

A Framing Analysis of Media Coverage of the Rodney King Incident and Ferguson, Missouri, Conflicts

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Abstract

This study explored how news organizations presented the Ferguson, Missouri, story in comparison with a similar Rodney King incident that happened two decades ago. The purpose of this study was to analyze if and how the mainstream news media have progressed in covering racially sensitive news stories. Background research on the concept of media frames enabled the author to conduct a comparative analysis on eight newspaper articles, two broadcast segments, and two magazine covers. Overarching frames focused on the conflict between the public and authorities, black hardship, and black male youth hardship. These frames influence public reaction to stories such as the tragedy in Ferguson, Missouri.

I. Introduction

The news media have been vital to informing the public and shaping public opinion in America for centuries. These “gatekeepers” of the news hold incredible power in the selection of news stories and the manner in which they are told.

In recent events, news stories have become more inflammatory and politicized. As the public becomes more aware of different organizations’ underlying political values and the media’s motivation for presenting stories in certain ways, viewers have opted to seek news that is catered, or framed, to support his or her own views. While framing is not intentional by the media, it is the inherent result of the manner in which writers and producers choose to present the facts on controversial cases.

In light of recent racially charged news stories detailing the conflict in Ferguson, Missouri, a retrospective look at how a similar story such as the Rodney King incident was presented in another racially tense time period may give insight into the progression of media frames. A comparative analysis of these stories sheds light on changes in media framing that have occurred over the last two decades. The following research will explore the concept of media framing and how public opinion has been shaped on racially charged stories in the past compared to today.

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II. Literature Review

Framing theory and history

Media framing is the manner in which information is presented to audiences at its most basic form. Gamson and Modigliani (1987) laid the groundwork for this concept by defining framing as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue” (p. 3).

There are many different types of frames and many different approaches to theorizing framing. The line between this concept and other concepts such as “agenda setting” and “priming” are often blurred. Agenda setting is how the mass media chooses to focus attention on specific topics. Priming is the process of determining which factors are important regarding specific topics (Iyengar, Kinder 1987). Gamson (1988) argues that social movements are created when the mass media wrap their positions into “holistic issue packages,” which are composed of many signature elements.

All of these theories boil down to the concept that these cognitive schemas ultimately enable an individual to efficiently classify and process information encountered in social environments. Frames simplify complex issues in different ways. Some frames are composed with persuasive intent; some might emphasize causal or moral aspects. While none of these different types of frames might tell the whole story, any story shared about a complex issue will always be incomplete. Frames satisfy society’s need for explanation and prescriptive action and facilitate the public to make informed decisions.

Mass media have a strong impact by constructing social reality “by framing images of reality . . . in a predictable and patterned way” (McQuail, 1987, p. 331). But audiences do not uniformly react to media messages because individuals construct their own meaning based on the messages they receive rather than being passive audiences. Of course, journalists develop and crystalize meaning of reality and contribute to shaping public opinion.

Mass Media Evolution: framing in the 1960s to present day

Historically, mass media have selectively gathered information about current events, framed it into news stories, and distributed it through various news platforms. The government has historically adopted a hands-off policy based on “the belief that diverse owners will produce a broad array of views, sustaining sound democracy” (Baker, 2007, p. 15).

However, America has experienced a trend toward deregulation, definitively marked by the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This led to rapid consolidation in the media industry and a focus on commercialization and financial soundness.

Now the explosion of the Internet and rise of the 24-hour cable news model have led to broader content and more ideological orientations than in the past, argues Shapiro (2011). Search engines, blogs, and social networks allow individuals to look for information on a specific topic and not have to scan news sources. Users have come to expect personalized information rather than accept standardized offerings. This has forced the news media to cater to users’ desires and deliver content that they are looking for. The result is news information that is framed to cater to specific audiences with the objective of increased profits. Many scholars argue “much of today’s partisan news verges on ‘propaganda’ masquerading as objective facts and analysis” (Pavlik, 2008).

