

FOR ALL THE BROTHAS WHO AIN'T HERE: ROADSIDE MEMORIALS AS AFRICAN  
AMERICAN MATERIAL CULTURE AND PERFORMANCE IN DETROIT

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **FOR ALL THE BROTHAS WHO AIN'T HERE: ROADSIDE MEMORIALS AS AFRICAN AMERICAN MATERIAL CULTURE AND PERFORMANCE IN DETROIT**

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In urban cities throughout the United States, roadside memorials have become a common symbol of public commemoration for persons who have died tragically in public places. I define roadside or spontaneous memorials as collections of physical objects or material symbols organized in an orderly or seemingly haphazard fashion, with the intent of performing mourning, grieving, or commemorating rites for persons who have died tragically. In some instances, grieving family and friends of the deceased create these memorials. In other cases, like those linked to the Oklahoma City bombing and the tragedy of 9/11, persons unknown to one another or even the deceased, may erect or contribute to a shrine in mourning, to commemorate the dead, and to sympathize with the living, as well as offer empathy for the surviving family. These memorials range from the simple to the elaborate and may appear orderly or haphazard. Mourners leave material items that vary in size and makeup and often include but are not limited to crosses, photographs, flowers, written messages, candles, toys, and single, or multiple collections of teddy bears. Despite differences in makeup, roadside memorials are similar in that they mediate tragedies that occurred within the public realm and they emphasize the sacredness of the spaces where they stand. Detroit, Michigan, the location of this study, has a considerable population of these memorials and as this study will illustrate, local residents have unofficially accepted roadside memorial constructions as both a ritual and a testament of mourning.

My research questions are: Are Blacks becoming less religious in their responses to tragic public mourning? In what ways do roadside memorials in Detroit contribute to African American democratic participation in the public sphere? In what ways do Black Detroiters view their rights to uses of public space? Lastly, in what ways could economics contribute to African American participations in roadside memorial making in Detroit?

This research was conducted over 3 years of fieldwork, where a total of 17 memorials were photographed and monitored for material changes. Some of the memorials have lasted throughout the duration of the study, while others have been physically removed, and still others have been late additions during the final year of study. My theoretical approach is rooted in David Prown's material culture theory using an interpretive method of analysis as well as Jürgen Habermas' conceptualization of the public sphere. This study seeks to contribute to both the growing literatures on roadside memorials and African American history and culture.

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## DEDICATION

All praises be to God!

*This dissertation is also dedicated to my Spirit Guides; my ancestors for enduring their time here to ensure my time here; my grandparents Mr. Charlie Flagg and Mrs. Luella Flagg who convinced me that I could do anything that I wanted to do and for teaching me to value education, resourcefulness, and hard work, may you both rest in peace; and my cousin Anthony (Amp) Jarod Williams the impetus for this project, may you forever be remembered through this work.*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiii
CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION: ONE TRAJECTORY IN THE SERCH FOR MEANING STREETSIDE .....	1
Amp’s Memorial .....	1
Preparing for Fieldwork .....	10
Fieldwork .....	12
Research Questions and Methodology .....	13
Theoretical Framework .....	14
Organization of the Dissertation .....	15
CHAPTER 2	
DESCANSOS, SPONTANEOUS MEMORIALIZATION, AND ROADSIDE SHRINES:	
PLACES OF REST FOR THE INTERRUPTED JOURNEY .....	18
Introduction .....	18
Shrines, Descansos, and Roadside Memorials .....	20
Shrines .....	20
Descansos .....	26
Roadside Memorials .....	28
CHAPTER 3	
MATERIAL CULTURE THEORY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE .....	43
Introduction .....	43
Prown’s Material Culture Theory .....	45
Habermas and the Public Sphere .....	47
CHAPTER 4	
CULTURE THROUGH SYMBOL AND MATERIAL ON THE STREET: PARTICIPATION	
IN THE FIELD .....	51
Introduction .....	51
Collecting Data .....	56
Detroit Police Ride Along .....	56
Memorial Contact .....	59
Unstructured Interviews .....	61
Participant Observation .....	64
Interviews .....	72

## CHAPTER 5

THE MEMORIALS: MEMORIAL DATA (PART I).....	76
Introduction.....	76
Memorial #1: Malice Green Memorial.....	77
Memorial #2: Papolo Memorial.....	88
Memorial #3: Amp Memorial.....	97
Memorial #4: Twin Memorial.....	109
Memorial #5: Dollar Store Memorial.....	114
Memorial #6: White Bear Memorial.....	115
Memorial #7: Stop Sign Memorial.....	119
Memorial #8: PaPoose Memorial.....	122
Memorial #9: Coney Island Memorial.....	126
Memorial #10 & 11: Jake Memorial.....	133
Memorial #12: Dre Memorial.....	137
Memorial #13: McGraw St. Memorial.....	149
Memorial #14: Bassett St. POMC Memorial.....	155
Memorial #15: Southwest Memorial.....	159
Memorial # 16: I-96 Memorial.....	162
Memorial #17: Child Memorial.....	166
Conclusion.....	169

## CHAPTER 6

MEMORIAL PATTERNS: MEMORIAL DATA (PART II).....	171
Characteristics of Detroit Memorials.....	171
Stuffed Animals.....	179
Flowers & Balloons.....	181
Written Messages.....	183
Chapter Summary and Conclusion.....	186

## CHAPTER 7

DATA ANALYSIS: DISSCUSSION OF MEMORIALS.....	188
Memorial Symbolism and Mourning Performance.....	189
Emotion.....	190
History of Landscape.....	190
Teddy Bears and Other Symbols.....	191
Memorial Aesthetics and Socio-Cultural Difference.....	198
Democracy, the Black Public Sphere, and Rights to the City.....	200
Democracy.....	200
The Black Public Sphere.....	209
Rights to the City.....	211
The Economics Associated with Mourning, or Lack Thereof.....	214
Closing Thoughts.....	215

## CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION.....	217
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Introduction.....	217
Interpretation of Findings .....	218
Youth, or Lack Thereof.....	218
Roadside Memorial Making in Detroit.....	219
Contribution to the Literature .....	222
Limitations and Directions for Future Research.....	223
APPENDIX.....	225
REFERENCES .....	232

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Deaths by type and by neighborhood.....	56
Table 5.1	Malice Green Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction.....	86
Table 5.2	Papolo Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction .....	94
Table 5.3	Amp Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction.....	106
Table 5.4	Twin Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction .....	112
Table 5.5	Dollar Store Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction.....	115
Table 5.6	White Bear Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction .....	118
Table 5.7	Stop Sign Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction .....	121
Table 5.8	PaPoose Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction .....	124
Table 5.9	Coney Island Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction .....	132
Table 5.10	Jake Memorial A: Object Description/ Deduction.....	136
Table 5.11	Jake Memorial B: Object Description/ Deduction.....	136
Table 5.12	Dre Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction.....	144
Table 5.13	McGraw St. Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction .....	153
Table 5.14	Bassett St. POMC Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction .....	157
Table 5.15	Southwest Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction.....	160
Table 5.16	I-96 Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction .....	165
Table 5.17	Child Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction.....	168
Table 6.1	Independent and Dependent Variable Table.....	171
Table 6.2	Memorial Compare Table (Accidental/ non-violent Death).....	172
Table 6.3	Memorial Compare Table (Violent Death).....	173
Table 6.4	Southwest Detroit Compare Table.....	174

Table 6.5	Highland Park Compare Table.....	175
Table 6.6	Dexter Ave. Compare Table .....	176
Table 6.7	West Side Detroit (General) Compare Table.....	178
Table 6.8	Written Messages Indiscriminate of Memorial Type .....	183
Table 6.9	Written Messages at Accidental Death Memorials.....	184
Table 6.10	Written Messages at Violent Death Memorials .....	185



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1	Amp Memorial, first encounter.....	9
Figure 4.1	Detroit Area Map .....	53
Figure 5.1	Malice Green Memorial in 1993.....	77
Figure 5.2	Green Memorial, Autumn 2008.....	80
Figure 5.3	Green Memorial, “give them life in prison” .....	80
Figure 5.4	Green Memorial, “We create our justice daily. We do” .....	81
Figure 5.5	Green Memorial, Autumn 2008: KKK mural defacement .....	83
Figure 5.6	Green Memorial, Autumn 2009: KKK removed and mural updated .....	84
Figure 5.7	Green Memorial, Autumn 2011 .....	85
Figure 5.8	Papolo Memorial, Autumn 2008.....	88
Figure 5.9	Papolo Memorial, death marker: <i>English translation</i> : “Jose A. Ortiz Rosario ‘Papolo’; December 20, 1976 – November 9, 2004: We will remember all the moments that we shared and we will take your family and friends in our hearts. Your family and friends: ‘Papolo’ 1976-2004” .....	89
Figure 5.10	Papolo Memorial, Autumn 2009.....	90
Figure 5.11	Papolo Memorial, located 10 – 15 feet from the actual death site.....	91
Figure 5.12	Papolo Memorial, photographed from across the street .....	91
Figure 5.13	Papolo Memorial, Autumn 2011: w/ plastic cups.....	93
Figure 5.14	Papolo Memorial, Autumn 2011.....	93
Figure 5.15	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008.....	97
Figure 5.16:	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: “The Hood Miss You Daddy!! Rest in Peace ANTHONY!! I LOVE U T.K.” .....	98
Figure 5.17	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: “Until we meet again, I LOVES U AMP... - TRACY- ” .....	98
Figure 5.18	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: CRME Messages.....	99

Figure 5.19	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: ““VENGEANCE!!’ IS MINE SAID THE LORD!!” R.I.P. DAT NIGGA AMP” .....	99
Figure 5.20	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: “R.I.P. 1971 AMP 2003, I MISS U DADDY!!” .....	100
Figure 5.21	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: inside view of Figure 5.20 .....	100
Figure 5.22	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: Highland Park and CRME mentions.....	101
Figure 5.23	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: garage door.....	101
Figure 5.24	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: primary memorial area .....	102
Figure 5.25	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2009: removals.....	103
Figure 5.26	Amp Memorial, Mother Nature’s clearing .....	104
Figure 5.27	Amp Memorial, garage door missing .....	104
Figure 5.28	Amp Memorial, Autumn 2011: utility pole removed .....	105
Figure 5.29	Amp Memorial, white garage removed .....	105
Figure 5.30	Amp Memorial, memorial ruins .....	106
Figure 5.31	Twin Memorial, Autumn 2008: front .....	109
Figure 5.32	Twin Memorial, Autumn 2008: back.....	109
Figure 5.33	Twin Memorial, Autumn 2009 .....	110
Figure 5.34	Twin Memorial, Autumn 2011 .....	110
Figure 5.35	Twin Memorial, “It’s Going Down” .....	111
Figure 5.36	Dollar Store Memorial, Autumn 2008 .....	114
Figure 5.37	Dollar Store Memorial, Autumn 2009 .....	114
Figure 5.38	White Bear Memorial, Autumn 2008: stop sign view .....	115
Figure 5.39	White Bear Memorial, Autumn 2008: bear view.....	115
Figure 5.40	White Bear Memorial, Autumn 2011: stop sign view .....	117

Figure 5.41	White Bear Memorial, Autumn 2011: removals.....	117
Figure 5.42	White Bear Memorial, Autumn 2011: fallen bears.....	117
Figure 5.43	Stop Sign Memorial, Autumn 2008: stop sign view.....	119
Figure 5.44	Stop Sign Memorial, Autumn 2008: rear view .....	119
Figure 5.45	Stop Sign Memorial, Autumn 2009: stop sign view.....	120
Figure 5.46	Stop Sign Memorial, Autumn 2009: rear view .....	120
Figure 5.47	Stop Sign Memorial, Autumn 2011 .....	121
Figure 5.48	PaPoose Memorial, Autumn 2008 .....	122
Figure 5.49	PaPoose Memorial, Autumn 2008: close up.....	122
Figure 5.50	PaPoose Memorial, Autumn 2011: close up.....	123
Figure 5.51	PaPoose Memorial, Autumn 2011 .....	123
Figure 5.52	Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2008 .....	126
Figure 5.53	Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2008: close up .....	128
Figure 5.54	Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2008: side A.....	130
Figure 5.55	Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2008: side B .....	130
Figure 5.56	Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2009: removed .....	131
Figure 5.57	Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2009: removals - close up .....	131
Figure 5.58	Jake Memorial A, Autumn 2009.....	133
Figure 5.59	Jake Memorial B: close up.....	134
Figure 5.60	Jake Memorial B, Autumn 2009.....	134
Figure 5.61	Jake Memorials A&B, approximately 20 ft apart .....	134
Figure 5.62	Jake Memorials removed, Autumn 2011 .....	135
Figure 5.63	Jake Memorial A, removed.....	135

Figure 5.64	Dre Memorial, Autumn 2009.....	137
Figure 5.65	Dre Memorial, Autumn 2009: close up .....	139
Figure 5.66	Dre Memorial, side A .....	140
Figure 5.67	Dre Memorial, side B.....	140
Figure 5.68	Dre Memorial, private property claimed for memorial use .....	141
Figure 5.69	Dre Memorial, writing on sidewalk #1 .....	141
Figure 5.70	Dre Memorial, writing on sidewalk #2 .....	142
Figure 5.71	Dre Memorial, writing on sidewalk #3 .....	142
Figure 5.72	Dre Memorial, writing on sidewalk #4 .....	142
Figure 5.73	Dre Memorial, Autumn 2011: removed.....	143
Figure 5.74	Dre Memorial, Autumn 2011: writing on sidewalk #2 faded .....	143
Figure 5.75	Dre Memorial, Autumn 2011: writing on sidewalk #3 faded .....	143
Figure 5.76	Dre Memorial, Autumn 2011: writing on sidewalk #4 faded .....	143
Figure 5.77	Dre Memorial, Autumn 2011: private property .....	144
Figure 5.78	McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009: vertical support attempt .....	149
Figure 5.79	McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009: items moved to parking lot .....	149
Figure 5.80	McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009: close up .....	150
Figure 5.81	McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009: completed .....	151
Figure 5.82	McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009: parking lot view A .....	151
Figure 5.83	McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009: parking lot view B .....	151
Figure 5.84	McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2011: parking lot view A, faded .....	152
Figure 5.85	McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2011: parking lot view B, faded .....	152
Figure 5.86	McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2011: removed .....	152

Figure 5.87	Bassett St. POMC Memorial, Autumn 2009 .....	155
Figure 5.88	Bassett St. POMC Memorial, Autumn 2009: side A .....	156
Figure 5.89	Bassett St. POMC Memorial, Autumn 2009: side B .....	156
Figure 5.90	Bassett St. POMC Memorial, Autumn 2011: removed .....	156
Figure 5.91	Bassett St. POMC Memorial, Autumn 2011: new tree added .....	156
Figure 5.92	Bassett St. POMC Memorial, gas station where the shooting occurred .....	157
Figure 5.93	Southwest Memorial, Autumn 2011 .....	159
Figure 5.94	Southwest Memorial, street-view .....	160
Figure 5.95	Southwest Memorial, curb-view .....	160
Figure 5.96	I-96 Memorial, Autumn 2011 .....	162
Figure 5.97	I-96 Memorial, close up .....	164
Figure 5.98	I-96 Memorial: Michigan National Guard building.....	164
Figure 5.99	I-96 Memorial: National Guard parking lot.....	164
Figure 5.100	Child Memorial, Autumn 2011 .....	166
Figure 5.101	Child Memorial, close up.....	167
Figure 6.1	Stuffed Animals by type (Violent Death) .....	179
Figure 6.2	Stuffed Animals by type (Non-Violent Death) .....	180
Figure 6.3	Flowers and balloons from a local dollar store in Detroit .....	182
Figure 6.4	Dollar store flower selection in Detroit .....	182
Figure 6.5	Direct message to the dead, example .....	184
Figure A.1	Crash Report for Papolo Memorial #2.....	226
Figure A.2	(Possible) Crash Report for Stop Sign Memorial #7 .....	228
Figure A.3	Crash Report for PaPoose Memorial #8 .....	230

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: ONE TRAJECTORY IN THE SEARCH FOR MEANING STREETSIDE

*Commemorative sites are not automatically sacred or otherwise historically important simply because a disastrous event occurred; they are spaces that are continuously negotiated, constructed, and reconstructed into meaningful places through ongoing human action.*<sup>1</sup>

#### Amp's Memorial

On June 3, 2003 I was awakened by a ringing telephone at 3:30 in the morning. I looked down at the caller ID....it was my mother. I looked at the alarm clock that rests on the headboard of my bed and instantly, I knew that something was wrong. My phone never rings at such an hour and especially not with calls from my mother. I hesitated a moment and then lifted the receiver, placed it against my ear and finally let out an alert but groggy "hello." The voice of my mother announced, "Lisa... Anthony has been shot... he dead." (Silence.) "Anthony who?" I responded, because she could not be talking about my cousin Anthony. I had just seen him about a week prior to this call and he looked fine. "Your cousin Anthony! Our Anthony!... Tweety's son!" (Silence.) "Amp?" "Yes!" "What happened?" "They say he was shot up in Highland Park last night on his way to Michael's [his father]. Gwen [his father's girlfriend] died yesterday and he was going to check on Michael." "I didn't know Gwen died, what happened to her?" "She had a heart attack. She woke up yesterday morning and went into the kitchen to make coffee and fell dead on the kitchen floor." "What!?" "Yeah." "Oh my god! How is Michael?" "They had to take him to the hospital. He had to be sedated." How is Tweety?" "Tweety is destroyed!" After holding the phone for what felt like an eternity, I finally muttered

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<sup>1</sup> Sather-Wagstaff (2011:20)

“who dere?” to which my mother informed me that only her, my aunt, and grandmother were home and that no one else had yet arrived. “Where is Tweety?” “She at the hospital with Michael.” “Alright... I’m on my way.”

After I hung up the phone, I began to move around my house in an erratic and slow motion. I stood in the center of my living room floor for a while in total shock. I felt utter disbelief with the conversation I had with my mother. I felt helpless and inadequate. Something as simple as what to do with my hands, feet, and overall body was more than I could consciously navigate for several minutes. Along with feelings of shock and disbelief came the intense urge to laugh. I was standing in the middle of the floor frozen, horrified, and at the same time laughing inside. I thought to myself, “Dat fool don went and got his self killed.... Naw, this ain’t happening.... What the hell?” Then, I started to laugh out loud and I felt this strange sense of excitement inside. To this, I begin to question my sanity. Was I going mad? How could receiving the news of the death of my favorite cousin produce such an emotion at such an inappropriate time? I punched the air for a couple of minutes in an attempt to fight off my intense desire to laugh. Finally, I sat down. I had to get myself together. After a few moments, I sprang into action. I begin dressing for the day. No shower, nothing fancy, but I do remember feeling the need to look semi-professional in case I had to speak with the police or some other municipal official on my family’s behalf. In many parts of the United States, a less than professional appearance and diction when dealing with bureaucratic types can result in a total disregard for you and your concerns.

Shortly after arriving at my grandmother’s house, I felt compelled to go to the location of my cousin’s death. I grappled with this idea for some time. Perhaps, I was simply seeking more information. Maybe, I was hoping to run into his murderers. I am not sure, but for some reason

it seemed to be the only thing that I could do, the only part of the day I could control. After wrestling with the idea for a while, I knew that I had to go there. Once I decided in my mind that I would go, I needed someone to accompany me. I wanted to take my cousins and my brother with me in case there would be trouble. Whoever shot my cousin is still out there. The news and other media often depict gun violence as random and impersonal events that occur without reason to innocent people. In the neighborhoods of Detroit where my cousin and I grew up, random shootings were extremely rare. Even today, I would argue that most people are shot by people that they know or are accidentally shot if they are in the line of fire between familiar parties. Therefore, it was immediately clear to my family and me that while we knew nothing about my cousin's murderers, they were not unknown to him.

I imagined that his killers would be driving past the scene of their performed violence all day while bragging to their friends of their cowardly exploit. I wanted to go, but I hesitated. I was waiting for something that would never come. I was waiting for my cousin Amp, who was now dead; my cousin Jun Jun, who was in jail serving a life sentence; and my brother Cory who is married with three children and now lives a working middle class lifestyle to all appear and help me go to Highland Park and bring Amp home. Essentially, I was waiting to be transported back into time when we were kids getting pumped up before a street fight, and lethal violence was extremely rare, and I was street tough. I longed for simpler days when this whole incident might have been a simple fist fight, not DEATH! Finally, I announced, "I'm goin' over there." Everyone in the room knew where "there" was, so no one asked.

Within an hour, I was standing at the mouth of an alley flanked by my mom and her sister Charlene, staring at the ground. My family heard that my cousin was killed at the entrance of an alley, between the rear side of a house and a garage on the adjoining side. When we arrived at



the site, there was an old garage that had very little of its original paint left. The wood was barren or it seemed absent of color. The garage itself was not in a condition to actually house a car or anything else. It was a plain, dried, and a weathered reddish-brown with a rusted lock affixed to its doors which were absent of bullet holes and this became a source of discomfort for us. The three of us were all fixated on finding something... anything.... "Is that blood right there?" My aunt asked. We studied the slightly reddish spot. "No" I said. "I think that's some kind of rusted material or brick dust." We continued to carefully examine the alley's gravel that was mostly comprised of tiny bits of rock and shard glass. (Silence.) After a while my mother suggested, "Look for bullet holes. Do ya'll see any bullet holes?" (Silence.) "No..." (Silence.) "Naw, I don't see nothing..." Since we could not find anything I begin to silently question if we were in the right location. As I began pondering this, two young women arrived by foot.

As the women approached they were discussing my cousin's murder as if it were a scene from an action movie. One of them was carrying a balloon and without saying anything to us, she began affixing it to the residential fence at the foot of the alley. They were talking among themselves at first; and then, I asked one of them if they knew him. I told them that we were his family. I was his cousin and the women with me were his aunts. They seemed unimpressed by this and continued to describe in gruesome detail what they believed happen there in the early morning during the last moments of my cousin's life. They began to inform us directly of gossip related to Amp's death. We were told that it took four men to kill him and that he was shot so many times because they knew he would be hard to kill. My numbness and shock began to dissipate. It was quickly replaced by a silent and growing rage that increased with each of the local's retelling of the event. The details of their shared story while told through smiles and excited voices began to seem less a testament of my cousin's strength, and instead, just gossip

from a growing group of women who were simply reliving the excitement of last night's drama in the hood. For me and my family, these details were overwhelming; and I felt sick to my stomach knowing that he died alone and under these conditions.

More women begin to arrive in small but constant groups. They were slowly transforming the space of my cousin's death, a very private tragedy for me and my family, into a place of theatre and performed friendship. A few of them talked to us, most ignored us, but it seemed that all of them came to be a part of this moment in time. They brought with them bouquets of balloons and teddy bears. They began affixing these items to the fence of the house with the garage. One of them placed a teddy bear on the ground at the base of the newly formed fence turned balloon stand. A young man walked up alone, spoke to no one, and begin to spray paint the once paint free garage doors with his tribute to my cousin. It was shortly after his arrival that I noticed that there were no men here. He was the first man I had seen. I wondered where the men were.

While I wondered why there were no men at the site, it became apparent to me that I was bothered by the local women there. I did not feel connected to them. I resented them. I resented the fact that most of these women were unconcerned with his family. I resented their claims of affiliation and closeness to him. I resented how they were taking my very private grief and making it public through their verbal accountings of his murder, and their memorial building activities. One of them mentioned that he was just at her house the other night hanging out and that he slept on her floor. I was appalled and in disbelief. This woman was wearing ill-fitted, disheveled, and soiled clothes and claimed that my cousin slept on her floor!! I couldn't believe it! I didn't believe it! I thought to myself that based on her appearance, her floor was probably in a similar condition and thus, my cousin certainly would not have slept there! This was a value

judgment and I knew it. Here I was an anthropologist and judging people based on the clothes that they wore. Everything I had learned about cultural relativity flew out the window in the face of my family's personal tragedy. In addition, I grew up in poverty and while we always had clean clothes and a neat house, many of our neighbors did not and we were taught not to judge them since we were all poor. However, in this moment of personal crisis, all bets were off! I was unapologetically judging her as well as another loud talking woman that arrived with a large tattoo on her face! She arrived with a balloon bouquet and was crying and shouting that her man had been killed. Who was this woman??? Certainly, my cousin wouldn't be romantically involved with a woman with a tattoo on her face!! If what they said was true, did I really know my cousin at all? Was this the man who just a month prior arrived at my grandmother's house with Mother's Day balloons and greeted us all with a kiss? Was this the same man who didn't swear in my grandmother's house, was respectful of elders, and kind to women? He was handsome, charming, and talented. Why would he be involved with these people?

At some point, the woman with the tattoo began to talk to us. She told us that she was very close to Amp. She spoke to us in hushed and sympathetic tones. This woman who upon her arrival clearly established herself among the other females as the "queen bee" was now deferring to us. The other women never did this. They continued to have their own moment. It felt in many ways that we were the outsiders. We didn't know how tough he was. We didn't know that he was shot so many times because "he wadn't no punk and wouldn't go down." And we certainly didn't know, as the woman with the tattoo informed us, that "they came at him four deep cause they knew he carried a gun EVERrrrYWHERE and he wadn't no Bitch!... That's right my man whazzzen't no Bitch!!!" She screamed to the crowd. Again, I was appalled! What kind of people speak that way in front of elders? My mother and aunt were present! Years

ago, that kind of disrespect deserved a punch in the nose. Who were these people? I quickly realized that I had changed. Years ago, no one would have spoken that way in front of my mother or any elder in my family, let alone to them! The rules of the street had obviously changed and so had I. I thought for a moment...“do you know who I am?” But who was I kidding? I haven’t had street “cred” since 1986 and it was now 2003. In 1986, I was a street tough teenager. However, after serving eight years in the U.S. Army that included a three year European tour of duty; living in upstate New York for three years where I attended college and hung out with socialists, artists, and feminist groups; beginning a second career in engineering technology that allowed me to return home to Michigan to be near my aging grandmother; purchasing my first home and other residential rental property; and later liquidating all of my assets to support my leaving a job that I loathed; and my subsequent return to school full-time to do something that I love; the combined experiences had changed me greatly. While I had successfully “pulled myself up by my bootstraps,” I was no longer intimately knowledgeable about the changing nuances in street culture. Therefore, this woman did not know who I WAS and she didn’t care. My once hard exterior was virtually non-existent. My clothing, speech, and mannerisms have become clear symbolic demarcations of my education and change in social economic status. I suddenly began to realize that I had become a pseudo-outsider. In those few moments, I had to face the fact that I had gotten soft. Soft or not, I still needed to know... I needed to know what happened to my cousin, how it happened, and this woman was the closest that I could get to that information. Then it hit me, they didn’t desire to be in conversation with us because they didn’t need us, we needed them!!

As the women’s memorial construction continued, so did their stories and accountings of my cousin’s life. I could not help but ask myself, were they making these things up? Did my

cousin really carry a gun on him and was he the tough guy that they described? He certainly was not that tough when we were kids and the last time I saw him alive he was telling me about his new business venture making leather purses and other garments. As I contemplated this, I noticed that the “absent” men were actually in cars.

Unlike the women who all came directly to the site on foot, the men were slowly driving by. I had not noticed these cars before but it became apparent to me when one car stopped just long enough for its driver and passengers to speak to a few of the women and then keep going. Other cars followed and some had short conversations with various women who were there. The cars were all older model large vehicles with on average about 3 to 4 passengers, all male. Most of their faces looked sad and grief stricken. The women were abuzz with hyper movements, gestures and language but the men appeared distant and mournful. So, these were my cousin’s friends. My mom, aunt, and I were at the site for about two hours and in that time, about 55 people either came directly to the site or interacted with the women from cars. When we left, a large memorial was erected and growing in my cousin’s honor.

For many days after this interaction I thought to myself... “My cousin was shot several times! He was shot so bad that he was missing parts of his skull, fingers and had holes so large that my family decided to keep his casket closed since the funeral director expressed a concern that he might not be able to keep him from leaking during the viewing, wake, and subsequent funeral. How is it that he was shot those many times and there were no obvious signs of death?” I think we all expected to find some tangible marker of death prior to our arrival and we left there disappointed and unfulfilled. We needed something. My family knew nothing of the conditions of my cousin’s death except the bits of information we had gathered from the women at his memorial. We didn’t know who killed him, why, exactly what time he died, was he

alone, was he cold, was he scared? Nothing!! And I for one, left the site not completely sure he was in fact dead. I know his mother viewed the body through a television monitor at the morgue. The community certainly believed he was dead and as proof, they were celebrated his living with their memorial and stories of his strength. But as his family... we were still struggling to accept our lost without an arrested killer, eyewitness, or symbolic marker of transition. Death became the symbol and it was painfully unacceptable! We never found out the true identity of my cousin's killers. There were stories from the street that followed, but the police never made a single arrest in the case.

In the fall of 2008, when I began the preliminary research for what has become this dissertation, I went back to the site of my cousin's memorial and photographed what I found.



**Figure 1.1: Amp Memorial, first encounter:** For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

My family and I had only visited the site once within hours after my cousin's death in 2003. At that time, the memorial was still under construction. When I returned to the site in 2008, I was surprised to see how large the final memorial was. What remained was primarily comprised of spray painted messages on three garages, two fences, a vacant house, an electric utility pole, and the cement ground. The balloons and teddy bears that the women brought were all gone, as was the original message that I witnessed being spray painted on the garage to the far right in figure 1.1. Instead, what remained was the freshly painted message to my cousin and a few others that were by comparison significantly faded. The details presented above of my cousin's murder, and the subsequent roadside memorial created in his honor, represent my catalyst into the following dissertation.

### **Preparing for Fieldwork**

The early work for this dissertation began in the spring of 2006, with an electronic literature search that at that time produced minimal published sources within anthropology, but a great number of journalistic reports and op-ed pieces on roadside memorials also called spontaneous shrines, spontaneous memorials, makeshift memorials and more recently, grassroots memorials in the United States. It is not that sources did not exist, but much of the domestic work was largely influenced by the tragic events of the Oklahoma City Bombing (1995); the Columbine High School Massacre (1999); the Texas A&M University Fire (1999); and the U.S. terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Today, this subject is increasing in popularity among anthropologists and others in the social sciences; and as we all work to understand the various nuances of this spreading phenomenon, more works are coming available and contributing to the quickly increasing body of literature on roadside memorials.

I define roadside or spontaneous memorials as collections of physical objects or material symbols organized in an orderly or seemingly haphazard fashion, with the intent of performing mourning, grieving, or commemorating rites for persons who have died tragically.<sup>2</sup> While roadside memorials and other forms of public commemoration are not new; the Internet and television media coverage of memorial sites have helped to globally increase their popularity. In many cases, wherever news articles related to roadside shrines or street memorials appear on the Internet, they are also accompanied by numerous postings from individuals who strongly oppose them as an accepted method of commemoration. It is probable that since these articles are often written to highlight contentions regarding memorials, or question their legitimacy, readers might be compelled to share competing opinions. Supporters of the shrines also appear on the news threads, however their voices are usually greatly outnumbered by those who claim that these shrines have become more of a nuisance than a help. Regardless, due to their increasing popularity, many local and state governments have had to legally address these memorials with laws in support, limitation, or in at least three U.S. states, ban them all together (Hopkins 2003). However, some U.S. states like New Mexico are extremely receptive to roadside memorials and have passed laws for their protection. I have found three major governmental oppositions to the shrines: 1.) they are a road distraction to drivers and may cause accidents; 2.) they are a violation of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which separates religion from state governance; and 3.) they are unsightly (Tiernan 2009 ). Organizations like Descansos.org have attempted to influence legislation regarding roadside memorials and protect their rights to exist.

September 11th generated a large interest in public memorialization; however most of this research focused on issues surrounding the government and nationalism and thus, was not

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<sup>2</sup> In this research, tragic death is defined as death caused by vehicular or physical trauma.



directly related to my research. Therefore, I initially relied on the now heavily cited works of Haney et. al (1997), Everett (2002), and Santino (2006) as well as journalist reports that suggested that the primary causes in rural areas and on U.S. highways of these tragic deaths were traffic accidents. However, many news reports that focused on memorials in urban areas with large African American and Latino populations suggested that these shrines were often youth or gang related, or both (Giarratani 2006; Holtz 2005; Pierre and Klein 2006). From these preliminary readings, I put together a project that focused on youth violence and tragic death in the city of Detroit as a basis for understanding these memorials in the urban landscape. I was excited to get into the field and discover what these shrines were about, learn their history, discover who created them, why they were created, what they mediated to those who viewed them, and what they could tell us about the contributors to violence among urban youth. What I found out about roadside shrines in Detroit was very interesting. My overly zealous project about a phenomenon that in the last decade has become a fast growing area of research among anthropologists studying memory, at times proved frustrating, limited, and in some ways disappointing since what I set out to discover was not what people actually talked to me about.

## **Fieldwork**

Prior to entering the field, I thought that people who had participated in the construction of a memorial would be both easy to locate, and that they would want to discuss their shrine in detail. In so doing, I would learn about their choice of materials, the symbolic significance of objects, and how the shrines represented what I believed would be fictive family ties to the dead. I also thought that people would share stories about how and why they built the memorials; and that they would tell me not only what the shrines meant to them, but how they represented at

least in part, what they felt and possibly continue to feel about the deceased. Lastly, I thought indicators of structural violence that resulted in physical violence would be rendered visible through these conversations.

Instead, I found it extremely difficult to locate people who actually participated in the construction of my photographed sites, largely because most of the memorials once constructed, are left to decompose and are not often visited by builders. Also, in some cases, their creators may not have actually resided in the neighborhoods where their loved one's memorial is located. In all but a few cases, individuals who lived and worked in close proximity to the memorials did not know the deceased. Sometimes people expressed their dislike, support, and indifference for the memorials. However, more often, people talked about the tragedy of the event. They wanted to tell me the story of what happened "there" on or near the spot of the memorials. Therefore, I decided to use these narratives in combination with the material components of the memorials in this study as a kaleidoscopic view of African American culture in flux.

## **Research Questions and Methodology**

My research questions are: Are Blacks becoming less religious in their responses to tragic public mourning? In what ways do roadside memorials in Detroit contribute to African American democratic participation in the public sphere? In what ways do Black Detroiters view their rights to uses of public space? Lastly, in what ways could economics contribute to African American participations in roadside memorial making in Detroit?

This study was conducted in four simultaneous phases of data collection: Phase one included geographical spatial mapping and descriptive analysis of the 17 roadside memorial sites. Each site was documented in terms of its geographical location; its relationship to

residential, commercial, and/or public space; type of death; and if known, the age of the deceased.

Phase two consisted of photographic observations of the memorial sites. I took photographs of each memorial in the autumn of each year, over a four year period, with no photographs for year three.<sup>3</sup> All material items for each site were coded in the following themes: spatial distance, type of death, and object popularity.

In phase three, I collected ethnographic data. I performed participant observation for six months with the group Parents of Murdered Children (POMC); directly observed the construction of two memorials; conducted informal interviews with four parents from POMC; conducted 32 semi-structured interviews with people on the street who live, work, or were standing in close proximity to the memorials; and three city officials, and a city desk clerk. In addition, I did a ride along with a Detroit police officer, and held two impromptu focus groups with six and five persons respectively.

My last phase of data collection involved a literature review and archival analysis of print news sources related to roadside commemoration in public spaces.

## **Theoretical Framework**

What began as a study primarily about violence shifted to include an investigation of materiality. After an examination of 3 years of photos, it became apparent that the material items

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<sup>3</sup> The original research design did not include photographing the sites over a three year period, as I was hoping to incorporate more interviews from memorial builders. However, after noticing interesting and significant changes in memorial site materials during the first two years of research, I became more interested in the material compositions of the memorials and thus, I continued to photograph them.

presented in this research have a story to tell. Therefore, I am using Prown's theory of material culture to present my data, illustrate the unique compositions of memorials in Detroit, and as a new paradigm for urban related research regarding the built environment. I chose this method because it requires both a detail description of objects, and my personal reactions to those objects, so as to bring to the fore personal contributions to the analysis process before speculating on outcomes of the research. Since this subject is also of a personal nature for me, it seemed ridiculous to feign innocence and objectivity in either my analysis, or overall research approach. Therefore, I have selected Prown's technique as my analytical method for this study because it allows me to record emotional responses and sensory engagement that is controlled through an object analysis based on object descriptions. I am also using Jürgen Habermas' theory of the public sphere as it allows for the political analysis that Prown does not.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

The following chapters are arranged in an effort to capture contextual complexities as it relates to roadside memorials in Detroit. Therefore, rather than following and externally imposed dissertation structure with a separate chapter on Detroit's history and economy, I have chosen to weave this information throughout the document. Further, I have also included elements of personal positionality and where appropriate, my own reflexive accounts of time and space in Detroit so as to both highlight insider/outsider complexities and to limit "othering" or the exoticization that sometimes accompanies research involving people of color (Jacobs-Huey 2002). For these reasons, I have organized the dissertation in the following order:

Chapter 1 opens the dissertation with a reflexive narrative of my cousin Amp's Memorial which illustrates how I became interested in roadside memorials. The chapter also details how

my early conceptualizations of the project were also greatly shaped by news reports and literature on roadside memorials that did not support what I found on the ground during fieldwork. Lastly, the chapter covers my research questions, theoretical framework, and research methodology.

Chapter 2 provides a general background for roadside memorials as a growing phenomenon throughout the United States. A single origin of memorializing the dead on the side of the road is unknown. However in this chapter, I explore possible connections between Descansos or “places of rest” found in the southwest region of the United States, Mexico, and throughout Latin America for possible ties to modern roadside memorials in the U.S., as well as a brief discussion on how everyday spaces are transformed into sacred places through shrine building. The chapter also includes a literature review of spontaneous memorialization also known as roadside shrines.

In Chapter 3, I define material culture and outline both Prown’s material culture theory and Habermas’ conceptualization of the public sphere. While, chapter 4 describes my experience conducting fieldwork in Detroit, it also summarizes some of the supporting data that I encountered while researching memorials on the street. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an insider’s view into how I collected my data and some of the interesting and challenging things that I learned in the process.

Chapter 5 introduces the reader to the memorials themselves as part I of my primary data. Here, I argue that each memorial is unique and mediates a message to the public regarding not only the deceased, but also includes personal messages from those that have constructed them. In this way, these memorials function as symbolic dialog within the public sphere. I have formulated a table for each memorial that outlines the material components of the memorial that

will be analyzed in chapters 6 and 7. Where possible, I share the causes of death of the deceased and/or history of the space and place where the memorial was constructed.

