Accounts of outrages committed by mobs form the everyday news of the times. They have pervaded the country from New England to Louisiana; they are neither peculiar to the eternal snows of the former nor the burning suns of the latter; they are not the creatures of climate, neither are they confined to the slaveholding or the non-slaveholding states. Alike they spring up among the pleasure-hunting masters of Southern slaves, and the order-loving citizens of the land of steady habits. Whatever then their cause may be, it is common to the whole country.

—Abraham Lincoln

The great mystery of all conduct is social conduct. I have had to study it all my life, but I cannot pretend to understand it. I may seem to know a man through and through, and I still would not dare to say the first thing about what he will do in a group.

—F. Bartlett

Men, it has been well said, think in herds; it will be seen that they go mad in herds, while they only recover their senses slowly, and one by one.

—Charles Mackay

On October 27, 2005, two Muslim teenagers died by electrocution while allegedly trying to hide from police in an electricity substation in a Paris suburb characterized by high rates of poverty and unemployment. Their deaths sparked resentment.
in the mostly immigrant community, leading to protests that quickly turned into riots. Most scholars contend that, while the boys’ deaths acted as the trigger point, the real reason for the riots was attributable to the environment of relative economic deprivation and hopelessness that many Muslim immigrants endure in these “ghettoized” suburbs. Within two days, violence had spread to other cities in France. After nearly two weeks of rioting, nearly 1,500 vehicles had been burned along with several businesses and a school. The riots left many injured and at least one person dead.

As the Paris riots illustrate, mob violence is not something that belongs to the past. The fury of the mob continues to haunt our society and our world. Like all violence, mob violence is not unique to our nation or the modern era. History is replete with examples of communal violence wracking cities, communities, and entire regions as crowds have erupted into uncontrolled and destructive violence in countless places and at numerous times for many different reasons. From ancient times to the present, many societies have confronted the problem of group violence. Ancient Greek society experienced it so often that the dramatist Euripides suggested that “mobs in their emotions are much like children, subject to the same tantrums and fits of fury.” Rome had so many riots that the Roman emperors resorted to ruinously expensive gladiatorial games in large part because they wanted to keep the mobs happy with “bread and circuses,” to borrow the Roman poet Juvenal’s famous phrase. England and France both suffered dreadfully from mob violence throughout their long histories. In fact, the historian Julius Ruff asserts that riots “represented a serious threat to the political and social stability of early modern Europe.” The danger was so bad that many European nations passed laws limiting the right of ordinary citizens to assemble, rightly fearing that demonstrations or protests could easily get out of hand and devolve into a riot. In June of 1780, for example, the Anti-Catholic Gordon riots took place in and around London. In less than a week, mobs burned, pillaged and looted, leaving around 500 people dead until the army was finally called in to quell the disorder. In France, one historical study found around 450 to 500 riots occurring between the years 1590 and 1715. In short, mob violence has been a ubiquitous feature for most societies throughout history.

Because we are social creatures who need to live and work within groups, there is something fundamentally frightening about large groups of people engaging in what we perceive as mindless and excessive brutality. We need to trust and rely on our friends, neighbors, and fellow citizens; we want to feel safe. Mob violence, however, calls into question our security within these same groups. It makes us question the behavior of these same friends, neighbors, and fellow citizens. How can we function within groups when they are potentially so dangerous? By their very nature, riots target anybody and anything unlucky enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. In these situations, no one is safe. Seemingly rational and reasonable people appear to act irrationally and unreasonably. But is this an accurate picture? Do crowds simply “erupt” into violence or is there something more to it? Why do some crowds explode into violent behavior while others do not? Are there specific identifiable triggers that play a role in sparking the transformation of a crowd into a mob? This chapter is largely concerned with exploring these kinds of questions. In this chapter, we examine
three of the most well-known forms of mob violence: riots, lynch mobs, and vigilante groups. All three are forms of collective behavior that are relatively spontaneous and unplanned (although there are exceptions), and the groups are relatively unorganized. First, however, we need to spend some time discussing and defining crowds and mobs.

**Mobs and Crowds**

What is the difference between a **mob** and a **crowd**? Simply put, a crowd is nothing more than an aggregation or collection of individuals who may or may not share a common purpose. Groups waiting for a bus, standing in line, or listening to a concert are all crowds. They are usually temporary in nature and do not usually act in a unified and singular manner. A mob, on the other hand, has very different connotations. The term “mob” carries with it a tremendous amount of implicit condemnation. In fact, the word “mob” comes from the Latin *mobile vulgus*, which literally means “the movable common people” and was meant to refer to the fickleness or inconstancy of the crowd. Other terms often used synonymously have been “rabble,” “herd,” and “the common masses”, none of which is particularly positive in meaning. From these unflattering portrayals, we can see that mobs are often associated with the lower classes, disorder, and a lack of respect for the law. They are usually portrayed as being uncontrolled, unorganized, angry, and emotional. Historically, these arguments and images were typically used by those in positions of power and authority to remove any legitimacy from these mass gatherings. Many of the riots throughout history have been responses to injustice and oppression. As such, it was in the best interests of those in power to portray mob violence as merely an expression of blind rage, rather than as a form of protest and resistance. The term “mob,” therefore, is a politicized word as much as it is a descriptive one. Because of its common usage, however, in this chapter we use the term “mob” for convenience’s sake. To summarize, then, essentially a crowd is any gathering of people, while a mob is a crowd that is seen as being out of control. Put another way, a mob is a crowd waiting for a trigger to set it off.

Heal suggests a typology that organizes crowds and mobs into specific subtypes, which is summarized in Figure 8.1. This way of organizing and categorizing groups is best understood as a continuum of collective behavior that ranges from the most violence prone (escape mobs) to the least (casual crowds) (see Figure 8.1 below).
Keep in mind that these are not absolutely static conceptualizations since it is possible for a group to move from one type to another given the right circumstances. As we shall see, there are a number of different catalysts that can set off a crowd, and when that happens various mechanisms come into play that help shape the behavior of individuals in mobs.

