992>

<https://www.latimes.com/local/1992riots/la-me-riots-25-years-20170420-htmlstory.html>

<http://gorhistory.com/hist383/LA-RodneyKing.html>

<https://www.npr.org/2017/04/26/524744989/when-la-erupted-in-anger-a-look-back-at-the-rodney-king-riots>

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/riots-erupt-in-los-angeles>

Timeline:

<https://timelines.latimes.com/los-angeles-riots/>

<https://projects.scpr.org/timelines/la-riots-25-years-later/>

Maps of LA Riots:

<https://la.curbed.com/maps/1992-los-angeles-riots-rodney-king-map>

Photos:

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/photos-scenes-from-the-1992-la-riots/2880574/>

Then and Now:

<https://www.npr.org/2020/06/01/867195883/usc-professor-on-how-protests-have-changed-since-la-riots-in-1992>

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/tv/story/2020-06-16/george-floyd-black-lives-matter-la-riots-1992-documentaries>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/us/rodney-king-george-floyd-los-angeles.html>

Video/Documentaries:

<https://watch.historyvault.com/specials/the-l-a-riots-25-years-later>

Smithsonian "The Lost Tapes: LA Riots":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jK88wmlIEZk>

"LA 92" National Geographic Documentary:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/tv/movies-and-specials/la-92>

"Let it Fall: Los Angeles 1982-1992" Documentary

"L.A. Burning: The Riots 25 Years Later" Documentary:

<https://www.kanopy.com/en/product/10699578>