Chapter 6 is both the second part of my data presentation and a starting analysis of the memorials from chapter 5, where memorials are analyzed by type of death, by neighborhood, and in terms of material object frequencies. Chapter 7 is a cultural analysis of the data from chapters 5 and 6 and answers my research questions. The final chapter is a brief discussion on my initial youth related expectations and ways that the media has contributed to that misconception. It also includes my interpretation of findings and closes with the limitations of this project and calls for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### DESCANSOS, SPONTANEOUS MEMORIALIZATION, AND ROADSIDE SHRINES: PLACES OF REST FOR THE INTERRUPTED JOURNEY

*Remember when you pass a cross by the side of the road on your journey, that someone's journey was interrupted there. Have faith, the traveler will not be forgotten. Part of the history of the people is written at these shrines by the road.*<sup>4</sup>

#### Introduction

In urban spaces throughout the United States, roadside shrines have become an all too common symbol of public commemoration for persons who have died because of violence, vehicle accidents, or other methods of untimely death. In some instances, grieving family and friends of the deceased create shrines; and in other cases like those linked to the Oklahoma City bombing and the tragedies of 9/11, persons unknown to one another or even the deceased may erect a shrine for those who have died in a public place. Shrines range from simple to the elaborate and may be orderly or haphazard. Mourners leave material items at or near the site of death that vary in size and makeup and often include but are not limited to simple white crosses, single or multiple collections of teddy bears, photographs, flowers, poems, candles, toys, and sometimes drugs and/or alcohol. Each shrine is unique in appearance and method of production and mourners usually construct them in public places. However, the actual land that shrines occupy may also be private since they are sometimes located within areas considered residential or commercial private property. Despite their location, most roadside shrines are similar in that

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<sup>4</sup> This quote was taken from *Descansos: An Interrupted Journey*, by Rudolf Anaya, Juan Estevan Arellano, and Deise Chavez, pg. 26.

mourners usually build them on the side of roads or highways to mark the actual or symbolic spaces where death occurred.

Part of the difficulty in researching roadside shrines, is the various terminology used to describe this method of commemoration. Descansos, roadside shrines, roadside memorials, temporary memorials, spontaneous memorials, wayward shrines, makeshift memorials, street memorials, altars, shrines, memorials, memorias, ghost bikes, crucitas (Spanish), parting stones (English), and proskynitaries (Greek) are just a few of the terms conceptually related to this phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> These compilations of material culture, constructed into sites of memory, on the sides of roads, highways, and in other public spaces to commemorate the lives of those who have had their living journeys interrupted while in public spaces, have become the source of great debate in the United States and are slowly but surely changing the ways we remember our dead. In this chapter, I will provide a conceptual overview of what roadside memorials are and review the related literature.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I have chosen to call these memorials a phenomenon because for many Americans, roadside shrines remain a curiosity. In addition, while they are increasingly becoming an accepted and common occurrence in some landscapes throughout the United States, for the moment these shrines are still contested in some regions throughout the U.S. but in others they are an emerging mourning ritual in American culture.

<sup>6</sup> The tragic events of September 11, 2001, have produced a massive amount of memorial literature. While it is arguable that those shrines were also for victims of tragic death, I have chosen to limit their inclusion here due to their mostly patriotic, nationalist, and/or labor specific focuses. I recognize that the memorials of 9/11 share many similarities with everyday spontaneous memorials. However, most are also representative of a unique time and space, and have social, governmental, and journalistic influences that are beyond the scope of this study.



## **Shrines, Descansos, and Roadside Memorials**

### *Shrines*

The practice of shrine building is old and widespread. Shrines may be religious or secular, designed to interact with the cosmos, or constructed as an act of performance to mediate a desired idea or emotion, as well as any combination of these. While shrines may vary in purpose and composition, and these variances are unique to their creators, mediation of meaning and sacredness of space are two elements that all shrines have in common.

Mather (2003) defines shrines as “sites of mediation where the ambiguity and unpredictability of relations are harnessed to generate meaning (23).” It is the intent of the builder that infuses the shrine with meaning. However, since shrines are compilations of material culture that function as symbols of meaning for both the builder and the viewer, the mediated outcome remains unpredictable and ambiguous for both the constructor and the observer. Just as an artist cannot control how her art will be understood and therefore received by her audience, intended symbolic meanings for shrines may not be fully comprehended or accepted by viewers. In fact, it is virtually impossible for anyone except the builder, to fully appreciate the meanings behind the symbols because each object has been selected and positioned in alignment with the thought processes of the contributor. Nevertheless, what is most important is that the combination of symbols when positioned together are recognized as a shrine and the location where it rests becomes recognized as sacred, or is consecrated through ritual into hallowed space (Foote 1997).

The sanctification associated with roadside memorial sites are created through ritual where public sites of tragedy are set apart from the surrounding area and transformed into locations of sacred space through the use of material symbolism. What separates these shrines

from trash piles in the mind of viewers is the successful material selection and placement by builders in communicating their consecration of the space. Put another way, the sacredness of these shrines have a reciprocal relationship with their material elements, and the combination of the two define the space as a shrine. Therefore, when shrines are created and placed on a location, so too is the element of sacred space also produced.

Shrines have various purposes, they may be indoors or outdoors (Cash 1998), personal or community oriented (Sadler 1975), used to maintain a relationship with the ancestors (Sadler 1975), to improve health (Lock 1980), or even to protect oneself from foolish behavior (Ottenberg 1970). Whatever their purpose, shrines are also markers of belonging and affiliation because their material makeup reflect religious and/or cultural specifics that are unique to particular groups like ethnicity (Riley 1992), ancestral lineages or kinship (Keesing 1970; Mather 2003), categories of sex or social status (Ottenberg 1970), religion (Sadler 1975), nationality (Kolinski 1994), or even virginity (Morris 2003). While the locations, purposes, and designs of shrines may differ globally, religious and ancestral shrines are two of the most popular shrine types.

Religious shrines are used to perform religious rituals and acts. Religion is a social construction and a fundamental part of human existence. As a social phenomenon, it attempts to provide answers to indeterminable questions like the purpose of life, why we die, and what happens post-death. Religion is also rooted in the collective, where both individual experience, coupled with group interactions through time, produce patterns of belief that are based on the group's accumulated knowledge of themselves and the world around them (Durkheim 1965). This knowledge becomes the bases for a shared cosmology, or religious orientation and worldview that is reinforced through ritual practice (Malinowski 1992).

Shrines are often used in religious practice. Individuals and groups alike construct shrines for deities, angels, saints, ancestors, spirits, the dead, and the living. Some religious shrines are community oriented and are located at pilgrimage sites in public, and yet others are privately located inside of homes, offices, and other personal spaces. Here in the United States, a religiously varied but mostly Christian nation, the most popular religious shrines that appear in public spaces are for Jesus Christ, the Madonna, and the Catholic saints.

Mexican-American Nichos and Cuban-American yard shrines are examples of religious shrines that may be constructed for personal or collective purposes. In the personal sense, they are usually located in the front yard of the home and dedicated to a particular patron saint, Jesus, or the Virgin Mary (Curtis 1980). While most are traditionally made of stone materials, bathtubs, or old refrigerators, other consumer goods are also utilized. Nichos resemble caves or cubbyholes where sacred images and saint replicas are placed inside with various religious paraphernalia for the purpose of honoring and communicating with them (Riley 1992). In many faith traditions in the U.S., privately located shrines (inside the home) dedicated to the dead are also popular.

Ancestral shrines may be collective and public; however, in African American culture, most ancestral shrines or altars are located inside of the home and maintained by individuals. Despite their location, two of the most popular beliefs associated with ancestral shrines are appeasement and veneration of the dead. In his study of ceremonial landscapes, Mather (2003) contends that humans construct ancestral shrines in an effort to domesticate both the natural environment and cosmic world by appeasing ancestral spirits (27). Aligned with appeasement or veneration goals, there are three main beliefs associated with ancestral shrines (a) an individual's soul or spirit continues to exist even after the fleshly body has perished, (b) the living and the

dead are interdependent and therefore communication and/or interaction is possible, and (c) the dead have the ability to affect the world of the living (Correal 2003). When shrines are dedicated to the dead, appeasement is sometimes a goal. Humans often go to great lengths to make sure that their dead are at peace and not disturbed, this may sometimes include being forgotten. Just as the names of the dead in some cultures are never to be spoken again by the living, some shrines are intended to be forgotten. The njoku pots of the Afikpo, Ibo of Southeastern Nigeria for example, are personal shrines created to lay the dead to rest and later neglected as not to upset the resting spirit (Ottenberg 1970).

In a general sense, personal shrines are constructed by an individual for personal, meaning “the self,” or personal family use. These shrines may be associated with a specific spirit, set of beliefs, the individual’s sex, or gender roles. Individual shrines may be numerous. One person may have several individually focused shrines and they may be associated with various elements of the individual like the person’s soul, general welfare, an individual’s protective spirit/s or spirit guides, material wealth, luck, or as I mentioned earlier, to deter foolish behavior. One of the overarching themes associated with personal shrines is the notion that these shrines help to protect the living from evil or disenchanted spirits (Keesing 1970; Kolinski 1994; Mather 2003; Ottenberg 1970; Rimmer 1875), for which shrines to protect the home are an example. Upon the home’s construction or when people move in, prayers and/or sacred objects are placed within the structure of the home, or if material objects are not used, the home is blessed with oil, water, or smoke in an effort to remove any evil or negative energy as well as ward off evil in general (Ottenberg 1970).

Shrines are also markers of ethnic, cultural, and geographical influences. Anaya et. al (1995) provides an example of this with their analysis of *descansos*, Hispanic influenced shrines that are most popular in the southwest regions of the U.S. and Latin America. The team argues,

Descansos are not only reminders of a journey never completed, they are a work of art and perhaps one of the few authentic noncommercial folk arts of New Mexico's Hispanos. They are created out of love in a time of pain and wonderment. These *descansos* are sculptures, in a sense earthworks, for they occupy a unique relation to the land and the environment. Through most are carved, some are assembled out of parts from the wrecked automobile, built out of rocks or poured cement, and others incorporate photographs. Only out of true love does a work of art evolve (99-101).

It is important here to note that shrines are also fluid in meaning and significance. Today's shrines may still be standing after several generations, however their meanings and importance to the community may vary. Sadler illustrates this point:

Everywhere I went, and everywhere I saw a shrine, I asked the people standing about who was the *kami* of their shrine. There was much sucking of breath and thoughtful grunts, and then: 'Just a moment, I'll ask grandfather' or 'Please wait a moment, I think uncle may know.' As often as not, uncle did not know, nor could grandfather remember—whether the shrine was located on a busy Tokyo street corner, or in an obscure fishing village (Sadler 1975:24).

Therefore, my analysis of shrines in general, and roadside shrines in particular, is based on the notion that culture is constantly changing, being constructed, and reconstructed; and thus, while this study is in part, an attempted glimpse into the thoughts and processes of African Americans related to the shrines of today, this glimpse is fleeting because just as the shrines are shifting and changing in our time, so too will the attitudes and meanings associated with them in the future. Before we leave this discussion of shrines, it is important to note that taboos also play a role in the future of shrines.

When shrines are sanctified, they by definition simultaneously become associated with taboos, or forbidden rules of behavior. These rules are the unspoken expectations of what not to

do at or with the shrines. Sometimes there are special sacraments that women and men perform prior to interaction with the shrines (Keesing 1970). Some shrines are only to be constructed, handled, or used by certain members of the social group, sex, or gender (Ottenberg 1970). Other shrines like roadside memorials, or public shrines that memorialize the dead in public space, have shifting or fluid taboos associated with them. They are fluid because the shrines themselves are sometimes disputed, and thus removed, interfering with both their legitimacy and reverence.

For roadside shrines in the U.S., there is a general notion that unless a person wishes to pay respect by adding something of benefit to the shrine, it should be left alone and undisturbed. However, not everyone agrees on what is beneficial. Sometimes personal contributions that differ from the majority of participants are also considered taboo. For example, after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and U.S. Pentagon, mourners created countless memorials for the deceased that generally expressed American solidarity. This solidarity sometimes meant not challenging the leadership of President Bush or U.S. Foreign policy, for to do so at these memorials was considered taboo in the early days after the event. However, a few months later when war became eminent, some mourners at Ground Zero in New York City, turned anti-war protesters, created memorials to express feelings against the war, all without a major backlash. Yet at the Pentagon, these expressions were not tolerated. Yocom states, “at the Pentagon memorial, though, no one aired these issues overtly. Or, if they did, others removed the signs before I saw them. Clearly, Pentagon memorial visitors, unlike some visitors to New York City memorials, thought that messages critical of United States policy were not appropriate at this memorial (Yocom 2006:75-76).” As I mentioned earlier, one of the most important aspects of shrines is that they are recognized as sacred within the culture and

geographical spaces where they exist. This recognition however, sometimes transcends geographical place and culture.

### *Descansos*

The term *descansos* is derived from the Spanish verb *descansar* (to rest) and according to Anaya, Arellano, and Cháveaz, *descansos* represent the sacred resting places in the old villages of New Mexico where men took physical rest and “rested” the coffin on the ground during a long journey from the church to the cemetery.

Led by the priest or preacher and followed by mourning women dressed in black, the procession made its way from the church to the cemetery. The rough hewn pine of the coffin cut into the shoulders of men. If the *camposanto* was far from the church, the men grew tired and they paused to rest, lowering the coffin and placing it on the ground. The place where they rested was the *descanso* (Anaya 1995).

*Descansos* are precursors to modern roadside shrines here in the United States. They were often comprised at minimum of flowers, candles, and a cross, usually white that showcased the name and/or birth or death dates of the victim/s.

The white cross was the most dominant feature of *descansos* which has had an influential effect on modern day roadside memorial designs. Perhaps this is because the cross through time has become a symbol of purification and consecration for many Christians. Rimmer (1875), notes that ancient English stone crosses were used for preaching, weeping, and as memorials to mark the sites where a person was killed, as well as to mark boundaries, highways, the entrances of churches, and as an attestation of peace (106). Kolinski (1994) posits that wayside crosses were very popular in Poland from the inception of Christianity well into the late nineteenth

century. His study examined wayside crosses in Wisconsin where he found that they were extremely varied in form and function:

Landmarks or border posts among unmarked fields, spiritual protection against evil forces, as well as objects of unofficial devotion during life's difficult periods. They functioned as places where one prayed, gathered during important moments in the life of the village, bid farewell to army recruits and the dead, sentenced criminals, and took oaths of loyalty (36).

Lastly, Kolinski suggests that wayside shrines, which utilized the cross, were constructed for the purpose of giving salvation to the dead as an effort to protect the living from bad spirits and wandering or lost souls (38).

Catholicism, more than any other sect of Christianity, makes use of the cross as an instrument to combat evil. In Catholic cosmology, the newly dead are considered to be in a state of purgatory, whereby the deceased is no longer living in the traditional sense, but has also not yet reached her or his final destination of Heaven or Hell. This is a great time of uncertainty and thus, the living become susceptible to evil forces. Also, the dead are believed to be confused by their new status, and therefore need to be guided to rest. The crosses and prayers performed at these sites function to combat any evil that may arise. Flowers allow the dead to smell, and the lights from candles provide sight, so that the newly deceased may be able to see in the darkness. Saints, angels, and spirit guides are asked to assist the deceased in the acclimation of death, and the living do all that they can deliver the body to its final resting place.

During the time of early descansos, the delivery of the body to the cemetery was performed by foot; and through time, these pathways marked with crosses became popular resting locations. The automobile has greatly transformed this type of funeral procession, since the body of the deceased is usually driven to the cemetery opposed to being carried, making the original purpose of descansos obsolete. However, where the automobile revolutionized the



funeral procession and eliminated the need for descansos in the southwest U.S., it too has become a huge contributor to its replacement, the roadside memorial.

Modern descansos, commonly referred to as roadside memorials are often constructed at the sites of automobile accidents. In “Voices from Inside a Black Snake: Religious Monuments of Sonora’s Highways.” Author James Griffith argues that,

“One has only to drive down Highway 15 between the U.S. – Mexico border and the Donoran capital of Hermosillo to judge the long-term effects of this formal command [to remove memorial crosses]: none whatsoever. The highway is positively lined with crosses, with an average of more than one per kilometer. The main differences are that the internal combustion engine has replaced the Apaches as the major cause of roadside death, and the crosses are probably far more frequent than they were in the eighteenth century (Griffith 2005:234).”

However, unlike traditional descansos, today’s roadside shrines are more often representative of locations of death, and symbolic spaces of rest for the deceased, than actual locations of rest for funeral processions. Additionally, they are different from tombstones or grave markers, since they attempt to mark the geographical spaces of death, not burial. While modern roadside memorials are not conceptually new, the practice is increasing in popularity throughout the United States (Doss 2010).

### Roadside Memorials

There are several conceptual frameworks to roadside memorial research that have shaped the literature, some of which include: the spontaneous and/or emerging ritual aspects of these types of memorials (Haney, et al. 1997; Santino 2004); the emotions and/or grief of memorial contributors (Clark 2006; Doss 2010; Grider 2007); societal needs for individualism (Sloane 2005); religion (Everett 2000; Griffith 2005; Trulsson 2002); memorial regulation (Ross 1998;

Schmidt 2000); social conflicts (Grider 2007); political protest (Azaryahu 1996; Engler 1999; Margry and Sanchez-Carretero 2011; Phelps 1998); global and geographical differences (Smith 1999); museum studies (Greenspan 2003); function and ritual aspects (Reid 2001; Santino 2006); history of (Monger 1997); relationship to monuments (Doss 2010; Durbin 2003); and the commoditization of memorials (Sather-Wagstaff 2011; Sturken 2007). A comprehensive review of each category would be beyond the needs of this dissertation. Therefore, the following is a brief synopsis of the literature in a few of these areas relative to my study.

The growing epistemology regarding roadside memorials has in many ways stemmed from the research of folklorist Jack Santino (1992b), who was the first to coin the term “spontaneous shrines” to describe what he considered temporary monuments constructed to acknowledge political assassinations in Northern Ireland. In a similar vein, Allen Haney, Christina Leimer, and Juliann Lowery later called the process of temporary memorial making “spontaneous memorialization (Haney, et al. 1997).” The team authored one of the most heavily cited articles on the subject where they posit that violent death, car accidents, murder, terrorism etc., upset normal patterns of dying and thus, leave those who can identify with the victim, or the victim’s family insecure about their own lives and that this insecurity has the ability to erode cultural values and threaten the future existence of society; and thus, traditional rituals are altered to meet “the inadequacy of contemporary U.S. death rituals (334).” They note seven components of spontaneous memorialization:

1. They are private individualized acts of mourning that are open for public participation and observation.
2. The shrines are usually erected at the death site or someplace associated with the deceased. This is in opposition to a funeral home, church, or cemetery.
3. There are no official or unofficial participants.

4. The shrines are comprised of an eclectic assortment of highly personalized objects, most of which are religious in nature; but the juxtaposition of these objects can be extreme.
5. Mementos usually illustrate the meaning of the event for the mourner and may reflect emotions like anger, vulnerability, or sadness.
6. Unlike funerals, this ritual does not have a set beginning or ending time and mourners may return to visit the site once or again and again.
7. The memorials provide a place for strangers to grieve collectively but they also represent possible social and cultural implications for death that have the ability to affect future change in society.

It is important to mention here that while temporary memorials share the aforementioned attributes, each is unique in its design and intent because tragic events differ as does death experiences (Santino 1992b). Lastly, while the Haney et al. remains popular among contemporary researchers on the topic, I should note that the term “spontaneous” is falling out of favor to describe these mostly temporary memorials. Since temporary memorials for victims of tragic death are becoming an easily recognized ritual throughout the Western world, the term “spontaneous” no longer seems fitting. Today researchers rarely use the term. Even Santino has since recanted his “spontaneous” terminology in favor of “performative memorials” as an expression to describe the emerging mourning ritual (2004).

Similarly, here in the United States the word “makeshift” is quite popular among journalist to describe these memorials. However in my opinion, the term has an offensive connotation since the word “makeshift” suggests a crude, and/or thrown together commemoration that is set apart from “traditional” or “official” memorials. Nevertheless, as I described at the start of the chapter, a single name to explain what is quickly becoming an

everyday ritual in the U.S still does not exist, but interdisciplinary literature concerning the practice is growing.

Another issue regarding definition concerns typification. In what category should these memorials be viewed? While temporary memorials or roadside shrines represent contemporary forms of remembrance in public space, it is my opinion that they not be marginalized or set apart from other forms of commemoration. John Hunt (2001), argues that commemorative gardens, or landscapes with some monument inserted into them have five essential qualities:

1. Gardens are intermediate zones—liminal enclaves between outside and inside, town and country, social space and private space—and therefore they lend themselves symbolically to the commemoration of the dead by the still living...
2. Gardens are essentially places that entail the celebration of something that has been.
3. They tell the story of some place.
4. Gardens are symbolically coded by the constructors and decoded by the viewer. The effectiveness of fine commemorations will undoubtedly depend upon the widest possible availability of codes to stand the test of time.
5. Finally, gardens are vulnerable because they are living or constructed of materials with natural and unnatural components which may communicate different things under different environmental conditions (20-22).

Hunt further posits,

...there is doubtless much more power exerted upon our historical imagination when a site is actually where the memorialized event occurred, because then we can say, 'Here, right here, it happened; on this very ground...' It is also possible to conceive of some locations that lack all interventions by landscape architecture, even any monumental record, as still exercising a memorial power upon people who have a special knowledge of or association with that place (23).

While Hunt is referring to the mnemonic structure of gardens, I think that this is also applicable to roadside shrines.

Similar to commemorative gardens, roadside memorials provide us with mediated symbols that are later decoded by those that view them and these symbols become a language all their own under different environmental conditions. This is also incidentally one of the most contested features of temporary memorials as the following quote illustrates:

What I hate most about them is the piles of moldering stuffed animals and dead flowers that you just know are harboring every kind of vermin available. Who wants to remember their loved one with rats crawling in and out of wet cotton batten (jcole 2010)?

This element at its core speaks to the decayed shrine's ability, or in this case lack thereof, to commemorate life and communicate the sacredness of both the shrine and the space. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, there is an interdependent relationship between shrine performance or mediation, and sacred space.

There has been some debate about how commemorative spaces are made sacred. Linenthal (2001) highlights these debates in his analysis of the making of sacred ground in American culture related to American war memorials. He asks the question, "are there places essentially sacred, quite apart from human activity (301)?" He quotes two arguments to this end. The first made by David Chidester who suggests that human agency becomes erased if all attention is placed on "holy places" and/or "gods and spirits" and thus, *they*, become sacred, anchor emotions, create and/or mold the environment mythical (301). The Second argument comes from religious historian Jonathan Smith who argues that places are made sacred through the attention, construction, control, design, and memory of human beings and thus, spaces deemed sacred are claims through human agency for ownership of space (301). Linenthal then suggests that there are four ways that American battlefields are made sacred: 1.) Commemorative

rhetoric – this is an attempt to make sense of war where patriotic themes are employed and warriors, heroes, and saviors are named, 2.) Monument building – these sites are also places of contention where diverse groups compete for the design, treatment, and placement of symbols, 3.) Physical preservation—boundaries are erected to separate the new sacred space from the surrounding “ordinary” environment, and 4.) Battle reenactment—war scenes are reenacted so that people might have a historical look at and/or celebrate the past event. Roadside shrines fit one or many of these categories since they are often: commemorative, function as temporary or “unofficial” monuments, are physically preserved though the material culture left at the spot of death, and/or reenacted through narratives, murals, and/or their upkeep. Additionally, since some of the memorials in this study are for victims of violent death, these spaces of death might also be viewed as mini battlefields within the urban environment.

Now if we return to the issue of decaying stuffed animals on temporary memorials, Linenthal argues that,

In addition to being ritual space, where people are classified as insiders or outsiders, battlefields are capable of being defiled. There is an almost intuitive conviction that for the patriotic message of the place to be properly heard, the physical environment must be pristine. The site must look, as much as possible, as it did at the time of the battle. It is not enough, therefore, simply to be at the geographical site of a battle. The site must offer a purity of vision through which the meaning of it all can be perceived clearly (306).

While Linenthal is referring to battle reenactment sites, I think that the same holds true for roadside memorials. However, I do not think that memorials have to be kept up or be “pristine” in order to continue to communicate the tragedy of both the event and the initial feelings of mourners; however, the symbols that make up the shrine have to be maintained if they are to be

effective in communicating to shrine decoders (viewers) long-term commemorative intentions of memorial builders.

Memory and identity also play a role here. Gillis notes that memory and identity are political in that they are not fixed, they are subjective, and function as representations or constructions of reality and we are constantly revising each in our class, gender, and power relationships. The process of commemoration is heavily tied to both memory and identity as it is rooted in the historical, which in its “old-fashioned” forms represented the political philosophies of the social and cultural elite (Gillis 1994). To this end, Gillis states, “Commemorative activity is by definition social and political, for it involves the coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation (5).” The author also makes a distinction between what he calls popular memory and elite memory. The former is interested in the overall representation of events and does not focus on the consecutive accounting of what happened from some starting point to an end. The latter attempts to construct a linear accounting of events, fill in all the blanks, and operate within fixed boundaries. In this way, traditional models of commemoration in the Western world have been reserved for the memories of elite males and thus all others were silenced or erased from the “official” historical narrative (Trouillot 1995). As commemorations, temporary memorials challenge “official” top-down histories and function as evidence for what might have become silences in the historical record.

Using a photo analysis of photographs taken just after 9/11 in New York City, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2003) examines the issues of legitimacy, democracy, and silence in the historical record. On public concern memorials she notes,

Grassroots responses to the trauma have been spontaneous, improvised, and ubiquitous. Every surface of the city—sidewalks, lampposts, fences, telephone booths, barricades, garbage dumpsters, and walls—was blanketed with candles, flowers, flags, and missing persons' posters.... They quickly became the focal point of shrines memorializing the missing and presumed deceased. The shrines appeared in parks, subway stations, firehouses, police stations, hospitals, and on stoops. Large crowds gathered spontaneously for vigils. We call the event and its aftermath 9/11 (11).

While her work centers on photos taken during 9/11, she concludes that the marginalization of memorialization could result in an absence in documented remembrance. She mentions two New York companies that are collecting photographs from individuals who took pictures during the terrorist attack. They are attempting to combine these photos to create a photographic memorial. These pictures notes the author, represent history in real time as there is no lag time when the hundreds of thousands of digital photographs that were taken are compiled into one computer program. She suggest that this may be our only opportunity to memorialize the actual events of that day as several government and media officials have deliberately removed images of the twin towers before they were attacked, thereby erasing them from the historical record; and since mementos of mourning are daily removed, this prevents unofficial memorialization.

Gillis adds that today, history is an individualized process whereby Americans have diverse understandings of the past which are not necessarily tied to old national historiography. The author argues, "Both Americans and Europeans have become compulsive consumers of the past, shopping for that which best suits their particular sense of self at the moment, constructing out of a bewildering variety of materials, times, and places the multiple identities that are demanded of them in the post-national era (Gillis 1994:17-18)." He adds that, "In this difficult and conflicted period of transition, democratic societies need to publicize rather than privatize the memories and identities of all groups, so that each may know and respect the other's versions



of the past, thereby understanding better what divides as well as unites us” (20). Roadside shrines appear to fit these criteria, and in some cases stand as a testament to conflicting narratives. Everett (2002) adds that, “so, too, roadside memorial makers offer a meeting place for communication, remembrance and reflection, separate from the ‘everyday.’ Embracing many voices, they may also represent the quiet acquiescence of civil authority, for in many states their mere existence violates official policy (14).

*Resting Places* (2007), a documentary by directors Melissa Villanueva and J. Michael Kipikash, illustrates the popularity of roadside memorials in the United States, France, Ireland, Poland, Argentina, Australia, Iceland, and Mexico. In Ireland, these memorials are extremely popular and are both culturally and politically accepted as a way of life. The documentary depicts Irish roads lined with memorials, most of which are engraved in stone as permanent reminders of the lives lost on the sides of these roads. In stark contrast, are those in France where the government erects human silhouettes displaying the ages of victims on roadsides where people have died. The French government claims that this policy has been successful in saving lives (Jackson 2006). However, the film highlights this policy as controversial since the French government has refused to remove signs even when requested by the grieving family. Here in the United States, the opposite is often true since family members sometimes have to fight with their state’s transportation department to allow the memorials of their loved ones to remain on the roadside. Throughout the Western world, battles between citizens and the state related to roadside memorials are increasing along with their popularity.

Erika Doss’ *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (2010) highlights the connections between U.S. constructed memorials and citizen rights. Doss contends that the current “American frenzy to memorialize” is due to citizen demands for representation and the

need to express feelings of grief, fear, gratitude, shame, and anger. However, due to the increasing popularity of these commemorations, many U.S. state and local governments are beginning to legally address memorials with laws to support, limit, and/or ban them all together. I have found three major governmental oppositions to the shrines: (1) they are a road distraction to drivers and may cause accidents, (2) they are a violation of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which separates religion from state governance, and (3) they are unsightly.

Throughout the country, these debates might have gone unnoticed and remained regional discussions, but with media reports of shrine constructions after tragedies like the Oklahoma City Bombing, 9/11, the deaths celebrities like Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston, as well as school shootings at Columbine, Virginia Tech, and most recently Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut, these memorials are quickly becoming an issue to which U.S. city and state governments are turning their attention. Some U.S. states like New Mexico are extremely receptive to the shrines and have passed laws for their protection, while other states like Florida, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin have outlawed this form of commemoration altogether.

Much of what we now know about roadside memorials has been shaped by the media. However differentiations between violent and non-violent memorials are usually not made directly. Yet, subtle non-direct comparisons exist and are often proposed in urban vs. rural terms where urban memorials are generally assumed to be markers of violence or human aggression (Hartig 1998; Kilpatrick 2004; Parker 2008) and rural memorials are considered symbols of accidental death and warnings of hazardous environmental conditions (Hastings 2005; Smith 1999). These kinds of reports do not make provisions for memorials that mourn the death of murdered victims whose bodies have been discarded along rural roads, or law enforcement officers who have been slain along U.S. highways. In addition, within both journalistic reports

and the academic literature, there seems to be a slight trend toward associating the term *roadside memorial* or *roadside shrine* with rural or highway memorials (Kennerly 2005) and conversely urban memorials with other names like *makeshift memorials* (Kilpatrick 2004) , *grassroots memorials* (Margry and Sanchez-Carretero 2011), and *murder memorials* (Thalson 2006), as well as the general term *street memorials* (Giarratani 2006; Holtz 2005).<sup>7</sup>

Robert Smith (1999), who studied roadside memorials in Australia, argues that location plays a significant role in memorial type. He studied memorials in rural areas of Australia that were comprised of a simple white cross with black lettering which listed the name of the deceased. Smith compared his work to that of Hartig and Dunn (1998) who performed an analysis of the records of auto fatalities that were linked to urban memorialization sites that also had crosses on them over a five year period. Hartig and Dunn reported that the roadside memorials they studied functioned to memorialize “youth machismo,” “aggression,” and “a disregard for safety and egocentrism.” Smith notes that the Hartig and Dunn analysis did not prove true in his study as he found that rural roadside memorials served as a “silent criticism” of local road conditions. These two groups of researchers illustrate a growing dichotomy in the research of roadside memorials, where urban memorials are connected with youth, aggression, and disregards for safety, while rural memorials are considered “silent criticisms” of road conditions. However, while the researchers disagree on what they think the memorials mediate

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<sup>7</sup> So as not to contribute to the growing social marginalization of urban memorials, throughout the dissertation I use the terms roadside memorial and temporary memorial interchangeably. In a similar vein, I avoid using the makeshift memorial and murder memorials to describe those in this study.

views in cities and rural areas, they agree with Haney et al. in that these memorials have the ability to effect societal change.

As I mentioned above, roadside memorializations are neither new, nor exclusively American practices. In 1908, the Detroit Free Press published a story on death boards which the author describes as memorials erected by peasants on the sides of roads in the Bavarian Forest of eastern Germany to remember their dead and teach lessons to the living about the uncertainty of life (1908). While most academic reviews in the social sciences are void of news reports, news sources should not be overlooked in their contributions to shifting epistemologies regarding roadside memorials because they both on a conscious and subconscious level influence our thoughts around developing phenomena in our culture. In addition, the media is a major visual contributor to the increasing popularity of roadside memorials on the American landscape. Since cameras are disseminating both background and foreground information to viewers as tragedies unfold, memorial making after tragic events have become an easily recognized practice within the United States. Media writers have played a pivotal role in spreading the ritual; and, the language that they use to describe the memorials also help to foster psycho-social associations between memorials, social occurrences, and demographics that strongly contribute to how we both feel about them and those who create them. These influences not only influence our views of urban vs. rural commemorations, but the roles that both perpetrators and victims of trauma and tragedy play on the social stage as well.

Engler (1999) reports that memorials constructed in Tel Aviv Square after the 1995 assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin contained candles, the Star of David, the universal peace symbol, and later several graffiti written messages. She states, “To many people, graffiti connote social dysfunction, vandalism, street culture and urban ghettos.” However, she adds

that the motivations for using graffiti are varied and can include political messages and messages to communicate with the dead. Delgado (2003) agrees that memorials in the city can have a multitude of purposes that are not always understood by those that stereotype urban memorial methods, particularly in communities of color. Further, these stereotypes become a triple-bind for urban youth of color. Delgado argues,

The subject of death at early age entered into the conversation about both the tragedies and the importance of communities finding ways to help honor the dead as well as helps them grieve. Youth, too, are a community and have needs that must be met through rituals that have significant meaning to them.... Although they rarely have the finances to undertake elaborate rituals (6).

Like the journalistic reports that I mentioned, youth (ages 12-25) as a social category, are often and explicably linked to violence, death, and memorials in urban space but is this connection completely justified? Or, do we perhaps both consciously and unconsciously use youth as a platform to showcase our ideas, emphasize debates, and/or formulate political agendas?

Margret Mead's work *Coming of age in Somoa* (2001) is an example of this method, where the author sought to prove that the experiences among adolescent girls in Somoa are very similar to those among girls of a comparable age in the United States. While the work does highlight some of the difficulties experienced during adolescence, at its core the main argument of the book is one of cultural relativism. Similarly, Bergmann's *Getting Ghost* (2008), and Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* (2003) both do a wonderful job of highlighting the complexities of the urban underground political economy as it relates to drug dealing and limited youth opportunities for social advancement. However, both works are also circuitous in their critiques of racist and classist practices in American society that limit the advancement of adult men of color. It is true, that the aforementioned youth will grow to be men and by focusing on the

barriers that block their advancement, adulthood patterns are made more apparent. However, is not the ultimate focus, understanding why some adult men advance and others do not?

Therefore, youth in these instances are used to understand older populations. Likewise, Delgado's book *Death at an Early Age and the Urban Scene* (2003) focuses on memorial murals in urban communities as a ritual among youth; however the book's goal is to understand the social needs of urban communities in the aftermath of violence. Similar to the works presented here, this dissertation also begun as a project to understand roadside memorial making in Detroit as it relates to youth violence. However, as I will show in the following chapters, most of the memorials in my accidental sample were for adults, many of which were over the age of 30 years. Thus, my work has shifted in an attempt to understand the unique aspects of Detroit memorials.

What sets this research apart from the aforementioned is its analysis of memorials created for and by African Americans. I have chosen to focus this dissertation on uses of public space and the material culture of roadside memorials in Detroit. While these memorials are not inherently religious, they are shrines that are markers of racial and cultural differences. After several months of photographing memorials, I discovered aesthetic differences between African American memorials and those constructed by Latinos. Further, it became apparent that they are also different in their secular and religious functions respectively. I will illustrate these differences in chapter seven.

Despite these differences, all of the memorials presented in this study, are in alignment with the noted components of Haney et al., they should also be viewed in alliance with Gillis' definition of commemorative gardens, and they are similar to Linenthal's assessment of the sacrality of American war memorials in that they have been successful in their attempts to

mediate the sacred nature of the spaces where they were/are located. The next chapter highlights Prown's material culture theory and Habermas' conceptualization of the public sphere as my chosen method of analysis.

## CHAPTER 3

### MATERIAL CULTURE THEORY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

*It is not just that objects can be agents; it is that practices and their relationships create the appearance of both subjects and objects through the dialectics of objectification, and we need to be able to document how people internalize and then externalize the normative. In short, we need to show how the things that people make, make people.*<sup>8</sup>

#### Introduction

Jules David Prown (1982) defines material culture as, “the study through artifacts of the beliefs—values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions—of a particular community or society at a given time.” According to the author, this definition is based on the premise that, “artifacts are primary data for the study of material culture, and, therefore, they can be used actively as evidence rather than passively as illustrations.... [And] objects made or modified by man reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased, or used them, and by extension the beliefs of the larger society to which they belonged (1-2).”

Material culture is in many respects a conceptual starting point for anthropology since it was the objects produced by non-European peoples that both fascinated and functioned as a prism for both pre and post-colonial European social thought and research. In the early 1900’s almost all anthropologists were in one way or another tied to museum work and thus, the study of objects. However by the late 20th century, both museum anthropology and interests in objects decreased in popularity and was replaced by theoretical studies of semiotics, symbolism, and structure (Geismar 2009:211). Marxist anthropology revived an interest in “things” due to

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<sup>8</sup>Taken from *Materiality* by Daniel Miller (2005:38)



studies involving consumption, exchange, production, and technology (211). Material culture has also been heavily linked to the anthropology of art which has led to contemporary studies in visual anthropology (Gell 1998; Layton 1991; Westermann 2005). While Archeology, an anthropological sub-discipline defined by the study of objects, has historically maintained rigid divisions between cultural anthropology and other disciplines, these lines are blurring (Berger 2009:16). For now, most contemporary examinations of material culture are linked with archaeology, cultural history, and folklore (Geismar 2009: 211). In other words, most modern anthropological studies regarding artifacts are focused on understanding elements of the past. However, I predict that this will change due to extreme increases in global material consumerism. Future societies will have to learn how to deal with tomorrow's trash, or the discarded and useless items of today, as well as future material innovations. These increases in global materialism will most likely also increase research efforts among cultural anthropologists who seek to understand material related cultural adaptations and phenomena in the present. This research is in alignment with that goal.

Additionally, since objects represent the “beliefs—values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions—of a particular community or society at a given time (Prown 1982),” when used in rituals, they may also be political (Kertzer 1988). To this end, the theoretical framework for this dissertation utilizes Jules David Prown's material culture theory to present my data in chapters 5 and 6, and Jürgen Habermas' conceptualization of the public sphere for my data analysis which appears in chapter 7. The rest of this chapter explores each theory in brief.

## Prown's Material Culture Theory

Jules Prown's material culture theory is based on the premise that material objects can be used as primary data for understanding culture. He defines material in the following manner:

"The word *material* in material culture refers to a broad, but not unrestricted, range of objects. It embraces the class of objects known as artifacts—objects made by man or modified by man. It excludes natural objects. Thus, the study of material culture might include a hammer, a plow, a microscope, a house, a painting, [and] a city. It would exclude trees, rocks, fossils, [and] skeletons (Prown 1982:2)."

He also notes that since material culture is a broad term, and a single object may be comprised of several physical materials, it is best to classify objects by *function*. Prown outlines six broad primary functions for material culture:

1. *Art* (paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, photography)
2. *Diversions* (books, toys, games, meals, theatrical performances)
3. *Adornment* (jewelry, clothing, hairstyles, cosmetics, tattooing, other alterations of the body)
4. *Modifications of the landscape* (architecture, town planning, agriculture, mining)
5. *Applied Arts* (furniture, furnishings, receptacles)
6. *Devices* (machines, vehicles, scientific instruments, musical instruments, implements)

The author recognizes that some objects may straddle categories; however, he argues that in material culture studies, taxonomic limitations do not cause analytical problems because these classifications are only used as a means of manageability. Furthermore, since an examination of culture through material objects largely deals with value, it is important to outline general categories of value.