**Mob Mentality**

Why do people often behave differently in crowds than they do when they are on their own? A number of different theories on the behavior of crowds have been suggested, most often beginning with the work of Gustave LeBon who is sometimes referred to as the “grandfather of collective behavior theory.” In fairness, LeBon was not the first to comment on the behavior of crowds. The ancient Greek lawgiver and poet Solon, for example, suggested that Athenians were as clever as foxes when mind-ing their own affairs, but as soon as they congregated they would lose their wits. The playwright Aristophanes also described his fellow Athenians as reasonable old men at home and as fools in the assemblies. LeBon, however, was the first to explore the behavior of crowds more systematically. He attempted to explain the seeming transformation of reasonable individuals into seemingly out-of-control and violent people when in a mob.

The crowd, LeBon felt, develops a mind of its own and individuals become highly vulnerable and suggestible to the will of the collective group. In LeBon’s view, crowd behavior is essentially contagious, so if one person gets excited, angry, and/or violent, others will quickly pick up on these emotions and actions. In a way, he was suggesting that individuals in a crowd are easily swayed by the mood and behavior of the collective because at an unconscious level we are programmed to do so. Individual conscious personality disappears and is replaced by a collective mind that, in LeBon’s view, is credulous, impulsive, emotional, without moral responsibility, less intelligent than individuals, and blindly obedient to charismatic leaders who “hypnotize” and mobilize a crowd into action. He suggests that

> We see, then, that the disappearance of the conscious personality, the predominance of the unconscious, the turning by means of suggestion and contagion of feelings and ideas in an identical direction, the tendency immediately to transform the suggested ideas into acts; these we see, are the principal characteristics of the individual forming part of a crowd. He is no longer himself, but has become an automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will.

The work of Gustave LeBon was later expanded upon by Herbert Blumer, who sketched out the transformation of a crowd into a mob. The first element in the transformation must be a trigger; something happens that is exciting or interesting and able to draw people together, such as a police shooting in a minority neighborhood or an unpopular court verdict, to borrow a few examples from recent American history. Next, the focus of the crowd converges on a common element as
emotions strengthen. United around an object or issue, individuals may escalate into behavior that will quickly be mirrored by others. Perhaps someone throws a rock or smashes a car window and others in the crowd, caught up in the moment, also unleash their aggression and begin acting violently; thus a mob is born. The criticism of LeBon’s and Blumer’s work, however, is that they tend to simplify the actions of the mob and focus exclusively on the emotional and irrational elements of crowd behavior, while ignoring or downplaying the more instrumental aspects of the violence. In other words, their work begs the question of whether or not there is purpose and reason to mob violence. Do people caught up in mobs think about the consequences of their action?

Recent work on individuals in mobs views them as much more rational than the earlier conceptualizations. Clark McPhail, after extensively reviewing the major theories and perspectives on crowd behavior, emphatically asserts, “Individuals are not driven mad by crowds; nor do they lose cognitive control!” Instead, he suggests that much crowd behavior is basically a rational attempt to accomplish or prevent some sort of social change. Importantly, he also acknowledges that this rationality is affected and informed by emotional and affective elements. Similarly, the historian Paul Gilje points out that mobs are often very selective in their choice of victims and targets, which does not support the notion of mindless violence. He says

Riotous crowds do not act merely on impulse and are not fickle. There is a reason behind the actions of the rioters, no matter how violent those actions may be. This rationality has two major components. First, the mob’s tumultuous behavior is directly connected to grievances of those involved in the riot. A tumultuous crowd does not ordinarily engage in wanton destruction of persons and property. Instead they seize upon some object or objects that represent the forces that propelled them into the riot originally.

These more recent perspectives acknowledge that crowds are affected by emotion and may sometimes get out of control, but that they are also fundamentally rational responses to specific political, social, religious, racial, and/or economic catalysts. Some of these specific triggers will become clearer as we examine specific examples of mob violence.

Another way to examine the issue is to look at some of the reasons why individuals come to participate in these types of group violence. Sid Heal, for example, has suggested that there are eight specific psychological factors that serve to lower or remove our prohibitions against violent behavior and thus facilitate individual participation in mob violence:

- **Novelty:** Some people may come to participate in riots and other group behavior simply because they are bored and see in the collective action a break from routine, and a sense of excitement and novelty.
- **Release:** Even though an individual may not be very concerned with a specific grievance or cause, they may participate because they find in the violence and aggression a release for a more generalized hostility, anger, and/or frustration.
Power: Mobs feel empowered by the violence and destructiveness they unleash. Participating in large-scale violence can confer upon somebody intoxicating feelings of control, domination, and supremacy.

Justification: The sense of power engendered in group destruction can also lead to feelings of righteousness and legitimacy.

Suggestibility: Many individuals in a mob may not be fully aware of what is going on or why, and so may be open to the answers provided by others who may appear to better know or understand the situation.

Stimulation: The emotions and sentiments of crowds can be infectious and individuals caught up in the group can easily find their own emotions aroused and stimulated.

Conformity: Not only do individuals have a natural tendency to conform to the demands of a group, rioting mobs also have a tendency to attack and victimize those who resist or don't conform, which tends to increase the pressures toward going along with the mob.

Deindividuation: In groups, individual identity tends to be diffused into the larger collective identity. When combined with feelings of anonymity, participants may feel released from normal constraints on their behavior.

These facilitators suggest that individuals participate in riots for many different reasons. Importantly, this involvement is also influenced by the historical and social context within which the group behavior is situated. That aggression, however, can take a number of related yet different forms and meanings.

As we stated earlier, this chapter will examine three types of mob violence: riots, lynch mobs, and vigilante groups. Each can be differentiated by its level of organization, as seen in Table 8.1. Riots tend to be the most spontaneous and the least organized; lynch mobs fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum; while vigilante groups are often the most planned and organized. It is important to emphasize that these are generalizations and there are plenty of exceptions to the rule. Any particular example can involve varying levels of organization. The infamous New York City Draft Riots of 1863 began with a preplanned and organized protest of the draft and then spontaneously evolved into a race and class riot. We also need to keep in mind that these are somewhat arbitrary distinctions and that many of the qualities of riots, lynchings, and vigilantism are virtually indistinguishable from each other. Many riots involve lynchings and lynch mobs often define their actions as a form of vigilantism. In other words, we discuss them as separate entities for conceptual clarity and for ease of discussion, but we cannot forget that they are variations on a common theme. Each can contain elements of the others, and the boundaries between them are sometimes indistinct and unclear. That being said, we begin with riots.