Present day framing effects on race relations

America reached a watershed in its history of race relations on November 5, 2008, with the election of the country’s first African American president, Barack Obama. Racial considerations continue to play a significant, at times defining, role in shaping public opinion across a broad array of politics (Shapiro, 2011). The commercialism of today’s media along with the public’s demand for personalized content drives mass media. There is a consistent “racial divide” between opinions on Whites and African Americans across a broad range of policy areas, both race-targeted and non-targeted (Kinder and Winter 2001).

Shapiro (2011) states that there have been three key developments in substantive areas of interest regarding race and the media. He argues that the dramatic demographic transformation since the 1960s, technological innovations, and evolving substantive interests in identity, institutions, and the boundaries of

politics have shaped present-day race and media relations.

The mass media's heightened awareness and focus on race leads to targeted agenda setting and resulting framing. These frames fuel social stereotypes and create a "cultural representation of the individual, as well as a mental representation within the individual" (Scheufele, 2004).

After understanding the way that news stories are packaged and presented in frames and understanding the capitalistic nature of modern mass media, it becomes apparent that there is much to explore as to why and how the mass media influence race relations and the public's perception of race in America. The way that racially charged news stories (both hard and soft) are framed has the potential to influence public opinion and race relations on a large scale.

III. Methodology

In order to explore the progression of media coverage of racially focused news stories, a comparative analysis has been performed on coverage of the Rodney King incident in 1991-1992 to the more recent incident of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Given the time and space limitations of this study's research, the breadth of news sources analyzed was limited to newspaper articles, broadcast, and magazine covers.

Eight print articles, two broadcast segments, and two magazine covers are cross-referenced—an equal number of sources from each incident. These two events were chosen for comparison based on their factual similarities and the two-decade time span between the two events. Similarities and differences in the coverage of these two events may reveal trends in media framing of these types of events over the past two decades.

The first two *New York Times* articles were selected for comparison based on each article's date of publication—each was published immediately after each incident. This comparison aims to gauge initial mainstream print media reaction to each incident. Articles 3 and 4 were selected from *The Wall Street Journal* based on the article's subject of the aftermath of each incident. This comparison aims to analyze the framing of the resulting riots and unrest of each incident from a historically conservative news source. Articles 5 and 6 were selected from *The New York Times* based on the article's subject of the public reaction and racial tensions resulting from each incident. This comparison aims to analyze the framing of race relations from arguably one of the world's premiere news sources. Articles 7 and 8 were selected from *The Washington Post* based on each article's focus on the authorities' perspective on each incident.

Next, the initial ABC broadcast coverage of the Rodney King incident is cross-referenced with a more recent ABC broadcast coverage of the Ferguson, Missouri, incident.

Lastly, two *Time* magazine covers are compared based on imagery and language used to present the two stories and subsequent unrest.

As detailed in Appendix 1, the Rodney King incident was covered by Articles 1, 3, 5 and 7, along with broadcast Segment 1 and magazine Cover 1; while the Ferguson incident was covered by Articles 2, 4, 6, and 8, along with Segment 2 and Cover 2.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze if and how the mainstream news media has progressed in covering racially sensitive news stories. For this purpose, the following four research questions were formulated:

RQ. 1: How did media present the Rodney King incident?

RQ. 2: How did media present the Ferguson, Missouri, incident?

RQ. 3: What are the similarities of coverage between the two events?

RQ. 4: How has the media framed the public reaction and riots of these two events?

IV. Findings

Print media coverage of Rodney King story

Wording:

The wording of a lead paragraph of a hard news article reveals a lot about what the story will cover as well as the tone and frame in which the story will be shaped. The wording an author chooses sets the tone and style in which the reader will receive the message.

Article 1 covers the initial story of the beating of Rodney King using phrases such as “jarred,” “failed,” and “official abuse of minorities” in the lead paragraph. These words grab the reader’s attention because they pull the reader into a larger concept than just the facts of this specific incident.

Articles 3 and 5 also include inflammatory phrases such as “outraged,” “threat,” “racial discrimination,” “brutality,” and “theft,” which paint a larger picture of the incident at hand and contribute to an overarching theme of racial tension.