Prown suggests five types of value. The first type deals with *intrinsic value*, or value that is associated with the fabric of which the object is made. These types of objects are valuable only as long as their material is considered precious or rare. The second type of value is based

on *utility*. *Aesthetic value* is the third type; while *spiritual value* and *articles that express attitudes from one human to another* make up the fourth and final types of value according to Prown. His three step methodology for the study of objects entails *description*, *deduction*, and *speculation*. I will address each of these in turn.

The first step involves object description. Here the focus is placed on simply recording descriptions of objects without notes or guesses about what the objects mean. Prown states that the descriptions should be recorded as specifically and objectively as possible. For example, an object's weight, color, measured size etc. are all that is required here. I performed this step in chapter 5, where tables with object descriptions for each memorial were presented following photographs of the memorial.

The next phase in the process is object deduction where Prown notes that objects have sensory, mental, and emotional affects on users/viewers and thus, these responses should be recorded so as to control for them in the data analysis. I have also included this step in chapter 5 as a brief description of my emotional and spiritual senses related to each site. These are recorded at the bottom of each data chart. The intellectual engagement portion was also included in the brief narrative about the memorial as I recorded information unique to each memorial.

Prown's final stage is speculation. The speculation segment is concerned with creating theories and hypotheses based on the first two stages using available historical and cultural insights. Prown also notes that an interdisciplinary approach is essential as it will function as a mode of validation for the process.

Prown's theory, while useful for presenting my data, is a bit limited for my data analysis; because while it is important for me to describe the memorials in detail, and note my reactions to them, the theory does not account for surrounding environment for which the objects are a part.

Also, since Prown's focus is heavily tied to the five aforementioned values types of objects, it is restricted in its ability to explain the political values of objects. For this reason, I have relied heavily on Prown's material culture theory for the presentation of my data, but have chosen to use Habermas' theory of the Public Sphere for my data analysis.

## **Habermas and the Public Sphere**

Jürgen Habermas' work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1989) is a social-historical examination of the *bourgeois public sphere*, a concept that he borrowed loosely from Immanuel Kant.<sup>9</sup> The book provides a socio-historical account of the emergence, transformation, and disintegration of democracy as a byproduct of capitalism, where open and public discourses among the bourgeois function as a *public sphere* between the state and civil society in an effort to monitor and collectively control the actions of the state (Edgar 2006; Habermas 1989).

Habermas This work is in alignment with Benedict Anderson's analysis of "print capitalism" in *Imagined Communities* (1991) since Habermas also illustrates the connections between the spread of print media and public discourse as a precursor to the modern nation-state.

The history of the modern state is complex and represents more of a piecemeal genealogy than a linear advance in human group participation. In general terms, the state has absolute sovereignty and control over a self demarcated, negotiated, or in some cases externally

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<sup>9</sup> While Habermas used Kant's term "bourgeois public sphere" to describe a space for public debate among the emerging bourgeois (property owners) on the issues concerning civil society, he disagreed with Kant's assertion that both politics and morality would guide debates among the bourgeois class; or that, these debates would later influence an enlightenment among non-bourgeois members of society who in turn would later join the political process.

determined geographical territory. Aretxaga notes that the state has a complicated nature that is paradoxical because while we may conceptualize the state as a system or all encompassing power or thing; *it*, is not. Instead, the state is “a significantly unbounded terrain of powers and techniques, and ensemble of discourses, rules and practices cohabiting in limiting, tension ridden, often contradictory relation to each other (Aretxaga 2003:398).”

Weber viewed the state as “a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory (Weber 1990[1946]:78).” He was the first to introduce the idea that violence is connected to the state. He further contends that “the state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence. If the state is to exist, the dominated must obey the authority claimed by the powers that be (78).” This obeying and submission to the authority of the state (sovereignty) represents the final historical shift from monarchies rooted in God’s authority over men, to the state’s authority over them through laws.

Foucault argues that while government uses laws and force to control men, for him it is not laws or force that are important, as they are tactics arranged to achieve a desired end. Foucault maintains that, “law is not what is important... it is not through law that the aims of government are to be reached (Foucault 1991:95-96).” The ultimate goal of the state is to protect its sovereignty which is the continuous submission to the rules and regulations of the state by the public body. This strengthens the laws of the state and at the same time, secures the state’s monopoly on force/violence. When the state is having trouble enforcing its laws the state of exception becomes the ultimate protection of state sovereignty as it operates above law and therefore allows the state to wield force unrestricted and have power unlimited.

The state of exception is the temporary and sometimes not so temporary suspension of law so that the state may address unforeseen issues that in consequence represent the “exception” to the rule, regulation, or law of the state. An emergency like war, terrorism, or perceived threats from the outside, or within the state, may produce legitimation for *the state of exception* which in turn allows the state to in many cases to transcend its own laws. However, if the state experiences an emergency for a prolonged period or what it believes will be an indefinite period, then questions related to the legitimacy of state policy and authority may arise (Das 2004).

Habermas’ question regarding the public sphere and the state centers on understanding the conditions that gave birth to the practice of private citizens publicly debating societal issues in a manner that was based on rational discourse instead of social hierarchies. He uses a Hegelian and Marxist lens to argue that the bourgeois uses the jargon of the educated class, the media, and their capitalist economic influences to both control the state for its own purposes and to exclude others in lower social classes from participating in the democratic process. To this end, Habermas notes that:

The political public sphere of the social-welfare state is marked by two competing tendencies. Insofar as it represents the collapse of the public sphere of civil society, it makes room for a staged and manipulative publicity displayed by organizations over the heads of a mediatized public (Habermas 1989:232)

Therefore, Habermas’ argument at its core is centered on what he sees as two competing entities, the quality of public discourse, and the quantity, or openness, to public participation in said discourse. However to this last point, Habermas does not explore exclusions to the public sphere in depth.

Nancy Fraser argues in *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy* (1990) that Habermas’ examination of the bourgeois public sphere

is closer to an illustration of the hegemonic male bourgeois public sphere since there was a blatant discrimination against participation from women and the lower social classes of society thereby squelching the possibility of a realized and true democracy. The author offers a modern conceptualization of the public sphere that contends that marginalized groups have formed parallel *Subaltern counterpublics* or *Counterpublics* as spheres for which to debate and offer opposing interpretations of their identities on issues that concern them (67). This is a good theoretical starting point for this dissertation.

The accessibility of citizens of the U.S. state, in this case grieving Black Detroiters' to critique violence within both the physical and philosophical public sphere should not be viewed as Fraser has suggested. While I thought it important to include Fraser's concept of Counterpublics, I will not include this as a part of my framework for understanding Detroit. Detroit remains one of the most segregated urban cities in the United States and while this is changing, the city is exceedingly Black in terms of both culture and demographics. There are class divides within the city; however, upper class Blacks do not make up the city's majority. The shrines for adult African American males are similar in design to their female counterparts and where differences do occur, they are slight. Therefore, while it may be argued by some that the city of Detroit as collective can be viewed as a Counterpublic of American White hegemony, I argue that since these memorials are constructed by, for, and within a predominately African American city, they should be viewed as the normative as opposed to the subaltern. I will discuss this further in chapter 7. The next chapter will cover my data collection process and experience in the field.

## CHAPTER 4

### CULTURE THROUGH SYMBOL AND MATERIAL ON THE STREET: PARTICIPATION IN THE FIELD

*Of course I have my own preference....I recognize that what I am about to say is my own construction, not necessarily an objective (whatever that may be) analysis. Indeed... [I] not only abjure objectivity, but celebrate subjectivity....The reader should not, therefore, read this [and the remaining] chapter/s in the mistaken notion that it represents gospel or even a widely agreed to position. I offer it as one way to understand the... issue.... [I]t is quite possible for me to entertain any construction...that is proposed by reasonable and well-intentioned persons.*<sup>10</sup>

#### Introduction

There are 17 roadside or spontaneous memorials identified in this study. The majority of memorials included in this research were located by accident; meaning, I randomly drove around the city's west side in search of them and upon encountering a memorial, I photographed the site, noted its geographical location, and sought out information about the deceased. Finding roadside memorials in Detroit was not difficult as they have become very popular in the city over the past 20 years. I found them while going about my day to day business, i.e. shopping, paying bills, and in general driving about the city. I had a previous knowledge of three of the seventeen shrines: Amp's Memorial, Papolo's Memorial, and the Malice Green Memorial. Two other memorials were suggested to me, one by a parent and participant in its construction, and the other by a resident and business owner of the neighborhood where it resides.

All except four of the memorials are for African Americans. Ten memorials are for African American men, two are for African American women, one is for a young African American girl, and 4 are for men of Puerto Rican, Dominican, Mexican, and Middle Eastern

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<sup>10</sup> Taken from Egon Guba's edited volume, *The Paradigm Dialog* (1990:17-27).

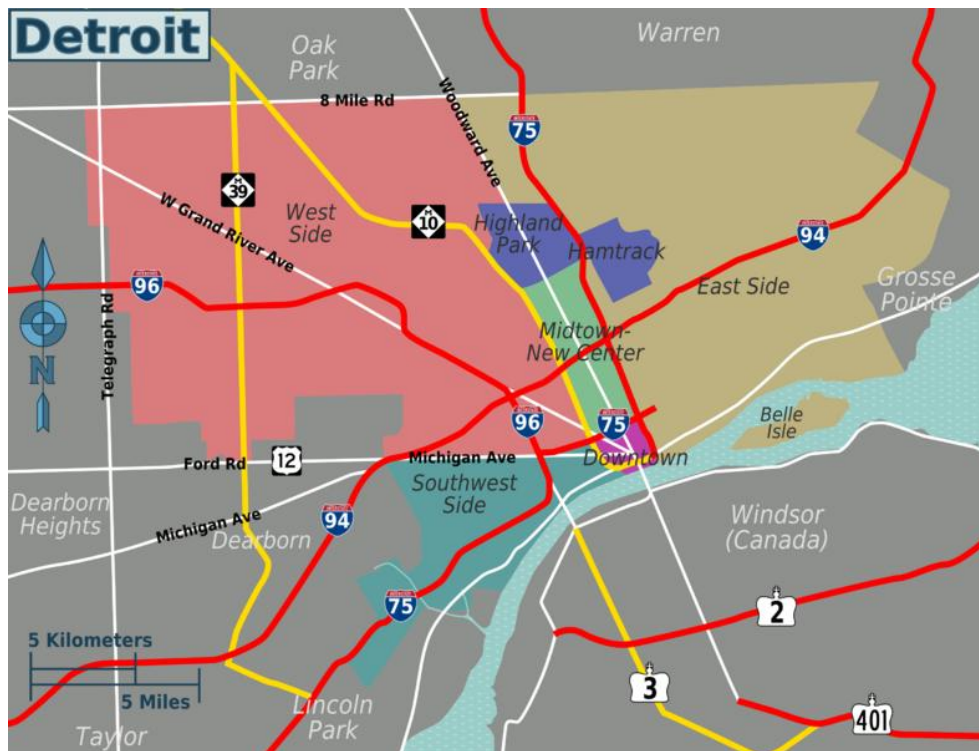


heritages. However, memorials were added as I encountered them and therefore race, ethnicity, or nationality was not an initial factor in sampling.

Of the 17 memorials, nine were added during the first year of research. In the second year, I added five more sites. However by that time, three of the original nine memorials had been removed. During the final year, three more sites were added; but two others from the 2009 additions had also been removed, leaving the total number of remaining memorial sites at twelve by the end of the research period.

While I did not participate in the construction of any of the 17 memorials, I directly observed the constructions of both the Amp Memorial and the McGraw St. Memorial. I also conducted 32 semi-structured interviews with persons who live or work in close proximity to the memorials, 4 interviews with city employees regarding the legitimacy and legality of roadside memorials in Detroit, and had approximately 20 additional impromptu or unstructured conversations with individuals who upon finding out the subject of my research topic, openly shared their opinions and/or experiences with roadside memorials. This last group, which I will discuss shortly, often caught me off guard with both narratives, intense interests in my project, and/or strong opinions regarding roadside memorials in general.

All of the sites are located on Detroit's West Side. Detroit's general geographical areas are colloquially referred to as the East Side, the West Side, Southwest Detroit (SWD), the New Center Area, Downtown, Highland Park (HP), and Hamtramck, where Woodward Avenue is the dividing line for the east and the west sides and 8 Mile Rd., Telegraph Rd., and the Detroit river. represent most of the city's defining borders (see fig.4.1).



**Figure 4.1: Detroit Area Map**<sup>11</sup>

However, when Detroiters refer to geographical locations within the city, they generally speak in terms of east vs. west dichotomies. In location related inquiries, the side of town is usually mentioned first, and then followed by a more specific location. For example, a typical response to the questions “So, where do you live; where did you grow up?” might be, “I live on the

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<sup>11</sup> Image Details: Date: 3 February 2009; by Peter Fitzgerald, OpenStreetMap.org  
[http://wikitravel.org/shared/File:Detroit\\_districts\\_map.png](http://wikitravel.org/shared/File:Detroit_districts_map.png)

Westside; but I grew up on the Eastside over by Mack and Chalmers.” Further, East Side vs. West Side social divisions are class based where residents from the Westside have historically been considered of a higher social class or “better than” folks from the Eastside. This class history is rooted in both official and unofficial racial segregation policies that predate the African American majority of the city today.

During post-WWII Detroit, African Americans migrated to Detroit in heavy streams from southern states to participate in industrial work. However, they were met with extreme racism from Whites that when combined with the housing shortages of the 1940s and 1950s, produced enduring residential segregation within the city (Sugrue 1996). Most Blacks who moved to Detroit during the mid 20th Century were forced into an overcrowded and run-down area that became known as *Black Bottom*, located on the east side of the city, just east of downtown (37).

About a quarter of Detroit’s Black population lived in small enclaves outside of Black Bottom, the largest of which was an area called *Paradise Valley*. This area was the hub for Black owned business of all types including night clubs, hotels, several restaurants, grocers, barber shops, doctor offices, dentists, tailors, real estate dealers, lawyers, a movie theater, and at one time, the only Black-owned pawn shop in the United States. However, when increasing numbers of southern Blacks began moving into the area during the 1940s, the Black elite relocated to various areas on the West Side of Detroit contributing to the modern East Side/ West Side social divide.

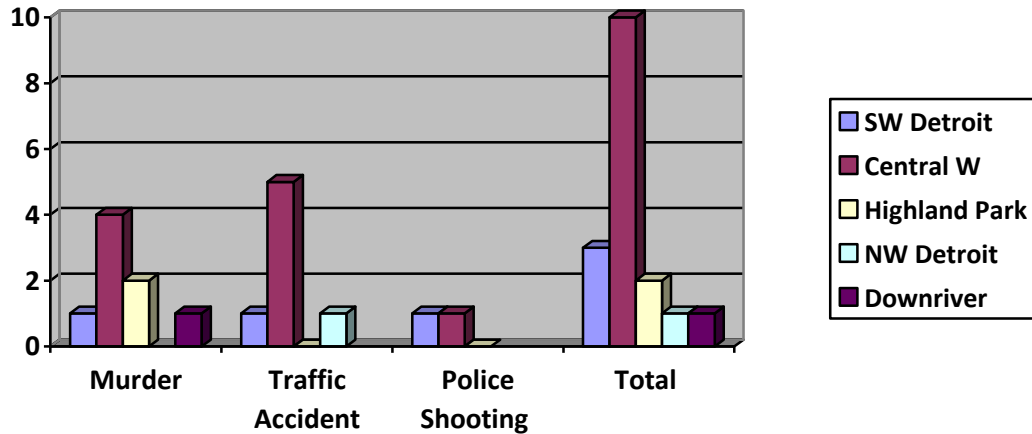
In addition, the 1967 riot contributed to both White and Jewish flight into suburbia. The home purchases among affluent Blacks of the homes on the city’s west side and the mansions located in the Boston-Edison area (which also has an East Side component but is primarily located on the West Side) increased. This history has not only created class divisions, but

cultural ones as well among Blacks in Detroit. Industrial automation contributed to the expansion of suburban based businesses and the factory closings that began during the great depression era increased in the city where Whites from both sides of the city began to move into the suburbs in search of jobs, leaving an African-American majority of city residents.

While there are less class divisions than in earlier times among Blacks within Detroit, there remains a social stigma against East Side residents that I have not been able to substantiate through crime statistics; but the general social climate is that there is more crime on the city's eastside. Nevertheless, I have decided to narrow my study to the West side of Detroit in an effort to have a large enough sample to investigate, but at the same time control for historical and cultural differences that might skew my data or go beyond the scope of this dissertation. Therefore, I have selected two sites from Highland Park, three from Southwest Detroit, and the remaining twelve sites are from various areas on the west side of Detroit. I began this research in Southwest Detroit, a neighborhood with the city's largest Latin American population because of both my knowledge of the Papalo memorial showcased in the next chapter, and the aforementioned literature that suggested a Latin American origin to U.S. roadside memorials.

Memorials arranged by type of death include: eight murder related sites, seven for traffic accidents, and two for individuals killed by Detroit police officers. However when cause of death is arranged by neighborhood, the central-west area of Detroit, a region located between Davidson Avenue to the north, West Grand Boulevard to its south, with Linwood and Grand River to its east and west respectively, has a disproportionately larger number of memorials than other neighborhoods on Detroit's west side.

**Table 4.1: Deaths by type and by neighborhood**



The majority of these memorials are traffic related and located on Dexter Avenue, a main thoroughfare of the area.

### **Collecting Data**

Each autumn, I took photographs of the sites for the purpose of examining changes to the memorials over time. Photographs were taken of the sites in the fall of 2008, 2009, and 2011. There were no pictures taken in the fall of 2010. Items from each memorial were recorded and changes were noted each year, including maintenance, disrepair, and site removals, as well as material additions and deletions. My research methods also included: direct observation (discussed in the next chapter), participant observation, and both semi-structured and unstructured interviews, as well as a single ride along with a Detroit Police homicide detective.

#### *Detroit Police Ride Along*

Since this research began as an investigation of youth related violence, I asked my friend Pat who is a Detroit homicide detective to notify me if she got a case involving a youth related

death. I asked her to call me as soon as possible after the time of death as it was my desire to witness the construction of a street memorial. I further explained that if I arrived on the scene fairly early after the time of death, then perhaps I could stake out the area with the hopes of catching memorial related activity.

Well after about a month into my fieldwork, I got the call. “Hello.” “Hey Lisa, I got one for you! A seventeen year old was just killed trying to carjack a man on the Eastside. You wanna come down here?” Her voice was rushed and excited and I couldn’t tell if she was excited about her work, or that fact that she was helping me. I looked at my clock; it was 8:40am. “Uhhmmm...Come down there right now?” “Yeah, you can come down to the scene if you want. I don’t know if they will be doing a memorial or not, but you’re welcome to come down if you like.” [Silence]....

My previous excitement about the possibility of catching people in the act of creating a memorial completely evaporated and was replaced by an intense fear. I couldn’t speak. Also, Pat’s usual demeanor was extremely laid back and quiet; so I was surprised by her excitement and her high energy. That too made me nervous. “Lisa, are you there?” “Uh yeah,...um, how long will you be down there?” I was stalling. “I’ll probably be here for the next hour; but if you don’t want to come down right now, I can call you if I see any memorials or stuff.” I think she could sense my hesitation and she was providing me an out. I took it! “Ok, please just let me know if you see anything that you think I might want to see.” “Ok, no problem. Also, I will be talking to the boy’s family later if you want to ride along.” “Sure, I think that would be better! Let me know when you’re going to meet with them.” “Ok Lisa, I’ll call you when I’m headed that way.” “Great, thanks! I’ll talk to you later.”

After I hung up the phone, I felt awful!! I felt like a complete failure as an anthropologist. I began to think about Philippe Bourgois (2003) hanging out with crack dealers in New York. “I’ll bet he didn’t miss an opportunity to hang out and catch a crack deal going down.” I also thought about Paul Stoller (2002) spending time with a group of sometimes illegal African immigrants selling designer knockoffs in New York City and a host of other anthropologists that did urban related research that by comparison, I now sucked!

Going to a crime scene just moments after someone has been killed to collect ethnographic research data sounded great in theory. However, when I was actually confronted with the offer to be up close and personal to death, I declined. I just couldn’t do it. Also, I had flashbacks of being at the site of my cousin’s death and the thought of going to a similar place where someone had just died scared me tremendously, not to mention the fact that this was a teenager.

So, I accepted my friend’s invitation to join her while she spoke with the family of the deceased. It took her two days to get back to me. She and I met at Swanson Funeral home on East Grand Boulevard located on Detroit’s east side. We met in the parking lot and walked in together. She showed her badge and spoke briefly with the funeral director. We both had to sign in on a clip board located on the front desk and the director told her the room location and we walked down a short hallway that felt like a mile long. When we entered the viewing room, there was an elderly African-American woman there who looked to be about 65 years old. Pat introduced both herself and me to the woman; and I not yet having enough courage to look at the coffin, kept my eyes fixed on the woman’s face.

She told us that she was the boy’s grandmother. She seemed happy that we were there; and at first she smiled, then she did something that would become a norm in my research

experience. She began to search our eyes as if she wanted something that we could give her. There was a brief silence and her eyes went back and forth from the detective's to my own and then back again. This went on for what felt like ten minutes but only lasted a few moments. Then without warning she let out a loud-deep-and-mournful-cry.

The detective held her as she cried louder while speaking unrecognizable sentence fragments through her sobbing. While Pat was comforting the grandmother, I gathered the courage to look at the casket. In it was a very handsome young man, dressed in suit and tie that were of colors I can't remember and I didn't record. All I could think when I saw him was that he could have been my son (I don't have children), nephew, or my cousin, or a relative of someone I knew. I was also struck by how good looking he was as if his looks somehow deepened the tragedy of his death. Would it really have made difference if I didn't consider him handsome? I don't know but for some reason, it made the moment seem more tragic as I imagined all the things that the teen could have done with his life instead of trying to carjack an elderly man in his own driveway, an act that cost him his life. After leaving the funeral home, I drove to my apartment, cried, recorded what I remembered about the funeral visit, and couldn't get off of my couch for a week.

### Memorial Contact

There were some general rules that I developed and adhered to while interacting with the memorials themselves. Prior to starting this project, I had an immense fear of dead people, spirits, ghosts, and haunted spaces and places. These are fears that I have had since childhood. Why the research you might ask? Well honestly, I feel that this project chose me. While taking an anthropology of religion course, the professor assigned an article on spontaneous



memorialization by Haney et. al. I found the article and class discussion interesting and on a class break, I began to write down some thoughts related to the memorial that I had witnessed for my cousin. Within a few moments, those musings turned into a detailed draft outline for this dissertation. At that time given my fears, I would not have imagined in a million years that I would be working with anything even remotely related to death or the dead. However, this project has helped a great deal to ease some of my previous fears surrounding death. Still, I developed a system for observing the memorials that involved limitations in contact.

When I first started this research, I wanted to approach each memorial with respect as not to offend the dead. I'm not sure what offending the dead is exactly, but I wanted to be sure not to do it. So, I attempted to open myself emotionally and spiritually as to feel the memorials and perhaps what had possibly occurred in the space/ place. I also said a prayer for the deceased. After a few times of doing this, I began to feel heavy and emotionally weighted. I also had trouble sleeping and felt a general sense of unease. I began to wonder if my work with the memorials was beginning to have an effect on the way I was feeling. I still do not know the answer to this question. However, I quickly changed my method of approach to the shrines and developed the following system. All I can say is that it helped me to feel better, so I kept the method.

First, I did not touch objects associated with or in close proximity to the memorials. There was a practical reason for this. Since memorials are comprised of objects that sometimes fall, are blown away by the wind, or simply disintegrate over time, I couldn't always tell if objects close by were at one time a part of the shrine. Also, I didn't want to tamper with the integrity of the memorial. There was also a fear of energy/spiritual transference and/or my upsetting the spirit of the deceased. Therefore, I simply took photographs and did not touch

anything. Secondly, I was sure not to stand too close. I usually kept about a five foot distance from memorials and used the zoom feature on my camera to increase the size of photographs as to explore details of the shrine. I did this both out of respect and fear of the dead.

Third, I took note of shrines that gave me an eerie or unsettling feeling; and I generally increased my spatial distance to those memorials. I have noted them in the next chapter. Also, I limited the time spent directly at the memorials. While the time spent on the street and general area of the shines have been significant, when it came to the memorials themselves, I quickly snapped photos and recorded noticeable physical changes in my notebook in about 5 minutes per visit. I also did not park my car in close proximity to memorials. I have no explanation for this, except it simply felt right. Lastly, I limited prayers, emotional, as well as spiritual connections with the memorials, including the one for my cousin.

### Unstructured Interviews

During the three years, or four seasons that I have researched this subject, I have indirectly, and sometimes accidentally collected a great deal of data. In fact, some of my richest data have come from casual conversations that I've had with people about my project. Many of these narratives found me as I was either introduced to people at social gatherings as a doctoral student and researcher of "those teddy bears for people who die," or during random conversations with strangers. In any case, materiality often emerged as a major theme in their processing the feelings related to grief and mourning. Most people that I've run into on the street, in coffee shops, in bars, or at social gatherings upon finding out the topic of my research either became excited about the topic and asked questions to learn more about "the places with the teddy bears and things," or others would ask me how I got into the research. When I shared

with them my story of my cousin's murder and subsequent interest in understanding the memorials, this seemed to open the gateway for people to share with me what happened to the loved one that they've lost. For instance, upon telling my friend Felicia about my research and my desire to interview people who had participated in the construction of a memorial, she sent me the following in an email message:

Summer 1996 Inkster Michigan. My niece Tia and her family were moving to another house in Inkster. They were loading up the van and she insisted that she ride on top and hold the mattress down. Mom said no at first, but dad (step dad said yes) so she the adventurous kid of 12 did. They were going down Middlebelt road and a gust of wind got under the mattress, throwing it and young Tia off into the street onto her head.

ICU, UM helicopter, swelling in her brain, on ventilator several days, then taken off. All organs donated. Tia received her diploma from Inkster H.S. years later posthumously.

Parents were charged, father (step) was jailed. Family (mother, sister, brother) went through counseling. This was a trying time for our family; it got a lot of media attention. And I would hear it and people would say what kind of mother would let their child ride on the top of a van. And all kinds of nasty things and people would whisper that this was [??] niece and then they would silence. But no one should judge, and everyone has an adventurous kid in their family that will do all kinds of wild things - we allow that. These kids grow up to be great politicians, speakers, entertainers, soldiers ...if they grow up.

A memorial was set up with teddy bears, flowers, dolls on the Inkster Road spot where she was killed. The funeral was standing room only, the school shut down and bus loads of kids came out. She touched soooo many people in her short lifetime and her spirit will live on in me.

Other times, it seemed as if people just appeared out of nowhere and shared tragic tales of death.

For example, one Friday in October of 2009, I agreed to meet my friend William at a local Detroit bar for happy hour, a period that usually lasts about three hours and drinks are half off the normal price. Upon my arrival, Will waved to me through the crowd of people who were standing and seemingly trying to out-talk one another. I appreciated seeing him sitting at the bar

with an open seat that he was holding for me. I walked through the mass of people, sat down, and after a few minutes having successfully gotten the bartender's attention, ordered a beer. He and I were sitting at the bar talking for about an hour when a woman that he knew came to the bar to order a drink. He asked her how she was and how things were going, to which she replied that she was "fucked up!" I thought her reply meant that she was inebriated. However, she went on to tell us (I say us because she continuously made eye contact with me as well) that her 3 year old daughter had been killed earlier that morning. She said that she let her daughter go to South Carolina to visit with her godmother, and that the woman and her partner beat her baby to death.

After sharing her news, the woman's eyes slowly darted back and forth and seemed to desperately search our faces for a reaction amid the silence that fell between the three of us and the roaring conversations from those that encircled us. I was speechless! After a few seconds that felt like 20 minutes, my friend Will and I did the only thing that a person can do in these types of situations, we both told her how sorry we were for her loss. While this incident occurred early on in my fieldwork experience, I have since that time had to make similar statements to several others who have opened their lives to me and shared the stories of how their loved ones died; and each time as the words of condolence floated out of my mouth, and past my teeth, into the space between us, I felt the sting of their inadequacy. In 2011, both women were convicted and given life sentences for the child's murder (Bird). However, I never saw the mother again.

Hearing the story of the little girl's murder deeply affected me as I could not get her, or her mother's grief stricken face out of my mind. Prior to going to the field, I had created a list of counseling centers in the Detroit area that specialized in bereavement to give to grieving research participants. However, this list felt inadequate and intangible as a tool of support for a

traumatized and grief stricken parent who just lost her two year old child to violence. Further, the woman was not an official participant in my research; and I did not expect to meet her while at a bar attempting to not think about my work. So the list located in a three ring binder in the trunk of my car proved impractical at best. Also, I thought it would have been insulting for me to leave the conversation to go to my car to retrieve a preprinted counseling provider list for a mother who was obviously still in shock, in need of sympathy, and just wanted to self-medicate with alcohol and talk with a friend about the death of her child. I wanted to help, but my prepared list just felt cold and distant in the space of intimacy created by the grieving parent. The helplessness that I felt while listening to this distressed mother, motivated me to be better prepared should a similar future event occur. So after a few days of replaying the incident in my mind, I searched the internet for peer related social groups that dealt with violent death in the city and I found Parents of Murdered Children (POMC).

### *Participant Observation*

Parents of Murdered Children is a national organization that offers on-going emotional support, awareness, prevention, advocacy, and education for all survivors of homicide victims. Membership is open to both the bereaved and professionals that come into contact with grieving persons who have lost a loved one to murder. POMC was founded in 1978, by Robert and Charlotte Hullinger in Cincinnati Ohio. That same year, the couple lost their daughter Lisa who after breaking off a romantic relationship with boyfriend Bill Coday was battered to death with a hammer. Lisa ended the relationship and relocated to Hamburg, Germany for a work study program. Coday followed her to Germany and after her continued refusal to be with him killed Lisa. He served 16 months in jail for his crime and returned to the United States without a

criminal record. Meanwhile, the Hullingers along with three other parents whose children had also been murdered, met at the Hullinger home and founded the first chapter of POMC just two months after Lisa's death. However, the Hullingers were once again devastated when Cody, who had moved to Florida, killed another woman in the year of 1997 for which he was later sentenced to death in 2002. Today, POMC has over 200 chapters and contact lists from people worldwide.<sup>12</sup>

One of the primary focuses of POMC is to support families in crisis and to help people to cope with the aftermath of violent death. The organization also has memorial and social justice components that encourages members to share narratives related to both the death and lives of their loved ones, and offers support to families seeking justice through legal channels. Each year POMC has a National Day of Remembrance, a conference designed to educate participants on violence prevention, murder statistics, share grief and mourning strategies, and to remember the lives of slain loved ones.

I came into contact with the organization after finding their website online and calling the Metro Detroit Chapter. This chapter meets monthly on the second Thursday of each month from 6:30 to 8:30pm. Most participants in the Metro Detroit Chapter are parents. However, I've also met a few siblings and distant relatives of murdered persons at the meeting. The group is also supported by a Detroit homicide detective who attends the meetings and follows up on murder case related information; the group Common Ground, who offers mental health and legal support to members; and Crime Stoppers, a national organization that uses community tips to help solve crimes.

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<sup>12</sup> POMC history and general information can be found on the national website:[www.pomc.com](http://www.pomc.com).

During my initial call, I explained to Rita, the board member who answered the phone, that I was conducting research on roadside memorials for victims of tragic death and that I wanted some literature to give to study participants in case they needed grief support. She thought the project very interesting and asked me how I got into it. I told her about my cousin's death and my growing interest in the topic and she invited me to a meeting. I accepted the invitation; but I was ill prepared for what came of that first meeting. I thought that I would simply show up at the meeting, meet some folks, share the nature of my research and leave with a handful of pamphlets and information about the group that I could pass on to those in need. In addition, I thought it might be possible to meet and set up interviews with parents who had participated in the construction of a memorial for their child. Lastly, I expected an emotional distance between myself as researcher and the group as an entity of my research process. Therefore, my initial goal was to be a distant-participant-observant.

When I entered the rear of St. David's Episcopal Church on West 12 Mile Road in Southfield, Michigan I was greeted by Sylvia Banks the chapter leader. I introduced myself as a MSU graduate student, shared the nature of my research, and told her that I had spoken with Rita who invited me to the group. She seemed happy that I was there and made me feel welcomed. Sylvia, myself, and a few others who were newly arriving set up the tables and chairs for the meeting in what appeared to be a large activity and dining hall for the church. During the actual meeting of about 20 participants, me included, we sat on the outsides of eight long and rectangular fold up tables that had been arranged into a large square. Our bodies in combination with the tables formed a squared-circle. Each participant introduced him/herself and shared a narrative about how their loved-one died. I listened to the stories of about 7 or 8 participants before it was my turn to share. When it was my turn, I introduced myself as a graduate student

researcher studying roadside memorials in Detroit; and I shared my own story about the death of my cousin Anthony. Toward the end of my narrative, I became completely overwhelmed with emotion and I broke down crying. I couldn't stop the tears and I was trying desperately to do so. I realized in that moment that while my cousin had been dead for six years, I obviously had not fully dealt with my loss. My attempt to be a distant observer completely broke down as I became a full participant in the group. I could feel their pain and I felt that they could feel mine. They cried with me, and I with them; and together, we transformed the room into a space of catharsis and healing.

I spent six months as a participant with Parents of Murdered Children. Most of my interactions have been with mothers of murdered children as they make up a large majority of POMC. In fact, I have only met 2 fathers at these meetings. During my participation in the group, I heard a great number of narratives about violent death and the people who had their living journeys interrupted. Since one of my goals when joining the group was to find persons who had participated in a public memorial for their family member, I listened intently for any memorial related information.

After meetings, I would talk one on one with group participants regarding memorial participation; to which, only one parent of the 45 or so that I spoke with, participated in a street memorial for their child (that memorial is included in the next chapter). Among my sample of parents, almost none participated in street memorials. In fact, in many cases, these parents have gone through great lengths to avoid the locations where their children died. Some parents have even created alternate routes to work, or other travel destinations within the city, so as not to go near these areas.



A common theme that emerged among these women is pressure from family members to dispose of objects associated with their child. Concerned family members, including spouses, have attempted to encourage many of these mothers to discard material objects associated with their children. Often there is a family induced push for them to “move on” emotionally. A second theme that I noticed was what seemed to be feelings of guilt among both male and female parents. While parents recognize for example, that they could not have saved their children from random acts of violence, a barroom fist fight that turned into gun violence, or death at the hands of a boyfriend; they as parents feel that it was their duty to protect their children; and that their children should bury them, not the other way around. Therefore, this guilt is twofold leaving many of these parents emotionally suspended. In this way, POMC provides a space where these feelings and others unique to parents of murdered children may be shared and supported among those who know what it is like to lose a child.

One surprising and interesting side note is that most of the parents that I have spoken with do not hate or wish dead their children’s murderers. Even fathers in the group spoke of their child’s killers in humanistic terms. His daughter had been bludgeoned to death with a hammer by her boyfriend who was on trial for premeditated murder. His daughter and her boyfriend were both in college, both young, and even though the police believed that he purposely drove her to a remote location to kill her, the father expressed a deep sadness for “the young man” while watching him at his trial. He never referred to him as her killer, murderer, or anything similar. Instead, he seemed by my observation just deeply sad and extremely tired.

Likewise, another POMC parent told me that when her daughter and her daughter’s boyfriend were shot to death, by the boyfriend’s best friend, as the couple lay in bed, she did not have any hatred for her daughter’s killer. Other parents and family members of murder victims

that I spoke with also did not verbally bash their loved-one's killer. The woman from the bar who lost her 3 year old daughter, also did not refer to her child's killers in a negative manner. This could be because the event was so new, and/or the mother might have been in shock. Nonetheless, I thought it interesting. I also conducted a semi-structured interview with a woman who had lost both of her brothers to drug violence a few months apart and she spoke in highly sympathetic tones about their killers.

Each brother was killed in separate drug related interactions that had gone awry. However both incidences occurred inside of private residential homes that were not only closed to the public, but were also culturally closed to the grieving family that sought to know more about the details of their loved ones' deaths. The first brother John Baptist Anderson, aka Johnny, was killed on June 27, 2007 at 40 years old. Like his namesake, he was murdered and his body was dismembered. The three assailants were unknown to the family. Her family had been given very limited information about the causes of her brother's death. She knew that he was a recovering crack addict and that he had recently relapsed and therefore, it was not uncommon for him to come up missing for a few days. However, when she and her family were notified that he had not only been killed, but that he had also been dismembered, they desired to visit the location in an attempt to gather additional information related to his death. Ultimately, she and her older brother were only able to go and identify his body.

Her family was told that he was murdered over a truck that he owned and was using for "scrapping" or removing metal from abandoned homes in the city. He had promised to give the truck to his killers, however when they found out that the truck was not in working condition, it resulted in his death. Two of his killers turned themselves in and a third was tracked down in a different state and returned to Detroit for trial. She explained to me that the trials were for her

and her family beyond exhausting and that through them, Johnny became “smaller and smaller in my daily thoughts of him” due to the time spent seeking justice for his death. However, after the trials, the family was able to find peace in the fact that their loved one’s murder had been solved and his killers brought to justice. This she said, allowed her to finally focus on her grieving. Like many of the parents that I encountered, she never referred to her brother’s murderers in negative terms. She didn’t even call them killers, or murderers. Instead, she continued to use the term “shooters.” She held,

They were killers before I saw them... they were killers. They were like these...I had made them into this sort of theatrical dramatizations of these big, mean, gruff, and when we saw them, they were these little tiny boys. They were [like] my nephews, they were these tiny... it was like this is somebody’s kid!... They were like kids you would see in the neighborhood. I think for me shooters just took away, like these were this evil... I mean they did an evil act, it doesn’t mean they are evil. I mean they just did something and they got caught up too. John got caught up, they were all caught up.

However, her oldest brother Danny took his younger brother’s death really hard. She said that Danny was also a drug user and was addicted to alcohol but after his brother’s death his behavior became erratic. He got into a fight with his best friend and roommate and it resulted in his being shot by his best friend, or fictive, or play-cousin Michael (not his real name). She believes that they were using drugs together and had gotten into an argument that turned into a fight and ultimately his death. She said she wrote her brother’s best friend to let him know he was forgiven to which he wrote back both his regrets for what happened and how he missed his friend. Daniel Wilson Anderson died on February 10, 2008, eight months after his younger brother at the age of 44.

Similar to this participant, none of the parents that have shared their stories with me have expressed a desire to do harm to their children’s murderers, or spoke of any ill feelings toward

them at all. More than anything, parents usually talked about the emotional exhaustion associated with court trials that they simply wanted to end. However, the empathy shown by these parents toward their child's killer/s should not be confused with a lack of desire for judicial justice. There was a notable difference between POMC parents who had received some sense of justice through the courts and those who did not. Appeals, non-convictions, and suspects at large or unknown, seemed to increase distress for individuals and the group as a whole. A small portion of each meeting was dedicated to reviewing the national parole dates for POMC related convicted killers so that members have the opportunity to participate in letter writing campaigns to parole boards across the country who are considering releasing those convicted of murder.

As for the material culture among parents whose children have died, I met a mom who still carries with her, her son's wallet since it was the last thing they gave her when she arrived to view his body. She put it in her purse eleven years ago and keeps it with her daily in remembrance of him. The wallet has also become a sacred object as others are not allowed to touch it. Several women from POMC have also mentioned the sacredness of objects in their home for their children. Many of these mothers have created small, and on two occasions, large areas with objects to remember their children, many of which are off limits to others, sometimes even their spouses.