Riots

Riots have been defined a number of different ways. The Federal Criminal Code, for example, defines a riot as:

A public disturbance involving (1) an act or acts of violence by one or more persons part of an assemblage of three or more persons, which act or acts shall constitute a clear and
Table 8.1 Typology of Crowds and Mobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casual crowd</td>
<td>- No common purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Members define themselves as individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Requires a great deal to provoke this kind of crowd into violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesive crowd</td>
<td>- Gathers for a common purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- While members still define themselves as individuals, more of a collective spirit prevails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rarely engages in violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive crowd</td>
<td>- Members share a common purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Members share collective sense of anger and/or frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Is quickly moved to action and violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive crowd</td>
<td>- Members share a common and strong sense of purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Individual identity is muted or lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Group tends to be impulsive and emotional, and easily aroused to violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive mob</td>
<td>- Targets of this group can be property, people, or both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The violence of this group is motivated primarily by emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tends to be fairly short lived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive mob</td>
<td>- Violence is seen as a means to express anger, resentment, and frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Violence and rioting are ways for members to give voice to their sentiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Violence and rioting are seen as legitimate expressions of collective emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisitive mob</td>
<td>- Motivated by greed and a desire to acquire goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Looters use the anarchy of a riot to plunder and steal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Is more easily controlled by authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape mob</td>
<td>- Characterized by panicked behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Very dangerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The only type of group that can be instantly aroused into mindless violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
present danger of, or shall result in, damage or injury to the property of any other person or to the person of any other individual or (2) a threat or threats of the commission of an act or acts of violence by one or more persons part of an assemblage of three or more persons having, individually or collectively, the ability of immediate execution of such threat or threats, where the performance of the threatened act or acts of violence would constitute a clear and present danger of, or would result in, damage or injury to the property of any other person or to the person of any other individual.24

Every state has its own definitions of a riot and these sometimes vary significantly from each other and from the federal code. Arizona, for example, defines a riot as occurring as follows: “A person commits riot if, with two or more other persons acting together, such person recklessly uses force or violence or threatens to use force or violence, if such threat is accompanied by immediate power of execution, which disturbs the public peace.”25 For Arizona, then, a riot needs only two participants. Not everyone necessarily agrees with such an inclusive definition.

Paul Gilje, who has studied riots extensively, asserts that riots are “any group of twelve or more people attempting to assert their will immediately through the use of force outside the normal bounds of law.”26 While setting the threshold for a riot at 12 people appears somewhat arbitrary, it does reinforce the idea that riots are a form of crowd violence.

Charles Tilly, on the other hand, writes that the word “riot . . . embodies a political judgment rather than an analytical distinction. Authorities and observers label as riots the damage-doing gatherings of which they disapprove, but they use terms like demonstration, protest, resistance, or retaliation for essentially similar events of which they approve.”27 Tilly’s work reminds us that the meaning of a riot can vary tremendously depending upon who is involved, the reasons for the violence, and the social audience. Riots, in other words, occur in particular political and social contexts that influence how they are perceived and defined. This is as true today as it was in the past. Not surprisingly, riots—like many other forms of collective violence—have been a fairly common feature of American history. From the earliest days of this nation to the present day, riots have often been a featured part of American life. Romanticized examples of civil disobedience such as the “Boston Tea Party” and the “Boston Massacre” are perhaps more accurately remembered as riots. In their behavior, the colonists were simply reflecting common attitudes and practices that had been a traditional part of English life. As Gilje summarizes, “Scholars now know that the boisterous crowds of the 1760s and 1770s built upon popular practices inherited from English traditions that were well rehearsed in the years before resistance began.”28

During the Civil War, the infamous draft riots occurred in New York City when President Lincoln imposed the draft (see In Focus 8.1). These traditional forms of civil unrest and destruction continue into the present day. The twentieth century was no exception to this practice and was filled with many different examples, some of which we will examine in more detail below.
The New York Draft Riots

The New York Draft Riots are perhaps the best known historic example of rioting in American cities, thanks in part to Martin Scorcese's film, *Gangs of New York*. They also are considered by some to be the worst example of riots and civil unrest that this nation has seen.

In the summer of 1863, the Civil War had been raging for two years and casualties had been mounting for the North. The war had proved monumentally expensive in lives and the Union had lost many men in battles such as the First and Second Bull Run, the Seven Days Battle, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville, to name but a few. At the battle of Antietam alone, the Union had over twelve thousand casualties. To make good these losses, President Lincoln and Congress passed an act of conscription which authorized the draft of every able-bodied male citizen between the ages of 20 and 35 and unmarried men between 35 and 45. Terrible stories of the horror and privations of the war enjoyed wide circulation in the North and, consequently, volunteers were becoming ever harder to attract. Conscription seemed like the only alternative.
As we alluded to previously, riots happen when a group of people react to some trigger or grievance and become violent and destructive. It is usually spontaneous, although it sometimes can be orchestrated and set in motion by those who are trying to achieve some political or social goal. It is also important to remember that not every crowd descends into violence. Eruptions of group violence can and do occur in a number of different contexts such as around sporting events or in prison settings, but in this chapter we are going to focus on one of the most destructive and widespread manifestations of rioting, those that revolve around race.

Race Riots

Race has been one of the most problematic features of American life, and the discontent often perceived by minority group members has often been expressed through
rioting and accompanying violence. In America, these outbreaks of communal violence reflect deep-seated discontent and frustration with the inequalities and injustices of society. And there have been many. Between 1900 and 1949 there were at least 33 cases of significant racial unrest, the most deadly of which occurred in Tulsa, Oklahoma at the end of May 1921.29