Frame of black hardship:

In Article 1, King is described as “speaking from a wheelchair and wearing a cast on one ankle.” King is first quoted in the article, making his viewpoint the most salient. He is quoted as saying, “I’m just glad I’m not dead.” This use of King as the initial primary source of the article shifts the focus towards his personal plight and the frame of black hardship.

More quotes from King include, “I was scared for my life, so I lay down real calmly and took it like a man.” The author uses a total of five quotes from King and only one from the police chief and one from a firsthand witness.

Article 5 illustrates King’s hardship, but also demonstrates his desire for protesters to cease violent activity in response to the incident. By directly quoting King’s remarks, *The New York Times* gives incredible potency to his words. His statement, “We’ll get our justice. They won the battle, but they haven’t won the war. We’ll have our day in Court, and that’s all we want,” contributes to the frame of black hardship because by using the word “we,” King is implying that Blacks as a whole lost this symbolic battle.

Article 1 includes another description of King that adds to this frame of black disadvantage. Including the fact that King was unemployed right before stating that he was hospitalized for two days, instills a sense of sympathy in the reader that he might not be able to afford the hospital visit. Including the fact that he was last released from prison only a few months prior, makes that fact less important.

Civil rights leaders’ frame versus authorities’:

An author’s subtle wording can reveal much about his or her intentional message buried under the facts of a story.

The majority of attributions included in Article 1 come from civil rights leaders and King himself. The majority of quotes serve one of two purposes: to demonstrate King’s misfortune or to demonstrate the Los Angeles Police Department’s wrongdoing.

For example, the author says, “Civil rights organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union and black and Hispanic advocacy groups joined in the public condemnation, saying there was a pattern of violence and racial abuse among Los Angeles law-enforcement agencies.” By including this statement prior to saying that the police chief “insisted that the beating was ‘an aberration’” pits the two parties against each other.

The next sentence further establishes this frame. By following the police chief’s statement with a contradictory statement from witnesses of the event, this further demonstrates the conflict between the public and the authorities because it persuades the reader to choose sides.

Article 7 from *The Washington Post* presents a starkly different perspective on the incident. Instead of focusing on King’s persona, this author presents the story from a police perspective saying, “the mere fact that King would not stop created an atmosphere of danger and suspicion.” This statement casts the story in a very different light than most other stories, which focused on police wrong-doing. One of the final sentences from the article highlights the frame of conflict. “Perhaps the greatest paradox of all will be seen in the days to come, when, in spite of feelings so strong as to defy logic, those who are so critical of the police will not hesitate to call on them for help when danger looms.”

Print media coverage of Ferguson, Missouri, story

Wording:

Articles 2, 4, 6, and 8 are all characterized by each author's factual and unemotional tone. However, the frame of Articles 2 and 6 become evident with quotes, such as "in an explanation that met with outrage and skepticism in the largely African-American community," and "The killing, on a residential street in Ferguson, set off weeks of civil unrest — and a national debate — fueled by protesters' outrage over what they called a pattern of police brutality against young black men."

The inflammatory tone in these articles is taken on by the quotes from Brown's parents and civil rights groups. In Article 2 the authors set the frame with sentences such as "the heightened tensions between the police and the African-American community were on display." Then quotes such as "No justice, no peace!" from protesters are used to support the authors' frame.

Meaning can be found in the authors' words in Article 2 regarding the police's account of the story. They write that "[the police] released what they said was the fullest account of the shooting that they could provide." By including the phrase "what they said" the authors imply that the police may or may not be releasing the fullest account they could provide. This causes the reader to think along the same lines as the authors.

Frame of black male facing youth misfortune:

In the wake of similar stories such as Trayvon Martin and Emmett Till, the facts of this story fall into this frame of an innocent black youth whose life ended too soon. Article 2 emphasizes Brown's innocence by saying he was "planning to begin college classes on Monday" and protesters were "leaving behind teddy bears and balloons" to memorialize the eighteen-year-old. The authors also included the detail that "he had been walking to his grandmother's house when the shooting occurred," which has youthful implications.

The most significant factor contributing to this frame in Article 2 is the quote from Brown's mother, Lesley McSpadden: "You took my son away from me. Do you know how hard it was for me to get him to stay in school and graduate? You know how many black men graduate? Not many. Because you bring them down to this type of level, where they feel like they don't got nothing to live for anyway. 'They're going to try to take me out anyway.'"

