



## WORKS

come back and you'd start to see people and recognize faces; maybe you'd have talked to someone the night before or you'd engaged in something with them and you'd be able to see them again and talk; you'd begin to form relationships and share ideas. That was really exciting.

Toward the night the police would eventually push towards the QT, but the QT itself was about half a mile from where most of the conflicts happened, so often they'd only be able to reach it after hours and hours of street fighting. It took them so long because they were terrified of coming into the crowd, especially during the day when there would be thousands of people around. The St. Louis area has a history of police being shot at, and police are very aware of that. The police know people are armed and willing to shoot. From the beginning of the uprising, rebels made this very clear: one of the first things to happen after they killed Mike Brown was shots being fired into the air. And then Sunday, the first night of rioting, during the looting, people were again firing shots. I can think of one particular situation where the police tried to push in, and people formed a line to fight them off. As the standoff was ending, the police cowardly gassed the crowd and left. Instantly there were gunshots at the police all up and down that mile stretch of road. You could hear gunshots everywhere, and see people jumping out of cars to shoot; shooting at them, shooting in their general direction. People learned that you didn't even need to shoot at them, but simply shooting in their general direction or making it known that you were armed was enough to keep the police back. So the guns kept them at bay. It was the first time in my life that I've ever seen that level of blatant armed action in a riot or demonstration or whatever you want to call what was going on up there.

Secondly, the other thing that I'd never seen before, specific to this situation was the car culture and the way cars were used in a few ways to confuse the police, block them and also just tie them up. West Florissant, the major street where all the rioting and looting and fighting was happening, is a four lane highway. And so up and down the strip people were using it as a cruising ground with countless cars packed with people, blaring music, with half a dozen kids on the hood, honking horns, and everyone screaming. This created a situation where it was impossible for the police to drive into the crowd; the cars were so dense. And also the general noise added to the insanity of the situation, so it was totally nuts to be out there. It was a situation that was completely uncontrollable and they had no idea what to do. If they came in on foot, they were attacked; if they came in cars, the cars would get stuck and they were attacked. Also a lot of the guns were kept in peoples' cars, so people were mobile and armed. At times cars were also weapons. On one night cars actually crashed into police lines. People would use the cars as barricades; everyone would drive and park their