Tulsa in the 1920s was a thriving boomtown and had grown strong and rich on oil and hope. The African American quarter of the city, known as Greenwood, was a healthy and vibrant place with many African American-owned businesses and attractions.30 But racial tensions existed in Tulsa as they did for the nation at large. Race riots had been occurring all over the country in those years in places such as Houston, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Duluth. The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 began after a young African American man named Diamond Dick Rowland stumbled into a white lady as he was entering an elevator and unwittingly grabbed her arm. Unfortunately, the young lady assumed the worst and quickly claimed that he had assaulted her. Dick Rowland was arrested the next day by police and placed in the city jail, and that’s when the trouble began. Earlier that year, an African American man who allegedly murdered a cab driver had been forcibly taken from the Sheriff, driven out of town by a mob in a caravan that reportedly stretched over a mile, and was lynched. The Tulsa police arrived just before the killing, but preferred to direct traffic rather than save the intended victim.31 It also didn’t help that the local paper ran a lurid and completely fictional account of the elevator attack that strongly insinuated a sexual element to the supposed attack. The paperboys selling the paper sold copies by yelling, “EXTRA! EXTRA! TO LYNCH NEGRO TONIGHT! READ ALL ABOUT IT!”32 Given this kind of reporting, the recent lynching, and the racially charged atmosphere of the times, a number of African Americans decided to arm themselves and go to the jail in order to ensure that Rowland wasn’t lynched. Not surprisingly, this behavior was seen as an extremely provocative act by many of the white citizens of Tulsa, and when a scuffle broke out at the jail and a gun shot sounded, it almost immediately escalated into a full blown gun battle. Within minutes, around 20 whites and blacks were dead or wounded. After the African Americans retreated to Greenwood, mobs of whites armed themselves and marched on Greenwood, precipitating some of the ugliest and most destructive racial violence this country has ever seen. Homes, businesses, and churches were looted and destroyed. African Americans—even the very young and the elderly—were shot out of hand. At one point, the National Guard set up machine guns and began pouring fire into Greenwood. The damage was summarized by one commentator:

Thirty-eight were confirmed dead, including ten whites, but the true figure was well over that, perhaps even three hundred. More certain is the destruction of property: 1,256 houses were burned in a thirty-six block area of Greenwood, including churches, stores, hotels, businesses, two newspapers, a school, a hospital, and a library—in short, all the institutions that perpetuated black life in Tulsa. The burned property was valued between $1.5 million and $1.8 million—more than $14 million in 2000 dollars.33
Unfortunately, none of the rioters was ever held legally accountable for their actions, even though many of the main actors were well known.

Race riots exploded into the American consciousness again during the 1960s and yet again in the 1990s. From June 1963 to May 1968, for example, 239 riots took place that involved over 200,000 participants, 8,000 injuries, and 190 fatalities. The historian of American violence, Richard Maxwell Brown, summarizes the worst of these riots beginning with

The August 11–16, 1965, Watts riot in the Los Angeles area, with thirty-four killed and $35,000,000–$40,000,000 in property damage. Other notable riots of the traumatic 1965–1968 period were the Chicago and Cleveland uprisings of 1966; the gigantic 1967 riots in Newark with twenty-three killed and $10,250,000 in property damage and in Detroit with forty-three killed and $40,000,000–$45,000,000 in property damage. Following the assassination of Martin Luther King on April 4, 1968, there was a massive wave of 125 riots (led by those in Washington, Baltimore, Chicago, and Kansas City, Missouri), with 46 deaths and $70,000,000 in property damage.

This catalogue of death and destruction is by no means complete, especially if we add the riots from our more recent past. In 1992, for example, the city of Los Angeles exploded in the wake of the acquittal of four police officers who had been on trial for the beating of Rodney King. Rodney King was an African American motorist who was stopped by the Los Angeles Police on the evening of March 3, 1991. Originally spotted driving at over a hundred miles an hour, Rodney King led law enforcement officers on a high-speed chase before he was finally forced to stop. While the two passengers quickly complied with instructions from police officers to exit the vehicle and lie face down on the ground, Rodney King, the driver of the vehicle, did not comply and instead advanced on the officers. Believing him to be under the influence of PCP and/or alcohol, the officers swarmed over King, jolted him with a taser, beat him with nightsticks, and kicked and stomped him, even after he was lying on the ground clearly stunned and helpless. The incident was captured on a videotape by a private citizen and quickly created a firestorm of bad publicity. Ultimately, the District Attorney of Los Angeles pressed charges against the four officers for using excessive force. Because of the media coverage of the case, the trial was moved to Simi Valley, a predominantly white suburb. This change of venue gave the impression to many, especially within the African American community, that the case was being stacked in favor of the police officers. The officers were ultimately acquitted of all the charges save one. After the verdicts were read, protests broke out almost immediately in various parts of the city and rapidly spread, although much of the unrest occurred in the largely minority South Los Angeles neighborhoods known collectively as South Central. Surprisingly, given the history of riots in Los Angeles, the buildup of tension leading up to the verdict, and the widespread belief within the LAPD that the city would burn, the Los Angeles Police Department was caught unprepared for the violence that followed the acquittal. As the violence flared up and officers were increasingly subjected to
thrown bricks, bottles, and rocks, officers received orders to retreat from the affected areas. Instead of regrouping and returning to the rioting neighborhoods, the police stayed largely outside of the affected zones, not even setting up a perimeter. This allowed many unwary motorists to drive into the rioting and become victims. The rioting involved large-scale looting, arson, and violence directed against whites, Asians, and Latinos unfortunate enough to find themselves within South Central during the violence, many of whom were literally dragged from their vehicles and attacked. One of the most emblematic images of the riot was created when Reginald Denny, a white truck driver, was pulled from his vehicle at an intersection and horribly beaten, all of which was captured by a news helicopter hovering overhead. Gunbattles erupted as Korean store owners banded together to fight the rioters. Korean businesses and liquor stores were particular targets of the mob, partially because of the prospect of looting offered by these establishments, but also because they had been the focal point of various tensions and hostility. Black-owned businesses, while not spared from looting, were largely spared from arson. One post-riot study suggested that more than 2,000 Korean American-owned business were destroyed, with of the damage valued at $400 million. It was almost a week before police and national guardsman brought an end to the violence. In the end, between 50 and 60 individuals were killed and many thousands injured, not to mention the extensive property damage. Over 800 structures were damaged or destroyed to the tune of $900 million in property losses.