Frame of Blacks versus authorities:

The authors' description of Brown's father's sign, which read, "Ferguson police just executed my unarmed son," illustrates this frame in Article 2. The subsequent statement from Chief Belmar that "the genesis of this was a physical confrontation," demonstrates conflicting perspectives on the story.

The conflict between the two parties in Article 2 is highlighted in the authors' paragraph concerning the 'heightened tensions' between the police and the community. "A crowd estimated in the thousands flooded the streets near the scene of the shooting, some of them chanting 'No justice, no peace.' They were met by hundreds of police officers in riot gear, carrying rifles and shields, as well as K-9 units."

Article 6 utilizes this framework heavily with quotes such as "protesters [are] outrage[d] over what they call a pattern of police brutality against young black men." The author never provides any further facts or details supporting the protesters' allegations. Quotes such as this give voice and validation to protesters from the media, yet by not substantiating these claims with facts, this may give protesters a false impression.

Article 4 takes on this frame in a different way, using tweeted photographs of the riots as they took place. These photographs depict protesters holding their hands up, displaying the 'Hands up, don't shoot' movement and police using tear gas to break up rioters. These tweeted images display this frame of conflict much differently than other articles.

Theme of discrepancy over facts versus witness testimony:

Articles 2, 4, 6, and 8 all contained a common theme of a discrepancy over the facts of the shooting of Michael Brown. Article 8 exemplifies this theme by including the varying accounts from multiple witnesses. The author includes the fact that "a friend initially asserted that he had seen Brown get shot in the back." However, the author also includes the forensic evidence that showed that Brown was not shot in the back.

Article 6 also features an image of a protester holding his hands up as a part of the 'Hands up, don't shoot' movement. However, the transcripts released from the investigation in Article 8 include interviews with witnesses, none of whom agreed that Brown had his hands raised during the altercation.

Broadcast media coverage of Rodney King story (Refer to Segment 1 in Appendix II)

ABC's 1991 initial coverage of the Rodney King story is presented by a middle-aged White male anchor, who uses a neutral and factual tone. The segment is one minute and thirty-two seconds long and presents the facts of the incident first, followed by commentary from community members.

After the anchor introduces the story, the famous footage from an eyewitness showing LAPD officers assaulting Rodney King is played. This footage was rare and eye-opening in 1991 because of the newness of video cameras. The violent footage speaks for itself and demonstrates the LAPD's wrong-doing clearly. Interviews with N.A.A.C.P. member Jose de Sosa further contributes to this frame. He said, "We no longer want to have to wake up each morning not knowing what fear to expect next. Today we are not assured that the police are there to protect us".

Next, an interview with the police chief reveals the facts of the case. He said, "In our review we found that one of our officers struck him with batons between fifty-three and fifty-six times. One officer rendered six kicks and one officer one kick." This quote demonstrates the LAPD's accountability and transparency.

Subsequent footage of the LAPD interacting with protesters and the Watts riots illustrates ABC's frame of the public conflict with the authorities.

Broadcast media coverage of Ferguson, Missouri, story (Refer to Segment 2 in Appendix II)

ABC's coverage of the Ferguson Missouri story is presented by a young White male anchor, who uses a concerned tone. The segment is two-and-half minutes long; the first half details the riots and unrest resulting from the shooting and the second half presents the facts of the case. By presenting the story in this order, this places more importance on the public reaction to the story rather than the facts of the incident.

The first half of the segment features dramatic footage of police in riot gear setting off tear gas and addressing protesters. There is also footage of protesters marching on the streets of Ferguson during the day, holding signs that read "Stop the violence" and "Peace and Prayer for Non-Violence, Michael Brown."

The second half of the segment delves into the specifics of the incident. First, an image of Michael Brown wearing headphones is shown as the reporter explained, "The chief of police telling ABC his officer was hurt in the incident authorities say either Brown or his friend fought with the policeman before the shooting." This pits the innocence of Brown versus the police officer who says he was injured.