After six months with POMC, I had learned a great deal about the stages of grief, the emotional struggles of grieving parents, and the various methods parents employed to keep the memory of their children alive. Still, the group proved less fruitful in my mission to explore roadside memorial constructions on the streets of Detroit. Therefore, I began to put forth a great deal of effort into learning how the memorialized of my selected shrines died, with the hopes of finding memorial builders.

## Interviews

For the first three months of the project, I spent about 10 hours a week simply hanging around the areas where the memorials were located. I would sit in my car with the hope that someone would arrive to either update the memorials, or to interact with them in any way. This method proved both ineffective and fruitless. In general, people seemed to ignore the memorials altogether. I felt like I was on a police stake out for a suspect believed to have moved out of the state. In general, there was no action! Therefore, I began to engage people on the street.

Where possible, I asked people who lived or worked in close proximity to the memorials if they knew what happened to the memorialized. Most of the people that I approached on the street seemed leery of me and responded with, “No, I don’t know anything” as they lowered their eyes and rushed to get away from me. At first, I thought it was my clothes. My usual dress is jeans or slacks, a button shirt or sweater, and leather loafers. Since most of my work was on the public street, I tried wearing tennis shoes, jeans, T-shirts, sweatshirts, and in general, anything that was not too flashy or attention getting. After a slight change in my appearance, when I spoke to people walking down the street or standing in close proximity to a memorial, they would generally stop to see what I wanted. However, as soon as I told them that I was a graduate student at MSU working on a project to better understand roadside memorials their facial expressions would change. Many of their faces went from what seemed to be expressions of inquiry to disinterest, suspicion, or in some cases disdain. One older gentleman seemed to quiz me before he shared with me what he knew about a memorial located near his work. I told him what I was doing there and that I was a graduate student at Michigan State University to which his mouth twisted to one side and he gave me a slight eye roll. I asked him if he knew what happened to the memorialized. He told me that he had lived and worked in the neighborhood for

over 50 years and in that time he had seen it all including, stabbings, shootings, and all types of violence. He asked me if I was from Detroit and where I grew up. I told him, and he seemed satisfied with this. I told him how I had gotten into the project because my cousin had been killed and a memorial was created in his memory and it was my desire to better understand them. This appeared to further relax him. His mood lightened and he shared with me that his wife was also a Spartan and had attended MSU for undergraduate studies. He then shared with me what he knew about the memorial in question. This interaction was out of the norm because this participant sought to examine me and my “intentions” prior to his participation.

In general, when I was successful at getting people to speak with me, they did so quickly and in most cases seemingly nervously. They usually kept their responses relatively short and to the point. Except on one occasion in the last season of the study, I took my mother with me as I drove around to take the final photos of the memorials. My mother, an African American woman in her late fifties, had a different effect on people. In all cases, people seemed to relax and easily share what information they knew. One participant even gave an animated re-enactment of the tragedy that had necessitated the memorial I was photographing.<sup>13</sup> Had I known that my mother’s presence would yield such an effect, I would have made her my research assistant early on in the project. In any case, while people on the street were generally less than receptive, business owners and workers were the opposite.

Most business owners did not know the deceased directly, but they usually had basic information related to the cause of death of the deceased and the upkeep or lack thereof of the memorials. When I shared with them that I was a doctoral student and what my research

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<sup>13</sup> This is the I-96 Memorial which will be presented in Chapter 5.

entailed, they were receptive and in most cases eager to help. My preliminary research suggested that roadside memorials are contested sites of memory among government officials and city residents. Therefore, I hypothesized that business owners would make up a majority in the dissenting group against roadside memorials as the presence of street shrines for persons who have died in or near their places of business might have the potential to negatively affect commerce. However, the business owners I spoke with had no problems with the presence of the memorials. They shared with me what they knew related to the deceased and in most cases appeared mournful or saddened by the tragedy.

My experiences in the field mirror both Habermas' conceptual understanding of the public sphere as a place for individuals to collectively talk about issues that concern their public and private lives as well as the limitations on said views concerning rational-critical discourse of the state. For example, while the meetings held by POMC provided a collective public space for individuals and families to express their grief, these conversations did not include critiques of violence in the Detroit Metro Area, or the Detroit Police Department's inability to solve crimes involving murder, an issue several families were confronting during my time with the organization. Further still, while people on the street were open with me about their opinions regarding the memorials, none of them suggested that the city should regulate, clear, and or become involved with the phenomenon, neither did they speak with me about violence in the city and/or the role of the police in curtailing violence. In chapter seven, I will explore these issues further as it relates to democratic participation among the city's citizens in the regulation of public space in Detroit. However, I will now turn my attention to the data analysis. The next two chapters represent my presentation and analysis of the material culture data associated with the memorials. The data is divided into two parts. Chapter five provides physical and material

descriptions of each memorial and chapter six is a material analysis of their memorial components, where memorials are compared to highlight patterns of similarity and difference.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE MEMORIALS: MEMORIAL DATA (PART I)

*“Me personally, I don’t want to even see a flower bed in that spot.... You know how people put stuff up and it’s like whatever... who was dis nigga? They act like nothing happened. Stuff is put there so that people don’t just come and act like nothing happened.”<sup>14</sup>*

#### Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to introduce each memorial, share anything that I have discovered about the deceased and/or the site, and where possible, give a brief historical or cultural report on the memorial location. This chapter also begins my material culture analysis. I have created a material description table for each memorial that will be further analyzed in the next chapter. Also, at the end of each table I have included a brief deduction section that describes both my emotional and spiritual/ intuitive reactions to the memorial.

Of the 17 memorials presented in this chapter, 7 are associated with traffic related fatalities and 10 are for victims of murder. While they are not grouped by neighborhood, there are notable similarities within groupings of memorials within small spatial distances that I will discuss in the next chapter. Therefore, the following memorials are presented by year in the order in which I collected the data. This method of presenting the memorials is my attempt to provide you the reader with a glimpse into my thought processes as I encountered each site. However, each memorial’s annual photographs are presented together in a single presentation so as to render changes to memorial structure and/or composition more apparent.

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<sup>14</sup> The quote is from an interview with a research participant for this project.

**Memorial #1: Malice Green Memorial:** (W. Warren Ave. between 23rd and 24th Streets)



**Figure 5.1: Malice Green Memorial in 1993**<sup>15</sup>

The first memorial I will discuss is for 35 year old Malice Wayne Green. The memorial is located at 3410-3416 W. Warren Avenue between 23rd and 24th streets, Detroit, Michigan. According to the Detroit News (2011), the building was once the home of Dr. Alexander Turner a prominent Black physician who in 1918, helped to found a 27 bed hospital that serviced the Black community of Detroit. At present time, the building is owned by Golf Club Real Estate Development Co. Inc. (see appendix A), an investment company located in a suburb of Detroit

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<sup>15</sup> Unless noted in the figure caption, text in this figure and others throughout this chapter is not meant to be readable. This text is for visual reference only. Please refer to text within chapter subsections and the tables within the chapter for explanations of photo contents and detailed descriptions of photographs respectively. Photo taken from Flickr: Pan-African News website: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/24756454@N00/with/287789823/>

and has been scheduled for demolition by the city due to its dilapidated nature. I included this site in my study because it is locally famous and possibly one of the oldest spontaneous memorials in the city for a victim of tragic death.

On November 5, 1992, Malice Green was stopped by two Detroit Police officers who claimed that he was seen leaving a known crack house and thus, was suspected of possessing drugs. Green's death was a result of an attempted arrest where he was allegedly bludgeoned to death by officers Larry Nevers and Walter Budzyn for refusing to relinquish a vial of crack cocaine. Green was unarmed. In 1993, Nevers and Budzyn were convicted of second-degree murder for Green's murder and both served jail sentences. However, the convictions were overturned in 1997. As a result, this memorial has become both a political symbol against police brutality and racial tensions in the city as well as a tourist site.

Green's death occurred the same year as the acquittal of three White and one Hispanic Los Angeles police officers who had been filmed repeatedly beating Black motorist Rodney King. The officers involved in the King beating were tried and acquitted of any wrong doing. The not guilty verdicts sparked the April 1992 Los Angeles Riots and after the death of Green, there was a fear among both Detroit city officials and residents that similar civil unrest could and would occur in Detroit.

During the initial 1993 trial, the Green memorial became a popular location for marches and rallies calling for justice against police brutality. Blacks and Whites have been heavily divided on the circumstances surrounding Green's death. Officers Nevers and Budzyn have gained a great deal of support from mostly suburban Detroit Whites, who largely view the officers as victims. Blacks view the Green death as yet another example of police brutality and

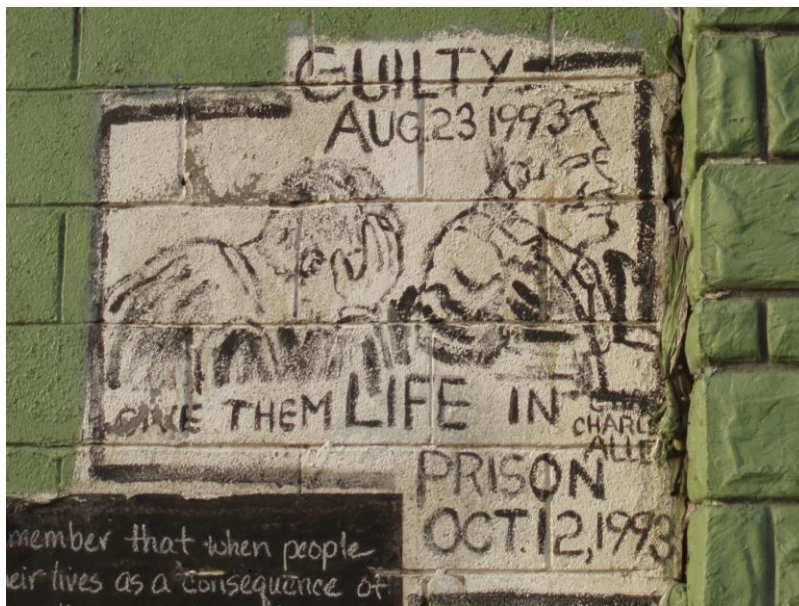
ongoing racism and violence by White police officers in the city. Both Blacks and Whites have used the site to symbolically voice their opinions regarding race relations in Detroit.

The original memorial, as shown in figure 4.1 was comprised of both a living quarters and memorial space. The banner displayed on the front entitled “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal” is a call to release Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Black activist and radio journalist who in 1981, was convicted of murdering police officer Daniel Faulkner in Philadelphia and as a result was sentenced to death. Debates surrounding Mumia’s death sentence question if he received a fair trial, his guilt/innocence, and the morality as well as racial inequality of death penalty sentences in the United States. Mumia’s death verdict received a great deal of national and international attention. On December 7, 2011, he was removed from Pennsylvania’s death row list. The banner’s placement on the memorial functions to both juxtapose and politicize the conditions of Green’s death and the impending death of Abu-Jamal.

Today, the Green Memorial is comprised of two sections and is no longer inhabited. The first or main portion of the memorial, displays a mural of Malice Green; while the second, and somewhat less noticeable left section of the mural, has three tablets and a drawing demanding that Nevers and Budzyn be given life in prison (see figures 5.2 – 5.4).



**Figure 5.2: Green Memorial, Autumn 2008**

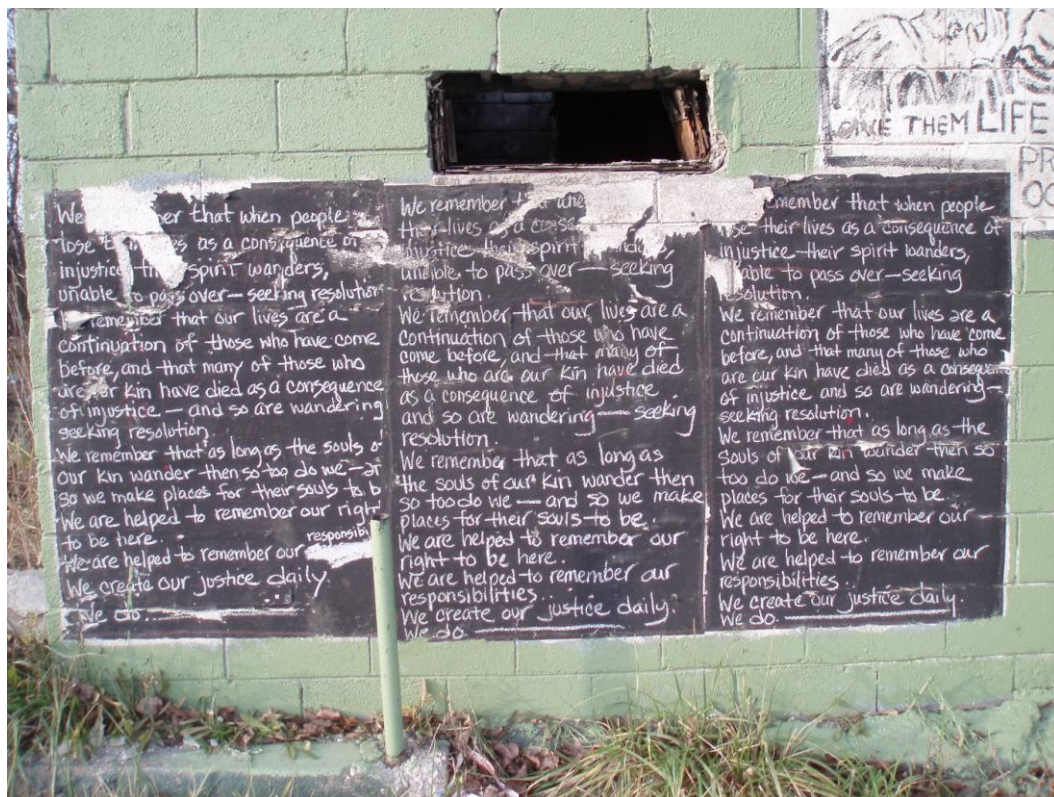


**Figure 5.3: Green Memorial “give them life in prison”:**  
 (Text reads: “Guilty Aug. 23, 1993; Give Them Life in Prison  
 Oct. 12, 1993.” Smaller text in lower left corner of figure is not  
 meant to be readable. It is for visual reference only.)



Located just below the drawing in fig. 5.3, are three identical written messages that explain that the purpose for the memorial, see figure 5.4. The written message says,

We remember that when people lose their lives as a consequence of injustice their spirit wanders, unable to pass over—seeking resolution.  
We remember that our lives are a continuation of those who have come before, and that many of those who are our kin have died as a consequence of injustice and so are wandering—seeking resolution.  
We remember that as long as the souls of our kin wander then so too do we—and so we make places for their souls to be.  
We are helped to remember our right to be here.  
We are helped to remember our responsibilities.  
We create our justice daily we do. -----.



**Figure 5.4: Green Memorial “We create our justice daily. We do”:**  
(Text in the figure is not meant to be legible. It is for visual reference only.  
Please refer to Table 5.1 for a description of text contents.)

Malice Green's name does not appear anywhere on the memorial suggesting the trans-symbolic nature of the memorial itself. While his face, painted by artist Bennie White is a major component of the memorial, he is not named directly. Therefore, both he and the place of his death become symbols for a larger message to the public. In a similar fashion, the names of Budzyn and Nevers also do not appear on the memorial, only their faces and a call for justice. This may suggest that the memorial transcends them as individuals and instead speaks to the larger issue of police brutality. In this way, the performance of the memorial becomes paramount as a point of mediation between Green's death and the outcome of the trial. Unlike any of the other memorials in this research, the memorial's builders make explicit their purpose for creating the memorial in that this one calls for justice, expresses a need to provide a place for the spirit or soul to dwell, and notes a collective responsibility to seek resolution for dead kin killed unjustly.

Opponents of the Green memorial's message have also used the site to express their opinions related to the builders' calls for judicial justice. Figure 5.5, shows the letters KKK spray painted across Green's forehead. KKK, is an acronym for the Ku Klux Klan, various 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century terror organizations that proposed biological, economic, and nationalistic superiority over non-Whites in the United States. The groups historically wore white robes and masks to shield member identities and used violence and intimidation to espouse their shared White pride agenda and oppression against Blacks and other non-White groups. Contemporary KKK organizations, considered hate groups by the U.S. government, are believed to be small in number compared to those in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Three upper cased K's, or KKK, has become a racially charged symbol in the U.S. that usually communicates hatred of

Blacks or other non-Whites, and/or White supremacy. The presence of KKK on Green's forehead transforms the site from a place of African American community outrage to a shared battleground of racial tensions between Whites and Blacks due to the racialized overtones associated with "KKK," and the symbol's ability to communicate racial hatred.



**Figure 5.5: Green Memorial, Autumn 2008: KKK mural defacement**

In 2009, Bennie White had repaired the mural and removed the KKK symbol, yet repainted Malice Green's face with what appears to be black tears streaming from his eyes and down his beard (see figure 5.6). The site was also falling into further disrepair as when compared with the previous year. As you can see in figure 5.6, the front door was missing; and by the final year of the study, the Green memorial had been stripped of most of its metal components, including interior plumbing, as well as windows, and electrical wiring. Locals informed me that due to the economic situation of Detroit, many people have increased "house



stripping” or removing any metal materials that can be sold for scrap. Despite this, one neighbor told me that people still visit the memorial from time to time, including various police officers at both the local and state level, who sometimes not only stop, but pose for pictures in front of the building, suggesting that even though the site is a skeleton of what it once was, it still holds political significance for some.



**Figure 5.6: Green Memorial: Autumn 2009: KKK removed and mural updated**



**Figure 5.7: Green Memorial, Autumn 2011**

**Table 5.1: Malice Green Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 1 Location: 3410-3416 W. Warren Avenue between 23rd and 24th streets, Detroit, Michigan Place: Private Residential Type: Violent Death Age at death: 35- 36 years			
<b>Description:</b>			
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2008	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
	Painted Green, entrance door is sealed; 1 large center window missing; left window intact; right window glass broken but frame intact	Yes ** Door missing	Yes ** All windows, window frames and surrounding brick removed
Mural (1)	Mural: Malice Green's face with a blue and white sky background, and red base. Signed by Bennie White E. Israel Green's face had the letters KKK on his forehead	Yes ** KKK has been removed from Green's face	Yes ** Paint fading
Dates	The words "NOV. 5" and "ANNIVERSARY NOV.5" are painted in large letters on front of building.	Yes	Yes
Poster (1)	" This is being" with large eyes and slogan, "Stop Halloween Arson	NO	NO
Beads	Beaded necklaces (24)	** only (20) necklaces	NO
Writing	"Wisdom Beads By Sankofa"		NO
Drawing (1)	"Guilty Aug. 23 1993," "Give Them Life in Prison Oct. 12, 1993" Drawing depicts Nevers and Budzyn in court	Yes	Yes

<b>Table 5.1: (cont'd)</b>			
Inscribed Tablet (3) Each of the three tablets are identical in content, they read:	<p>“We remember that when people lose their lives as a consequence of injustice their spirit wanders, unable to pass over—seeking resolution.</p> <p>We remember that our lives are a continuation of those who have come before, and that many of those who are our kin have died as a consequence of injustice and so are wandering—seeking resolution.</p> <p>We remember that as long as the souls of our kin wander then so too do we—and so we make places for their souls to be.</p> <p>We are helped to remember our right to be here.</p> <p>We are helped to remember our responsibilities.</p> <p>We create our justice daily we do. -----.”</p>	Yes	Yes
Mask	African styled small mask with beads hanging from it	Yes	No
			** Graffiti like tag on memorial front
Flowers	**Present during earlier photo, but not during the time of my study	NO	NO
<p><b>Deduction:</b> Frightened/ Eerie: In close proximity (within 5ft), this memorial felt frightening throughout the study and increasingly so with each year as it continued to fall into disrepair.</p>			



**Memorial #2: Papolo Memorial: (Intersection of McGraw and Lumley Streets)**



**Figure 5.8: Papolo Memorial, Autumn 2008:** (Text in the figure is not meant to be legible. It is for visual reference only. Please refer to figure 5.9 for a visual close up and translation of text contents.)

I first saw this memorial in the winter of 2004, not long after its construction. I had moved into Southwest Detroit the previous year and this site is located less than a mile away from my previous residence. Southwest Detroit (SWD) is geographically located in the southwestern region of the city. The neighborhood is considered economically poor and working class by local standards; and while it has a large Latino population from various parts of Latin America, smaller populations of Blacks and Whites also live in the area. When I initially viewed the memorial, it was comprised of a simple cross, candles, and plastic flowers. I have seen this change through the years including the additions of the memorial marker stones as well as various updates to its current composition. I selected this shrine for my research due to my prior knowledge of its existence and geographical location. In addition, my review of the literature

suggested a Latino origin to roadside memorials and thus, it made sense to begin my study in Southwest Detroit, since the area has the largest population of Latinos in Detroit.

This memorial is for 27 year old Jose A. Ortiz Rosario, nicknamed “Papolo.” I know this because this information as well as his birth and death dates are displayed on the memorial, (see figure 5.9).



**Figure 5.9: Papolo Memorial, death marker: *English translation:* “Jose A. Ortiz Rosario ‘Papolo’; December 20, 1976 – November 9, 2004: We will remember all the moments that we shared and we will take your family and friends in our hearts. Your family and friends: ‘Papolo’ 1976-2004”**

I interviewed neighbors who lived in close proximity to the shrine and was told that Papolo was struck by a pickup truck and killed while he was riding a motor scooter near the intersection of McGraw and Lumley streets, the memorial’s location. I was told that the driver of the truck was headed northbound on Lumley and as he crossed over McGraw hit Papolo who was driving his scooter westbound on McGraw. The memorial is actually located on the westbound side of McGraw about 10 feet from the corner of Lumley. I was not able to verify if the location of the

memorial is the actual death site or if the place of transition is a few feet away. My guess is that the actual site of death was in or close to the intersection given that both the victim and the driver of the truck were headed in perpendicular directions. I was also informed that the memorial was created by friends and family; however Papolo's sister and mother maintain the site.

In 2009, when I returned to update my photographs, I found the memorial as shown in figures 5.10 - 5.12. Please see table 5.2 for noted material composition changes to the site. This differs from many of the others I will discuss as it is self contained and only utilized the ground where it sits. Most of the other memorials I will discuss in this chapter often utilize signposts as a means of support for the memorial. This one also drastically differs in terms of material makeup and use of handmade materials. The crosses were both constructed and painted by hand. The memorial is surrounded by a brick boarder with a gravel center and grave markers which suggests an element of permanency as it is more similar in design to a gravesite than most of the other memorials in this study.



**Figure 5.10: Papolo Memorial, Autumn 2009** (Text in the figure is not meant to be legible. It is for visual reference only. Please refer to figure 5.9 for a translation and visual close up of text contents.)





**Figure 5.11: Papolo Memorial, located 10 – 15 feet from the actual death site**



**Figure 5.12: Papolo Memorial, photographed from across the street.**



The final year of the study, I returned to photograph the Papolo site and found it updated as I expected. However, this time there were several small plastic cups scattered about the site. I suspected that perhaps there was a pouring of libations.<sup>16</sup> One of the neighbors informed me that some of Papolo's friends came to visit the site and that they come each year on his birthday and death date. He also informed me that they bring their cars and motorcycles and "spin their tires" in Papolo's honor.<sup>17</sup> During the first two years of the study, I visited the site on both of these days in the hope of meeting the person or persons who maintained the site; however I did not find anyone or any notable changes to suggest recent visits. Therefore, I could not figure out when the site was being updated. Well, it turns out that I had been arriving too early in the day since the neighbor told me that his friends arrived in the early evening and spent several hours into the night at the site. This is an example of the valuable information that you learn as you are leaving the field. However, it would have been great to meet this informant earlier in my research.

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<sup>16</sup> This is a ritual pouring of a liquid into a vessel or upon the ground in memory of those who have died. In the U.S., the liquid is most often an alcoholic beverage like beer, wine, or spirits.

<sup>17</sup> Tire spinning also called a burnout or peel out, is very popular in the United States among drag racers and motorcyclists. It is performed by holding down both the brake and accelerator of a car or motorcycle which results in the spinning of the rear tires at a highly accelerated rate while the vehicle remains relatively stationary to produce heated sticky tires, smoke, and noise, as well as large black marks on the pavement. It is usually done to show off both the vehicle and operator skills as it is EXTREMELY dangerous and if not done properly will catapult the car, bike, and driver forward at a very high speed. It became popular as a memorial method in the 1990s with the popularity of sport motorcycles to memorialize urban bikers and drag racers that have died in vehicular accidents.



**Figure 5.13: Papolo Memorial, Autumn 2011: w/ plastic cups**  
(Text in the figure is not meant to be legible. It is for visual reference only. Please refer to figure 5.9 for a visual close up and translation of text contents.)



**Figure 5.14: Papolo memorial, Autumn of 2011:** (Text in the figure is not meant to be legible. It is for visual reference only. Please refer to figure 5.9 for a visual close up and translation of text contents.)

**Table 5.2: Papolo Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 2 Location: Intersection of McGraw and Lumley Streets (SWD), Detroit, Michigan Place: Public Roadside Type: Accidental Death Age at death: 28 years			
<b>Description:</b>			
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2008	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Cross (2)	1 White with nickname name, birth, and death dates, RIP, always, to Wanda (faint)  1 colored (red, white, blue), with nickname, birth year, death year, RIP, necklace (red, white, blue beads)	Yes   Yes  ** New small wooden cross added with nickname (1)	Yes   Yes  Yes  ** New small cross added (2)
Flag (2)	National flag of Puerto Rico w/ cartoon character	** No New, w/o cartoon character (2)	** No New, small flag (1)
Candle (5)	1 plain white 1 plain off white 1 red, Jesus 1 white and blue, La Guadalupe "Our Lady of Guadalupe" 1 red Sacred Heart of Mary	No	No
Flowers (3)	2 white potted, artificial silk flower bunch 1 mixed autumn color, artificial silk bunch	** Yes All New artificial silk flowers blue	Yes  **New silk roses added yellow

<b>Table 5.2: (cont'd)</b>			
Grave marker (2)	1st: name, birth date, death date, and message from family and friends 2nd is a picture of Papalo with year of birth and death	Yes  Yes	Yes  Yes
Dates	Dates appears in (4 places)	Yes	Yes
Name	Name appears in (4 places)	** Yes additional name (1)	
Ground Lantern/ Light (2)	2 ground lanterns similar to those found in residential landscaping	** Yes 1 lantern missing	Yes
Silver beads/bells	1 string of bells/beads	No	No
Vine garland	1 plastic floral vine garland	No	No
Bookmarkers	2 bookmarkers with printed messages	No	No
Plastic Cup	(1) plastic cup, blue	No	** Yes (8) small transparent plastic cups
Stones	Stone garden, circular in shape with death markers in center	Yes	Yes
Liquor bottle?	Remy Martin Cognac (1/2 pint)	No	No
Teddy Bear	No	** New Silver bear with blue eyes and nose	No
Misc Items		** New silver bows (2) with green ribbons, 1 per cross	No
		** New car air freshener (Black Ice)	No

<b>Table 5.2: (cont'd)</b>			
		** New Checkered racing flag tied to cross	No
		** New necklace with red, white, blue beads	No
			** New small plastic toy motorcycle
			** New deflated helium air balloon
			** New stings of beads on main cross
<p><b>Deduction:</b> Peaceful/Pleasant: Throughout the duration of the project, this memorial had a peaceful and almost pleasant feel about it. It was unknown to me that this was the site of a vehicle accident until the last year of research. Knowing the type of death associated with the memorial did not change my emotive response.</p>			

**Memorial #3: Amp Memorial:** (3rd Ave. between Monterey and Richton streets, Highland Park, MI)



**Figure 5.15: Amp Memorial, Autumn of 2008**

The third memorial I visited was for my cousin “Amp,” or more formally Anthony Jarod Williams who was murdered on May 2, 2003, at the age of 31. I chose to include this site because it was the ideological starting point for my research and I knew of its location. This memorial is spatially the largest in the study and it is located in Highland Park, a city located within Detroit’s geographical borders.<sup>18</sup> The memorial is different from the others as it is completely comprised of written messages.

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<sup>18</sup> While Highland Park is a city within its own right, among Detroiters the small city is socially considered more akin to a neighborhood than a separate city. In recent times, this has become increasingly the case, since the city also relies on Detroit for various public services including fire, emergency medical, hospital, educational, and library services. Therefore, I have treated the city thus; however in chapter six, when I compared Highland Park memorials to others in this





**Figure 5.16: Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: “The Hood Miss You Daddy!! Rest in Peace ANTHONY!! I LOVE U T.K.”:**  
 (Additional text in the figure is not meant to be legible. It is for visual reference only.)



**Figure 5.17: Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: “Until we meet again I Loves U AMP... - TRACY ! -”**

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study, aesthetic differences became apparent in memorial design. I will discuss this further in the next chapter. In recent times, this has become increasingly the case, since the city also relies on Detroit for various public services including fire, emergency medical, hospital, educational, and library services.



**Figure 5.18: Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: CRME messages**



**Figure 5.19: Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: “VENGEANCE!! IS MINE SAID THE LORD!!” R.I.P. DAT NIGGA AMP”**





**Figure 5.20: Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: “R.I.P. 1971 AMP 2003, I Miss U Daddy!!”**



**Figure 5.21: Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: inside view of Figure 5.20**



**Figure 5.22: Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: Highland Park and CRME mentions:**  
 (Text on the structure reads in no particular order: “HPK; Vengeance is mine said the lord; R.I.P. DAT NIGGA AMP; 1971-2003; CRME Boy; HPD; ABN)



**Figure 5.23: Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008:**  
 garage door: (This is the front door of Figure 5.22)



**Figure 5.24: Amp Memorial, Autumn 2008: primary memorial area**

Since I was present for a portion of its original construction, I know that it once included at least balloons and teddy bears. However, those items have either been removed or destroyed by nature. All that remained in 2008 were written messages, some of which seem to have also over the course of my research been removed. In figures 5.16, 5.18, and 5.19 the spray paint on the fence and garage doors are vibrant and not dull like those in figures 5.17 and 5.20, suggesting that these messages have been updated. In addition, while the house and detached garage to the right of figure 5.24 are today yellow and black, I remember that during the time of the memorial's original construction, its previous colors were red and white. The owners of the house have been in a continuing battle to keep the property free of the painted messages as I will show in photographs from 2009 and 2011.





**Figure 5.25: Amp Memorial, Autumn 2009: removals**

In figure 5.25, we can see that a large portion of the memorial was removed with one exception, the utility pole to the right of the picture. However, the home and its garage in 2009, is free of most of the memorial and when juxtaposed with the other vacant structures that surround it, appears uninvolved with the memorial. With its messages erased, the site by comparison has been cleared or cleansed of the tragic event that is still displayed on the dilapidated garage in figure 5.26 to its rear, and the smaller white garage in figure 5.27 across the street that by 2009 was missing its front door.



**Figure 5.26: Amp Memorial,  
Mother Nature's clearing**



**Figure 5.27: Amp Memorial, garage door  
missing**

The final year of the study, most of the area has been cleared of mementos of tragedy and remembrance of the deceased. When I arrived to take my final photographs in 2011, one of the first things that I noticed about the site was that the utility pole that wore Amp's name had been removed (see figure 5.28). In addition, as can be seen in figure 5.29, the small white garage that was across the street from the main portion of the memorial had also been removed. Today, all that remains of the Amp Memorial can be seen in figure 5.30, a frail and disintegrating structure that Mother Nature is slowly clearing away.



**Figure 5.28: AMP Memorial, Autumn 2011: utility pole removed**



**Figure 5.29: Amp Memorial, white garage removed**





**Figure 5.30: Amp Memorial, memorial ruins**

**Table 5.3: Amp Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 3 Location: 3rd Ave. between Monterey and Richton streets (HP), Highland Park, Michigan Place: Public Alley; Public Sidewalk; Public Roadside; Private Residential Type: Violent Death Age at death: 32 years			
<b>Description:</b>			
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2008	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
	<b>Garage 1:</b> [on garage doors, updated]	YES	YES
Written Messages	“CRME” (red) “C.P. Amp Love you!!”(white)	NO NO	NO NO

<b>Table 5.3</b> <b>(cont'd)</b>	"Amp Chedder RIP" (white)	NO	NO
	"R.I.P 1971 – 2003" (white)	NO	NO
	"Amp ♥ U .Daddy" (white)	NO	NO
	"RIP" (white)	NO	NO
	"June 2003" (white)	NO	NO
	"NOE" (white)	NO	NO
	"Vengeance!!" is Mine Said the Lord!!" (red)	NO	NO
	"R.I.P DAT NIGGA AMP" (white)	NO	NO
	<b>Garage 2:</b>		
	RIP AMP 1971-2003 (inside)	YES	YES
	AMP (red, corner)	YES	YES
	AMP (white, corner)		
	R.I.P. (red)	YES	YES
	1971 AMP 2003(black)	YES	YES
	"I Miss YOU DADDY!!" (red)	YES	YES
	A.M.P" (white)	YES	YES
	T.K. (inside of a heart)		NO
	<b>Garage 3:</b>		
	[on side]	YES	NO
	"HPK"	YES	NO
	"Vengence is mine said the lord"	YES	NO
	"R.I.P. DAT NIGGA AMP"	YES	NO
	"1971-2003"		
	[on front]	NO	NO
	"R.I.P"	NO	NO
	"Amp"	NO	NO
	"1971-2003"		
	"R.I.P. AMP I Love You, T.K."	YES	YES
	"HERE LAID A REAL G' SLAIN"	NO	NO
	R.I.P. AMP 1971-2003	YES	NO
	<b>Vacant home:</b> AMP, CRME, CRME, CRME	YES	YES



<b>Table 5.3 (cont'd)</b>	<p><b>Fence 1: [updated]</b> “UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN I LOVES U AMP... -TRACY!-“</p> <p><b>Fence 2: [updated]</b> “THE HOOD MISS YOU DADDY!!” REST IN PEACE ANTHONY!! I LOVE U T.K.”</p>	YES	YES
Balloons  Teddy Bears	*** During construction of memorial, I observed the addition of teddy bears and balloons. However year later, only the above remain.	NO	NO
<p><b>Deduction:</b> Frightened/ Eerie: This memorial had an emotionally frightening and spiritually eerie feeling about it that lessened each year as sections of the memorial were removed. Since the memorial was so large, and covered a large circular area (3 residential garages, 1 vacant home, 2 fences, an alley, a utility pole, and the public sidewalk), it felt like I was walking into a world of death. When I returned the second year, much of the memorial had been removed and the remaining memorial remnants felt less threatening. The final year, even though almost the entire memorial was gone, I remained slightly fearful but the space still seemed eerie. I also felt some sadness about the memorial’s erasure as it was for my cousin.</p>			

**Memorial #4: Twin Memorial: (Dexter Ave. and Pingree St.)**



**Figure 5.31: Twin Memorial, Autumn 2008: front**



**Figure 5.32: Twin Memorial, Autumn 2008: back**

I found this memorial while randomly driving through the city a few months into the first year of my research. I almost missed it because it didn't look like most of the others in Detroit. The site is located on Dexter Avenue, north of West Grand Blvd. and south of Davison Avenue. Of all of the memorials that I have researched, obtaining information for this one was the most difficult. Dexter Avenue is a moderately used street, approximately 4 miles long, with a good amount of automobile and foot traffic. When I first discovered the memorial, I knocked on the door of the house adjacent to its location but no one answered the door. Then it occurred to me that knocking on doors was probably not the wisest or safest thing to do; and thus, for the

remainder of the project, I did not knock on any more doors. I did however, enter places of commerce and speak with employees and business owners. I also selectively stopped people on the street to ask about the deceased. However, just as I sometimes had trouble getting people to talk to me when I stopped them, I too was very cautious when stopping people. There is a general unease among strangers on the street in Detroit. First, there are potential dangers because you might accidentally stop a “stickup kid” or person who will rob you. Secondly as a woman, there was the fear of encountering a sexual predator and thus, before stopping men on the street, I paid close attention to what they were wearing, if he they were on foot or in a car, and my intuition. Also, I usually only stopped to talk to men who were in groups if they looked older (over 50), or they were working. Lastly, I had a general fear of the unknown; and thus while working on the street, I kept my guard up at all times.



**Figure 5.33: Twin Memorial, Autumn 2009**



**Figure 5.34: Twin Memorial, Autumn 2011**

The first year of the project, I was unsuccessful in getting non-conflicting information regarding the men who died here. Also, when people did not know they seemed to speculate about the memorial's history. When I returned to the site for the photo update of 2009, the vibrant air brushed portrait from figure 5.31, had faded into the almost black and white image shown in figure 5.33, and while the balloons were missing, I was surprised to see that the memorial had not been completely removed.

In 2011 when I returned to photograph the site, I found it updated with the T-shirt and message shown in figure 5.35 and I thought I was finally going to get to learn more about the deceased.



**Figure 5.35: Twin Memorial, “It’s Going Down”:** (Text in the figure is not meant to be legible. It is for visual reference only. Please refer to Table 5. 4 for a description of text contents.)

I was excited about the T-shirt since it had a phone number and the name of a contact person. I quickly called Cleo and when he answered, I told him who I was and explained my research and interest in the memorial. He initially said he was willing to meet me for an interview; however, he never showed and when I followed up with him, he informed me that he had to go and get someone out of jail and thus, he could not meet with me. That was the last time that he accepted my call. I called him about four or five more times and all of my calls went unanswered and unreturned. Therefore for a long time, the cause of death for this memorial was unknown. However, I decided to go back to the area one last time in an effort to find someone on the street who might know who the young men were. I asked a woman standing at a bus stop to no avail, then on my way back to my car, I saw a neighbor coming out of his house and he informed me that the men died in a traffic accident. He told me that during the summer months young guys race their cars down the residential streets playing a version of “chicken” to see who can make it across Dexter Ave. without stopping. He suspected that, that is what might have caused this fatal crash. Obtaining information for this memorial, although late in the study period, became a reminder for me to hang in there when conducting research.