The Los Angeles City Riot of 1992, like many other earlier riots, revolved around racial issues. It is important to note that race riots are ultimately class riots as well, since race and poverty are so closely related in our country. In other words, while the riots were manifestations of racial discrimination and hostility, they were also about poverty, a lack of economic opportunities, and the frustration and alienation that often accompany such conditions. In this sense, race riots have not been purely spontaneous or completely irrational events. We find instead that they can best be understood as a response to historic and ongoing problems of racism and discrimination experienced by African Americans. The poet Langston Hughes once asked, “What happens to a dream deferred?” Many of the riots in our cities provide an answer to that question. When entire communities feel disenfranchised and discriminated against, they are primed for civil unrest and protest; it only takes a catalyst or triggering event to convert that pent-up anger and frustration into violence. In the case of the Los Angeles riot of 1992, the acquittal of the police officers was merely the specific catalyst that allowed a long-simmering rage and frustration to be released. The underlying factors that influenced the riot included very high rates of unemployment in South Central Los Angeles due to an economic downturn in the 1980s and a widespread perception that the LAPD was racist and brutal. For example, the LAPD had been in the news for its use of chokeholds, which had resulted in 17 deaths in six years, 13 of which were African American. More immediate precipitants included the shooting of Latasha Harlins, a 15-year-old African American teenager who had been shot in the back of the head by a Korean owner of a deli store after a dispute. The suspended sentence received by the deli owner was perceived as lenient by the African American community, and
served to further reinforce the belief that African Americans were subject to different standards of justice compared with others. Very much in the same vein, we can point out that the Paris riots of 2005 occurred under similar economic conditions along with the same perceptions of inequality. In fact, we find very similar triggers for many of the other famous examples of riots:

- The 1965 Watts riot was instigated by a drunk driving arrest.
- The Newark riot of 1967 began with the arrest of an African American taxicab driver.
- The Detroit riot in 1967 was sparked by a police raid on an after-hours club.
- The 1980 Liberty City riot in Florida was started by the police killing of an unarmed African American who ran a red light.
- The 1989 riot in Miami occurred after police shot an unarmed African American motorcyclist.
- The 1997 looting and rioting in Nashville were precipitated by police officers shooting a young black suspect.
- The 2001 rioting in Cincinnati was the result of the police shooting an unarmed black man.38

While none of these incidents should have been enough to begin a riot alone, they were triggering events because they were the most visible and inflammatory examples of the racism and brutality perceived to be employed by the police in many minority neighborhoods. In fact, in many minority neighborhoods today, the police have been defined as a hostile occupying army, not as public servants whose job it is to protect and serve.39 This is not to suggest, however, that rioters act solely or even primarily out of a sense of injustice and for political and racial motivations. Many participants in riots see the violence as an opportunity for excitement, crime, and/or personal enrichment. To recognize the emotional elements of a riot, however, doesn’t invalidate the underlying structural conditions that form the backdrop for race riots in this country.

Historically, race riots—especially those directed against minority groups—have also often contained elements that may best be understood within the context of lynching, and it is to this form of mob violence that we turn next.

**Lynching**

Lynching is an imprecise term and has been used and misused in many ways. However, it can roughly be defined as an extralegal execution by a mob. This, of course, is not what Clarence Thomas was referring to when he called his nomination hearings a “high tech lynching.” Lynching is a type of collective violence in which a group of individuals circumvent the law and punish individuals for real or imagined crimes. Initially non-lethal in nature, it usually involved punishments such as whippings and tarring-and-feathering, but over time it evolved to become a much more lethal and deadly form of social control—one which typically included torture, mutilation, hanging, and burning.
While there are a couple of possible contenders, the origin of the term “lynching” most likely comes from Judge Charles Lynch who fought against the Tories during the Revolutionary war. A Virginia magistrate, legislator, and colonel in the militia, Lynch and his sympathizers rounded up and punished Tory sympathizers, even though they had no jurisdictional authority to do so. As Lynch himself reported after one extralegal expedition, “Shot one, hanged one, and whipt [sic] several.” Because of the relatively high social status of those perpetrating the acts and a superficial adherence to formality and impartiality, many people felt that their actions were legitimate and carried the force of law, even if the technical legality was missing. This type of violence soon became known as Lynch’s law, later shortened to Lynch law, and still later to the verb lynching.

After the revolution, lynching began appearing on the frontier as the newly formed nation began its inexorable expansion westward, but in character and tone lynch law remained largely unchanged and was a relatively infrequent occurrence. Lynching at this time, it should be noted, was rarely perpetrated against blacks, but was instead perpetrated against various other groups that were perceived as threatening some established order. There was no need to Lynch slaves, since the laws and customs of slaveholding states and territories provided many legal mechanisms intended to keep blacks in their place and under control. This all changed, however, after the end of the Civil War and the beginning of Reconstruction.

On April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox courthouse and, to all intents and purposes, ended the American Civil war. In December of the same year, Congress ratified the Thirteenth Amendment and officially abolished slavery, completing the process begun with President Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation. African Americans were finally free to participate in the economic, social, and political life of the nation. Unfortunately, many white Southerners resented and hated the newly won rights of their former slaves. Under slavery, whites had enjoyed a privileged position that was protected by the laws and institutions of the slaveholding states. The Civil War and reconstruction put an end to that and, as one historian of lynching asserts

The conclusion of the war and the subsequent abolition of slavery unleashed an unprecedented wave of extralegal violence. Many white southerners, embittered by defeat and unsettled by the turmoil of Reconstruction, responded by expanding antebellum customs of communal violence to meet new conditions. Thus, the events of the postbellum era served both to perpetuate and to expand the role of extralegal violence in southern culture. At the root of the postwar bloodshed was the refusal of most whites to accept the emancipated slaves’ quest for economic and political power. Freed from the restraints of planter domination, the black man seemed to pose a new and greater threat to whites. During a period when blacks seemed to mock the social order and commonly understood rules of conduct, whites turned to violence to restore their supremacy.

Lynching, then, was a way for white Southerners to reassert control over the African American population—or, in other words, it was a tool for protecting certain traditional
values that placed blacks in a subordinate role to whites. The *extralegal means of social control* were also buttressed by a host of legislative initiatives in the southern states known as the “Black Codes” that were intended to limit the rights of African Americans. Congress attempted to hamper these codes by passing the Civil Rights Act of 1866 that gave blacks citizenship and full rights, even overcoming a presidential veto to do so.43

In short, in the aftermath of the Civil War, Southern whites began relying on violent and repressive tactics, of which lynching was the most lethal manifestation, in order to protect their privileged way of life relative to blacks. Although there were many organized groups that fought to retain white supremacy during this time, the *Ku Klux Klan* (KKK) is probably the most well known. The KKK was founded in 1866, its main purpose being to fight Reconstruction efforts. Today, the number of members in various organizations related to the KKK has dwindled; however, the Klan is still alive and well, holding annual rallies and marches across the country. You can even order Klan jewelry and figurines from various Klan websites. The organization’s scope of intolerance has widened since the time of Reconstruction following the Civil War, and the Klan now professes to be anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, anti-gay, anti-immigration, and anti-Muslim.