Next, there is footage of the police chief giving an interview with the reporter voiceover saying, "He (police chief) says he and his officers are getting death threats daily and says he won't release the name of the officer involved in the shooting unless his officer is charged with a crime or a court makes him, and then he could always appeal. Prosecutors say it could take weeks before they decide if the shooting is a crime." This gives less importance to what the police chief said and more importance to what the reporter discussed.

Lastly, exclusive video of the crime scene with subtitles from a witness is shown. ABC's publication of this video implies a level of trust and credibility to this source. This is powerful footage, however using the subtitles, which include poor grammar and profanities, raises questions regarding ABC's sources' credibility.

Magazine covers

Cover 1

Rodney King and the 81-second video that sparked race riots in Los Angeles for weeks was the subject of both *Time* magazine's cover and seven cover-related stories in May 1992. The cover of a majorly circulated magazine such as *Time* not only sums up the issues of the day, but the content is presented in a way to sell as many copies and gain as many subscribers as possible.

This particular cover depicts a blazing fire, presumably a result of the riots that occurred as a result of the civil unrest following the acquittal of the police officers who assaulted King. There are also six figures running toward the blaze, possibly insinuating the public's propensity to 'fan the fire' of the tense race relations during that time.

The headline of the cover reads "Can we all get along?" and the subtitle reads "Rodney King May 1, 1992." This message implies that society is not getting along and points to the Rodney King incident and subsequent unrest as the agitator for not getting along.

Cover 2

The September 2014 *Time* magazine cover is strikingly similar to the May 1992 cover. This cover also features bright dramatic lights of a protest. However, what's even more striking about this cover is the subject: a dark person on his or her knees with their hands raised up. The headline reads in a smaller understated font, "The tragedy of Ferguson."

There are many assumptions a reader could make from this cover image. A less informed reader might assume that this photo was taken at the incident and that the subject is Michael Brown himself. A more informed reader might assume that the photo was taken of a protestor, who could be found among many protest participants who marched the streets yelling, "Hands up, don't shoot!"

Alternatively, this photo could have been staged to depict the protesters' message and highlight the ongoing conflict between the public and the authorities in Ferguson, Missouri.

Regardless of the reality, the image on the cover is a powerful one. The contrast of light and dark can be interpreted metaphorically or literally depending on the eye of the beholder. The solidarity of the subject is also quite ironic, based on the reality of the situation, which involves thousands of people, if not the entire American public.

The photographer, Scott Olson, was one of the many photographers arrested for documenting what was taking place in the troubled town.

V. Discussion

Upon careful analysis of newspaper articles, broadcast, and magazine covers depicting both the Rodney King incident in 1991-1992 and the more recent Ferguson, Missouri, incident, notable differences between timeframes became apparent and several overlapping frames became noticeable.

First, almost all print articles contain wording that highlight the conflict and unrest in both situations. Words such as "outrage," "skepticism," and "controversy" inundate these articles. This is notable considering that articles for both stories were published soon after each incident. Considering the limited amount of time for public reaction between the time of the incident and time of publication, this raises the question, 'Did these phrases describe the reality of the public's initial reaction to each situation? Or did the media guide readers to believe this was the prescribed reaction to such events?'

This leads to the discussion of several overlapping frames discovered in many articles. Articles 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 utilize a frame centered on black hardship. Article 1 and 5 utilize primary quotes from King, focusing on his side of the story and his own personal hardship. The fact that King was unemployed can be seen as a pathos appeal to persuade the reader to feel sympathy for the victim who might not have had the means to pay for his hospital stay. Mention of King's previous second-degree robbery conviction also fits in with the black hardship frame.

In comparison, Articles 2, 6, and 8 read much more factually than Article 1. The lead paragraph of Article 2 includes the classic five W's of journalism: who, what, when, where, and why. In contrast, the lead paragraph of Article 1 paints a picture of conflict and violence with broad statements, such as "alleged pattern of police brutality" and "official abuse of minorities."