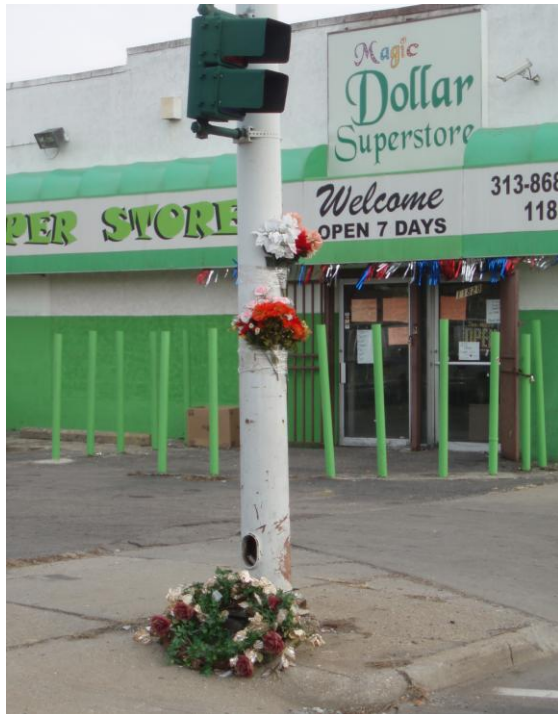
**Table 5.4: Twin Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 4			
Location: Intersection of Dexter Ave. and Pingree St., Detroit, Michigan			
Place: Public Telephone Pole			
Type: Accidental Death			
Age at death: (20 – 30+ years)			
<b>Description:</b>			
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2008	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011

<b>Table 5.4 (Cont'd)</b>			
Airbrushed mural	The faces of two young men airbrushed on cloth and stapled to telephone pole. The colors are vibrant. One man wears a red hat and the other a striped shirt with an earring in his left ear.	YES (faded)	NO  ** Replaced with black cotton T-Shirt
Balloons	(3) deflated balloons	NO	NO
T-Shirt	NO	NO	YES
Teddy Bears	YES (1) small brown teddy bear	NO	NO
Message	NO	NO	YES  “It’s Going Down, RIP, NBC, AJ, LC, Royalty Stars 13132 Grandriver Btw(Scheafer & Meyers), Date: October 15, 2011, Time: 9pm-2:00am, For More Info: Cleo (248) 247-4241 ‘No Ice, No Juice, No Cup’”
<p><b>Deduction:</b> Sadness/ Neutral</p> <p>When I first encountered this memorial it was visual appealing to me. I had not seen a memorial on the side of the road with an airbrushed design, so this memorial really stood out. Approaching the memorial I felt a deep sadness the first year that lessened each year of the study. The color fading of the pictures had a less visual appealing effect on me. Also, the T-shirt addition in the last year, while also unique in roadside memorial design, had little to no emotional affect on me or my emotional experience of the space. Throughout the research period, I felt spiritually neutral when standing in close proximity to this memorial.</p>			



**Memorial #5: Dollar Store Memorial: (Dexter Ave. and Elmhurst Streets)**



**Figure: 5.36: Dollar Store Memorial, Autumn 2008**



**Figure: 5.37: Dollar Store Memorial, Autumn 2009**

This memorial is for an unknown middle-aged-man of Middle Eastern descent that was killed in a traffic accident at or near the location shown in figure 5.36. Several guys working at the carwash across the street told me that the man was driving a car that crashed with another automobile and it resulted in his death. They did not see the actual crash but they witnessed the aftermath of the crash and informed me that the unknown man died at the site. Persons from the neighborhood, unknown to the deceased, constructed the memorial above. When I returned the following year, the memorial had been removed. Notice that with the exception of flowers, the memorial is absent of stuffed animals or any other materials making it stand out among the others in this study.

**Table 5.5: Dollar Store Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 5			
Location: Dexter Ave. and Elmhurst Streets, Detroit, Michigan			
Place: Public Traffic Signal Pole			
Type: Accidental Death			
Age at death: approx. 40+			
<b>Description:</b>			
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2008	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Flowers	Imitation floral reef: various flowers types, colors: gold, red , green vine	NO	NO
	Imitation flower bunch (2), various flower types, colors: orange, red, pink, white, yellow, peach	NO	NO
<b>Deduction:</b> Cold/Neutral This memorial read emotionally cold. Visually it seemed incomplete. I felt spiritually neutral when standing in close proximity to this memorial.			

**Memorial #6: White Bear Memorial:** (Elmhurst and Holmur streets)



**Figure 5.38: White Bear Memorial, Autumn 2008: stop sign view**



**Figure 5.39: White Bear Memorial, Autumn 2008: bear view**



This memorial is for an unknown young African American teenager. Two separate residents told me that the young man was hit by an automobile at the residential intersection in Figure 5.38. They told me that he was not from the neighborhood and was riding a bicycle through the intersection when struck by a car and killed. They also told me that locals in the neighborhood know to stop and take extra precaution at this particular intersection because people rarely adhere to the stop sign and instead speed down the residential side street without yielding or stopping. As a result, several accidents have occurred on this corner, one of which caused this fatality.

This is a common occurrence in Detroit. While most major cities on the east coast of the United States became high-rise cities with skyscrapers and high-rise apartment buildings, Detroit by comparison is a low-rise city (Sugrue 1996). Except for the downtown and New Center areas, most residential houses in the city are single family detached homes that are lined on city blocks with separating side streets. These side streets rarely have homes facing the street and instead run along the “sides” of the homes and/or perpendicular to streets with rows of individual street-faced housing. Since side streets may run for several miles in the same directions as busy thruways located miles apart, they are often used as traffic alternatives.

While the normal speed limit for most Detroit residential streets is between 25 – 35 mph (including side streets), it is not at all uncommon for drivers to reach 45mph or higher on side streets, especially during the warmer months when snow is not prevalent. As a result, several accidents occur within the city where side streets intersect with residential streets. Compounding the problem is the limited traffic enforcement within the city limits. It is common knowledge among most Detroiters that police will rarely stop drivers solely for traffic concerns. This is due

to high crime rates that keep officers occupied with more pressing concerns and lack of city resources to hire traffic enforcement cops.



**Figure: 5.40: White Bear Memorial, Autumn 2011: stop sign view**



**Figure 5.41: White Bear Memorial, Autumn 2011: removals**



**Figure 5.42: White Bear Memorial, Autumn 2011: fallen bears**

**Table 5.6: White Bear Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 6			
Location: Intersection of Elmhurst and Holmur streets, Detroit, Michigan			
Place: Public Stop Sign Type: Accidental Death Age at death: approx. 14 years			
<b>Description:</b>			
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2008	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Flowers	Imitation flowers of various types, colors: yellow, red, blue,	** YES most of the flowers are missing, only a few remain	NO
Teddy Bears	White medium (1) sized bear set apart from others below it	YES	NO
Stuffed Animal Toys	Several others $\geq$ (8) bearlike stuffed animals in a pile at memorial base	YES	** YES, but only a few remain
<b>Deduction:</b> Neutral/Neutral When I first saw this memorial I thought it was for violent death and that mourners had used the stop sign perhaps in an act of protest against violence. Throughout the study, I felt emotionally and spiritually neutral when standing in close proximity to this memorial.			

**Memorial #7: Stop Sign Memorial: (Dexter Ave. and Tyler St.)**



**Figure 5.43: Stop Sign Memorial, Autumn 2008: stop sign view**



**Figure 5.44: Stop Sign Memorial, Autumn 2008: rear view**

When I first ran across this memorial it was early in my research and I was surprised that so many memorials were located either on or close to Dexter Avenue. Since I was initially looking for sites associated with youth violence, I made the mistake of assuming that this memorial and others attached to stop signs were both youth and violence related. This inaccuracy was based on news reports that link street memorials to youth and/or violence (Holtz 2005; Kilpatrick 2004; Parker 2008) and my knowledge of the neighborhood as being either within the territory or close to what is considered “Zone 8,” by a local street gang. However, the mechanic and shop owner adjacent to the corner informed me that this memorial is for a young man who died in a traffic accident that occurred in the center of the intersection.





**Figure 5.45: Stop Sign Memorial,  
Autumn 2009: stop sign view**



**Figure 5.46: Stop Sign Memorial,  
Autumn 2009: rear view**

The memorial looked relatively new in 2008, the year I discovered it. However, when I returned the following year, most of the balloons were gone and the flowers had lost most of their color. As we can see in figure 5.47, by 2011, nature had removed almost all of the remaining flowers and with it, many of the symbolic reminders of the event.



**Figure 5.47: Stop Sign Memorial, Autumn 2011**

**Table 5.7: Stop Sign Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 7 Location: Intersection of Dexter Ave. and Tyler St., Detroit, Michigan Place: Public Stop Sign Type: Accidental Death Age at death: unknown			
<b>Description:</b>			
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2008 Item Description,	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Flowers	Imitation flowers of various types, colors: purple/white, pink/white, peach, pink, grey (5) bunches	** YES ½ of the flowers are missing	**YES Only 6 individual flowers remain
Balloons	≥ (5) deflated balloons, one balloon reads: “Love You”	** YES Only (1) deflated	NO

<b>Table 5.7</b> <b>(cont'd)</b>		balloon remains	
<p><b>Deduction:</b> Neutral/Neutral</p> <p>When I first saw this memorial I thought it was for violent death and that mourners had used the stop sign perhaps in an act of protest against violence. Throughout the study, I felt both emotionally and spiritually neutral standing in close proximity to this memorial.</p>			

**Memorial #8: PaPoose Memorial:** (18481 Greenfield Ave.)



**Figure 5.48: PaPoose Memorial, Autumn 2008**



**Figure 5.49: PaPoose Memorial, Autumn 2008: close up**

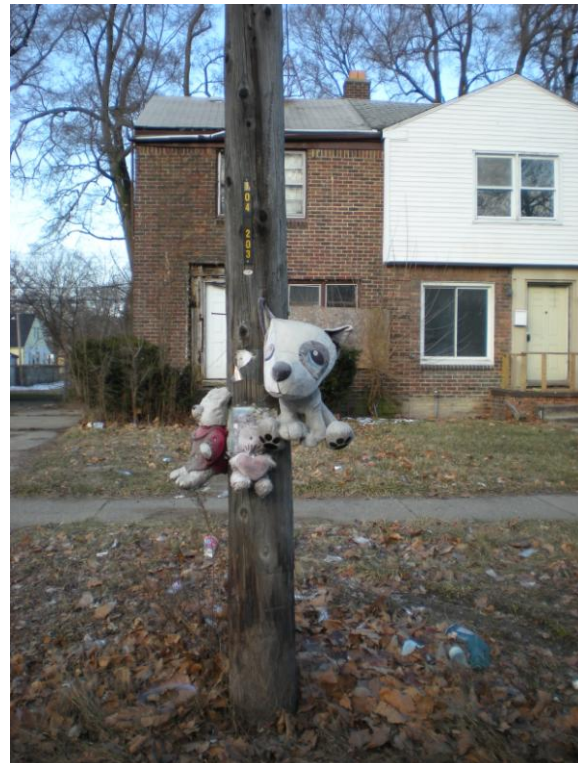
This is the only memorial in the study that I was unable to obtain direct information about from neighbors. The day that I took the photo in figure 5.48, a new family was moving into the house behind the utility pole and thus, they did not know anything about the memorial. Also this



section of Greenfield Ave. does not have a lot of foot traffic. Greenfield is a large street that runs for several miles. It has four lanes of traffic, two in each direction and the posted speed limit is 35mph; but the average speed limit among drivers is about 10 mph faster. Through archival research, I was able to locate a State of Michigan Traffic Crash Report that seems to coincide with the posted information on the memorial (see Appendix B). The report notes the date and time of the accident as 12/24/2005 at 11:15 am. It also notes that the driver was female with a birth date of 03/05/1969 which matches the information in figure 5.49. The notes from the report state: “Investigator reveals that car 1 loss control crossing the center line causing car 2 to strike her Psr door...the driver was...DOA.” According to the report, drugs and/or alcohol was not a factor in the accident.



**Figure: 5.50: PaPoose Memorial, Autumn 2011: close up**



**Figure: 5.51: PaPoose Memorial, Autumn 2011**



When I returned the final year, the original bear with the red hearted sweater was still present as well as additional items; however the red sweater bear had been sun bleached and repositioned as shown in figures 5.50 and 5.51. Also, one of the laminated writings had been removed and the other was covered slightly with stuffed animals as shown in figure 5.50.

**Table 5.8: PaPoose Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 8 Location: 18481 Greenfield Ave., Detroit, Michigan Place: Public Berm Area, Telephone Pole Type: Accidental Death Age at death: 36 years		
<b>Description:</b>		
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2008 Item Description,	Autumn 2011
Written Messages	(2) Laminated messages printed on white paper and enclosed in plastic	** (1) Only one of the written message remains
	<p>Message #1:            “Marquita Monique Green aka ‘PaPoose’... A TRIBUTE... The Love You’ve Shared Will Never Die, It Will Continue To Live On In The Hearts Of Those Whose Lives You Have Touched And Indwelt Forever... March 5, 1969 – December 24, 2005”</p> <p>Message #2:            “Secret of Life... Take time to Think. It is the source of Power. Take time to Play. It is the secret of perpetual Youth. Take time to be Friendly. It is the road to Happiness. Take time to Work. It is the price of Success. Take time to Pray. It is the greatest power on Earth.</p>	<p>NO</p> <p>YES</p>

<b>Table 5.8 (cont'd)</b>	Take time to Love and be Loved. It is the way of God.”	
Photograph	There is a photograph of a woman of African descent. (I speculate that this is a picture of the deceased since the message says it is a tribute.)	NO (appeared on message #1 which was removed)
Teddy Bears	(1) Medium sized white bear is attached to the pole. (3) Three small bears, green, brown, white, are on the ground at the pole’s base. The three bears are all face down and appear to be older than the bear that is attached to the pole	*** Yes/NO (1) the medium sized white bear remains.  (4) three small white bears have been added. They are inside of a transparent net bag.  (1) small white bear with attached heart has also been added.
Stuffed Animals	NO	YES A large white stuffed dog was added to the site. However it is weathered, and colors have faded.
<b>Deduction:</b> Sadness/Neutral The picture of the deceased and writing on this memorial evoked sadness in me. I felt spiritually neutral when standing in close proximity to this memorial.		

**Memorial #9: Coney Island Memorial:** (12857 Woodward Ave. between Avalon and Glendale Streets, Highland Park, Michigan)



**Figure: 5.52: Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2008**

Several major cities throughout the United States have a traditional food, or popular local cuisine that both locals and visitors enjoy. For example, both New York City and Chicago are known for their regional interpretations of pizza. New York's version is an extra large 26 inch thin cut pie, while Chicago's version is a smaller 18 inch thick or "deep dish" variety. Philadelphia is known for its Philly Cheese Steak sandwich, a large oblong bun filled with thinly sliced steak, onions, and peppers which is smothered in cheese. Detroit's most popular local fare is served at the numerous Coney Island restaurants, or "greasy spoons" that are scattered throughout the city. The restaurants have a Greek theme and an extremely limited Greek menu. While there is not one main dish served, the most popular food items are cheeseburgers, fried chicken tenders (boneless chick breast, battered and deep fried), the Greek chicken salad (lettuce, red onion, beets, and olives topped with a grilled chicken breast), wing dings (disjointed chicken wings, battered and deep fried), and gyros (sliced chicken or beef covered in a cucumber yogurt

sauce with grilled onions served in a slice of pita bread). Almost any food item can be ordered “deluxe” which usually means an order of fries, coleslaw, and soft drink is included; and most items on the menu are less than 7 dollars.

While a few of the restaurants are a part of a small family owned chain, the majority are individually owned and operated. Most Coney Island’s are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and you can call ahead and place your order over the phone, which adds to their popularity among drug dealers and sex workers who often work midnight shifts, as well as the crowds of weekend nightclub goers looking to coat their stomachs after a night of drinking. Despite the fact that almost all of the restaurants have inside dining rooms, with a few exceptions, locals generally take their food to go since fights, shootings, and robberies sometimes occur in the overly crowded parking lots, dining rooms, and at drive thru windows while people are waiting for their food. Nevertheless, these spots are most popular among adults during the weekend evening hours after the bars close at 2am, which often leads to clashes between groups of males who are often not organized street gangs, yet socialize in small tight knit social groups.

This memorial is for an adult male that was killed as the result of an argument that took place inside the restaurant shown in figure 5.52. He got into an altercation that began in the dining room and spilled over into the parking lot where he ultimately was shot and killed. Workers near the Coney Island only shared with me the aforementioned details and I did not inquire further as I am aware that my doing so might have placed them in future danger.

This memorial has a lot of stuffed animals, which is in alignment with others constructed in Detroit. However, this one has a great deal more color in the selection of the objects. Many of the memorials throughout the study have stuffed animals that are white in color. This one by

comparison, has a lot of objects with darker hues. Also the animals appear more masculine than others throughout my research, and have been gendered with items of clothing.



**Figure: 5.53: Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2008: close up**

For example, the stuffed Rottweiler and white teddy bear in figure 5.53 are wearing army fatigues, and a sun-visor respectively, both of which are symbols of African-American male masculinity within American culture. The sun-visor in and of itself is not masculine, however by turning it to the side it becomes a recognizable symbol of male masculinity that has its historically roots in 1970s hip hop B-boy<sup>19</sup> culture. In addition, the Rottweiler is a popular breed among American men and by dressing the dog in army fatigues, its communicative

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<sup>19</sup> B-boys were predominantly African-American male street dancers in NYC during the mid-late 1970s that inspired what eventually became known as breakdancing in the 1980s. They were known for both their unique styles of dance and dress that have helped to spread hip hop music, clothing, and culture all over the world. See: Chang, Jeff (2006). *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*. New York City: BasicCivitas. pg. 117.

masculinity becomes two-fold in both dog breed and military associations. Lastly, the alcoholic beverages associated with the site are mostly consumed by men. There are four alcohol related bottles at the site, Remy Martin which is a cognac, two beer bottles, and a small Seagram's gin bottle, the last of which is colloquially known as "bumpy face" because of the bumpy or rough texture of the bottle. Alcoholic beverages in the U.S. are both marketed to and favored by most Americans according to race, gender, and social class. In the African-American community, the beverages associated with this memorial are usually consumed by men. African-American women and American women in general, tend to favor sweeter drinks like Moscato and Riesling wines, as well as vodkas, which are almost flavorless and odorless and takes on the flavors of the cocktail mix. This is in contrast to gin that has both a strong flavor and odor. Therefore, this memorial communicates to passersby that it is probably for a male adult as memorials for children do not have alcoholic beverages present.





**Figure: 5.54: Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2008: side A**



**Figure: 5.55: Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2008: side B**



**Figure: 5.56: Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2009: removed**



**Figure: 5.57: Coney Island Memorial, Autumn 2009: removals - close up**

When I returned to the site the following year, the memorial had been removed (see figures 5.56 – 5.57). In addition, the restaurant had new owners who knew nothing about the previous memorial. They said it was not present when they purchased the store. It is unknown if the memorial would have remained had the restaurant not been sold. The original owners allowed the memorial to remain for a time, which appears to be a testament (at least on a basic level) to their cooperation and respect for the needs of the community. However their reasons for selling, actual feelings about the memorial, and cooperation are unknown.



**Table 5.9: Coney Island Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 9 Location: 12857 Woodward Ave. between Avalon and Glendale Streets, Highland Park, Michigan Place: Private Commercial Business Signpost Type: Violent Death Age at death: 21+		
<b>Description:</b>		
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Teddy Bears	> 9 teddy bears (only two are white) most are brown or multicolored	NO
Stuffed Animals	(1) Rabbit, (2) dogs, (1) M&M (blue/male),	NO
Alcoholic Beverage Bottles	(1) 40oz. beer bottle, (1) liter bottle of cognac (Remy Martin, VSOP), (1) ½ pint bottle of Seagram's Extra Dry Gin	NO
Candles	(4) candles = 3 small glass jars, 1 large glass tall candle w/ faded label	NO
Balloons	(5) deflated helium balloons	NO
Written Messages	Message #1: "RIP Shaw (unintelligible word) Peide"	NO
	Message #2: " 7 – Street 4 Life"	NO
Flowers	(1) bouquet of flowers (plastic and silk mixed) in a glass vase (2 pink, 3 white, and 3 off white)	NO
Miscellaneous	(1) Toy basketball (taped to pole above)	NO
<b>Deduction:</b> Sadness/Neutral I felt emotionally sad and spiritually neutral when standing in close proximity to this memorial. This memorial also felt a bit different from the others since it was directly in front of an open and operating restaurant. Its location seemed to lessen the sadness and communicative tragedy of the event.		

**Memorial #10 & 11: Jake Memorial: (Tireman and Wetherby Streets)**



**Figure: 5.58: Jake Memorial A, Autumn 2009**

The following two memorials as told to me by a group of men who were standing by two parked cars in the center of the street are for murder victims. I felt comfortable approaching the group because they all appeared to be over 50 years old and it has been my experience that older neighbors are more knowledgeable than younger ones as it relates to neighborhood comings and goings. The men told me that the mother of the deceased gives him a party every year on his birthday which occurs sometime during the summer months. Jake's approximate age was unknown, they said he was an adult. They also told me that a lot of men have been killed on this corner. When I asked if the memorials were both for Jake or two separate people, they did not know. They knew that some killings had occurred on the corner but they didn't know if both memorials were for Jake. Therefore, I have entitled the memorials Jake A and Jake B, but have otherwise represented them separately. Also, as you can see from figure 5.61, the memorials are a good distance apart, approximately 20 feet.



**Figure:5.59: Jake Memorial B: close up**



**Figure: 5.60: Jake Memorial B, Autumn 2009**



**Figure: 5.61: Jake Memorials A & B: approximately 20ft apart**



By the final year of the project, both memorials had been removed included the metal signpost from fig. 5.58. The only thing that remained of either memorial was the writing on the wall in fig. 5.63.



**Figure: 5.62: Jake Memorials removed, Autumn 2011**



**Figure: 5.63 Jake Memorial A, removed**

**Table 5.10: Jake Memorial A: Object Description/ Deduction**

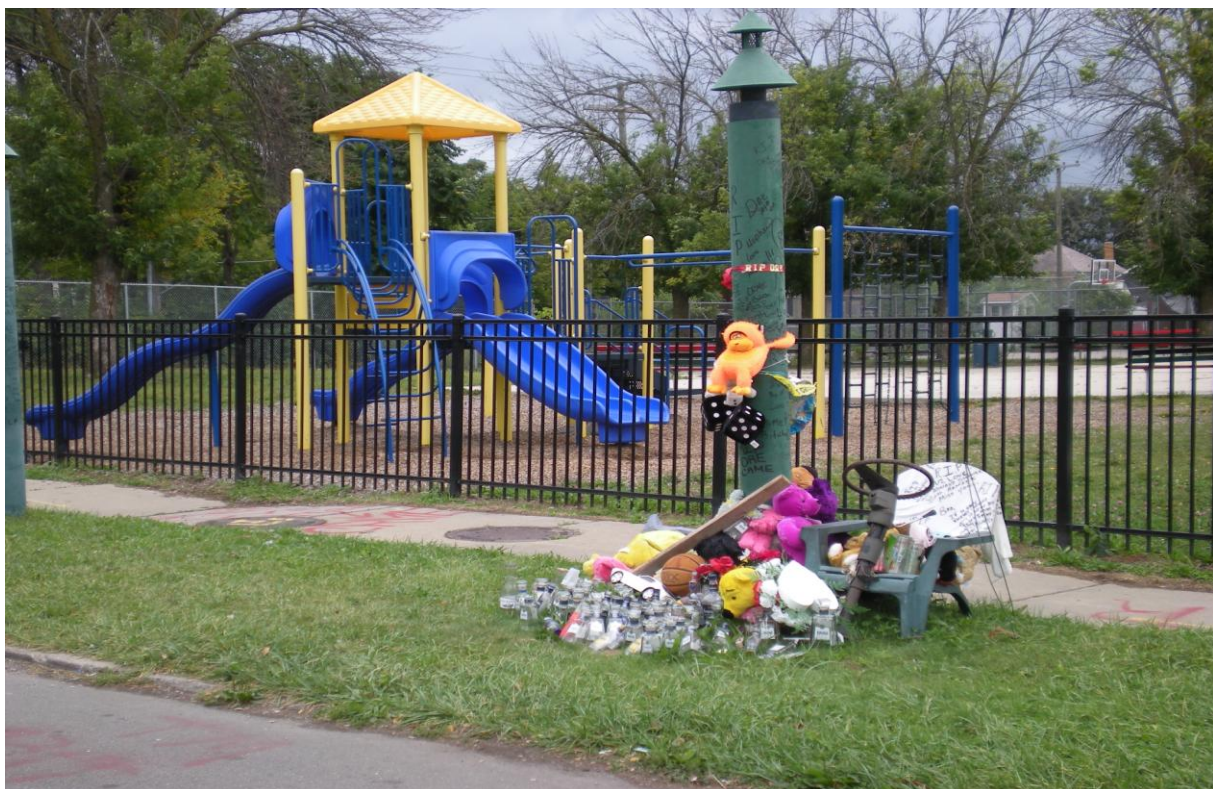
Memorial No. 10 Location: Tireman and Wetherby Streets, Detroit, Michigan Place: Public Signpost & Private –Commercial building (Michigan Steel Services Inc.) Type: Violent Death Age at death: unknown		
<b>Description:</b>		
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Written Messages	Message: #1 “RIP, Jake Said What UP, JBM, RIP, Joy Rd, Jo”  Message #2: “Rip JAKE, Jet2 Big Pat”	NO
Teddy Bears	(1) Large teddy bear, brown with red hearts that say “I love you”	NO
Balloons	(15) deflated balloons	NO
Stuffed Animals	> 10 large stuffed animals of various colors (2 dogs, 1 monkey, 1 lion, 1 male figure, others unknown)	NO
<b>Deduction:</b> Neutral/Neutral I felt both emotionally and spiritually neutral when standing in close proximity to this memorial.		

**Table 5.11: Jake Memorial B: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 11 Location: Tireman and Wetherby Streets, Detroit, Michigan Place: Public Signpost Type: Violent Death Age at death: unknown		
<b>Description:</b>		
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2009 Item Description,	Autumn 2011

<b>Table 5.11 (cont'd)</b>		
Stuffed Animals	(2) stuffed animals (1 large mouse, 1 unknown)	NO
Balloons	(1) deflated balloon	NO
Teddy Bears	(1) white teddy bear with red heart	NO
<b>Deduction:</b> Neutral/Neutral I felt both emotionally and spiritually neutral when standing in close proximity to this memorial.		

**Memorial #12: Dre Memorial:** (Monterey and Hamilton Streets, Highland Park, MI)



**Figure: 5.64 Dre Memorial, Autumn 2009**

Of all of the memorials in the study, this one has the largest number of individual material artifacts and is second to only the Amp memorial in its use of public space. The majority of the memorial was located on the south east corner of Monterey and Hamilton streets in Highland Park, Michigan. However, it is my speculation that other individual spray painted messages throughout the four block CRME area that contain combinations of “Dre”, “RIP”, and “CRME” within a single message, are both individual and collective additions to this one. When compared to memorials from other areas on Detroit’s West Side, the Highland Park memorials are unique in that they have large amounts of spray painted messages, and that they take up large amounts of geographical space, particularly private space. Both the Amp memorial and this one have utilized several residential homes to display bereavement related messages to the dead. Also, unlike the other memorials in this study, this commemoration is not located at or near the actual site of death.

According to local residents, the deceased was murdered at the intersection of Woodrow Wilson and Webb streets, which is situated three blocks south, and three blocks west, of the memorial site. A woman who was walking her dog in the adjacent park informed me that the memorial was constructed at this site because the deceased was a resident of Monterey Street, where the memorial resides. Another interesting aspect of this memorial is the number of liquor bottles incorporated in its design.





**Figure: 5.65 Dre Memorial, Autumn 2009: close up** (Text in the figure is not meant to be legible. It is for visual reference only. Please refer to the Table 5.12 for a description of this figure's written contents.)

While the pouring of libations is not unique to African peoples or cultures, in the African American context, the practice can be traced back to ancient cultural practices from West and Central Africa. In African American culture, libations, or a ritual pouring of liquid (usually alcohol) in memory of the dead, can be considered a cultural “retention” or hold-over from African antiquity. In practice, the liquid should be poured on the ground, grave, or if indoors in a church for example; a planter is a popular choice. The actual pouring is also accompanied by talking to the dead where the phrase “rest in peace” or calling the deceased by name is common,



along with any additional sentiments that the pourer would like to share with the dead. Partaking in, or drinking the remainder of the poured liquid, traditionally occurs after the offering has been made. In other words, the dead drink first. While Kwanza, funerals, and memorial celebrations are popular venues for the pouring of libations, Hip Hop culture has drastically increased the visual presence of the ritual through film and music videos. The following photographs and description table document the memorial's material objects and its subsequent removals.

**Autumn 2009**



**Figure: 5.66 Dre Memorial, side A**

**Autumn 2009**



**Figure: 5.67 Dre Memorial, side B**

(Text in the figures 5.66 and 5.67 are not meant to be legible. They are for visual reference only. Please refer to the Table 5.12 for a description of written contents.)

Autumn 2009



**Figure: 5.68 Dre Memorial, private property claimed for memorial use**

Autumn 2009



**Figure: 5.69 Dre Memorial, writing on sidewalk #1**

(Text in the figure is not meant to be legible. It is for visual reference only.  
Please refer to the Table 5.12 for a description of this figure's written contents.)



Autumn 2009



Figure: 5.70 Dre Memorial, writing on sidewalk #2

Autumn 2009



Figure: 5.71 Dre Memorial, writing on sidewalk #3

Autumn 2009



Figure: 5.72 Dre Memorial, writing on sidewalk #4

**Autumn 2011**



**Figure: 5.73: Dre Memorial, Autumn 2011:  
removed**

**Autumn 2011**



**Figure: 5.74: Dre Memorial, Autumn 2011:  
writing on sidewalk #2 faded**

**Autumn 2011**



**Figure: 5.75: Dre Memorial, Autumn 2011:  
writing on sidewalk #3 faded**

**Autumn 2011**



**Figure: 5.76: Dre Memorial, Autumn 2011:  
writing on sidewalk #4 faded**

## Autumn 2011



**Figure: 5.77: Dre Memorial, Autumn 2011: private property**

**Table 5.12: Dre Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 12 Location: Dre Memorial: Monterey and Hamilton Streets (HP), Highland Park, Michigan Place: Public light pole Type: Violent Death Age at death: 18 years		
<b>Description:</b>		
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Stuffed Animals	(1) Extra large Scooby Doo stuffed dog (brown, w/ black spots)	NO
	(1) Extra large duck (yellow)	NO

<b>Table 5.12 (cont'd)</b>	(1) rabbit (small, brown)	NO
	(1) bunny (blue, w/ yellow barrettes at base of ears)	NO
	(1) Mickey Mouse (small, red, black, and white gloves)	NO
	(1) dog (small, light brown)	NO
	(1) Monkey (medium, orange)	NO
Teddy Bears	(1) Winnie the Pooh bear, medium sized	NO
	(1) teddy bear (large, purple)	NO
	(3) teddy bears (pink, small)	NO
	(1) care bear (small, blue with moon on belly)	NO
	(1) Extra large bear (purple)	NO
Balloons	(2) Deflated balloons (tied to light post)	NO
Flowers	(1) bunch red artificial roses w/ baby's breath	NO
	(1) bunch of White artificial flowers	NO
	(1) small bunch of artificial mixed flowers (yellow, white, pink, purple)	NO
	(1) Artificial floral heart wreath, colors unknown (funeral style)	NO
Liquor Bottles	(>30) Jose Cuervo 1800 Silver Tequila (pint size bottles)	NO
	(1) Jose Cuervo 1800 Silver Tequila (fifth size bottle)	NO



<b>Table 5.12 (cont'd)</b>	(2) 1800 Select Silver Tequila 100 Proof (Pint size bottle)	NO
	(> 3) Seagram's Extra Smooth Vodka (pint size bottles)	NO
	(1) Ciroc Vodka (pint size)	NO
	(1) Ciroc Vodka (fifth size)	NO
	(1) Svedka Vodka (pint size) (2) Martell V.S. Cognac (pint size bottles)	NO
	(2) Paul Masson Wine (carafe)	NO
	(1) 20oz juice bottle, plastic	NO
Cups	(2) plastic cups (clear)	NO
Candles	(7) glass tall candles (3 red, and 4 unknown)	NO
	(1) candle in glass fat jar (red)	NO
Misc Objects	(1) Official size basketball	NO
	(1) Toy car, white, approx. 12"	NO
	(1) wooden 2x4 plank	NO
	(1) automobile steering column with steering wheel	NO
	(1) Large pair of stuffed dice, black with white dots	NO
	(1) lawn chair, green plastic	NO
	(1) Spray paint can	NO
Written Messages	<i>On T-Shirt:</i> "R.I.P Cuz Love Always Shanie - N- Armani Miss You"	NO (shirt removed)

<p><b>Table 5.12</b> <b>(cont'd)</b></p>	<p>“RIP Nephew Auntie will really miss you”</p> <p>“Bro, If you only knew!...(undecipherable)</p> <p>“R.I.P. DRE Always be missed”</p> <p>(unknown expression) signed “Grand Mom” <i>On light post #1:</i></p> <p>RIP Dre</p> <p>“RIP Dre”</p> <p>“RIP BIG BRO”</p> <p>“RIP Dre” (red satin ribbon tied around the pole w/ a bow and gold letters)</p> <p>“Crazy Pook The King of HP”</p> <p>1-4-1991</p> <p>8-20-2009</p> <p>“RIP DRE CRME”</p> <p><i>On light post #2:</i></p> <p>“R.I.P. Pookie I Love U So Much Dre BF”</p> <p>“BF4ever, Simone –N- Pookie”</p> <p>“R.I.P. DRE Big Ray A.K.A. Rizzy”</p> <p>“CRME DRE REAL NIGGA DO REAL THANGS”</p>	<p>YES** (all messages fading/ weathered)</p> <p>YES** (all messages fading/ weathered)</p>
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<b>Table 5.12 (cont'd)</b>	<p><i>On vacant house across the street (written in red spray paint, unless noted):</i></p> <p>“U Will Alwayz BE Missed” (in black)</p> <p>“R.I.P. DRE CRME MoB”</p> <p>“RIP DRE”</p> <p>“ M.O.B. RIP DRE”</p> <p>“RIR DRE”</p> <p>“CRME BOYZ M.O.B.”</p> <p>“RIP D'RE” (in black)</p> <p><i>On sidewalk:</i></p> <p>“U Will Live trew CRME” (arrow points to the ME in CRME in red)</p> <p>“C.R.M.E (in red) –U- -R- TRULY MISS Tamara”(in black)</p> <p>“R.I.P. Kristan” (in black)</p> <p>“R.I.P LIL LUZ DRE” (with dice in both red and black)</p> <p>“R.I.P DRE Big Baby Hp 100 year”</p> <p>“CRME” (in red bubble lettering)</p> <p>“R.I.P LOVE ALWAYS DRE 2009 ALWAYS MISSED CRME HOOD NIGGA”</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES** (all messages fading/ weathered)</p>
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<b>Table 5.12 (cont'd)</b>		
<p><b>Deduction:</b> Frightened/ Uneasy:  This memorial had an emotionally frightening and spiritually uneasiness about it. Like the Amp memorial it felt like I was walking into a world of death since it was so large, and covered almost every surface of an entire street corner.</p>		

### **Memorial # 13: McGraw St. Memorial:** (McGraw and Daniels Streets)

I was present during the attempted construction of this memorial. I say attempted because the winds were extremely high and the two women working to keep memorial objects in place had to continuously readjust items due to weather conditions. Notice the relocation of memorial objects from near the telephone pole in figure 5.78 to the parking lot in figures 5.79 and 5.83.

#### **Autumn 2009**



**Figure: 5.78: McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009, vertical support attempt**

#### **Autumn 2009**



**Figure: 5.79: McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009, items moved to parking lot**

As the women brought out items from a nearby home, materials were blowing into the street. They then moved the memorial further back toward the center of the parking lot so as to

not have items destroyed by McGraw St. traffic. This explains why some memorials may not be erected on the actual site of death. Sometimes issues of practicality dictate memorial design. Also, the women told me that their friend had been shot and killed in the parking lot of figure 5.82 in the early morning hours of November 8, 2009 around 3am. However, through my observations, I could see that they initially wanted the memorial close to the street, but ended up settling on the parking lot. The women's desire to have the memorial near the street as opposed to the parking lot and actual location of death, suggests that memorial performance seems to be more important than the actual spot where death occurred. I returned to the area a week later in an attempt to see the completed memorial. However, it was not updated, and remained as seen in figure 5.81. I was surprised when I returned in the fall of 2011, to find the memorial completely removed. I thought that I might find a more permanent and updated memorial but it had been removed and the writings on the parking lot pavement was faded in color as seen in figures 5.84-86.

### **Autumn 2009**



**Figure: 5.80: McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009: close up**



**Figure: 5.81: McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009: completed**

**Autumn 2009**



**Figure: 5.82: McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009: parking lot view A**

**Autumn 2009**



**Figure: 5.83: McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2009: parking lot view B**

(Text in the figures 5.82 and 5.83 are not meant to be legible. They are for visual reference only. Please refer to the Table 5.13 for a description of written contents.)





**Figure: 5.84: McGraw St. Memorial,  
Autumn 2011: parking lot view A, faded**



**Figure: 5.85: McGraw St. Memorial,  
Autumn 2011: parking lot view B, faded**



**Figure: 5.86: McGraw St. Memorial, Autumn 2011: removed**

**Table 5.13: McGraw St. Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 13 Location: McGraw St. Memorial: McGraw and Daniels Streets (SWD), Detroit, Michigan Place: Private parking lot Type: Violent Death Age at death: 25- 30+ years		
<b>Description:</b>		
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Photograph	Picture of the deceased with the caption: “DESCANZA EN PAZ” (REST IN PEACE)	NO
Teddy Bears	(1) medium sized teddy bear brown	NO
Flag	(1) large Dominican Republic flag	NO
Flowers	(1) Dozen live white roses in a large vase with water  (2) live Bamboo plants in vases with water  (1) bunch of artificial flowers white in glass vase with rock inside  (1) bunch of white and blue artificial flowers (blue roses and white lilies)  (1) bunch of white and grey artificial flowers  (1) vase with live bamboo and five live yellow roses in water	NO (all flowers removed)
Candles	(24) tall glass candles with various saints and religious figures on them	NO

<b>Table 5.13 (cont'd)</b>	(3) glass white bowl candles	NO
Liquor	(1) small plastic cup with approximately 2 ounces of brown liquor inside	NO
Misc Items	(1) Florida Water bottle (empty)  (1) plastic lawn chair  (1) medium sized cardboard box (with empty glass liquor bottles inside)  (1) wooden TV stand with white cloth  (1) bunch of fresh vegetation (herbs?)  (1) lighter (fire starter)  (4) large concrete masonry blocks	NO  NO  NO  NO  NO  NO
Written Messages	<i>On parking lot pavement:</i>  “R.I.P EL MAESTRO” (R.I.P The Master)  “NUNCA TE OLVIDAMOS” (we will never forget you)  “11/08/2009”	YES** (all messages fading/ weathered)
<b>Deduction:</b> Helpless/Fearful Since I was present during the construction of this memorial it was painful to watch the two women battle the strong winds to build it. I felt emotionally helpless and unsure about what to say or do. Spiritually, I felt uneasy and fearful.		

#### **Memorial #14: Bassett St. POMC Memorial: (A Mother's Memorial)**

This memorial was constructed by one of the mothers I met in 2009 while attending POMC meetings. The memorial is for her son and she informed me that he was shot at the gas station in figure 5.92 while sitting in his car. He tried to drive away after the shooting. However, his car drifted across the street and struck the telephone pole in figure 5.87 where he subsequently died. When asked why she built the memorial she told me that it gave her a sense of slight control over the grief she was experiencing. She also told me that she updated the memorial on major holidays and on his birthday. When I returned to the site in 2011, the memorial had been removed as shown in figures 5.90 and 5.91.