❖ Photo 8.2 Two men are lynched in Marion, Indiana. After being accused of murdering Claude Deeter, 23, and assaulting his girlfriend Mary Ball, 19, two young African American men are taken from the Grand County Jail and lynched in the public square.
As a tool for maintaining social control, lynchings in U.S. history were not isolated incidents. In fact, lynchings by small groups of whites or mobs were so prevalent between 1880 and 1930 that Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck have referred to these years in U.S. history as the “Lynching Era.” Tolnay and Beck found that there were 2,805 people lynched between 1882 and 1930 in ten Southern states. While the vast majority of these victims were African Americans, other victims were those from the North who came down South to assist the black population during Reconstruction, white Southerners who sympathized with Reconstruction and efforts to integrate blacks into Southern society, and others. In the view of Tolnay and Beck, these nearly 3,000 victims represented only the tip of the iceberg of the violence and intimidation faced by Southern blacks on a daily basis. It is therefore a mistake to see lynchings as spontaneous eruptions of communal violence, although they were often portrayed as such – especially by many Southern newspapers. Instead, we must recognize that lynching often served some very real social, political, and economic goals.

Examining the patterns of lynchings in the South, we find that, up until World War I, most lynchings of African Americans were concentrated in the areas in which cotton was the dominant crop. In fact, the number of lynchings at any given time has been found to be influenced by fluctuations in the price of cotton. Specifically, lynchings against Southern blacks increased during tougher economic times in those regions of the South where the dominant cash crop was cotton. Keep in mind that cotton cultivation depended heavily on cheap African American labor. While never overtly about labor conditions, the violence against African Americans certainly helped reinforce white domination over the African Americans, and helped maintain the plantation owners’ supply of cheap labor. Lynchings also varied by time of year, and this seasonality also reflected the needs of the planters. As Tolnay and Beck assert

Although plantation production was extremely labor intensive, the demand for labor was not uniform throughout the year. It is likely that landlords and planters perceived greater need to maintain control over workers during periods of peak labor demand. Although the manifest function of lynchings might well have been to rid the white community of offending blacks who violated the moral order, the latent function was to tighten the reins of control over the black population, especially during times when whites most needed black labor to work fields of cotton.

In many ways, then, we can see lynching as operating on a number of different levels. One of the primary purposes was to strike fear into the hearts of blacks in the post-Reconstruction period as they were attempting to integrate into white society, and assert their economic and political independence. Lynchings helped intimidate the black population and made them easier to control within the labor force. This reign of terror also made many blacks hesitant about agitating for higher wages and/or better working conditions. It also served as a means to maintain white supremacy over the black population because it helped to discourage African Americans from challenging the status quo of white privilege more generally. In addition, some have
suggested that as the prices of cotton fell and Southern whites were under more economic stress, blacks were more likely to be scapegoated for the problems and economic misfortunes of whites who lynched out of frustration and misplaced anger. This is not to suggest, however, that these instrumental reasons were articulated overtly. Instead we find a whole host of rationales and justifications used to paint the lynchings in a positive light.

The victims of lynchings were almost always portrayed as dangerous and brutish offenders who had called down the righteous wrath of the community by their actions. Perpetrators of violence, we must remember, almost always portray their behavior as justified and righteous, and in this the lynch mob was no different. Local newspapers, for example, often portrayed the actions of a lynching in the best possible light. After one lynching in 1886 in Louisiana, for example, the local paper wrote:

> While we deplore the necessity for mob law, we must commend it in this instance, for if the accused had been convicted of an “attempt at rape,” the penalty would only have been two years in the Penitentiary, which is worse than farce...the action of the mob is approved by the best people in the parish. As we have said before, “the will of the people is the law of the land,” and all such monsters should be disposed of in a summary manner.

Ostensibly, as Tolnay and Beck point out, African Americans were lynched for a variety of real or alleged crimes such as murder, theft, or rape, or for appearing to challenge their position within society by being uppity, insolent, or rude. The image of black men defiling white women was a particularly potent symbol and was often used to justify violence against African American males. One Texas editorial even went so far as to write, “Almost every day some negro brute assaults a white woman in this state, and often one to a half-dozen murders are committed in an effort to hide the crime...If rape and murder by brutish negroes are to become common, the negro must expect extermination.”

Some may be tempted to argue that lynchings were simply a form of popular justice—that lynching mobs were simply making sure that justice was served in cases where a crime had been committed. However, this premise is almost impossible to justify since the majority of lynching victims were taken from jails or some other form of law enforcement authority. As such, most victims were already under the arm of legal sanctions in some form or another, even though many victims had not been tried or convicted of an offense. Moreover, a significant number of lynchings involved more than a mere hanging; many involved symbolic mutilations, burning, and torture of the body, which was always displayed in a place that was easily visible to the black community. In sum, the purpose of lynching against the blacks during this time was not solely to impose justice, but to create a reign of terror within the African American community and to make a political statement that blacks who did not submit to white rule would be severely dealt with.

Another peculiar element of lynchings was the often carnival-like atmosphere that frequently accompanied these murders. Some lynchings were watched by hundreds, if not thousands, of spectators who often included children. Spectators sometimes came from miles around to join in the festivities and the crowd would often pose for
photographs with the bodies of the victims—which would sometimes be turned into postcards. After the lynching, spectators would often fight for scraps of clothing, rope, and bone to take home as souvenirs. As repellent as this is to us, it should be noted that this kind of behavior was often seen at legal executions performed in public and was part of a long tradition of public conduct.