An overlapping, yet distinct, frame became apparent in Article 2. In the wake of several similar situations to the shooting of Michael Brown, the frame of black male youth misfortune has become salient in mass media. This frame can be seen as a more specific subset of the more general black misfortune frame analyzed in Articles 1 and 7. This frame is characterized by a focus on the innocence of the black male victim and the tragedy of the individual's unfair and untimely death. The final quote from Brown's mother in Article 2 illustrates this relevant frame: "Do you know how hard it was for me to get him to stay in school and graduate? You know how many black men graduate? Not many. Because you bring them down to this type of level, where they feel like they don't got nothing to live for anyway."

Lastly, the most overarching frame the researcher found was focused on the conflict between the Black community and authorities. Every media type analyzed for both stories emphasized the opposition between the Black public and the authorities. What's different among media types and between two timeframes is the persuasion, or lack of persuasion, to choose one side of the conflict.

There is a clear difference in the framing of the two broadcast segments. ABC's coverage of the Rodney King story in 1991 is factual in tone and presents the hard facts and footage of the incident. In contrast, ABC's more recent coverage of the Ferguson, Missouri, story focuses on the riots and backlash from the incident with dramatic footage of police confronting protestors with tear gas. This focus on the conflict in Ferguson and the criticism of the police takes precedence over the facts of the story in the broadcast segment. There is an evident shift from the reporting style in 1991 versus the framing and reporting of the Ferguson story.

Both Time magazine covers portrayed the events in similar ways. Both images depict bright, dramatic lights that indicate conflict and unrest. Cover 1 is more inflammatory with the statement "Can we all get along" compared to the more general caption, "The tragedy in Ferguson," on Cover 2.

The differences in the print articles are significant in that coverage in Articles 1, 3, and 6 is focused on victim's side of the story and the clearly defined wrongdoing by the authorities. Whereas the coverage in Articles 2, 5, 7, and 8 is more balanced with all facts from each incident and quotes from both witnesses and the police. Articles similar to Article 1 lead the reader to empathize with the victim and resent the authorities, whereas articles similar to Article 2 articulate both the police and the public's perspective on the incident, but strongly persuade the reader to side with the public.

This analysis was limited to three types of mass media communication and 12 total items. While there are many more aspects to consider regarding this topic, time constraints restricted the researcher to the analysis of 12 sources in total.

VI. Conclusion

News media serve as a powerful mode of communication and have incredible power in influencing public opinion on controversial topics. Agenda setting and framing are inherent to the process of communicating news to the public. These aspects of reporting are necessary to the news process and enable the public to make sense of seemingly unrelated events. For example, individual cases of suffering may be inserted into a larger story to illustrate the nature of the problem in human-interest terms.

This analysis demonstrates the changes and progression of the media's framing of two similar stories that occurred in different contexts. All types of news media utilized an overarching frame focused on the conflict between the public and authority. The print articles and broadcast segments also utilized frames of black disadvantage and used the specific facts from each story to contribute to a larger theme.

These frames are all a part of a broader framing pattern by media. Each news organization and medium handles stories differently than others; however, media consolidation and commercialization impact the message the public receives. Consequentially this impacts the way the public reacts to controversial stories such as the unrest in Ferguson, Missouri.

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Appendix 1: Sources of stories

Print Articles:

- Article 1) New York Times, "Tape of Beating by Police Revives Charges of Racism," (March 7, 1991)
- Article 2) New York Times, "Grief and Protests Follow Shooting of a Teenager," (August 11, 2014)
- Article 3) Wall Street Journal, "RODNEY KING VERDICT: THE AFTERMATH: Deciding Moment of the Trial May Have Been Five Months Ago," (May 1, 1992)
- Article 4) Wall Street Journal, "Ferguson in Tweets: Violence Erupts Again in Missouri," (August 16, 2014)
- Article 5) New York Times, "Rodney King Speaks Out: 'Can We All Get Along?': A Plea for Calm," (May 2, 1992)
- Article 6) "New York Times *Protests Flare After Ferguson Police Officer Is Not Indicted*," (November 24, 2014)
- Article 7) The Washington Post, "The Rodney King Case Through Police Eyes," (April 4, 1991)
- Article 8) The Washington Post, "Prosecutor releases more Ferguson documents," (December 13, 2014)

