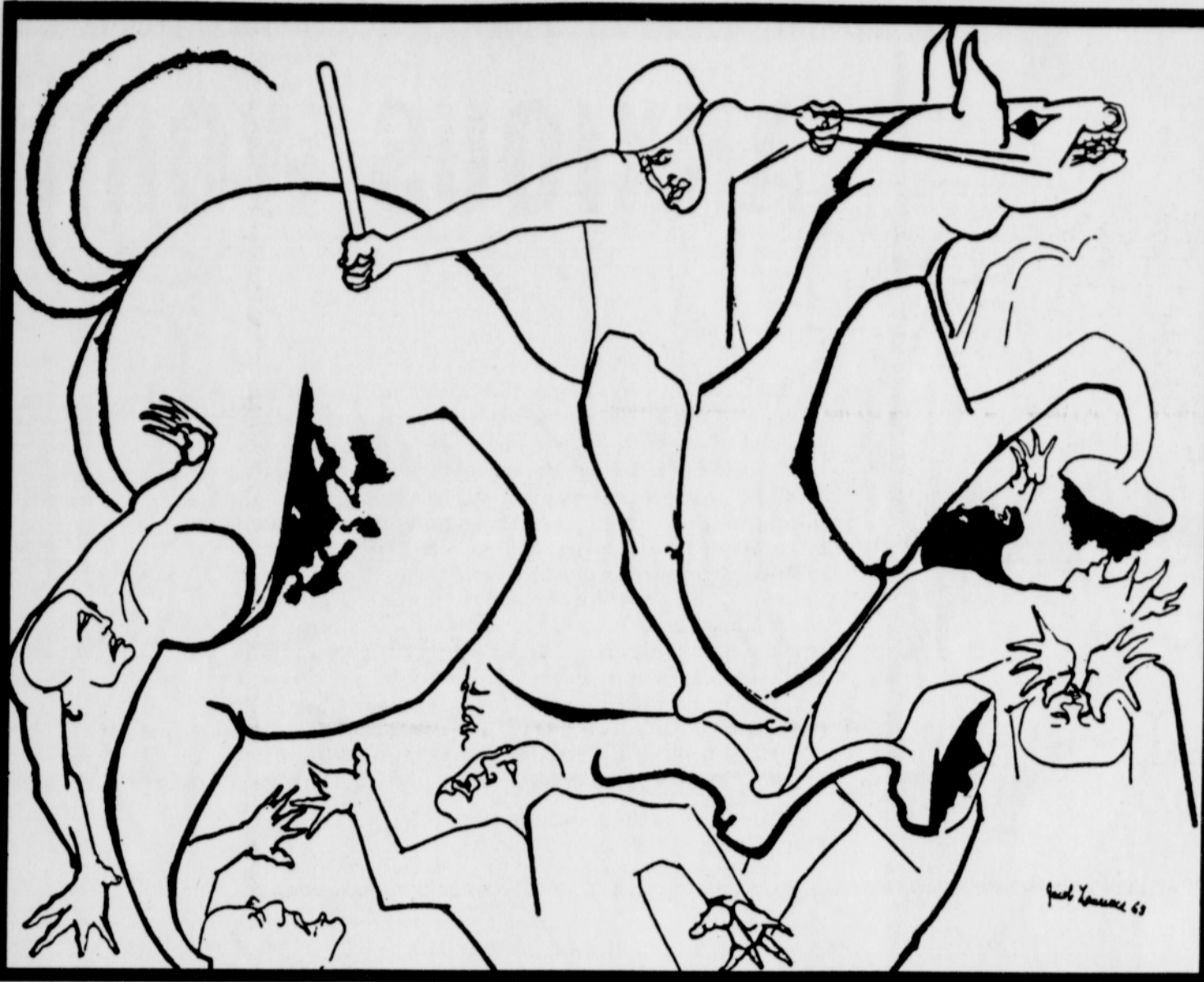


# IT'S NOT RIGHT



JACOB LAWRENCE, "STRUGGLE NO. 2" (1965)

BY DAVE KRUGER

It came from behind me, down at the Merry-time Tavern in Astoria. Porter had just gotten clobbered going to the hoop. In the melee, one of the Phoenix Suns' black players had been knocked to the floor under the basket, shielding himself with his forearms.

The voice floated over my head. "Time for a little Rodney King action." Unconsciously, my right hand went behind my head in the gesture of international ill will. But the guy didn't see it. Or he didn't get it. Or care.

The politically correct act would have been to confront the bugged and "engage in a purposeful dialogue about racism." I didn't. I blew it off. But it stuck hard, in my head.

Yeah, that's how far we are from solving this problem. It's buried in our heads. It comes out in those little heart-to-hearts guys have in locker rooms or over beers or in references to "Africa" in northeast Portland.

It violates every fundamental fairness principle on which this nation was founded. It's not right. We "know" that. But we don't practice it. We don't live it.

Everybody I talk to is depressed about the verdict in the Rodney King beating incident, and the subsequent rioting and killing in Los Angeles. It just doesn't make any SENSE.

So, do THIS: talk to your kids about it. Tell them it's wrong. Tell the next person of color you meet how disgusted you are. When the boss smirks at the end of his racist joke, do not smile. Stare at him blankly. Make him nervous. When Bush natters about the riots being LBJ's fault, remember it in the polling booth.

It's boring, dull, and vital. We'll all be killing each other if we do not attack the problem. It's not enough to feel warm and safe that south central L. A. is 1200 miles and twenty thousand National Guardsmen away. This stuff will kill our souls from within unless we get rid of it.

Dave Kruger lives in Astoria. He teaches chemistry at Clatsop Community College.

## L.A.

I mourn for L. A.  
I mourn for reasons why.  
25 years ago I was 18,  
living down there during the Watts Riots.

The hot, hot Summer pushed people living in a hellhole  
over the edge.  
They struck out, trying to destroy the trap  
they were forced to live in.  
Fires broke out all over the nation.  
Wake up America!

We pledged to build a Great Society.  
Then spent our money on the Vietnam War.  
Now with no money to spare, with jobs dear even to Whites, who  
will help build our new Society?

Who bears the responsibility for what happened?  
Can I look deep into my soul and find no  
Sheds of fear and distrust of Black People?

Have I never raged in my despair,  
Wanting to destroy something?  
Drug gangs and riots, born of our neglect and fear.

I mourn for L. A.  
I mourn for reasons why.

— CAROLYN GEIGER

Carolyn Geiger lives in Astoria.


## MURPHY BROWN

For shame! For shame! Murphy Brown.  
You've turned the White House upside down.  
Poor sensitive Vice President Quayle  
Turned quite livid, then quickly pale.  
However can you sit calm  
When your sit-com was a lethal bomb?  
For unless Quayle's quite mistaken,  
Our moral fiber is completely shaken.  
To portray anything quite so wild,  
As a single parent having a child.  
There is really no excuse to  
Not portray things we're used to.  
Murder, hooker, assassin are all choices  
That wouldn't raise objecting voices.  
But to have earned the Vice Presidential frown,  
What were you thinking of Murphy Brown?

— MARY McKINNEY

Mary McKinney lives in Astoria.



  
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