As we noted earlier, African Americans were not the only victims of lynch mobs in the United States. At various times and in various locations, Cubans, Mexicans, Native Americans, union organizers, Northern sympathizers, and many others were victims of lynch mobs. In all cases, however, lynching represented an attempt to maintain an unequal social hierarchy without the protection of the law. It is important to remember that, while ritualistic lynchings are mostly relegated to our past, killing in the name of hate still continues as examples from this book illustrate. Moreover, ritualistic lynchings have not disappeared entirely, as the case of Michael Donald illustrates. In Mobile, Alabama in 1981, an African American man charged with the murder of a white police officer resulted in a hung jury. The Ku Klux Klan believed that the jury was unable to convict the defendant because some of the jury members were African American. To avenge the policeman’s death, two Klan members, Henry Hays and James Knowles, went to Mobile to seek revenge. After cruising for victims, they found 19-year-old Michael Donald walking home from the store after getting his sister a pack of cigarettes. At the time, Donald was attending a vocational school and working part-time at the local newspaper. They forced him into their car, and drove him to the next county where they beat him with a tree limb, slit his throat, and then hung him from a tree. Donald’s death was originally attributed to a drug deal gone bad, but Donald’s mother fought tirelessly to get her son’s murder investigated. It took two and a half years, but the FBI finally linked Hays and Knowles to the murder and both were ultimately convicted; Hays was sentenced to death and Knowles was sentenced to life in prison. The Southern Poverty Law Center also filed a wrongful death suit against United Klans of American on behalf of Beulah Donald, Michael’s mother. The jury ruled that the Klan was responsible for Donald’s death and awarded his mother 7 million dollars.

Vigilantism

The last of the three related types of group violence that we explore in this chapter is vigilantism. Briefly, vigilantism can be defined as an organized extralegal movement in which the participants take the law into their own hands. Typically conservative, these groups were intended to protect the status quo by applying their own brand of law and justice to outlaws and others who threatened the establishment of social order. Vigilante movements generally arose in times and places where the established authority or government was perceived to be ineffective in protecting traditional rights of property, possessions, and personal safety. Not surprisingly, the heyday of American vigilantism was in the mid- and late nineteenth century in the American West as the process of settlement and industrialization required the eradication of widespread criminal elements and gangs. In Focus 8.2 illustrates one case that reveals many of these qualities.
Vigilantism in Flagstaff

Flagstaff, Arizona is a quiet university town set in the mountains of northern Arizona. Nestled in the largest Ponderosa pine forest in the world, the scenic beauty belies the turbulent history of this Western community. In the late 1800s, Flagstaff was a raucous and wild place, with the downtown known as Whiskey Row because of the large number of saloons and gambling halls. In the evenings and on weekends, the loggers and the ranch hands came into town eager to drink, gamble, and engage the services of the “fallen doves.” The problem was that these young men coming into town for an evening’s fun were often preyed upon by a large and aggressive population of criminals who would assault and rob the often intoxicated pleasure seekers. At that time, Flagstaff had only one deputy sheriff who was unable to deal effectively with the situation. Concerned citizens and local business leaders called for action and held meetings, but nothing came of it and by 1885 the situation reached a head when some of the victims, angered at their treatment, threatened to burn the town down, not to mention the lost business due to the crime. In response, six saloon owners formed a volunteer committee to take care of the situation. They recruited a rancher named McMillan from out of town to come in and pose as an easy mark. Varying his appearance, pretending to be drunk, and flashing a lot of money, this undercover cattleman was victimized numerous times, but each time he made note of who the perpetrators were. Eventually, the volunteer committee made a list of the most prolific offenders and posted a warning on the doors of local business that read, “Notice: Tinhorns have 24 hours left!” Tinhorn was the term used at that time for criminals. Predictably, the warning was ignored and so at 3:00 a.m. on the morning of August 28, the vigilantes went to work. Squads of men fanned out throughout Flagstaff in order to apprehend the ten worst offenders. Only one of the men on the list was not apprehended because he escaped by breaking through a window and escaping into the night. The nine prisoners were taken to a large Ponderosa pine at the outskirts of town and summarily hanged from a long branch. Left dangling for most of the day, the bodies were finally cut down and buried without caskets or markers. The violence had its intended effect, with many of the other reputed criminals leaving town for safer pastures. When the sheriff came up from Prescott to investigate the killings, not a single person he interviewed admitted knowing anything about the hangings and it remained an open secret for many years until 1928 when one of the participants wrote a letter detailing the activities of this frontier vigilante group.

While there is often a great deal of overlap between vigilantism and lynching, vigilantism often represents an attempt to impose some sort of law in a lawless setting, while lynchings typically involve an attempt to circumvent established law and order. In fact, many lynching victims were actually broken out of jail in order to punish victims for some real or alleged crimes. This often happened with the tacit approval and assistance of law enforcement officers, but nonetheless involved an attempt to circumvent legitimate legal proceedings. Vigilantism, on the other hand, typically does not involve groups trying to short-circuit legitimate avenues of justice. Instead, vigilante groups try to create a legal process where none is perceived to exist. Historically, some vigilante groups even went so far as to put the accused criminals on trial. As imperfect and rough and ready as these trials may have been, they at least adhered to the semblance and process of legality. The famous San Francisco vigilance committee certainly illustrates this point.

San Francisco in the mid-nineteenth century was the epitome of a wild frontier community. The California gold rush had swelled the population of San Francisco into a large city that included not only those seeking their fortune in the gold fields, but many seeking their fortunes by robbing others. The criminal element also included a large number of criminals who often made their living by robbing miners, setting fires, and from various other criminal enterprises. In desperation, a number of businessmen formed a vigilance committee in the spring of 1851 to protect the lives and property of San Franciscans. They even created a constitution and bylaws, and notified the community via the local newspaper that they would punish criminals. Their first action was to put on trial an Australian named John Jenkins who had been caught stealing a safe. After being found guilty, he was hung in front of a crowd. This was followed by a fair number of other hangings as well as some deportations. Largely supported by the community and the newspapers, the vigilance committee helped pressure the official law enforcement agencies to take a stronger stance against crime. Over time, the San Francisco vigilance committee died out but it was resurrected a number of times whenever the crime rate rose again; it was always distinguished by an adherence to formalities of justice, including providing a trial.

