



WORKS

Bart: I think there were bits of both. There were points at night where people would be there, and would get organized to go loot somewhere further away. And maybe people would have taken the initiative to do that even if they hadn't been in Ferguson on that strip, but I really do think that everyone being there together allowed people to begin to act collectively. We were out there one night and people started chanting "Walmart! Walmart!" and everyone started running to their cars, doing donuts, and peeling out. Walmart was four miles away from where the riots were taking place, and so without the context of a place where people could discuss "oh we should go loot Walmart!" and feel safe and comfortable enough to do that, I don't think that would have happened. In some ways it did allow for that type of spreading. But, in other ways I think it didn't, because people were so attached to this space they'd liberated (and it did really feel like a liberated space) that people couldn't imagine expanding or leaving. People were so focused on the QT and Canfield and West Florissant that it seemed hard to imagine the rioting spreading to somewhere else. That space had become so important to people, and because of that people were willing to do a lot to defend it. So to a degree it was used as a space to plan out attacks or expropriations in other parts of the city, but the rebellion never really spread far beyond that central area.

Nikola: Its inspiring to hear you talk about part of Ferguson as a liberated space because this is the same way that many of us thought of the Oakland Commune encampment. The first thing that happened when we took the plaza was to change the name to Oscar Grant Plaza, and with that it was almost as if a spell had been cast over the space. Things felt different when you were within it. A lot of people talked about time feeling different when in that space; the concerns and pressures of their relationships and jobs and all the things that would usually weigh on them seemed to melt away when people walked into the camp. I think that in that space more things felt possible and to me that was something I haven't experienced elsewhere – this immense opening up of possibilities and the ability to talk to people in a way that previously felt impossible. It feels like an entirely different world, so far removed from a life of work and responsibilities and indignities. In a sense this is maybe what's at stake in creating spaces like this: creating magic places where we can discover new things about ourselves.

Bart: Definitely. In a lot of ways it felt similar. One of the small roles anarchists had was to push for a name change for the QT; people start-ed calling it Mike Brown Plaza, sort of reminiscent of the occupation movement. It was clear knowledge that we hadn't been given the right to assemble or protest or whatever. Everyone knew we could only do what we were doing because we had taken it. And because of that knowledge that we had taken the power away from the police, Mayor and Governor, the space became incredibly important to people. So yeah, a similar