**Figure: 5.87: Bassett St. POMC Memorial, Autumn 2009**





**Figure: 5.88: Bassett St. POMC Memorial, Autumn 2009: side A**



**Figure: 5.89: Bassett St. POMC Memorial, Autumn 2009: side B**



**Figure: 5.90: Bassett St. POMC Memorial, Autumn 2011: removed**



**Figure: 5.91: Bassett St. POMC Memorial, Autumn 2011: new tree added**



**Figure: 5.92: Bassett St. POMC Memorial, gas station where the shooting occurred**

**Table 5.14: Bassett St. POMC Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 14 Location: Bassett and Schaefer Streets, Detroit, Michigan Place: Public telephone pole Type: Violent Death Age at death: unknown		
<b>Description:</b>		
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Balloons	(3) deflated balloons	NO
Crosses	(2) white crosses	NO
Teddy Bears	(8) small teddy bears of	NO

<b>Table 5.14 (cont'd)</b>	various colors (2 white, 1 red, 1 light brown, 1 grey and white, 1 yellow,	
Stuffed Animals	(1) stuffed red heart	NO
Misc Items	(1) Ghost decoration with "Boo" on it	NO
	(1) butterfly, yellow	NO
Flowers	(5) bunches of artificial white roses at memorial base  (5) bunches of artificial red roses at memorial base  (1) bunch of artificial red roses on post  (1) small bunch of artificial red carnations on post  (1) small bunch of artificial orange and purple daisies on post	NO (all flowers removed)
<b>Deduction:</b> Sad/ Neutral I felt both sad and spiritually neutral when standing in close proximity to this memorial. I had spoken with the mother of the victim prior to seeing the memorial so my emotional reaction to this memorial may be different than if I had discovered it like the others in the study.		



**Memorial # 15: Southwest Memorial:** (Wagner St. Between Chopin and Cecil Streets)



**Figure: 5.93: Southwest Memorial, Autumn 2011**

Several neighbors that live near this memorial informed me that it is for a man that was shot to death and killed at the location of the memorial. One woman told me that the man was accused of raping a 14 year old girl from the neighborhood and was subsequently killed by the police. However, I was unable however to locate police records to verify the circumstances surrounding the death of the deceased. Since the memorial was added the final year of the study, the material data is only presented for the single year of 2011.

Autumn 2011



**Figure: 5.94: Southwest Memorial, street-view**

Autumn 2011



**Figure: 5.95: Southwest Memorial, curb-view**

**Table 5.15: Southwest Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 15 Location: Wagner St. Between Chopin and Cecil Streets (SWD), Detroit, Michigan Place: Public roadside Type: Violent Death Age at death: 28 years		
<b>Description:</b>		
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Written Messages	N/A	<i>On concrete slab memorial base with cut out for figurines:</i>  “R.I.P J. Angel F 3-2-82 - 7-29-10”  “Love Smokey”  “RIP (undecipherable)”
Flowers	N/A	(1) bunch of flowers (artificial roses 8 pink and 6 white with a pink satin bow and fern leaves)

<b>Table 5.15 (cont'd)</b>		(1) extra small clump of light blue flowers (1) small assortment of artificial flowers, carnation, lilies, (red, orange, purple, white, and yellow with fern leaves) with purple bow
Teddy Bears	N/A	(1) extra small white teddy bear (face down on right side of memorial base)  (1) extra small white teddy bear (on its side to left side of memorial base)
Flags	N/A	(1) American flag (placed right)  (1) Mexican flag (placed on left)
Cross	N/A	(1) large crucifix (wooden with brass colored Jesus and "IHS" at center)  (1) small crucifix (wooden with vanilla colored Jesus)
Figurines	N/A	(1) a small bust of Jesus on the left center of memorial  (1) a small bust of a cherub at the center of memorial  (1) a small bust of woman (Virgin Mary?) at the right center of memorial
<b>Deduction:</b> Neutral/Eerie I felt emotionally neutral when seeing the memorial. However, this memorial had an eerie feeling when standing in close proximity.		



**Memorial #16: I-96 Memorial: (I-96 and McGraw St.)**



**Figure: 5.96: I-96 Memorial, Autumn 2011**

I encountered this memorial the last year of my research while I was on my way to photograph the Papolo Memorial. The memorial is located on the same street as the Papolo Memorial, but its location is not considered Southwest Detroit. This area of Detroit is colloquially referred to as the West Grand Blvd. area. Historically, the area was once a neighborhood for upper class African-Americans that had moved from Black Bottom on Detroit's lower east side. However when the I-96 freeway was constructed it displaced many of

the Black business owners, and disrupted the economic stronghold African-Americans had in the area. Today, the neighborhood is considered lower-working-class or poor.

The memorial is for a woman who died about 10 feet from its location. According to a woman who lives down the street from the site, she actually died on McGraw. However, the woman's sisters chose to construct the site on the utility pole in figure 5.96, at the intersection of McGraw and the freeway. The deceased died as a result of a traffic accident where two young men, ages unknown, reportedly stole a military vehicle from the Michigan National Guard Armory located on the other side of the freeway at McGraw and Grand River Ave (see figures 5.98-5.99) and drove it through the neighborhood for a joy ride. The men hit the deceased and her friend as they approached the intersection. She died at the scene; but her friend, another woman, survived after several weeks in the hospital's intensive care unit.

One of the interesting things about this memorial is its location. Like the McGraw St. and Dre Memorials, visibility seemed to be important to the builders in this memorial. The family chose to put the memorial on the corner, even though that is not the location of death. Also, they chose to hang the stuffed animals at eye level while standing, instead of at the base of the pole. Most memorials throughout the city are at eye level unlike the Dre Memorial in Highland Park, or those found in Southwest Detroit, which is less than five miles from the site. While this memorial is spatially closer to those in Southwest Detroit, it does not bear any similarities as both of the other memorials were located away from the corner and directly on the ground. This is important, because this memorial shows that while sites are similar within close geographical distances, other factors like ethnicity, religion, and nationality are also important.



**Autumn 2011**



**Figure: 5.97: I-96 Memorial, close up**

**Autumn 2011**



**Figure: 5.98: I-96 Memorial:  
Michigan National Guard building**

**Autumn 2011**

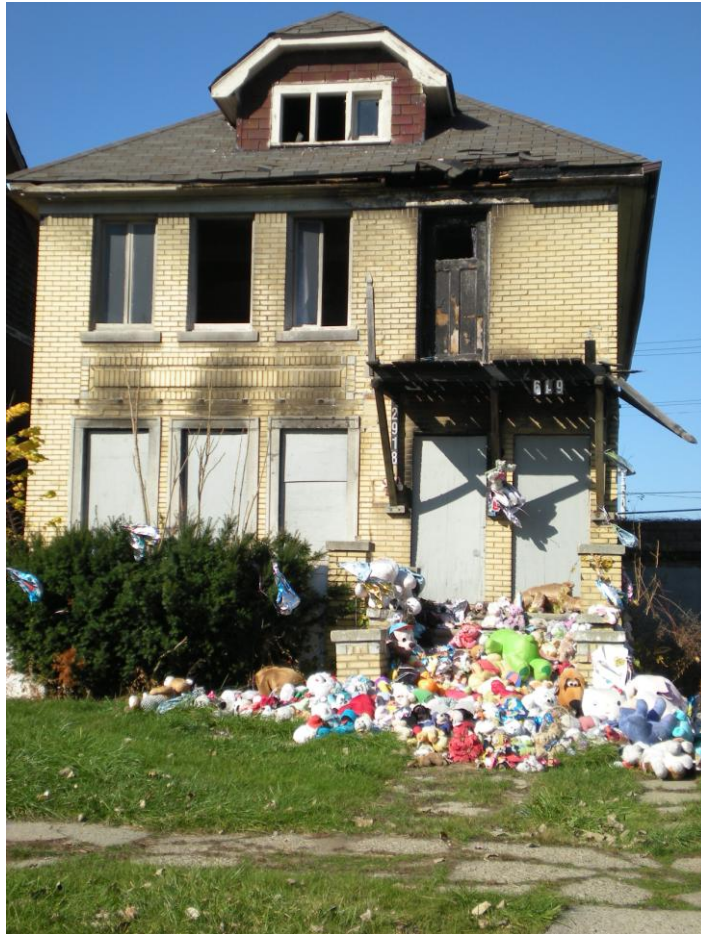


**Figure: 5.99: I-96 Memorial:  
National Guard parking lot**

**Table 5.16: I-96 Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 16 Location: Intersection of I-96 and McGraw St., Detroit, Michigan Place: Public electrical pole Type: Accidental Death Age at death: unknown		
<b>Description:</b>		
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Balloons	N/A	(6) deflated balloons
Teddy Bears	N/A	(1) medium sized blue teddy bear  (1) medium sized brown teddy bear  (1) small light brown teddy bear  (1) small brown teddy bear
Stuffed Animals	N/A	(1) large orange and yellow stuffed animal (unknown type)  (1) small Sponge Bob Square Pants  (1) small Scooby Doo
<b>Deduction:</b> Neutral/Neutral I felt both emotionally and spiritually neutral when standing in close proximity to this memorial.		

**Memorial #17: Child Memorial:** (2900 Waverly St. between Wildemere and Lawton Streets)



**Figure: 5.100: Child Memorial, Autumn 2011**

The memorial above is for 5 year old Mariha Trenice Smith. Mariha's death made national news as the little girl was missing for more than a week before it was confirmed through autopsy reports that she was strangled, beaten and her body burned beyond recognition in a fire set to the then vacant two family flat located at 2900 Waverly Street in Detroit. According to news sources, her mother reported the child missing on Sunday July 31, 2011, and that same day, fire fighters found the charred remains of a little girl matching Mariha's description in the structure of figure 5.100. Darnell Cheatham, the boyfriend of the child's aunt was later arrested



for her murder, and now awaits trial. This memorial is important for several reasons. While many memorials that contain stuffed animals and child related plush toys are believed to be for children, most of them are not. Therefore, I chose to include an actual child memorial for material comparison. Since this memorial is the only one of this study for a child, it is obviously limited in its ability to speak to overall material differences that may occur between adult and child public memorials. Nonetheless, this memorial may offer a glimpse into material selection as many of the stuffed animals pictured in figure 5.101 are known animated cartoon characters which sets them apart from the more generic selections used in other memorials. Since the memorial was added the final year of the study, the material data is only presented for the single year of 2011.

#### **Autumn 2011**



**Figure: 5.101: Child Memorial, close up**

**Table 5.17: Child Memorial: Object Description/ Deduction**

Memorial No. 17 Location: 2900 Waverly St. between Wildemere and Lawton Streets, Detroit, Michigan Place: Private residential home Type: Violent Death Age at death: 5 years		
<b>Description:</b>		
Items left on the Memorial	Autumn 2009	Autumn 2011
Teddy Bears	N/A	>20 teddy bears of various sizes and colors
Stuffed Animals	N/A	>30 stuffed animals of various sizes and colors  (1) Winnie the Pooh bear  (1) Large Hello Kitty  (1) small Minnie Mouse  (1) small Mickey Mouse  (1) Large Mickey Mouse  (1) small Teletubby (Laa Laa)
Balloons	N/A	>16 deflated balloons
Flowers	N/A	(1) artificial poinsettia plant
Candles	N/A	(2) candles (white and yellow)  (1) glass candle holder upright  (1) small glass candle holder
<b>Deduction:</b> Deep Sadness/ Uneasy I knew how the deceased died prior to seeing this memorial and thus, I had felt a deep sadness prior, during, and after viewing it. There was also a spiritual uneasiness about it.		

## Conclusion

The quote that opened this chapter was taken from an interview that I conducted during the preliminary phase of this project in 2006. At that time, I was collecting pre-dissertation data and I interviewed a man in his early 30s who had lost a friend, an African American male in his mid twenties, to gun violence for which a memorial was constructed. His friend was shot to death while sitting in a car parked in front of his own house. According to my interviewee, the gun violence and subsequent murder of his friend was the result of a rival gang retaliation that occurred within their Southwest Detroit neighborhood. When I asked him why he and his friends felt the need to create a memorial for their friend, he stated “Me personally, I don’t want to even see a flower bed in that spot.... You know how people put stuff up and it’s like whatever... who was dis nigga? They act like nothing happened. Stuff is put there so that people don’t just come and act like nothing happened.” His sentiments are echoed throughout many of the memorials presented in this chapter. In this way, these memorials seem to be less about memory in the traditional sense and more about making sure that the deaths of their loved ones are not treated as insignificant occurrences. Therefore, these memorials also function as evidence of crimes committed, material proof of lives lived, and physical demonstrations of love, mourning, and remembrance so that those of us who know what happened don’t forget and those of us who do not, acknowledge the loss of life and those in pain as a result.

While many of them share similarities in construction, I have found that the greatest similarities exist within small spatial distances. Meaning, the memorials presented here seem to be most similar to others within close geographical proximity and least like those located further away. However as a collective, there are also some general similarities. First, there is a preferred use of large quantities of stuffed animals. Second, with the exception of those located

in Southwest Detroit, most memorials do not have overtly religious symbolism as a component of memorial composition. For example, two of the three memorials from Southwest Detroit use crosses as primary, or fore-fronted and centered objects. However, none of the other memorials in this study utilize crosses at all. Third, with the exception of written language, the majority of the following memorials are comprised of commercially manufactured materials. Lastly, I have noticed a strong preference for written messages, mostly written to the deceased; but it is important to remember that these messages are also incorporated into the larger performance of the memorial as a whole which is thereby performed for the living as well as the dead. The next chapter will explore the material components of the memorials in an attempt to understand how these memorials perform mourning, mediate tragedy, and represent African American material culture in Detroit.



## CHAPTER 6

### MEMORIAL PATTERNS: MEMORIAL DATA (PART II)

The memorials in this chapter have been coded and analyzed using the following schema:

**Table 6.1: Independent and Dependent Variable Table**

<i>Independent Variables:</i>	<i>Dependent Variables:</i>
<b>Characteristics of Detroit Memorials:</b>  <i>Memorials (violent death)</i>  <i>Memorials (accidental non-violent death)</i>  <i>Spatial Distance between memorials &amp; Memorial design</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Southwest Detroit</li><li>○ Highland Park</li><li>○ Dexter Ave.</li><li>○ General West Side</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Religious Symbols</li><li>• Written Messages</li><li>• Stuffed Animals</li><li>• Birth and/or Death Dates</li><li>• Balloons</li><li>• Flowers</li><li>• Flags</li><li>• Candles</li><li>• Alcoholic Beverage related materials</li></ul>
<b>Analysis of Most Popular Material Objects:</b>  <i>Stuffed Animals</i> <i>Flowers &amp; Balloons</i> <i>Written Messages</i>	

#### Characteristics of Detroit Memorials:

In Detroit<sup>20</sup>, memorial type, spatial distance, and gender seem to have a notable effect on memorial design. Also, memorials created by African Americans differ in appearance from

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<sup>20</sup> It is important to note here that this is a qualitative study. While this research highlights observations in memorial patterns among the memorials presented, my sample size is too small to be statistically significant.

those of other groups. In the previous chapter, I created a data chart for the memorials that individually listed each memorial's object composition. Here in this chapter, I have highlighted the most frequently used objects from the previous chapter's data charts and compared them to each of the memorials denoting an objects presence with an "X." In the following tables, I have placed a small "x" in the Stuffed Animal column if the memorial only had a single small teddy bear and therefore, the stuffed animals were not a major component of the memorial. Tables have been produced across memorial type and location for which some interesting patterns have emerged:

**Table 6.2: Memorial Compare Table (Accidental/ non-violent Death)**

Memorial Name:	Religious Symbols	Written Messages	Stuffed Animals	Birth & Death Dates	Ball- oons	Flo- wers	Flags	Can- dles	Al- cohol
PaPoose Memorial		X	X	X					
Twin Memorial		X	x		X				
Dollar Store Memorial						X			
Stop Sign Memorial					X	X			
White Bear Memorial			X			X			
I-96 Memorial			X		X				
Papolo Memorial	X	X	x	X		X	X	X	X
Totals:	1	3	5	2	3	4	1	1	1

**Table 6.3: Memorial Compare Table (Violent Death)**

Memorial Name:	Religious Symbols	Written Messages	Stuffed Animals	Birth & Death Dates	Balloons	Flowers	Flags	Candles	Alcohol
Amp Memorial		X	X	X	X				X
Mother's Memorial	X		X		X	X			
Jake Memorial A		X	X		X				
Jake Memorial B			X		X				
Southwest Memorial	X	X	x	X		X	X		
McGraw Street Memorial		X	x	X		X	X	X	X
Child Memorial			X		X	X		X	
Coney Island Memorial		X	X		X	X		X	X
Malice Green Memorial	X	X		X		X			
Dre Memorial		X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Totals:	3	7	9	5	7	7	2	4	4

Seven of the seventeen memorials presented are for victims of traffic accidents and thus, non-violent death; while, the remaining ten memorials are for persons who were shot to death and therefore, have died violently. If I give full value to both small and large X's in both accidental and violent death tables, the most popular items used in order are:

1. Stuffed animals
2. Flowers
3. Written messages & Balloons (equal)

#### 4. Birth and Death dates

However, after the five above materials have been used, the memorials diverge by type:

##### Violent Memorials

- 5. Candles and Alcohol (equal)
- 6. Religious Symbols
- 7. Flags

##### Accidental Memorials

- 5. Candles, Alcohol, Religious Symbols, Flags (equal)
- \*(*this only appears in the Papalo Memorial*)

However, if only the memorials that contain 3 or more stuffed animals are given the full value of 1 for each “X”, then in the case of accidental death memorials, flowers would become the most popular material object with written messages, stuffed animals, and balloons all tied for second. The remaining material contributions remain the same. Likewise, the adjustment for violent death memorials would make written messages, stuffed animals, balloons, and flowers an equal tie for first place in terms of material frequency.

**Table 6.4: Southwest Detroit Compare Table**

Memorial Name:	Religious Symbols	Written Messages	Stuffed Animals	Birth & Death Dates	Ball-oons	Flo-wers	Flags	Can-dles	Al-cohol
<i>Southwest Detroit</i>									
PaPolo Memorial #2	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	X
McGraw Street Memorial #13	X	X	x	X		X	X	X	X
Southwest Memorial #15	X	X	x	X		X	X		

Memorials #2, #13, and #15 are all in the neighborhood of South West Detroit (SWD). As you can see from Table 6.4, the memorials are very similar in design. Memorials # 13 and #15 are for murder victims and #2 is for a traffic accident, yet there appears to be an analogous presentation of materials for all three memorials. For example, all of the memorials from SWD have crosses on them. This is a notable difference from the rest of the memorials throughout the study, where all but one, the Mother's Memorial, are absent of crosses or other religious symbols. In addition, each of the SWD memorials has a nation flag in its design to represent the ethnicity or heritage of the deceased. Lastly, the use of teddy bears or other stuffed animals are kept to a minimum. All three of the SWD memorials had no more than two very small teddy bears present. Lastly, while all three memorials had written messages within their designs, the messages were primarily addressed to the viewing public and were similar to those that appear on tombstones, with the birth and death date, name of the deceased, and a single sentiment to rest in peace (R.I.P.).

**Table 6.5: Highland Park Compare Table**

Memorial Name:	Religious Symbols	Written Messages	Stuffed Animals	Birth & Death Dates	Ball- oons	Flo- wers	Flags	Can- dles	Al- cohol
<b><i>Highland Park</i></b>									
Amp Memorial #3		X	X	X	X				X
Dre Memorial #12		X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Coney Island Memorial #9		x	X		X	X		X	X

The Highland Park (HP) memorials when compared with those in SWD incorporate a great deal more stuffed animals into their design. In fact, almost all of the memorials outside of SWD, use stuffed animals as a primary memorial object. However HP memorials are unique for their usage of alcohol related objects and written messages. Also, these memorials tend to be the largest in size. The Amp Memorial and the Dre Memorial each had several spray painted messages on multiple buildings, sidewalks, and on private property. All three of the HP memorials utilize private spaces and with the exception of the Coney Island Memorial, these memorials tend to have a sprawling or widespread appearance when compared to the more contained style of the others throughout Detroit's West Side. Lastly, since all of the HP memorials are for victims of violent death, it is unknown if an accident related memorial would look differently.

**Table 6.6: Dexter Ave. Compare Table**

Memorial Name:	Religious Symbols	Written Messages	Stuffed Animals	Birth & Death Dates	Ball- oons	Flo- wers	Flags	Can- dles	Al- cohol
<i><b>Dexter Ave Memorials</b></i>									
Child Memorial #17			X		X	x		X	
Dollar Store Memorial #5						X			
Stop Sign Memorial #7					X	X			

<b>Table 6.6 (cont'd)</b>									
White Bear Memorial #6			X			X			

Unlike the HP and SWD memorials, all but the Child's Memorial in the Dexter Ave. area are for traffic accidents. As I explained, the memorials for traffic related deaths tend to have less variation in material components and fewer materials than those for violent death. Therefore, in comparison to the HP and SWD memorials which are mostly violent death related and frequently utilize 8 to 9 primary material components respectively, the memorials in the Dexter Ave. area tend to be smaller in size and only use 2 to 3 material variations. However, a distinguishing characteristic of these memorials is that they, again with the exception of the Child's Memorial, utilize vertical supports in their design, with stop signs and utility poles being the most common. All three of the SWD memorials were constructed fairly low to ground and do not use any type of vertical support; while, the HP memorials utilize both vertical and ground support as well as private residential and commercial structures. Another unique aspect of the Dexter Ave. memorials is their lack of written messages. None of the memorials in this area had messages written to the public or the deceased. Lastly, it is important to note that the Twin Memorial (#4) is also located on Dexter Avenue. However, I did not include it with these memorials as it is farther away and not generally considered by Detroiters to be within the same neighborhood. Therefore, I have chosen to include the Twin Memorial in the general West Side Detroit section.



**Table 6.7: West Side Detroit (General) Compare Table**

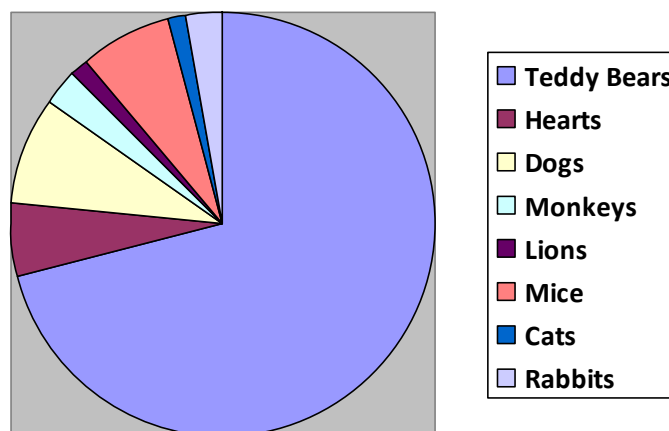
Memorial Name:	Religious Symbols	Written Messages	Stuffed Animals	Birth & Death Dates	Ball-oons	Flo-wers	Flags	Can-dles	Al-cohol
<i><b>West Side General</b></i>									
Malice Green #1 Memorial		X		X		X			
I-96 Memorial #16			X		X				
Twin Memorial #4		X	x		X				
Jake Memorial A #10		X	X		X				
Jake Memorial B #11			X		X				
Bassett St. PMOC Memorial #14	X		X		X	X			
PaPoose Memorial #8		X	X	X					

The remaining memorials are scattered throughout the West Side of Detroit (WSD) and since they are not located in a single neighborhood, I decided to place them together in a single chart in an effort to understand the general make up of memorials in the city. As shown in Table 6.7, they have larger spatial distances than others from the aforementioned neighborhoods, yet

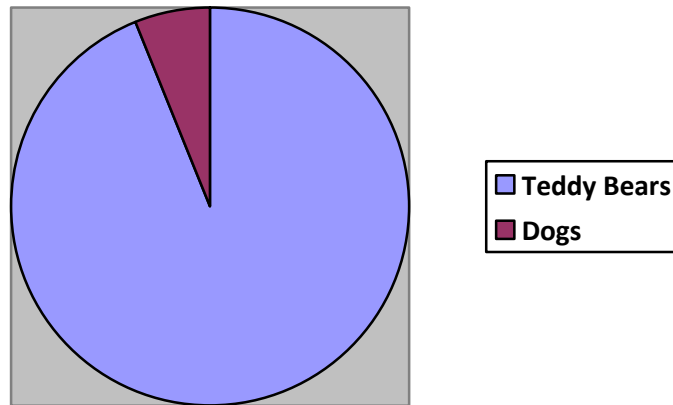
they too seem to have a similar pattern of material design. Interestingly enough, of the seven memorials in this section, four of them are for violent death yet this does not seem to have a large impact on memorial design deviation from those associated with traffic accidents. I have no explanation for this except that the primary components of these memorials are also the same ones generally used in the memorials from other areas. In general, Detroit memorials most often have stuffed animals, balloons, and written messages and the memorials presented here are no exception.

### Stuffed Animals

As I mentioned earlier, stuffed, or plush toy animals are popular material objects used in roadside memorial constructions in Detroit. The object data charts from Chapter 5, were entered into HyperRESEARCH 3.5.1 and animals were coded by type and counted to determine the most popular stuffed animal selections. These categories were further divided by type of death. The following pie charts illustrate the most popular choice of animals used in Detroit memorial constructions.



**Figure 6.1: Stuffed Animals by type (Violent Death)**



**Figure 6.2: Stuffed Animals by Type (Non-Violent Death)**

While this analysis was successful in identifying the frequency of stuffed animals and usage across memorial type, it cannot explain why people use them, or what the materials mean to those who choose to add them to commemorations for the dead. Nor does the analysis tell us what people think about them or feel when they view them in public commemorations. Whereas the first two questions are outside of the scope of this study, when interviews were coded for teddy bears, it seems that the condition of stuffed animals has a large effect on what people think about the memorial as a whole. In fact, very few responses related to thoughts about memorials were absent of an opinion related to the conditions of teddy bears on the street. The following quote sums up many of the general attitudes among Detroiters regarding street memorials:

I know that it's gone to get dirty, but my thought is, it don't even look like nobody ever came back. You put it out here that one time and that was it.... So, if you gone set up this memorial, cause that's what you doin', setting up this memorial for this person that passed, come back and refresh it, a teddy bear cost a dollar at the dollar store. Don't make it old, cause you cared enough to even put it out here, whoever did it. So care enough to keep it up.

Since most memorials in Detroit are primarily comprised of stuffed animals which are often exposed to the elements of nature, their appearance is a popular topic of conversation when discussed among Detroiters. Secondly, stuffed animal usage, or lack thereof, is a primary distinguisher between SWD memorials and the rest of the city's West Side. The SWD memorials use of the cross and nation flags in roadside memorials reflects both the religious beliefs of the mostly Catholic Latino community as well as ethnic divisions between community groups, while large quantities of stuffed animals, and written messages to the deceased seem to be a trademark among the primarily African American majority throughout HP and the rest of the city's West Side. Lastly, where memorial longevity seems to be a focus among memorial builders in SWD, where memorials are primarily compiled of objects made of wood, cement, and plastic; non-SWD residents seem to construct more "temporary" memorials. For example, if longevity were a concern among builders outside of SWD, objects would be replaced as in the Papalo Memorial or repositioned as in the PaPoose Memorial. However, most of these memorials are destroyed by nature or later removed by human intervention after the bears have lost their aesthetic values.

### *Flowers & Balloons*

Flowers and balloons are also a major component of roadside memorials in Detroit. Local dollar stores sell artificial flowers and helium balloons for \$1.00 per flower bunch or per balloon, see figs. 6.3 and 6.4.



**Figure 6.3: Flowers and balloons from a local dollar store in Detroit**



**Figure 6.4: Dollar store flower selection in Detroit**

As an interesting side note, all of the memorials for males who died in traffic accidents have flowers. However, neither of the two memorials for women who died similarly had flowers on them. Since the sample size for women was significantly smaller than that for men, it is unknown if the lack of flowers is related to gendered relationships between the living and the deceased, the sex of the departed, or object removals. Likewise, the Child Memorial which has well over 70 objects also does not have flowers as a main element. This memorial only has one artificial poinsettia plant. Since this is the only memorial for a small child in the study, it is unclear if the lack of flowers is due to the deceased being female, a child, or both. In any case, flowers are also not a major component of this memorial, or others for women in the study.

### Written Messages

Ten of the seventeen memorials in this study have written messages. The messages from these memorials indiscriminate of memorial type were coded and analyzed for frequency in HyperRESEARCH where they were coded for the following:

- *Direct message to the dead*—message written to the deceased
- *Emotive message*—message that describes a feeling, for ex. love, sadness etc.
- *Group affiliation*—message or symbol to communicate affiliation of group
- *Justice*—message calling for political action, justice, vengeance, etc.
- *Message directed to the Public*—birth/death dates, name of the deceased etc.
- *Name of the Living*—name of the living included in writing
- *Religious or cosmological expressions*—mentions of God, angels, spirit etc.
- *Responsibility to the dead*—message to remember the dead, perform actions on their behalf etc.
- *Unknown*—unintelligible writing

Table 6.8 is an analysis of the combined written messages from tables in chapter 5. The most popular written messages by code in order of popularity are as follows:

**Table 6.8: Written Messages Indiscriminate of Memorial Type**

Message by code	
	Totals
Name of the Living displayed on memorial	9
Direct message to the dead	8
Group affiliation	8
Message directed to the Public	7
Emotive message	6
Responsibility to the dead	4
Religious or cosmological expressions	3
Justice	2
Unknown writing	2

In the majority of cases, the names of the living almost always accompany direct messages to the dead as in the following message from the Amp Memorial seen in fig. 6.5.



**Figure: 6.5: Direct message to the dead, example**

The only exception to this pattern was seen in the updated version of the Twin Memorial (#4) that had a message printed on a T-shirt to the living regarding the time and date of a memorial celebration which included a name and phone number of a living person see fig. 5.35.

When messages are divided by type of death an interesting pattern emerges see tables 6.9 and 6.10.

**Table 6.9: Written Messages at Accidental Death Memorials**

<b>Memorial No.</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	
								<b>Totals</b>
Direct message to the dead	1					1		2
Emotive message	1				1	1		3
Group affiliation	1							1
Justice								0
Message directed to the Public	1	1				1		3
Name of the Living displayed on memorial	1	1				1		3
Religious or cosmological expressions						1		1
Responsibility to the dead	1							1
Unknown writing								

*Message popularity:*

1. Emotive message/ Message directed to the public/ Name of the living
2. Direct message to the dead
3. Group affiliation/ Religious or cosmological expressions/ responsibility to the dead

It is important to note that among the accidental death memorial type, only the Papalo (#2), PaPoose (#8), and Twin (#4) memorials had written messages. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, these types of memorials do not generally display written messages with the frequency of those for victims of violent death. However, when written messages are displayed, the name and birth/death dates of the victims are the most popular writings along with emotive sentiments to the dead that mention connections to the living. The continued message ordering is shown above. This order is significantly different than that for violent death memorials.

**Table 6.10: Written Messages at Violent Death Memorials**

<b>Memorial No.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	
											<b>Totals</b>
Direct message to the dead		1	1	1		1	1		1		6
Emotive message		1				1			1		3
Group affiliation	1	1	1	1		1	1		1		7
Justice	1	1									2
Message directed to the Public	1	1				1			1		4
Name of the Living displayed on memorial	1	1	1	1		1			1		6
Religious or cosmological expressions	1	1									2
Responsibility to the dead	1					1	1				3
Unknown writing			1			1			1		3

*Message Popularity:*

1. Group affiliation
2. Direct messages to the dead/ Name of the living
3. Message directed to the Public
4. Emotive message/ Responsibility to the dead/ Unknown
5. Justice/ Religious or cosmological expressions



In the case of violent death memorials, group affiliation is most important. The “KKK” defacement of the Green Memorial, “CRME” on both the AMP and Dre memorials, “7-Street 4 Life” on the Coney Island Memorial, and “Joy Rd.” on the Jake Memorials all note (with the exception of the Green memorial) the importance among memorial builders to include what I believe is a shared group affiliation in relationship to the deceased.<sup>21</sup> If we also take into account the flags displayed in the SWD memorials, displayed group affiliation would read as an even greater importance in memorial design.

The second and third most popular writings are in alignment with accidental memorials. However, emotive messages seem to be a great deal less important among this group. While violent death memorials have a lot more writing than accident memorials, the overall direction of the messages are inverted since accidental memorials seem to be primarily directed at the public and then the dead, but violent death memorials focus a bit more on the dead first and then the living. In either case, writing to the dead suggests at a basic level a belief that the messages will be read, understood, or in some way acknowledged by the dead, as well as a possible cosmological or spiritual belief in an existence after death.

## **Chapter Summary and Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze the data presented in Chapter 5, where the following patterns emerged:

1. Memorials for accidental death have similar but fewer objects than those for violent death.

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<sup>21</sup> The Green memorial as I noted in chapter 5, became a racialized political battleground between Whites and Blacks as well as city residents and suburbanites.

2. Both spatial distance and identity have significant influences on memorial design
3. Teddy bears are the most popular memorial object used in Detroit roadside memorials.
4. Flowers are not a major material component of memorials for females.
5. Messages written to the dead are almost always accompanied by the name of living persons.
6. Accidental death memorials have less written messages than those for violent death

The following two chapters will review the research questions and summarize the results of this chapter and overall dissertation. In addition, I will briefly provide research limitations, and suggest future areas of exploration regarding roadside memorial research.

## CHAPTER 7

### DATA ANALYSIS: DISSCUSSION OF MEMORIALS

*Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.*<sup>22</sup>

Within the physical public sphere, roadside memorials function much like props on a stage to assist actors in their communication with the audience. In theatre, film, and on TV, there are several variations of props, however the *practical prop*, is a prop that serves a practical purpose like real food and drink, or a working lamp (Hart 2013). These types of props are used to set the scene, or backdrop for the performance itself; but they also sometimes perform alone to communicate an idea, feeling, or mood as in the raging fire started by actress Angela Bassett in the film *Waiting to Exhale*, to express her character's anger and pain after her husband of 20 years left her for his younger White secretary. In the same way, the memorials in this study should be viewed as both practical and performative in their ability to perform both culture and emotion.

There are a number of explanations for why roadside memorial making has become a popular ritual of mourning in Detroit. In this chapter, I will use Habermas' conceptualization of the public sphere to conduct a cultural analysis of the performance elements of roadside shrines in the city, and the relationship that these memorials have to African American liberalism and democratic participation in Detroit as it relates to real and presumed ties to violence. The chapter is organized around the theme of performance.

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<sup>22</sup> Taken from page 5, of: Geertz, Clifford 2000[1973]. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

## Memorial Symbolism and Mourning Performance

Kapchan (1995) defines performance as “aesthetic practices—patterns of behavior, ways of speaking, manners of bodily comportment—whose repetitions situate actors in time and space, structuring individual and group identities (479).” Kapchan also argues that performance is intimately linked to agency, reflexivity, and ethnography where actors attempt to “carry something into effect,” create reflexive awareness in their audience, and give experience meaning respectively. Molette and Molette (1986) add that African American performance through ritual is not interested in an illusion of time other than the present. They state, “The Afro-American ideal of theatrical presentation that maintains a sense of real and present time and place, frees the audience members to spontaneously participate in the theatrical event (90). Stow contributes to this conversation an analysis of African American *tragic public mourning*<sup>23</sup> that he maintains should be “understood as *response* not *condition*—is, in contrast, pluralistic, critical, and self consciously political (Stow 2010:682). He also more importantly argues that the African American combination of mourning and the tragic ethos is declining due to theological and class schisms among Blacks that will ultimately negatively impact the lower social classes since the church and its rituals have traditionally been a source of Black political strength.

During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s, African American southern churches were extremely instrumental in orchestrating responses to, and support for, families and communities where Blacks had been tragically and violently killed in public space. The Black power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s was born in Oakland, California and led by intellectuals that were less connected to the African American church than previous generations

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<sup>23</sup> This definition is in opposition to what Stow calls *romantic public mourning* which he says is focused on the singular, uncritical, and purely comforting type of mourning.

or their southern counterparts. Therefore, given the addition of roadside memorial constructions for tragic death as an emerging ritual in Detroit, Stow asks a valid question: Are Blacks becoming less religious in the responses to tragic public mourning? To answer this question, let me first discuss the material aspects of the memorials in an effort to flesh out their religious and/or secular cultural ties.

### Emotion

*Memorials for non-violent death have similar but fewer objects than those for violent death*—an example of the performative nature of memorials in Detroit is most easily seen in the memorials for violent death. Memorials for violent death have more material objects than non-violent memorials because there are different coping strategies involved (Burke 2010). There has been a great deal of work done on the emotional needs of family and friends relative to memorial making (Clark 2006; Doss 2010; Durbin 2003; Everett 2000; Everett 2002; Reid 2001; Sloane 2005). In addition, there have been several studies that suggest that violent and unanticipated deaths of loved ones complicate grief (Jordan 2001; Parkes 1998; Seguin 1995). Further, since mourning related rituals like funerals, and in this case temporary memorials, helps individuals and groups to express feelings (Rosenblatt 1976), it makes sense then, that the greater the tragedy, the greater would be the material elements associated with the ritual.

### History and Landscape

*Both spatial distance and identity have significant influences on memorial design*—while creating shrines for person who have died tragically in public space is a new practice among African Americans in Detroit, I do not want to give the impression that this emerging ritual,

although tolerated, has been fully adopted and accepted as a part of the African American culture within the city as such incorporations are strengthened only through time and practice. At the same time, even though the practice is fairly new, these memorials are also not void of African American culture or Detroit spatial histories either. Like all cultural adaptations, the new practice does not completely replace the old one, or vice versa. The places where these memorials rest also have histories that cannot be fully erased. Therefore, these memorials can be viewed as representatives of shifting epistemologies of both culture and space.

Taking up what Ingold calls a “dwelling perspective” he argues, “the landscape is constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves (Ingold 2000:189). Norder agrees, concerning his research on rock art he states, “I take issue with those who believe that a lack of remembrance of who created these places signifies a lack of affiliation with them (Norder 2012:398). In this vein, I argue that these memorials are imbued with the histories of the people and spaces where they are constructed. Highland Park memorials do not look like those from other parts of the city; neither do those in Southwest Detroit. The memorials within these areas are not just in closer spatial distances to one another respectively, but because they are, they mostly like also share similar spatial and cultural histories that help to inform their aesthetics.

### *Teddy Bears and Other Symbols*

*Teddy bears are the most popular memorial object used in Detroit roadside memorials—*teddy bears are an extremely practical component in Detroit memorials since they are both inexpensive and readily available. Local Dollar Stores carry several varieties of small bears that

can be purchased for \$1.00; but also, the medium and large bears are sold in chain drug stores for \$5-20 dollars. Curious about what these bears meant to Detroiters, I went to a resale shop and found two identical teddy bears with the intent of damaging one of the bears so that I could juxtapose the bears to see how people felt about clean vs. dirty teddy bears. The bears were white, medium sized, without clothes, and both looked fairly new; except one of the bears had a red mark on its forehead. The mark was small but noticeable since the bear was all white. I looked at the bears and I had a hard time trying to decide which bear to destroy. At first, I thought about damaging the bear with the mark on its forehead. I thought this for two reasons. First, I wanted a completely clean bear to contrast with a dirty one; but also, the small red mark seemed to make the bear flawed to me and thus, an easier mark to destroy.

This last thought made me very uncomfortable because I thought it cruel. I then began to mentally compare the bears to humans and I couldn't image the choice I was trying to make. Morally, it seemed discriminatory and brutal, and I realized I couldn't do it. My inability to destroy the bear, or choose a bear for destruction, increased my interest about what others thought about teddy bears. Previous to my research, I didn't remember feeling or thinking anything about the teddy bears placed on memorials or teddy bears in general, so my reaction to the inanimate objects surprised me.