Not all vigilante groups were the same, however. Some adhered more to the formalities of law while others were much less concerned with following the proprieties. The motivations for these groups also varied, as illustrated by the typology developed by Rosenbaum and Sederberg who suggest three main types of vigilante groups. The first type is labeled crime-control vigilantism, and is the type most often associated with this form of collective violence—targeted as it is with the elimination of crime. The second kind of vigilante group is known as social group-control vigilantism and describes groups whose goal is to keep some population group in their place, usually within the lower levels of class structure. This is the kind most closely akin to lynch mobs. The third and last type is regime-control vigilantism, which concerns groups that engage in violence in an effort to control the government if it strays from an acceptable course of action and policy. Typically composed of middle- and upper-class
elites who want to protect their prerogatives, this type of vigilante group defines its role as keeping the regime in check. Each type of vigilante group, as this typology makes clear, is a conservative organization in the sense that it doesn’t try to subvert law and order; rather all types of group try to enforce it, though each has a different goal in mind as it engages in violence.

We also should not think that vigilantism is a relic of the past. Vigilantism is alive and well, both in the United States and around the world. Today, however, we more often hear about cases of individual vigilantism compared with actions of an organized group. While not as acceptable as it once was, vigilantism still represents a kind of violence that springs up in certain kinds of scenarios. In Brazil during the 1970s, for example, off-duty police officers were implicated in the murder of between 500 and 1,200 habitual criminals. They felt that the courts were too easy on criminals and that the people they had killed were not able to be rehabilitated. Amazingly, 60 percent of residents in the city in which the vigilantes were operating approved of their actions.

In contemporary America, the Guardian Angels, a group founded 27 years ago in the Bronx, is still active in a number of communities. Identified by their red berets, its members patrol the subways, streets, and neighborhoods in order to prevent crime, and have sometimes been labeled vigilantes by police and their detractors. Nevertheless, new Guardian Angels chapters are being formed in cities across the globe every day, even though the welcome mat is often not put out for them by city governments.

Instead of group vigilantism, we more often hear of individuals engaging in vigilantism in contemporary society. Sex offender registries, which all states have available in some form, make convicted sex offenders particularly easy targets for individuals bent on delivering their own brand of justice. For example, in April of 2006, within a five-hour period, 20-year-old Stephen Marshall killed two men he found registered on the state of Maine’s sex offender registry. One of the victims was William Elliott, a 24-year-old man who had been convicted of statutory rape when he was 19 because his girlfriend was under 18 years of age. Marshall later killed himself while police were closing in on him on a bus in Boston. As we learned earlier in Chapter 7, other registered sex offenders have experienced vigilante justice, including two men who were killed in August 2005 in the state of Washington when a self-styled vigilante gained access to their homes by posing as an FBI agent.

Conclusions

As we have seen, mob violence—as exemplified by lynchings, vigilantes, and riots—has a long history in this country. While lynchings are not as prevalent as they once were, they nevertheless remain as potent manifestations of collective violence perpetrated outside of the boundaries of official governmental authority. Moreover, while ritualistic lynchings by hanging and burning have faded, we know that hate-motivated killings
remain an ever-present part of all societies. We also know that the primary purpose of lynchings is not to seek some form of popular justice, but to instill a climate of terror in marginalized populations. It is a sad reality that mob violence, in its various guises, is still very much a part of our contemporary landscape.

**Key Terms**

- acquisitive mob
- aggressive crowd
- aggressive mob
- anti-Catholic Gordon riots
- casual crowd
- cohesive crowd
- communal violence
- conformity
- crime-control vigilantism
- crowd
- deindividuation
- escape mob
- expressive crowd
- expressive mob
- extralegal means of social control
- Guardian Angels
- Ku Klux Klan
- Los Angeles City Riot of 1992
- lynch mobs
- mob
- mob violence
- New York City Draft Riots of 1863
- popular justice
- race riot
- Reconstruction
- regime-control vigilantism
- riots
- San Francisco vigilance committee
- sex offender registries
- social group-control vigilantism
- Tulsa Race Riot of 1921
- vigilante groups

**Discussion Questions**

1) Conduct a case study of a recent incident of mob violence from somewhere around the world. It is probably best to access news sources to find recent cases, including such sources as the BBC (www.bbc.co.uk), the Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com), CNN (www.cnn.com) or some other national or international source of news.

What societal conditions were present before the violence? What groups were involved in the incident(s) and which were perceived by the media as the primary offenders and which were perceived primarily as the victims? What factors can you identify as those that are common contributors to mob violence in general?
2) The Southern Poverty Law Center, which started out as a small civil rights law firm, is now a large internationally known organization devoted to tracking hate groups and pursuing civil and criminal remedies against hate. Go to the Center’s website (www.splcenter.org) and search for “lynching.” One of the locations to which you will be guided will provide you with details of the civil trials the Center has pursued against acts of racial injustice including modern-day lynchings. Conduct a case study of one of the incidents listed on the site. To find out more information about the case, search the web for information from local news media that covered the case (it is probably best to use the plaintiffs’ and/or victims’ names as the keywords). Discuss how civil remedies have been used to wage a war against these criminal incidents.

3) David Haddock and Daniel Polsby are Professors of Law at Northwestern University. They published an article titled “Understanding Riots” for the Cato Institute in the *Cato Journal*, which can be accessed at www.cato.org/pubs/journal/cj14n1-13.html. According to the article, what factors are typically necessary for a riot to ensue? What factors can be used to stop a riot? What policies do they recommend for preventing riots? In your opinion, what other factors may be useful in preventing riots?

**Notes**

6. BBC News, “French Violence Hits Fresh Peak.”
22. Heal, "Crowds, Mobs and Nonlethal Weapons."
24. Taken from the Office of the Law Revision Council, which prepares and publishes the United States Code, which is a consolidation and codification by subject matter of the general and permanent laws of the United States. The website is at http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/18C102.txt
45. Tolnay and Beck, *A Festival of Violence*.
46. Tolnay and Beck, *A Festival of Violence*.
48. For a discussion, see Brundage, *Lynching in the New South*.
51. Tolnay and Beck, *A Festival of Violence*.
53. You can find information about Michael Donald’s case on several sites including the Southern Poverty Law Center’s at http://www.splcenter.org/legal/docket/files.jsp?cdrID=10, and Sparticus Educational Services at www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk

54. Brown, Strain of Violence.

55. Brown, Strain of Violence.


58. Rosenbaum and Sederberg, “Vigilantism.”