Broadcast Coverage:

- Segment 1) ABC, Coverage of Rodney King story
- Segment 2) ABC, Coverage of Michael Brown story

Magazine Covers:

- Cover 1) Time Magazine, May 1992
- Cover 2) Time Magazine, September 2014

Appendix II

Segment 1:

ABC Coverage of Rodney King story from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW1ZDIXiuS4>

Transcript

Anchor: "And now the story that might never have surfaced if someone hadn't picked up his home video camera. We've all seen the video of Los Angeles Police Officers beating a man they had just pulled over. The city's police chief said today he will support criminal charges against some of the men. Here's ABC's Gary Shepard."

Cue amateur home video of incident

Reporter: "Stopped a 25 year old black man last night, then beat him, kicked him, and clubbed him, unaware that an amateur photographer was recording the incident. Gates believes 'assault with a deadly weapon will be one of the charges'

Cue footage of Gates' police statement of the facts.

Gates: "In our review we found that one of our officers struck him with batons between fifty-three and fifty-six times. One officer rendered six kicks and one officer one kick."

Cue footage of LAPD, fire of riots, black police officer.

Reporter: "Civil rights organizations say the LAPD has a history of brutality and misconduct that goes back a quarter of a century including one incident that sparked the Watts riots. So far this year there have been over 125 complaints of police misconduct filed with watchdog organizations

Cue interview with Jose de Sosa, NAACP.

de Sosa: “We no longer want to have to wake up each morning not knowing what fear to expect next. Today we are not assured that the police are there to protect us.”

Cue reporter

Reporter: “But Chief Gates today called the LAPD a model department and said he has no plans to resign.”

Segment 2:

ABC Coverage of Ferguson story from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khQf4mCzFqU>

Transcript

Anchor: “There’s violence in the streets of St. Louis and incredible pictures are coming in.

Cue video of tear gas and riots.

Anchor: “Police are in riot gear and firing tear gas to break up protesters angry over the shooting death of an unarmed teenager. The police chief is weighing in on whether or not to reveal the officer who shot him.”

Cue reporter.

Reporter: “There are many people here who believe the police could be using a much lighter hand; they arrested two reporters last night and an elected official because they didn’t move fast enough. A state senator said she had tear gas thrown at her and she approves the budget for state patrol. Even president Obama has been briefed on the developments here.”

Cue video of tear gas explosions.

Reporter: “Overnight protests turned violent again on the streets of Ferguson, Missouri. Police responded with tear gas and the crowd went running.”

Cue video of protesters marching.

Reporter: “As civil rights groups protest the police shooting that killed 18 year-old Michael Brown, and the lawsuits mount. [cue picture of brown, 1:05] The chief of police telling ABC his officer was hurt in the incident authorities say either Brown or his friend fought with the policeman before the shooting.”

Cue interview with police chief.

Police Chief: “His face was swollen so he’d obviously been hit or punched or something like that.”

Reporter: “He says he and his officers are getting death threats daily and says he won’t release the name of the officer involved in the shooting unless his officer is charged with a crime or a court makes him, and then he could always appeal. Prosecutors say it could take weeks before they decide if the shooting is a crime.”

Cue police department member giving public statement.

Police member: “We have difficulty reaching a lot of witnesses. We’re having trouble locating them.”

Cue video of community members interacting with police.

Reporter: “They are talking with Dorian Johnson who was walking with Brown when he says the officer tried to get them off the street.”

Johnson: “He tried to thrust his door open but we were so close to it that it ricocheted off us and it bounced back to him and I guess that got him a little upset.”

Cue exclusive video from the scene: covered body in middle of street.

Reporter: “Police say he started shooting from inside the vehicle. Listen as this neighbor describes what she saw. Subtitles: ‘the first shot he shot out of the car. The other shots he stood over him and pow pow pow pow pow.’ “

Cue video of tear gas.

Reporter: “For now the concern is that racial tensions here are about to explode.”

Cue video of reporter.

“There’s been a lot of talk that Michael brown had a record which his family feels is an offensive question, but this morning St. Louis County says no; no arrests, no convictions.”