I then took the bears to a local Detroit coffee shop. After clearing my intended experiment with the shop manager, I asked coffee shop patrons if they had a moment to participate in a quick experiment involving the teddy bears I was holding. Everyone I asked agreed to participate. I spoke with 20 people in total of which 8 were male and 12 female, this number included a small group of 6 friends, 2 male and 4 female. I showed participants both bears and told them that I was a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at Michigan

State University and I was interested in how people felt about teddy bears. Most people wanted to touch or hold the bears during our brief conversation and I allowed this. However, they usually didn't ask, they simply touched the bears while I talked or held out their hands to receive one or both of them. I then asked the participants how the bears made them feel. Generally participants told me that they thought the bears were cute or nice looking. This caused me to rephrase the question with an emphasis on how they felt when seeing the bears. To this, people expressed feeling happy, comfort, safe, warm, and/or fuzzy. Warm and fuzzy was the most popular response.

I then told participants that one of the bears needed to be destroyed and I asked them if they could pick a bear to be damaged. Most people, both male and female took a step backwards, and/or crossed their arms, or in a few cases seemed to look at me with suspicion. All but two participants said that they could not pick a bear for destruction. One woman held both bears and noticed the red mark on one of the bears and selected that one. She said that she chose the bear because it already had a mark on it. A man told me that it didn't matter since they were the same and he seemed to randomly select a bear. At this point, I told the participants about my dissertation research on roadside memorials and that I was also trying to understand the affects that dirty and torn teddy bears might have on people since so many study participants mentioned them. To this, several people shared their views of the street memorials comprised of teddy bears.

In general, most people didn't have a problem with the memorials themselves. However, people expressed sadness about seeing dirty, wet, and disintegrating teddy bears left on the street as memorials for loved ones. Two people said that they thought I was really a psychology student conducting an experiment on human personalities so they were careful with their



responses. I consider this a limitation of the experiment. Perhaps if I shared the subject of my dissertation with people before showing the bears, it might have yielded a different outcome. None the less, the participants of the teddy bear experiment seemed to really enjoy it and most expressed interests in my larger project.

I repeated this experiment twice, once at a friends' party and the second time with an anthropology class of about 40 Michigan State University students. After the trial at the coffee shop, I asked my friends in Detroit, about 25 people, the same questions and got similar responses, except this time, I asked if anyone was willing to destroy one of the bears. Initially, no one was willing to do it so we placed the bear in a closed room with my friend's 130 lb Labrador Retriever Brandon and expected him to do my dirty work. Well after an hour, we opened the door and the bear was untouched. So one of my friends stepped forward and offered to destroy the bear. She selected the bear with the mark on it because she said it was already kind of dirty. She then started to rip at the bear, stomped on it and attempted to dismember a leg when another friend asked her to take it outside. I looked around and the facial expressions of several of my friends and they looked uneasy, most had their arms crossed and no one said a word. Watching her attempt to damage the bear was uncomfortable and even more so because I had no idea how difficult it would be. That was one tough bear! With all that she had just put the bear through, it was still intact and looked about the same. She went outside and about 10 minutes later with the aid of a borrowed pocket knife, my friend emerged with a dirty and torn teddy bear

A professor asked me to give a guest lecture to her class on my research, so I took both the clean and newly destroyed bears with me. I asked her students what they felt when they saw the new bear and I kept the dirty bear in a bag. All of the students that answered told me what

they *thought* of the teddy bear. I then said, “Ok, but how does the bear make you feel.” It was then that the students gave similar answers to those in both the coffee shop and at my friend’s party. They said that the bear made them feel safe and warm and fuzzy. These responses were an unexpected outcome of the experiment. Detroiters, as well as most MSU students, were more likely to tell me what they thought, opposed to how they felt. Thoughts about the bears were shared freely; however, people seemed a bit more reserved when sharing their feelings.

Like Detroiters, the students also wanted to touch or hold the clean bear during my lecture, and I allowed this. When I pulled out the dirty and torn bear from a bag and asked students, “how does this bear make you feel?” All of the respondents, both male and female, told me that the dirty bear made them feel sad. A few people even contributed emotions of sadness or loneliness to the bear. No one reached for the dirty bear or tried to touch it in any way.

When Detroiters discuss roadside memorials, they generally mention teddy bears or simply refer to them as “the teddy bears.” When I asked people if they knew of any roadside memorials, most people didn’t know what I was talking about. However, if I said that I was conducting research of those memorials on the side of the road where people were killed, a general response would be something like, “Oh, you mean the teddy bears.”

A common critique of the memorials was the appearance of the teddy bears. People didn’t talk to me about deflated balloons, color faded flowers, or other decomposing materials. If people expressed a dislike of the memorials, it was mostly related to the condition of the teddy bears:

S: “I know that it’s gone to get dirty, but my thought is, it don’t even look like nobody ever came back. You put it out here that one time and that was it.... So, if you gone set up this memorial, cause that’s what you

doin', setting up this memorial for this person that passed, come back and refresh it, a teddy bear cost a dollar at the dollar store. Don't make it old, cause you cared enough to even put it out here, whoever did it. So care enough to keep it up."

Other participants in the group also begin to weigh in on the topic.

J: ...now it's like it been forgotten.

S: Right, now you done forgot about it...

T: But you may not have forgot...but it's just like it kinda of symbolizes you might have forgot like the fallen is forgotten now. Like... Ok, I put it out there this first day, now I'm done. I did my duty. I did what I had to do, now I'm done.

This last point illustrates that spontaneous memorials, roadside shrines, street memorials and the numerous other names we researchers have assigned to these collections of material culture have little bearing on how the average Detroiter refers to them. I have not uncovered a single term or name Detroiters use for them; but "teddy bears," "those bears," "murder bears," as well as "them damn bears!," are all phrases that people have utilized when speaking with me.

*Flowers are not a major material component of memorials for females*—unfortunately, my sample was not large enough to verify this, or investigate gender related differences in memorial design.

*Messages written to the dead are almost always accompanied by the name of living persons*—as I mentioned in chapter 2, for some, shrines for the dead are considered aids in assisting loved ones on their spiritual post-Earth journeys. Kozak states, "Surviving relatives use the death-memorial as a sacred ground for assisting the soul to the O'odham 'heaven.' The death-memorial is both a new 'home' of the deceased and also a mediating location that exists in

a liminal space between the physical and supernatural worlds. By ways of death-memorials, the potentially harmful power of ‘bad’ deaths is neutralized (Kozak 1991:215).

In chapter 5, I documented what I called my spiritual feelings associated with each memorial. I also spoke a bit in chapter 4 about my uneasiness directly interacting with Detroit memorials while in the field. While my reactions are my own, and based in part on my unique history, family of origin, etc. this reflexivity is also a reflection in part of African American ideas about death and spirits associated with the dead. Toni Morrison illustrates my unease with upsetting the dead in her attempt to write about unknown African ancestors who were slaves...

The responsibility that I feel for the woman I’m calling Sethe, and for all of these people: these unburied, or at least unceremoniously buried, people made literate in art. But the inner tension, the artistic inner tension those people create in me; the fear of not properly, artistically, burying them, is extraordinary (Morrison 1994:209).

I posit that, these writings are attempts to connect with the dead and deliver last rites that will bring them peace. This is a role of duty and the obligation must be taken seriously so as not to upset the dead. Also, the fact that people put their names on these messages must suggest the belief that the deceased will not know who wrote the message without identifiers.

*Non-violent death memorials have less written messages than those for violent death*—I would argue that this is alignment with the complicated grief assertion earlier in the chapter since this research affirms a positive correlation between tragedy and material quantity of material objects; in that the more tragic the event, the greater the material response to the tragedy. Also the similarities and variations in memorial aesthetics relative to spatial distance suggest that memorials should be viewed as representations of real and present time histories. Since memorials for violent death have more written messages than those associated with accidents,

and these messages also include the names of the living, the histories of both people and place are incorporated into the design of these memorials which in turn make them not only aesthetically unique, but also markers of political responses to violence.

Lastly, while the memorials in SWD have religious symbolism incorporated into their design, those created by African Americans in the city do not. The teddy bear is the main symbolic component used in African American memorials. The teddy bear experiment identified that the main association that research participants made with teddy bears were connected to emotion, not religion.

### *Memorial Aesthetics and Socio-cultural Difference*

As it relates to memorial function and design, while European religious views have influenced both African-American and Latino religious practices, these group's cosmological beliefs are also rooted in West African and Native belief systems respectively; and these factors have to be considered in understanding what roadside shrines mean in Detroit. Since the city remains one of the most racially segregated locations in the United States, African-Americans make up a strong majority of the city's population; however, there is a significant Latino population in the southwest region of the city. The memorials in SWD do not look like the others throughout the rest of the city and the differences in memorial design are representative of cultural variations between these groups.

While residents in SWD are also varied culturally, the mostly Catholic groups in the area generally believe that death is not the end and that the living can continue a relationship with the dead that is based on caring for those who have transitioned and providing them with the material and food items necessary for their guidance and comfort on the other side (Carmichael

1992; Gonzalez-Wippler 2005; Sommers 1995). Similarly, most African-Americans view death as a continuation of existence where the living has a responsibility to the dead. However unlike Latinos, the early death rites given to the dead i.e. funeral related activities etc., are usually considered sufficient where no additional material care is necessary (Holloway 2003; Smith 2010).

The shrines created today which adorn the roads, streets, highways, and byways of America are American, but to be American means that they are also an accumulation of past cultural practices and the belief systems of those who helped to shape America. Roadside shrines have very distinct ethnic and/or cultural markers that are in some cases sources of pride for those who construct the shrines (as in the use of nation flags on the SWD memorials); but they also sometimes represent unconscious cultural retentions and survivals from cultures past (Herskovits 1990; Mintz 1992; Raboteau 2004). For example African-American shrines in Detroit and other urban cities represent not only American city life and culture, but West African cultural roots and rituals as well. Some of the Detroit shrines like the Dre and Coney Island Memorials incorporate bottles of liquor into their construction which is in alignment with the pouring of libations, a West African tradition where people honor, or communicate with those who have died by having a drink with, or in celebration of the dead. This ritual is thought to be particularly effective if the favored alcoholic beverage of the deceased is known. Therefore, it is not uncommon for African descendants in urban areas to drink, pour liquor on the ground for the deceased, smoke marijuana (if the dead person liked marijuana), and in some cases party at the death site, all in an effort to include the spirit of the deceased into the activities of the moment. These rituals are performed as a final farewell to the deceased; this is akin to giving a going

away party for the dead. After the ritual is complete, many of the shrines are left to decompose similar to the Nigerian njoku pots that I described in chapter 2.

In contrast, many Latin American families in Southwest Detroit present offerendas (offerings) of food, candles, flowers etc. at both public and private shrines during the city's annual Day of the Dead celebrations that honor the dead. These cultural practices most likely also influence roadside memorial design and upkeep in the SWD area, where annual practices to honor the dead with material items are the cultural norm. Therefore, it makes sense then that the Papalo Memorial is updated annually, as I suspect the Southwest Memorial will be in coming years.

In chapter two, I mentioned that religion is defined by the collective, where individual experience, coupled with group interactions through time, produce patterns of belief that are based on the group's accumulated knowledge of themselves and the world around them, and that the accumulated knowledge is a bases for a shared cosmology, or worldview that is reinforced through ritual practice. While these memorials are examples of a shared cosmology among African Americans regarding a belief in life after death, they do not reflect a shared worldview or belief system relative to how African Americans view themselves, or their place in the world around them. So to answer the question, are Blacks becoming less religious in their collective responses to tragic public mourning? My answer is yes, possibly.

## **Democracy, the Black Public Sphere, and Rights to the City**

### Democracy

In what ways do roadside memorials in Detroit contribute to African American democratic participation in the public sphere? Habermas notes two major contributors to the

transformation of the bourgeois public sphere from a monarchy society to a representative democracy. He proposes that: 1.) *the family* became an intimate sphere that included the everyday events, economic activity, and a patriarchal structure that participated in the public sphere; and 2.) *the worlds of letters and politics became combined* where the processes of creating novels that evoked a shared sense of sentimental and cultural sensibilities (imagined communities) also became the medium for debating political ideas, i.e. the birth of newspapers (Habermas 1989:55-56). Also, Habermas maintains that “in the intimate sphere of the conjugal family privatized individuals viewed themselves as independent even from the private sphere of their economic activity—as persons capable of entering into ‘purely human’ relations with one another (48).” In other words, the family is important because it represents the one area of life that economic or other statuses could not take away (11).

This has not been historically true for African American families. In the context of African slaves and their decedents, economics have and continue to be a major contributor to definitions of family among Blacks in the U.S. that have affected the separations and biological ties of blood relatives; increased the need for fictive kin; and more recently, created social divisions between fathers and children through “Friend of the Court” policies that contribute to distrust between men and women concerning new definitions of parental abilities now based on economic ability. To be fair, a direct analysis of democracy and African American civic participation using Habermas’ version of the bourgeois public sphere is in many respects a misnomer since he did not consider people of color in his original conceptualization of the public sphere. However, I thought the distinction important to mention.

Habermas does however make a connection between democracy and the media’s role in knowledge production, where he argues that the contemporary media functions as a tool of



corporations and special interests to influence thinking and consumer driven behavior among the masses at the expense of critical civic engagement and debate. He also suggests that the invention of print-media increased literacy among the masses; however, although more people could read, the culture of the bourgeois public sphere could not be translated to an uneducated public and thus, the once pleasurable, and debate based, social gatherings borrowed from Kant, ended. At the same time, new organizations abstained from literary and public debates and instead of fostering an environment of critique, rational-critical debate became consumption (Habermas 1989:162-163). He says, the world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only. By the same token the integrity of the private sphere which they promise to their consumers is also an illusion (171). Therefore for Habermas, these transitions represent a de-politicization of the public sphere, which in turn contributes to false consciousness because the mass public sphere comes to define itself based on the model of its bourgeois predecessor. While at the same time, the group is mislead into believing that they are critically contributing to public opinion (194).

As it relates to this study, the media is responsible for transmitting information about roadside memorials to the general public through still photographs, live video, and commentary that shapes not only how the viewing public thinks about roadside memorials but the discourse associated with them as well. In Detroit, the media is supportive of roadside memorials since, they serve as a backdrop for other stories. In this way, the memorials can be viewed as props in the political theatre, where the stories generally focus on violence. However, unintended associations are made between the subject of violence and the visual placement of memorials. This contributes to the notion among many Detroiters that all, or most, of the temporary memorials in the city are for victims of violent death. Habermas published *The Structural*

*Transformation of the Public Sphere* long before the invention of social media. Therefore, I think it is important to also note that not all knowledge production emanating in the realm of the media should be affiliated with the politics of the state.

A Facebook<sup>24</sup> friend posted a video from YouTube entitled “Shit Detroit N\*ggas Say by ComedianCP (2012).” What caught my eye was that my Facebook friend expressed her amusement at the comedian’s mention of “murder bear” poles in Detroit. I watched the recording, it is approximately four minutes of insider humor, or jokes that requires an insider’s knowledge to fully understand, and is directed at Detroiters. ComedianCP opens the video with the 1980s phrase “What up doe?” an expression unique to Detroit which generally means, “Hey, how are you?” He continues to use Detroit specific humor throughout the video where he jokingly mentions numerous people who have been shot, including one uncle, who shot his other uncle, who shot him back, “they both dead” and a preacher who was shot because he owed someone money. Attempting to secure a location for a friend to meet him, ComedianCP says, “Meet me by that pole full of murder bears.... You know where the bears is? The bears? Where people...somebody died at? Right. Right there, by the bears, be by the bears.” One of the things that I have found interesting is that the subject of teddy bears on roadside memorials or in this case, “murder bears” made it into a four minute video about common phrases among Detroiters. The comedian only had four minutes to communicate the most popular phrases unique to the city and the fact that he included the “murder bears” in his commentary speaks to their successful performance in public space as well as their contribution to Detroit’s public sphere.

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<sup>24</sup> Facebook is a social networking service on the Internet.

Also, in a more neutral stance, I contend that the media contributes to the reproduction of roadside memorials through diffusion. Global and domestic news stories that showcase memorial affiliated news to viewers across different geographical locations and cultures, other than the reported event, provide visual representations of alternative methods of mourning that through time may be duplicated. This type of mediated democratic expression can also be seen in tattoos, memorial T-shirts, and other publically displayed temporary memorials.

During a group interview, I did not ask about other forms of memorialization but they sometimes came up in discussions of roadside memorials. The following is an excerpt from a semi-structured interview I conducted with four persons, 3 female, and 1 male, on general attitudes toward memorials in the city. One participant stated that she would not memorialize a non-family member through a roadside memorial, but would instead wear a memorial T-shirt:

***I: So, you said you'll get a T-shirt, what does that mean?***

J: Oh, a T-shirt with they name on it. Some will have they name, rest in peace... stuff like that

***I: How long do you wear it?***

K: You wear it until you tired of it.

***I: Do you wear it until it fade out? Do you wear it like, till you wear it out, do you wear it a month?***

J: I still be wearing my shirt, but sometimes I just wear it through the house or something. Or, I just keep it in my room.

A male participant disagreed, stating that he would nether wear a T-shirt, nor participate in a roadside memorial. Instead he prefers tattoos as tributes to those who have died:

- K: ...I look at it like this... you not family, I'm not wearing no shirt with you on it. Point blank, period! You know what I mean? And then in that case, I never had to because you family, I don't want to wear no shirt. I'll get it in ink. I'll put it in a tattoo.
- S: It's like people, now they showing their love in different ways. Like before, it was the teddy bears, now it's T-shirts, then people go get tattoos. I ain't never had a tattoo before, but Ima put my cuz on me... you know stuff like that. Because, [x person] and [x person], they still wear they grandma T-shirt to this day. I still see them wearing it.
- J: ...I still wear [x person] T-shirt.
- I: *Wait...K, you said that if the person is not family, then you won't wear a T-shirt for them; but you will get a tattoo for the person?***
- K: ...Naw, I wouldn't get a tattoo for the person period. What I was saying by that is: I can't see myself doing dat because, I have family members that passed and if I haven't bought a T-shirt for them, Ima feel bad if I buy a T-shirt for you. And then [later], I'm thinking I bought a T-shirt for them, but cuz passed and I ain't got no shirt for him. It don't make me feel comfortable with myself, so I wouldn't even do it. I wouldn't even do it! I'd just represent my family. Now if I get a T-shirt it would have to be family. But I wouldn't even get a T-shirt, I would just get a tattoo, because that's permanent! I can't never take that off. That's gone always be with me, even when I pass, and hopefully somebody tattoo my name. That's how I look at it.
- J: Right!
- K: Civilization like pain, I look at it like this...I feel a little bit of pain, what you went through, because I got this tattoo.
- J: Right, cause this is pain!! This is pain!!! [pointing at a tattoo on her arm]
- I: *What's pain?***
- J: Dis! (points to her tattoo)
- I: *What tattoo is that?***
- J: My momma. Now that was pain!
- I: *And so, was the pain part important for you when you got the tattoo?***

J: Yeah, you know how much I love you....like ooooooooooh, ooooooooooh!

***I: So, if I'm willing to go through this pain for you then it is a testament for how much you loved the person?***

J: Yeah!

K: Exactly!

To this last point, I agree with the participant's information regarding memorial tattoos. When my cousin was killed, I felt helpless and I was in a great deal of emotional pain that I didn't know what to do with. I also wanted a tattoo prior to the death of my cousin as I didn't have any tattoos. However, a week after he was murdered, I went in to get a tattoo for him. I got a large tattoo on my left shoulder. The tattoo was very painful!! However, the pain of the tattoo helped me to feel better. I actually felt emotionally healthier leaving the tattoo shop than before I had entered. I felt a sense of peace having experienced and released a physical pain which in turn aided me to do the same with some of my emotional pain. Since emotional pain can sometimes feel abstract or incomprehensible, the physical pain associated with tattooing makes sense as a concrete source of agony and in turn renders the unintelligible tangible. Several studies on the connection between tattooing and mourning have also made this connection (Aguirre 2008; Bates 2009; Samuel 2009).

Individualism is high in American culture in general; and African Americans in particular have a tremendous sense of pride in individually expressing their culture through music, hairstyles, dance, clothing etc. where distinction through cultural innovation is held in very high social esteem. This type of individualism through memorialization was another theme that emerged during my interviews.

One participant described a billboard memorial that was created for his friend. While he was comfortable with the unique method of memorial related sentiments 20 feet in the air, he was less so when it came to permanent tattoos on human skin. He explains:

K: ... like the situation with my homeboy and them, I understood, yeah, your brother passed and he dead; but y'all done commenced to get a billboard and you riding down [B avenue] and it's a billboard. My homeboy UP there. I'm talkin bout UP there like RIP!

**I: *Is it still there?***

K: Naw, it's not there no mo but every so often [they have it reinstalled], they throw a party every year.

**I: *A billboard, like somebody actually purchased a billboard, like the ones that sell cigarettes?***

K: Yeah...KOOLS!! Advertising Kools, one of dem billboards!! It's one of dem! My homeboy had one of dem, you know what I mean. But, I'm not saying nothing wrong with dat. Dat was cool, but celebrating, having a party for him, every year and doing all this other stuff...naw, I think dat's like celebrating death to me, honestly.

...I dare to be different. I try to be different; but it's not different because the things that I'm trying to be different from, it's like everybody is doing it. Tattoos is like a fad now. People get tattoos just to get tattoos. I feel like, if I get a tattoo, it's going to have to mean something. But it's so many tattoos out here that don't really mean nothing! The only thing you can do is draw yourself to loved ones that passed, or your family member that you really like, and different things that really make you happy. Cause other than that, you never know what you getting tattooed on you. It's so many tattoos out here that symbolizes two different things. It looks good, but it's demonic as hell!!

J: Yep!

K: So, it's a lot of stuff you can get, but you can't get it! You just don't know the background behind it. So, I tattoo a lot of family members on me.

**I: *What does that mean? So, you'll see the tattoo and you think it's attractive...***

K: ...Oh, it's hot!!! But on the flip side, it means something totally different. You just don't know.

J: Right! You might see the tattoo, but you don't know the background of it.

***I: And so, rather than chance it, you just don't get the tattoo?***

K: I stay away from that. I stick to family and loved ones.

One of the major differences between memorial tattoos and street memorials is the cause of death. Memorial tattoos are not unique to tragic or unexpected death. Some people get tattoos of grandparents, or parents that died of natural causes. There are also high numbers of birth tattoos for children, as well as tattoos to mark milestone events like marriage that are sometimes followed by divorce cover-up tattoos. Street memorials by comparison usually are tied to deaths that occurred in public place. Therefore, a major element for the need to memorialize persons in public places is related to the very public death of the deceased.

If we think about public place and space as a stage in which actors perform their agency or act out their needs, when everyday situations turn tragic, that tragedy and its aftermath is also played, or acted out on the stage. In this way, the public stage becomes a performance space for historical, social, and moral correctives for postal workers, florists, factory workers, and other everyday persons when their families have survived their deaths and feel that their loved-ones are just as important as the rich and famous who have memorialized namesakes, buildings dedications, road and street signs, statues in the park, and notable mentions in the history books. Similarly, prostitutes are socially transformed into daughters and mothers; crack dealers become sons and friends; and crooked police officers are made over into heroes and martyrs, all of which, if only for a season, are promoted from their role of extra and into the spotlight on the

public stage. In this vein, each of the aforementioned memorials in this section and those of this study, should be viewed as representation of democratic engagement in the public sphere where individuals and groups exercise their voice, and with the use of material culture attempt to correct whatever has been lost, trespassed, or in some cases, as in deaths of ordinary people when compared to celebrities, made invisible within the public arena.

### *The Black Public Sphere*

There is also a historical and political context for which these memorials need to be understood. In 1973, Detroit elected Coleman A. Young as its first Black mayor. One of the first tasks the new mayor tackled was STRESS. Stop the Robbers, Enjoy Safe Streets was a secret undercover squad of the Detroit Police Department. STRESS was designed as a decoy operation to catch would be criminals by patrolling so-called “high crime” areas (Stovall 1996). STRESS’ numbers and function were unknown and as a consequence, its officers frequently shot and killed their suspects. African Americans viewed the squad of White cops as a gang of murderers killing innocent citizens (191). One of the first actions Mayor Young took after his inauguration was to disband STRESS. The end of STRESS was also the beginning of the end of White rule in the city.

Mayor Young’s strong and outspoken leadership style cannot be overstated and during his 20 year tenure as the city’s leader, all areas of city government, including police, fire, and the city council became increasingly Black controlled to reflect the city’s growing African American majority. The Black political control over Detroit set the climate for intellectual debates among Blacks, about Blacks, and Black life in the city. These debates are similar to Habermas’ assessment that the “public” is where private individuals debate on issues concerning state



authority and in so doing, the private realm emerges as an area in need of being defended against the domination of the state.

Detroit has experienced almost 40 years of Black leadership and in that time a Black public sphere has developed that is a combination of both a representative democracy and a *Habermasian democracy* where issues are presented “before” the people. Further, according to Habermas, increasing public sociability with people coming together to have “rational-critical” debates in salons, coffee houses, and other places along with the invention of print-media, allowed people to imagine life without a king or monarch. Similarly in Detroit, public social debates coupled with reporting from Detroit’s Black newspaper, *The Detroit Chronicle*, now called *The Michigan Chronicle*, guided African American Detroiters to imagine the city as their own. Conceptualizations of the “black public sphere” have been thus:

The black public sphere—as a critical social imaginary—does not centrally rely on the world of magazines and coffee shops, salons and highbrow tracts. It draws energy from the vernacular practices of street talk and new musics, radio shows and church voices, entrepreneurship and circulation. Its task is not the provision of security for the freedom of conversation among intellectuals, as was the case with the bourgeois public spheres of earlier centuries. Rather, it marks a wider sphere of critical practice and visionary politics, in which intellectuals can join with the energies of the street, the school, the church, and the city to constitute a challenge to the exclusionary violence of much public space in the United States (BPSC 1995)

I contend that the Black public sphere of Detroit should be viewed as both imagined and physical; because unlike Habermas’ bourgeois, those who were at one time at the margins of both public opinion, and public spaces controlled by Whites within Detroit, have taken over those spaces contributing to a reversal in both Black and White imaginations about who has rights to the city.

### Rights to the City

In what ways do Black Detroiters view their rights to uses of public space? While Black Detroiters gained civic leadership and political control over the physicality of the city from the inside, Suburban Whites have and continue to control the economic environment of both the city and the suburbs from the outside. As I mentioned in chapter four, the 1967 race rebellion spawned what became known as white flight, since Whites moved out of the city into the suburbs and the majority of well paying jobs followed them, creating an economic desert inside of the city. By 1987, Detroit was almost 75 percent Black (Johnson 2008). Working class and poor African American responses to this racist political and economic climate were one of self reliance, interdependence, and in some cases increased reliance on state assistance, making the city ripe for increases in criminal activity.

During the 1980s, Young Boy\$ Incorporated a.k.a. YBI led by Butch Jones became a multi-million dollar a year operation estimated by the police to take in 7.5 million dollars a week (Canty 1996:133). The organization used teenage boys to sell heroin because they received less jail time. As a teenager growing up during this time, I can still remember the *young boys* both literally and figuratively, standing on street corners wearing the YBI uniform, Levi brand jeans, Adidas Top Ten sneakers (which cost \$100 a pair), thick gold chains, and straw political campaign hats shouting the various names of their products in a manner that was reminiscent of the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Boys from my eighth grade class not yet old enough to drive went from walking to school with me, to showing up after school to show off their new sport cars, to not showing up to school at all.

According to the film *Murder City (2008)*, YBI simply walked up to young boys and made them work for them. They would give them a wad of money and a job selling drugs

starting at \$400.00 a week. The film also mentions that since many adult men and women were laid off and/or unable to find work, the participation of young boys in drug sales inverted the natural parent to child power dynamic of the home. Since these children became the major bread winners of their families, in many cases they also held unusual amounts of power within them.

Unlike the underground political economy described by Bourgois (2003) in his ethnography *In Search of Respect Selling Crack in El Barrio*, the drug economy associated with YBI was very much above ground in that police did not bother them, nor did residents interrupt their business as dead, overdosed, and murdered bodies left in alleys, and trash dumpsters also became a part of their association with the neighborhoods for which they were affiliated.

In addition, YBI contributed significantly to Detroit's 1980s economy. In his tell all autobiography, YBI leader Butch Jones outlines his interactions with the police and YBI influences on the local economy. He states:

See in the 10th precinct all the police officers knew who I was. I had superstar status. I didn't have no problems with the blue an' whites over there....

I had purchased about nineteen or twenty Vettes. The caravan was so awesome that the press wrote about it. Altogether, including some of our other cars there where roughly eighty cars headed down the freeway. Before we went to Cedar Point, we all went out to Footlocker. We was about forty deep. On that day alone I went out and spent about twelve thousand dollars in one whop. Then the next day I went back and spent another nine thousand. It wasn't nothin' to go to the mall and get whatever we wanted (Canty 1996:51-53).

The majority of illegal drug transactions in Detroit took place in houses. These structures were either abandoned dwellings or residential housing converted into dens for public consumption. I contend that the use of public street corners and private residential space for illegal activity without major intervention from city government, represents at least one contribution to a growing sense of communal control over the city's physical landscape. While

this ownership is more *imagined* than economic, it can also be seen in the tradition of Devil's Night:

...They call it Devil's Night.'... Three years earlier, in 1983, for reasons no one understands, America's sixth largest city suddenly erupted into flame. Houses, abandoned buildings, even unused factories burned to the ground in an orgy of arson that lasted for seventy-two hours. When it was over the papers reported more than eight hundred fires. Smoke hung over the city for days.

What at first appeared to be a bizarre outburst turned into an annual tradition. By 1986, Devil's Night had become a prelude to Halloween in Detroit in the way that Mardi Gras precedes Lent in New Orleans, or the Rose Bowl parade ushers in the New Year in Pasadena (Chafets 1989:3-4).

As well as Grace Bogg's accounting of her involvement with the group WE-PROS to take back the streets from drug dealers:

...and for three years, calling ourselves WE-PROS (We the People Reclaim Our Streets)...we carried on weekly marches in different neighborhoods, undeterred either by the heat of summer or the below-freezing temperatures of winter. At one point there were eight neighborhood groups marching together as WE-PROS. All over the city we chanted 'Up with hope! Down with dope!; 'Pack up your crack and don't come back!'; 'Dope dealer, dope dealer, run and hide! People are uniting on the other side!' Before the WE-PROS marches people were afraid of one another, afraid to sit on their front porches, afraid of being laughed at if they took a stand against crackhouses. The WE-PROS marches broke that cycle of fear, replacing it with a new spirit of hope and unity in the neighborhoods where we marched (Boggs 1998:225)

Mitchell (2003) argues that public space is in continuous contention and always a representative of exclusions. The social interactions I have listed in this section regarding Detroit's public space and the Black public sphere among the city's African American residents are all examples of the reciprocal condition of public and private spaces and how said spaces are continuously contested and remade in Detroit.

The Malice Green Memorial from chapter five, is a great example of private/public dichotomies as the once private dwelling was transformed through human action into public

territory after Green's death, yet it has had to be defended from individuals that painted KKK on his forehead, and the city who has made a few attempts to have it demolished. The Amp and Dre Memorials although located in Highland Park, are also examples of how people claim private space for public purposes and these removals also demonstrate the social tensions embedded in those actions. These and all of the memorials in this study are contested sites of memory and mourning in that at any moment their material elements can be physically removed. However, their contested positions in regard to the landscape should not be confused with their larger participation in the public sphere where their builders imagine their political rights to the city.

I will close this section with a quote from Santino who does a great job of articulating the imagined rights to the city. He states, "We, who build shrines and construct public altars or parade with photographs of the deceased, will not allow you to write off victims as mere regrettable statistics. We insist; the shrines insist—by their disruption of the mundane environment, their calling attention to themselves—that we acknowledge the real people, the real lives lost, and the devastation to the commonwealth that these politics hold.... They are, I believe, the voice of the people (Santino 2004:370)."

### **The Economics Associated with Mourning, or Lack Thereof**

In what ways could economics contribute to African American participations in roadside memorial making in Detroit? In 2009, Detroit made national news when CNN Money ran a story entitled "Detroit: Too Broke to Bury Their Dead (Harlow 2009)." The exclusive reported that 67 unclaimed bodies were stacked in the freezer at the city's morgue because with unemployment in the city near 28%, some Detroit residents could not afford to retrieve, bury, or cremate their dead relatives. Likewise, when my cousin Amp died my family and his friends

struggled significantly to pool the \$6,000 dollars necessary for his last rites. For many African American families burials have been a luxury. Hoffman describes pauper funerals for Negroes in the late 19th century:

Whoever has witnessed the pauper funeral of a negro.... the bare pine box and the common cart, the absence of all that makes less sorrowful the last rites over the dead, has seen a phase of negro life and manners more disheartening perhaps than anything else in the whole range of human misery. Perhaps only the dreary aspect of the negroes' [burial ground], the low sad hills, row after row, partly washed away by the falling rains, unrelieved by a single mark of human kindness, without a flower and without a cross, only the pauper lot itself, may be more sad and gruesome than the display of almost inhuman apathy at the funeral (Hoffman 1896:246-49)

It is probable that, the street memorials in Detroit function in part as correctives for economic limitations among living friends and relatives who might not be able to afford more elaborate material offerings for the deceased. Cans of spray paint, artificial flowers, dollar store balloons, candles, plush toys, and libations are affordable alternatives to mahogany coffins, new clothes for the dead, fresh cut flowers, funeral home services, etched tombstones, gravesites, and funeral car rentals. Some memorials may also be viewed as gifts for the dead where social statuses, gift exchanges, and the performance of grief are important for the living.

### **Closing Thoughts**

In this chapter, I have painted Detroit with a broad brush in my description of racialized public space; it is important to note that *all* Whites did not leave the city and *some* Blacks have also fled the city for surrounding suburbs. My attempt here was not to create hard dichotomies as much as to communicate the political, economic, and physical environment as the majority of native Detroiters view public spaces within the city. Also, while African American

participations in the ritual of roadside memorial making for those who have died in Detroit public space is a relatively new phenomenon; aesthetically, conceptually, or at their core, these memorials represent deep and long held cosmological, social, and political values, that are rooted in African retentions, localized histories, and contemporary needs.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

*In some senses, the city is like a stage, and the individual is an actor in a drama. By being such an actor, the individual gets a better sense of what the drama is about.*<sup>25</sup>

#### Introduction

This dissertation's title, *For the Brothas Who Ain't Here*, refers to a line from the 1975 cult film classic *Cooley High*. In the movie, a group of friends gather in an alley to share a bottle of wine and the film's co-star Richard "Cochise" Morris, played by Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs pours some wine onto the ground "for the brothas who ain't here." The biographical-fiction movie is based on the life of its screenwriter Eric Monte (born Kenneth Williams) and is a coming of age story set in 1960s Chicago. It follows the lives of a group of teenagers from Cooley High (an actual high school located on Chicago's north side) and brings to the fore issues of urban life, African American cultural expression, and mourning. Since the film, the phrase has become an African-American colloquialism that refers to the West African tradition of pouring libations for the dead and thus, I thought the title fitting for this project.

Roadside memorials in the United States have become a common symbol of public commemoration for persons who have died tragically in public places. Detroit, Michigan, the location of this study, has what appears to be a growing population of these memorials and as this study has illustrated, local residents have unofficially accepted roadside memorial constructions as both a ritual and a testament of mourning.

This dissertation began as an attempt to explore youth violence in the city of Detroit through the lens of roadside memorial making. However, convenience sampling produced an

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<sup>25</sup> City of Detroit, Planning Department (1985:2)



almost all adult selection among the 17 memorials in this study. Further, interviews obtained through both accidental and snowball sampling also produced narratives about the deaths of adults. Therefore, my research trajectory shifted to understand the social, political, and economic agency associated with the material culture of these memorials as it relates to uses of public space in Detroit.

My research questions were: Are Blacks becoming less religious in their responses to tragic public mourning? Do roadside memorials in Detroit contribute to African American democratic participation in the public sphere? In what ways do Black Detroiters view their rights to uses of public space? Could economics be a contributor to African American participations in roadside memorial making in Detroit?

## **Interpretation of Findings**

### *Youth, or Lack Thereof...*

This chapter and dissertation began with an inquiry into the relationship between Detroit urban youth, violence, and roadside memorial constructions. During my data collection, my accidental sample of roadside memorials in Detroit only produced 3 known youth related memorials of 17 samples. In addition, my interviews also did not produce large indicators of urban youth violence. Of the more than 30 parents that I met through POMC, all with the exception of three, lost adult children to violence. Two POMC parents independently lost children who were in college, and one POMC parent survived the death of her sixteen year old daughter who was abducted and killed by unknown persons. In a chance meeting, I met a parent whose infant was killed by two adult women; and I participated in a police ride along that involved the murder of a teenager by an elderly man. While some of these may qualify as youth

connected violence, none of them were memorialized on the street. Further, I was unable to find youth violence in the *normalized* sense that involved street gangs, or other instances of inter-group violence among youth peer groups. Why did the literature so ill prepare me for what I actually discovered on the ground?

My answer to this is in alignment with Habermas' assertion on the condition of the contemporary public sphere. He highlights a schism in public function where intellectuals debate critically in private among themselves, while corporations and the media perform a show for the public in an effort to maximize profits (Habermas 1989:206). As I discussed in Chapters 2, 5, and 7 of this dissertation, the media has and continues to play a significant role in the disseminating of information regarding roadside memorials. Media sources not only influence opinions regarding memorials, but they also contribute to the ideological and philosophical connections made by news consumers regarding the relationships between memorials, geography and demographics, as well as general roadside memorial debates. In addition, adult reports on youth activity, and majority White and Jewish media investigations into the lives of African Americans even when well intended, may not be a true representation of what is actually happening on the ground. Lastly, this study is the first to examine roadside memorials among African Americans in Detroit. While the memorials in other cities may be disproportionately youth connected, this does not appear to be the case in Detroit.

### *Roadside Memorial Making in Detroit*

Detroit is a city with an African American majority and it has had almost 40 years of Black leadership. This leadership has contributed to a Black public sphere where both elites and everyday people come together for "rational-critical" debates concerning political, economic,

and social concerns within the city. The historic development of this sphere has contributed to feelings of city ownership among the city's Black majority which includes rights to public space. In this way, Detroit's roadside memorials are a reflection of physical democratic participation. They also represent a shared and imagined idea of resident entitlements to use public space for private concerns.

Through an analysis of Devil's Night activities; the influence of Young Boy\$ Incorporated on Detroit's economy and public/private spaces; and the "take back the streets" marches by WE-PROS, I have demonstrated how Detroiters are not only participating in the physical public sphere of Detroit, but how these actions are also reflective of ideas related to the rights to the city's geography. In this vein, roadside memorials should be seen as props in the public theatre within the city. These memorials have been "unofficially" accepted by Detroiters as they are rarely removed by human interventions and are not legally regulated in any way by the municipality. Socially, they function as correctives for addressing what has gone wrong on the public stage. In addition, they serve as evidence for violence and unsafe conditions in the physical public sphere that needs attention.

The teddy bear is the main symbolic element used in constructions of roadside memorials among African Americans in Detroit. Other popular memorial objects include artificial flowers, balloons, and written messages. While these memorials reflect cosmological beliefs through writings addressed to the deceased, suggesting a shared belief in post-death existence, they are not expressions of religious practice. Descansos, the precursors to contemporary roadside memorials, were religious shrines in that they were almost unequivocally tied to the Christian cross and Christian burial practices. My comparison in chapter seven between the roadside memorials constructed by Latino groups in the city's southwestern neighborhoods in SWD with

those among African Americans on the city's West Side produced significant aesthetic differences.

Similar to descansos, the memorials from Southwest Detroit utilize the Christian cross as the major memorial symbol. In addition, the memorials in the southwest area have been maintained in a way that is in alignment with Day of the Dead ceremonies and/or Catholic rituals. However, the secular memorials created by Blacks in Detroit should not be viewed as attempted replicas of either the descansos of the past, or the contemporary roadside shrines created by Latinos in the city. It is important to understand that contemporary needs give birth to contemporary solutions and thus, these memorials should be viewed as active testaments to African American culture in flux to meet contemporary concerns.

Funeral and last rites rituals in their traditional form are generally expensive in the United States. These memorials offer inexpensive alternatives for the bereaved. Further, roadside memorial making in Detroit allows friends and fictive kin, or non-blood relatives of the deceased, to exercise individual and/or communal agency in their performance of grief in the public realm. However, these memorials are not religious in nature. Roadside memorials created by African Americans in Detroit should more accurately be described as secular expressions of mourning performance in public place. These symbolic expressions are also demonstrations of African American material culture; a shared ideology regarding the right to use public space in Detroit for private concerns; and adaptations in African American culture as it relates to both public expressions of mourning, and symbolic mourning performance.

While my data analysis of the writings on the memorials produced a shared cosmology, or belief among African Americans in an existence after death, the noted shared ideology regarding death, and life after death, is not religion, or sufficient to suggest a single shared

religious belief system. Instead, what these shrines represent might best be understood in Molette's assertion of Afro-American ritualized performance: "These performances do not successfully duplicate the actual ritual events of our predecessors [or those from which they are borrowed] because that is not their goal. These performances are not attempts to achieve some kind of archaeological revival of the rituals of the past. Instead, the goal is to adapt [borrowed and] traditional Black ritual concepts to contemporary Afro-American culture (Molette 1986)."

### **Contribution to the Literature**

The literature regarding temporary memorials like those found on roadsides, street corners, and other tragic death sites in the United States often center on functionality, social agency, and commoditization of memorial materials. These themes however, generally under represent political agency where memorials are viewed as an attempt by the living to remember and commemorate those who might have otherwise been ignored by "official" historical recordings traditionally reserved for the wealthy, famous, or heads of state government. This dissertation addresses the latter.

My contribution to the growing epistemology regarding roadside memorials focuses on space and place, where I have explored how African American Detroiters use public space and private residential places for public performances of private concerns. In this way, roadside memorials are clear demonstrations of non-authorized uses of public space since people simply construct them without approvals from the city.

My second contribution examines African American material participation in the public sphere. Here, roadside memorials represent an increased democratic participation in both the general American landscape, and more specifically Detroit's infrastructure. This research is also

unique in that I have utilized memorial related objects as primary data. Lastly, this work should also be considered an examination of African American roadside memorial making, a conceptual starting point that at present represents the first of its kind among both spontaneous memorial and urban memorial research. Therefore, this dissertation is sure to stand out among other works that have roadside memorials as their subject.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

There are several limitations to this study. Since all but one of the memorials included in this research were already in existence prior to my initial photographs of them, information concerning the attitudes, beliefs, thought processes, strategies, and overall goals regarding these memorials from the emic perspective of their builders have been limited. Had I been privy to participant observation data from memorial constructions, combined with a theoretical analysis incorporating Clifford Geertz's "thick description" with Victor Turner's work on ritual, the political agency associated with this research would have been further strengthened.

Additionally, while memorials were photographed at the time of discovery, and annually, I had no way of knowing if the memorials were larger, smaller, included all of their original components, or if objects had been removed by nature, or human interventions. Further, it is also unknown if these memorials received additions prior to my initial photograph session. Also, the sample size was small, and thus, this study should be more rightly viewed as a beginning investigation into ongoing research regarding roadside memorials and the performance of African American material culture in public space. Lastly, this study was originally designed to study youth, and thus, my shift in trajectory as a result of field conditions have resulted in a flawed research design relative to the actual final product.

There were only two memorials among the samples presented here for children. To date, research concerning the public memorialization of children in the United States is greatly underrepresented. While children also die tragically in public spaces throughout the U.S., and studies concerning youth violence are prevalent, studies concerning material culture and commemorating the young are few. For example, do teddy bears and other stuffed animals left at death sites of children have a different connotation than those for adults? What can memorials for children tell us about American culture relative to our views on childhood, parenting, and/or the roles of children in American society? Or, do memorials for school shootings differ from those on the street; and what can they tell us about American views on the education environment? This project began as a result of my interest in an anthropology of children. While convenience sampling for this project produced an almost all adult sample, understanding the lives and experiences of the young is still both a necessary and important direction for future research.

## **APPENDIX**



# APPENDIX

Authority: 1949 PA 300, Sec. 257.622 Compliance: Required MSP UD-10 Penalty: \$100 and/or 90 days (Rev 1/04)		Do Not Use		Page <u>1</u> of <u>1</u> File Class _____	
STATE OF MICHIGAN TRAFFIC CRASH REPORT					
ORI: <b>MI-8234903</b>		Department Name <b>Detroit Police Department</b>		Incident Disposition <input checked="" type="radio"/> Open <input type="radio"/> Closed	
Crash Date Month <u>11</u> Day <u>06</u> Year <u>2004</u>		Crash Time Hour <u>15</u> Minute <u>20</u>		No. of Units <u>02</u>	
County <u>82</u>		Traffic Control <input type="radio"/> None of These <input type="radio"/> Signal <input checked="" type="radio"/> Stop Sign <input type="radio"/> Yield Sign		Relation to Roadway Location of First Impact <input checked="" type="radio"/> On Road <input type="radio"/> Median <input type="radio"/> Shoulder <input type="radio"/> Outside of Shoulder/Curb <input type="radio"/> Gore <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown	
City/Twp <u>99</u>		Construction Zone (if applicable) (Mark One From Each Group) Type <input type="radio"/> Const./Maint. <input type="radio"/> Utility		Lane Closed <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Activity <input type="radio"/> On Road <input type="radio"/> Off Road <input type="radio"/> None		Crash Type <input type="radio"/> Single Motor Vehicle <input type="radio"/> Head On <input type="radio"/> Head On-Left Turn <input checked="" type="radio"/> Angle <input type="radio"/> Rear End <input type="radio"/> Rear End-Left Turn <input type="radio"/> Rear End-Right Turn <input type="radio"/> Sideswipe-Same <input type="radio"/> Sideswipe-Opposite <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown		Special Circumstances <input checked="" type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> School Bus <input type="radio"/> Hit and Run <input type="radio"/> Local <input type="radio"/> State	
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Special Checks <input type="radio"/> Fatal (Report All) <input type="radio"/> Corrected Copy <input type="radio"/> Replace (Entire Report) <input type="radio"/> Delete (Entire Report) <input type="radio"/> Non-Traffic Area <input type="radio"/> ORV/Snowmobile		Area <u>07</u>		Total Lanes <u>2</u>	
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Prefix <u>6</u>		Intersecting Road <u>Linley</u>		Road Type <u>1</u>	
Unit Number <u>1</u>		State <u>MI</u>		Date of Birth <u>11/24/1978</u>	
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Driver Condition <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Interlock <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Alcohol <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
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Drugs <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Test Type <input type="radio"/> Blood <input type="radio"/> Urine		Test Results <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Vehicle Description Make <u>Chevy</u> Model <u>4dr</u> Color <u>Gray</u> Year <u>89</u>		Location of Greatest Damage First Impact <u>07</u> Extent of Damage <u>2</u>		Vehicle Type <input checked="" type="radio"/> PA <input type="radio"/> VA <input type="radio"/> PU <input type="radio"/> ST	
Vehicle Direction <input checked="" type="radio"/> North <input type="radio"/> South <input type="radio"/> East <input type="radio"/> West		Special Vehicles <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7		Private Trailer Type <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7	
Vehicle Defect <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7		Vehicle Use <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11		Date of Birth <u>11/24/1978</u>	
Sex <input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Restraint <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Hospital <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Ambulance <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Ejected <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Trapped <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Airbag Deployed <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Not Equipped <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Date of Birth <u>11/24/1978</u>		Sex <input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Restraint <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Hospital <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Ambulance <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Ejected <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Trapped <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Airbag Deployed <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Not Equipped <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Age <u>28</u>		Pos. <u>23</u>	
Rest. <u>23</u>		Damaged Property <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Public <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N	

Figure A.1: Crash Report for Papolo Memorial #2 (Text in the figure is not meant to be legible, but is for visual reference only.)

Figure A.1 (cont'd)

Unit Number <u>2</u> State <u>MI</u>		Date of Birth <u>1/22/1976</u>		License Type <input type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> CY <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> F <input type="radio"/> R		Sex <input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Total Occup <u>01</u> Hazard Action <u>00</u>			
<b>NCS</b>		Unit Type <input checked="" type="radio"/> MV <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> P <input type="radio"/> E (train)		City <u>Dearborn</u> State <u>MI</u> Zip <u>48124</u>		Injury <input checked="" type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Position <u>01</u> Restraint <u>10</u>		Hospital <u>Harvey Ford Ambulance 22</u>	
Driver Condition <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10		Interlock <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refused <input type="radio"/> Not offered		Alcohol <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Test Type <input type="radio"/> Field <input type="radio"/> PBT <input type="radio"/> Breath <input type="radio"/> Blood <input type="radio"/> Urine		Airbag Deployed <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Equipped		Citation Issued <input type="radio"/> Hazardous <input type="radio"/> Other		Vehicle Description Make <u>Yamaha</u> Model <u>Motorcycle</u> Color <u>Blue</u> Year <u>01</u>	
Drugs <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Test Type <input type="radio"/> Blood <input type="radio"/> Urine		Location of Greatest Damage <input checked="" type="radio"/> 01 <input type="radio"/> 02 <input type="radio"/> 03 <input type="radio"/> 04 <input type="radio"/> 05 <input type="radio"/> 06 <input type="radio"/> 07 <input type="radio"/> 08 <input type="radio"/> 09 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11 <input type="radio"/> 12		Vehicle Type <input type="radio"/> PA <input type="radio"/> CY <input type="radio"/> OR <input type="radio"/> VA <input type="radio"/> MO <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> PU <input type="radio"/> GC <input type="radio"/> Truck/Bus <input type="radio"/> ST <input type="radio"/> SM (Complete Truck/Bus Section)		Vehicle Direction <input type="radio"/> North <input type="radio"/> South <input checked="" type="radio"/> East <input type="radio"/> West		Special Vehicles <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6		Private Trailer Type <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7	
First Impact <input checked="" type="radio"/> 01 <input type="radio"/> 02 <input type="radio"/> 03 <input type="radio"/> 04 <input type="radio"/> 05 <input type="radio"/> 06 <input type="radio"/> 07 <input type="radio"/> 08 <input type="radio"/> 09 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11 <input type="radio"/> 12		Extent of Damage <input type="radio"/> 01 <input type="radio"/> 02 <input type="radio"/> 03 <input type="radio"/> 04 <input type="radio"/> 05 <input type="radio"/> 06 <input type="radio"/> 07 <input type="radio"/> 08 <input type="radio"/> 09 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11 <input type="radio"/> 12		Driveable <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No		Airbag Deployed <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Equipped		Ambulance <input type="radio"/> Ejected <input type="radio"/> Trapped <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Vehicle Use <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
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Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
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Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
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Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
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Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
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Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
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Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
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Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint		Hospital	
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Date of Birth		Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position		Restraint			

Authority: 1949 PA 300, Sec. 257.622 Compliance: Required MSP UD-10 Penalty: \$100 and/or 90 days (Rev 1/04)		Do Not Use		Page <u>1</u> Of <u>1</u> File Class _____ Incident Disposition <input type="radio"/> Open <input checked="" type="radio"/> Closed Reviewer _____	
STATE OF MICHIGAN TRAFFIC CRASH REPORT					
ORI: <b>MI-8234900</b>		Department Name <b>Detroit Police Department</b>			
Crash Date Month <u>01</u> Day <u>29</u> Year <u>2007</u>		Crash Time Hour <u>16</u> Minute <u>00</u>		No. of Units <u>02</u>	
County <u>82</u> City/Twp <u>99</u>		Traffic Control <input type="radio"/> None of These <input type="radio"/> Signal <input checked="" type="radio"/> Stop Sign <input type="radio"/> Yield Sign		Relation to Roadway (Location of First Impact) <input checked="" type="radio"/> On Road <input type="radio"/> Median <input type="radio"/> Shoulder <input type="radio"/> Outside of Shoulder/Curb <input type="radio"/> Gore <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown	
Construction Zone (if applicable) (Mark One From Each Group) Type <input type="radio"/> Const./Maint. <input type="radio"/> Utility Lane Closed <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Activity <input type="radio"/> On Road <input type="radio"/> Off Road <input type="radio"/> None					
Crash Type <input type="radio"/> Single Motor Vehicle <input type="radio"/> Head On <input type="radio"/> Head On-Left Turn <input type="radio"/> Angle <input type="radio"/> Rear End <input type="radio"/> Rear End-Left Turn <input type="radio"/> Rear End-Right Turn <input checked="" type="radio"/> Sideswipe-Same <input type="radio"/> Sideswipe-Opposite <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown					
Special Circumstances <input checked="" type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> Deer <input type="radio"/> Fleeing Police <input type="radio"/> School Bus <input type="radio"/> Hit and Run <input type="radio"/> State <input type="radio"/> Local					
Weather (Mark Only One) <input checked="" type="radio"/> Clear <input type="radio"/> Severe Wind <input type="radio"/> Cloudy <input type="radio"/> Snow/Blowing Snow <input type="radio"/> Fog/Smoke <input type="radio"/> Sleet/Hail <input type="radio"/> Rain <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown					
Light (Mark Only One) <input checked="" type="radio"/> Daylight <input type="radio"/> Dark-Lighted <input type="radio"/> Dawn <input type="radio"/> Dark-Unlighted <input type="radio"/> Dusk <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown					
Road Condition (Mark Only One) <input checked="" type="radio"/> Dry <input type="radio"/> Snowy <input type="radio"/> Debris <input type="radio"/> Wet <input type="radio"/> Muddy <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown <input type="radio"/> Icy <input type="radio"/> Slushy					
Special Checks <input type="radio"/> Fatal (Report All) <input type="radio"/> Corrected Copy <input type="radio"/> Replace (Entire Report) <input type="radio"/> Delete (Entire Report) <input type="radio"/> Non-Traffic Area <input type="radio"/> ORV/Snowmobile					
Area <u>10</u> Total Lanes <u>2</u> Speed Limit <u>35</u> Posted <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No					
Prefix <u>DEXTER</u> Road Name _____ Divided Roadway <input type="radio"/> (N) <input type="radio"/> (S) <input type="radio"/> (E) <input type="radio"/> (W) Road Type _____ Suffix _____ Distance _____ FT _____ North _____ East _____ Beginning of Ramp _____ Trafficway <input checked="" type="radio"/> (2) <input checked="" type="radio"/> (3) <input checked="" type="radio"/> (4) Access Control <input checked="" type="radio"/> (2) <input checked="" type="radio"/> (3)					
Prefix <u>AT</u> Intersecting Road <u>TIVLER</u> Divided Roadway <input type="radio"/> (N) <input type="radio"/> (S) <input type="radio"/> (E) <input type="radio"/> (W) Road Type _____ Suffix _____					
Unit No. <u>1</u> State <u>MI</u> Date of Birth <u>03/04/1931</u> License Type <input checked="" type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> CY <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F <input type="radio"/> R Total Occup <u>01</u> Hazard Action <u>14</u> Unit Type <input checked="" type="radio"/> MV <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> P <input type="radio"/> E (train) City <u>Detroit</u> State <u>MI</u> Zip <u>48208</u>					
Driver Condition <input checked="" type="radio"/> (2) <input type="radio"/> (3) <input type="radio"/> (4) <input type="radio"/> (5) <input type="radio"/> (6) <input type="radio"/> (7) <input type="radio"/> (8) <input type="radio"/> (9) <input type="radio"/> (99) Interlock <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refused <input type="radio"/> Not offered (Submit Results To FARS When Available) Alcohol <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Test Type <input type="radio"/> Field <input type="radio"/> PBT <input type="radio"/> Breath <input type="radio"/> Blood <input type="radio"/> Urine Test Results _____ Drugs <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Test Type <input type="radio"/> Blood <input type="radio"/> Urine Test Results _____					
Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> U <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> J <input type="radio"/> L <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> P <input type="radio"/> Q <input type="radio"/> R <input type="radio"/> S <input type="radio"/> T <input type="radio"/> U <input type="radio"/> V <input type="radio"/> W <input type="radio"/> X <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> Z <input type="radio"/> AA <input type="radio"/> AB <input type="radio"/> AC <input type="radio"/> AD <input type="radio"/> AE <input type="radio"/> AF <input type="radio"/> AG <input type="radio"/> AH <input type="radio"/> AI <input type="radio"/> AJ <input type="radio"/> AK <input type="radio"/> AL <input type="radio"/> AM <input type="radio"/> AN <input type="radio"/> AO <input type="radio"/> AP <input type="radio"/> AQ <input type="radio"/> AR <input 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Vehicle Description <u>TOYOTA A400R</u> Make <u>TOYOTA</u> Model <u>A400R</u> Color <u>blue</u> Year <u>2005</u> Vehicle Type <input type="radio"/> PA <input type="radio"/> CY <input type="radio"/> OR <input type="radio"/> VA <input type="radio"/> MO <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> PU <input type="radio"/> GC <input type="radio"/> Truck/Bus <input type="radio"/> SM <input type="radio"/> Complete Truck/Bus Student Vehicle Direction <input type="radio"/> North <input type="radio"/> South <input type="radio"/> East <input type="radio"/> West Special Vehicles <input type="radio"/> (1) <input type="radio"/> (2) <input type="radio"/> (3) <input type="radio"/> (4) <input type="radio"/> (5) <input type="radio"/> (6) <input type="radio"/> (7) <input type="radio"/> (8) <input type="radio"/> (9) <input type="radio"/> (10) <input type="radio"/> (11) Private Trailer Type <input type="radio"/> (1) <input type="radio"/> (2) <input type="radio"/> (3) <input type="radio"/> (4) <input type="radio"/> (5) <input type="radio"/> (6) <input type="radio"/> (7) <input type="radio"/> (8) <input type="radio"/> (9) <input type="radio"/> (10) <input type="radio"/> (11) Vehicle Defect <input type="radio"/> (1) <input type="radio"/> (2) <input type="radio"/> (3) <input type="radio"/> (4) <input type="radio"/> (5) <input type="radio"/> (6) <input type="radio"/> (7) <input type="radio"/> (8) <input type="radio"/> (9) <input type="radio"/> (10) <input type="radio"/> (11) Vehicle Use <input type="radio"/> (1) <input type="radio"/> (2) <input type="radio"/> (3) <input type="radio"/> (4) <input type="radio"/> (5) <input type="radio"/> (6) <input type="radio"/> (7) <input type="radio"/> (8) <input type="radio"/> (9) <input type="radio"/> (10) <input type="radio"/> (11)					
Location of Greatest Damage <input checked="" type="radio"/> (1) <input type="radio"/> (2) <input type="radio"/> (3) <input type="radio"/> (4) <input type="radio"/> (5) <input type="radio"/> (6) <input type="radio"/> (7) <input type="radio"/> (8) <input type="radio"/> (9) <input type="radio"/> (10) <input type="radio"/> (11) <input type="radio"/> (12) First Impact <u>DB</u> Extent of Damage <u>7</u> Driveable <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> U <input type="radio"/> I <input type="radio"/> J <input type="radio"/> L <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> P <input type="radio"/> Q <input type="radio"/> R <input type="radio"/> S <input type="radio"/> T <input type="radio"/> U <input type="radio"/> V <input type="radio"/> W <input type="radio"/> X <input type="radio"/> Y <input 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type="radio"/> MH <input type="radio"/> MI <input type="radio"/> MJ <input type="radio"/> MK <input type="radio"/> ML <input type="radio"/> MM <input type="radio"/> MN <input type="radio"/> MO <input type="radio"/> MP <input type="radio"/> MQ <input type="radio"/> MR <input type="radio"/> MS <input type="radio"/> MT <input type="radio"/> MU <input type="radio"/> MV <input type="radio"/> MW <input type="radio"/> MX <input type="radio"/> MY <input type="radio"/> MZ <input type="radio"/> NA <input type="radio"/> NB <input type="radio"/> NC <input type="radio"/> ND <input type="radio"/> NE <input type="radio"/> NF <input type="radio"/> NG <input type="radio"/> NH <input type="radio"/> NI <input type="radio"/> NJ <input type="radio"/> NK <input type="radio"/> NL <input type="radio"/> NM <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/> NP <input type="radio"/> NQ <input type="radio"/> NR <input type="radio"/> NS <input type="radio"/> NT <input type="radio"/> NU <input type="radio"/> NV <input 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type="radio"/> PK <input type="radio"/> PL <input type="radio"/> PM <input type="radio"/> PN <input type="radio"/> PO <input type="radio"/> PP <input type="radio"/> PQ <input type="radio"/> PR <input type="radio"/> PS <input type="radio"/> PT <input type="radio"/> PU <input type="radio"/> PV <input type="radio"/> PW <input type="radio"/> PX <input type="radio"/> PY <input type="radio"/> PZ <input type="radio"/> QA <input type="radio"/> QB <input type="radio"/> QC <input type="radio"/> QD <input type="radio"/> QE <input type="radio"/> QF <input type="radio"/> QG <input type="radio"/> QH <input type="radio"/> QI <input type="radio"/> QJ <input type="radio"/> QK <input type="radio"/> QL <input type="radio"/> QM <input type="radio"/> QN <input type="radio"/> QO <input type="radio"/> QP <input type="radio"/> QQ <input type="radio"/> QR <input type="radio"/> QS <input type="radio"/> QT <input type="radio"/> QU <input type="radio"/> QV <input type="radio"/> QW <input type="radio"/> QX <input 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type="radio"/> SM <input type="radio"/> SN <input type="radio"/> SO <input type="radio"/> SP <input type="radio"/> SQ <input type="radio"/> SR <input type="radio"/> SS <input type="radio"/> ST <input type="radio"/> SU <input type="radio"/> SV <input type="radio"/> SW <input type="radio"/> SX <input type="radio"/> SY <input type="radio"/> SZ <input type="radio"/> TA <input type="radio"/> TB <input type="radio"/> TC <input type="radio"/> TD <input type="radio"/> TE <input type="radio"/> TF <input type="radio"/> TG <input type="radio"/> TH <input type="radio"/> TI <input type="radio"/> TJ <input type="radio"/> TK <input type="radio"/> TL <input type="radio"/> TM <input type="radio"/> TN <input type="radio"/> TO <input type="radio"/> TP <input type="radio"/> TQ <input type="radio"/> TR <input type="radio"/> TS <input type="radio"/> TT <input type="radio"/> TU <input type="radio"/> TV <input type="radio"/> TW <input type="radio"/> TX <input type="radio"/> TY <input type="radio"/> TZ <input type="radio"/> UA <input type="radio"/> UB <input type="radio"/> UC <input type="radio"/> UD <input type="radio"/> UE <input type="radio"/> UF <input type="radio"/> UG <input type="radio"/> UH <input type="radio"/> UI <input type="radio"/> UJ <input type="radio"/> UK <input type="radio"/> UL <input type="radio"/> UM <input type="radio"/> UN <input type="radio"/> UO <input type="radio"/> UP <input type="radio"/> UQ <input type="radio"/> UR <input type="radio"/> US <input type="radio"/> UT <input type="radio"/> UU <input type="radio"/> UV <input type="radio"/> UW <input type="radio"/> UX <input type="radio"/> UY <input type="radio"/> UZ <input type="radio"/> VA <input type="radio"/> VB <input type="radio"/> VC <input type="radio"/> VD <input type="radio"/> VE <input type="radio"/> VF <input type="radio"/> VG <input type="radio"/> VH <input type="radio"/> VI <input type="radio"/> VJ <input type="radio"/> VK <input type="radio"/> VL <input type="radio"/> VM <input type="radio"/> VN <input type="radio"/> VO <input type="radio"/> VP <input type="radio"/> VQ <input type="radio"/> VR <input type="radio"/> VS <input type="radio"/> VT <input type="radio"/> VU <input type="radio"/> VV <input type="radio"/> VW <input type="radio"/> VX					

Figure A.2 (cont'd)

Unit Number		State		Date of Birth		License Type		Sex		Total Occup		Hazard Action																																									
2		MI		03/03/1959		<input checked="" type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> CY <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> F <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> R		<input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		01		00																																									
<b>NCS</b>																																																					
Unit Type: <input checked="" type="radio"/> MV <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> P <input type="radio"/> E (train) City: <u>DeWitt</u> State: <u>MI</u> Zip: <u>48227</u> Driver Condition: <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 Interlock: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refused <input type="radio"/> Not offered Alcohol: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Field <input type="radio"/> PET <input type="radio"/> Breath <input type="radio"/> Blood <input type="radio"/> Urine <input type="radio"/> Test Results Drugs: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Test Type <input type="radio"/> Blood <input type="radio"/> Urine <input type="radio"/> Test Results																																																					
Vehicle Description: <u>1999 Dodge Stratus Sedan</u> Color: <u>gray</u> Vehicle Type: <input type="radio"/> PA <input type="radio"/> CY <input type="radio"/> OR <input type="radio"/> VA <input type="radio"/> MO <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> PU <input type="radio"/> GC <input type="radio"/> Truck/Bus <input type="radio"/> ST <input type="radio"/> SM Vehicle Direction: <input checked="" type="radio"/> North <input type="radio"/> South <input type="radio"/> East <input type="radio"/> West Special Vehicles: <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 Private Trailer Type: <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 Vehicle Defect: <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11 <input type="radio"/> 12 Vehicle Use: <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11 <input type="radio"/> 12																																																					
Location of Greatest Damage: <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11 <input type="radio"/> 12 First Impact: <u>08</u> Extent of Damage: <u>7</u> Drivable: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Injury: <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input checked="" type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> Airbag Deployed: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not Equipped																																																					
Date of Birth: <u>06/06/1961</u> Sex: <input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F Position: <u>04</u> Restraint: <u>Henny Ford</u> Ambulance: <u>Medic 1</u> Ejected: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Trapped: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No																																																					
Date of Birth: <input type="text"/> Sex: <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F Position: <input type="text"/> Restraint: <input type="text"/> Ambulance: <input type="text"/> Ejected: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Trapped: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No																																																					
Age: <input type="text"/> Pos: <input type="text"/> Rest: <input type="text"/> Age: <input type="text"/> Pos: <input type="text"/> Rest: <input type="text"/>																																																					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">Unit Reported on Front</th> <th colspan="5">Unit Reported Above</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Action Prior</th> <th>First</th> <th>Second</th> <th>Third</th> <th>Fourth</th> <th>Action Prior</th> <th>First</th> <th>Second</th> <th>Third</th> <th>Fourth</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>02</td> <td>17</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>01</td> <td>17</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Most Harmful</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Most Harmful</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>														Unit Reported on Front					Unit Reported Above					Action Prior	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Action Prior	First	Second	Third	Fourth	02	17				01	17				Most Harmful					Most Harmful				
Unit Reported on Front					Unit Reported Above																																																
Action Prior	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Action Prior	First	Second	Third	Fourth																																												
02	17				01	17																																															
Most Harmful					Most Harmful																																																
Unit Number: <input type="text"/> City: <input type="text"/> State: <input type="text"/> Zip: <input type="text"/> GVWR: <input type="text"/> Carrier Source: <input type="radio"/> Papers <input type="radio"/> Vehicle <input type="radio"/> Log Book <input type="radio"/> Driver Driver's CDL Type: <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> H <input type="radio"/> P <input type="radio"/> T <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/> S <input type="radio"/> X CDL Restrictions: <input type="radio"/> 26 <input type="radio"/> 29 <input type="radio"/> 30 CDL Exempt: <input type="radio"/> Farm <input type="radio"/> Other Vehicle Type: <input type="radio"/> AS <input type="radio"/> AL <input type="radio"/> BS <input type="radio"/> CX <input type="radio"/> AA <input type="radio"/> AT <input type="radio"/> BB <input type="radio"/> BX <input type="radio"/> Other AH <input type="radio"/> AX <input type="radio"/> BH <input type="radio"/> CH <input type="radio"/> AN <input type="radio"/> AY <input type="radio"/> BN <input type="radio"/> CP <input type="radio"/> AP <input type="radio"/> AZ <input type="radio"/> BP <input type="radio"/> CS Medical Card: <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N Hazardous Material: <input type="radio"/> Placard <input type="radio"/> Cargo Spill Class: <input type="text"/> Type & Axles Per Unit: <input type="text"/> First <input type="text"/> Second <input type="text"/> Third <input type="text"/> Fourth Cargo Body Type: <input type="text"/> 1 <input type="text"/> 2 <input type="text"/> 3 <input type="text"/> 4 <input type="text"/> 5 <input type="text"/> 6 <input type="text"/> 7 <input type="text"/> 8 ID #: <input type="text"/> Investigated at Scene: <input checked="" type="radio"/> (N)																																																					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Crash Diagram and Remarks</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Driver 2 stated he was sideswiped by Driver 1 who was backing out of the EB on Tyler and hit his vehicle from the side but majority of damage was the front of the vehicle. Driver 1 stated one did not see Driver 2.</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Passenger of Driver 2 Denise Jackson b/f out of the car and to the head of car. No injuries. 305 St. 757028 Dr. Fowkes - condition stable.</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>														Crash Diagram and Remarks		<p>Driver 2 stated he was sideswiped by Driver 1 who was backing out of the EB on Tyler and hit his vehicle from the side but majority of damage was the front of the vehicle. Driver 1 stated one did not see Driver 2.</p>	<p>Passenger of Driver 2 Denise Jackson b/f out of the car and to the head of car. No injuries. 305 St. 757028 Dr. Fowkes - condition stable.</p>																																				
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Authority: 1949 PA 300, Sec. 257.622 Compliance: Required MSP UD-10 Penalty: \$100 and/or 90 days (Rev 1/04)		Do Not Use		Page <u>2</u> of <u>2</u> File Crash _____	
STATE OF MICHIGAN TRAFFIC CRASH REPORT					
ORI: <b>MI-8234908</b>		Department Name: <b>Detroit Police Department</b>		Incident Disposition: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Open <input type="radio"/> Closed	
Reviewer: _____		Reviewer: _____			
Crash Date: <b>02/29/05</b>		Crash Time: <b>11:15</b>		No. of Units: <b>01</b>	
County: <b>82</b>		City/twp: <b>99</b>		Crash Type: <input type="radio"/> Single Motor Vehicle <input type="radio"/> Head On <input type="radio"/> Head On-Left Turn <input checked="" type="radio"/> Angle <input type="radio"/> Rear End <input type="radio"/> Rear End-Left Turn <input type="radio"/> Rear End-Right Turn <input type="radio"/> Sideswipe-Same <input type="radio"/> Sideswipe-Opposite <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown	
Traffic Control: <input checked="" type="radio"/> None of These <input type="radio"/> Signal <input type="radio"/> Stop Sign <input type="radio"/> Yield Sign		Relation to Roadway: (Location of First Impact) <input type="radio"/> Shoulder <input type="radio"/> Outside of Shoulder/Curb <input checked="" type="radio"/> On Road <input type="radio"/> Median <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown		Special Circumstances: <input checked="" type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> School Bus <input type="radio"/> Hit and Run <input type="radio"/> Flooding Police <input type="radio"/> State <input type="radio"/> Severe Wind <input type="radio"/> Snow/Blowing Snow <input type="radio"/> Sleet/Hail <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown	
Construction Zone (if applicable) (Mark One From Each Group) Type: <input type="radio"/> Const./Maint. <input type="radio"/> Utility Lane Closed: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Activity: <input type="radio"/> On Road <input type="radio"/> Off Road <input type="radio"/> None		Light: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Daylight <input type="radio"/> Dawn <input type="radio"/> Dusk <input type="radio"/> Dark-Lighted <input type="radio"/> Dark-Unlighted <input type="radio"/> Other/Unknown		Road Condition: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Dry <input type="radio"/> Snowy <input type="radio"/> Muddy <input type="radio"/> Icy <input type="radio"/> Slushy	
Prefix: _____ Road Name: <b>GREENPICO</b>		Divided Roadway: (N) (S) (E) (W)		Road Type: <b>RD</b>	
Distance: <b>61</b>		Direction: <b>FT</b>		Access Control: (1) (2) (3)	
Prefix: _____ Intersecting Road: <b>MARGARETA</b>		Divided Roadway: (N) (S) (E) (W)		Road Type: <b>ST</b>	
Unit Number: <b>1</b>		State: <b>MI</b>		Date of Birth: <b>03/05/1969</b>	
Unit Type: <input checked="" type="radio"/> MV <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> P <input type="radio"/> E (train)		License Type: <input type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> R		Sex: <input type="radio"/> M <input checked="" type="radio"/> F	
City: <b>DETROIT</b> State: <b>MI</b> Zip: <b>48207</b>		Injury: <input checked="" type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Position: <input checked="" type="radio"/> 01 <input type="radio"/> 02 <input type="radio"/> 03 <input type="radio"/> 04 <input type="radio"/> 05 <input type="radio"/> 06 <input type="radio"/> 07 <input type="radio"/> 08 <input type="radio"/> 09 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11 <input type="radio"/> 12	
Driver Condition: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Refused <input type="radio"/> Not offered		Restraint: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Hospital: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Alcohol: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Test Type: <input type="radio"/> Field <input type="radio"/> PBT <input type="radio"/> Breath <input type="radio"/> Blood <input type="radio"/> Urine		Airbag: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Citation issued: <input type="radio"/> Hazardous <input type="radio"/> Other	
Drugs: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Test Type: <input type="radio"/> Blood <input type="radio"/> Urine		Vehicle Description: <b>040</b>		Model: <b>STRATUS</b>	
Location of Greatest Damage: <input checked="" type="radio"/> 01 <input type="radio"/> 02 <input type="radio"/> 03 <input type="radio"/> 04 <input type="radio"/> 05 <input type="radio"/> 06 <input type="radio"/> 07 <input type="radio"/> 08 <input type="radio"/> 09 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11 <input type="radio"/> 12		Vehicle Type: <input checked="" type="radio"/> PA <input type="radio"/> VA <input type="radio"/> PU <input type="radio"/> ST		Vehicle Direction: <input checked="" type="radio"/> North <input type="radio"/> South <input type="radio"/> East <input type="radio"/> West	
First Impact: <b>03</b>		Extent of Damage: <b>ST</b>		Private Trailer Type: <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7	
Drivable: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No		Vehicle Defect: <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11		Vehicle Use: <input checked="" type="radio"/> 01 <input type="radio"/> 02 <input type="radio"/> 03 <input type="radio"/> 04 <input type="radio"/> 05 <input type="radio"/> 06 <input type="radio"/> 07 <input type="radio"/> 08 <input type="radio"/> 09 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11	
Injury: <input type="radio"/> K <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O		Airbag Deployed: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Not Equipped: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Date of Birth: _____		Sex: <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position: _____	
Restraint: _____		Hospital: _____		Ambulance: _____	
Elected: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Trapped: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Date of Birth: _____	
Sex: <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F		Position: _____		Restraint: _____	
Hospital: _____		Ambulance: _____		Elected: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Trapped: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Date of Birth: _____		Sex: <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F	
Position: _____		Restraint: _____		Hospital: _____	
Ambulance: _____		Elected: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Trapped: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Age: <b>34</b>		Sex: _____		Rest: _____	
Age: <b>49</b>		Sex: _____		Rest: _____	
Damaged Property: _____		Public: <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N		Private: <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N	

Figure A.3: Crash Report for PaPoos Memorial #8 (Text in the figure is not meant to be legible, but is for visual reference only.)

Figure A.3 (cont'd)

Unit Number <u>2</u> State <u>MI</u>		<b>BACK</b>	
<b>NCS</b> Unit Type <input type="radio"/> MV <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> P <input type="radio"/> E (train) Driver Condition <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Alcohol <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Drugs <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Test Type <input type="radio"/> Blood <input type="radio"/> Urine Test Results		Date of Birth <u>05/29/1957</u> License Type <input type="radio"/> O <input type="radio"/> CY <input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> F <input type="radio"/> F <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> R Sex <input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F Total Occup <u>01</u> Hazard Action <u>00</u> Injury <input type="radio"/> K <input checked="" type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> O Position <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 Restraint <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Ejected <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Trapped <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Airbag Deployed <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Citizenship Issued <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Hazardous <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Other <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Location of Greatest Damage <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11 <input type="radio"/> 12 Front Impact <input checked="" type="radio"/> 01 Extent of Damage <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 Drivable <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Vehicle Description <u>Ford F-350</u> <u>WAT</u> <u>97</u> Vehicle Type <input type="radio"/> PA <input type="radio"/> CY <input type="radio"/> OR <input type="radio"/> VA <input type="radio"/> MO <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> PU <input checked="" type="radio"/> GC <input type="radio"/> Truck/Bus <input type="radio"/> ST <input type="radio"/> SM <input type="radio"/> Complete Truck/Bus System Vehicle Direction <input type="radio"/> North <input checked="" type="radio"/> South <input type="radio"/> East <input type="radio"/> West Special Vehicles <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 Private Trailer Type <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 Vehicle Defect <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 Vehicle Use <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11		Date of Birth Sex <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F Position Hospital Ambulance Ejected <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Trapped <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Unit Reported on Front Action Prior Sequence of Events First Second Third Fourth 01 01 01 17 Most Harmful <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> M <input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> M		Unit Reported Above Action Prior Sequence of Events First Second Third Fourth 01 11 17 Most Harmful <input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> M	
Unit Number <u>2</u> State <u>MI</u> Carrier Source <input type="radio"/> Papers <input checked="" type="radio"/> Vehicle <input type="radio"/> Log Book <input type="radio"/> Driver Driver's CDL Type <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> C <input checked="" type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> None <input type="radio"/> Interstate <input type="radio"/> Intra (MI Only) CDL Exempt <input type="radio"/> Farm <input type="radio"/> Other Vehicle Type <input type="radio"/> AS <input type="radio"/> AL <input type="radio"/> BS <input type="radio"/> CX <input type="radio"/> AA <input type="radio"/> AT <input type="radio"/> BB <input type="radio"/> BX <input type="radio"/> AH <input type="radio"/> AX <input type="radio"/> BH <input type="radio"/> CH <input type="radio"/> AN <input type="radio"/> AY <input type="radio"/> BN <input checked="" type="radio"/> CP <input type="radio"/> AP <input type="radio"/> AZ <input type="radio"/> BP <input type="radio"/> CS Medical Card <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N Hazardous Material <input type="radio"/> Placard <input type="radio"/> Cargo Spill Class #		Crash Diagram and Remarks  Investigation reveals that crash occurred on the crossing the center line crossing over the street the fire on the right side of the road. The driver was not wearing a seat belt.	

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