

# The Reverend Canon Doctor Heron Sam Mexican Standoff

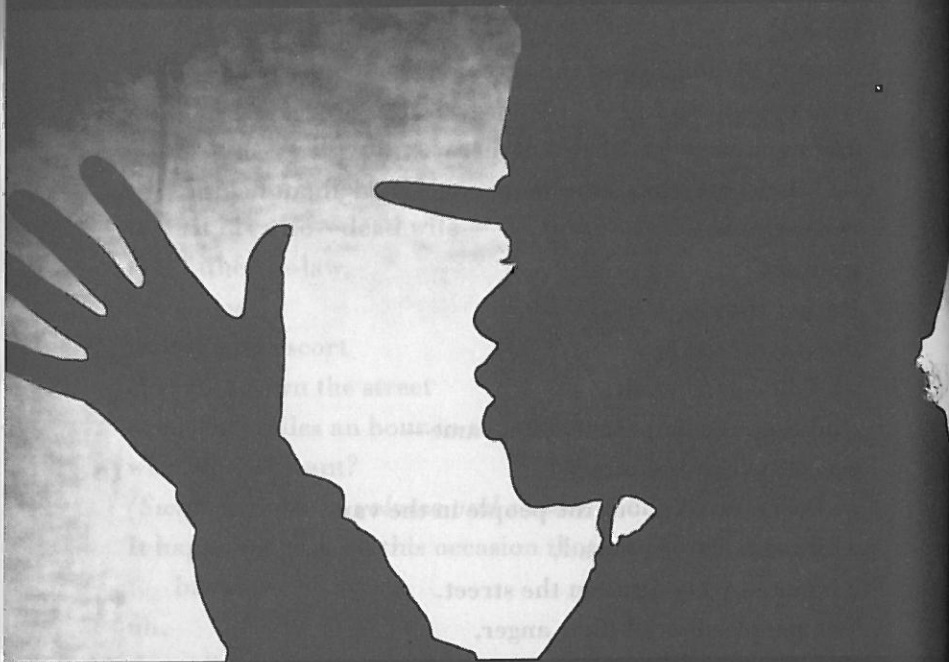
(November 12, 1991, 4:00 P.M. The rectory office at St. Mark's Church in Crown Heights. A small, short office. Lived in but impeccably ordered. Some light from lamps, some from overhead. Plaques and awards everywhere. The reverend is wearing a yellow shirt, priest's collar, tan summer jacket. He wears spectacles. There are clocks that make noise and sound the hour in his office and outside church bells sound during the interview, loud. Throughout the talk he is trying to get the corner of a calendar to stay down, but it continues to stick up. Finally he uses a paperweight to keep it down.)

You can't have that kind of accident  
if people are observing the speed limits.  
People knew it was the Grand Rebbe.  
People have seen the Grand Rebbe  
charging through the community.  
He is worried  
about a threat on his life  
from the Satmars.  
These Lubavitcher people  
are really very,  
uh, enigmatic people.  
They move so easily between  
simplicity and sophistication.  
Because  
they fear for his life,  
because the Satmars  
who are their sworn enemies

(He laughs/chuckles)  
have threatened to *kill*  
the Rebbe.  
So whenever he comes out  
he's gotta be *whisked!*  
You know like a President  
or even better than a President.  
He says he's an intuhnational figuh  
like a Pope!  
I say  
then, "Why don't you get the Swiss guards  
to escort you  
rather than using the police  
and taxpayers' money?"  
He's gotta be  
*whisked!*  
Quickly through the neighborhood.  
Can't walk around.  
He used to walk.  
When I first came here.  
Now he doesn't walk at all.  
They drive him.  
And when he walked  
you could tell he was in front  
because there was,  
he was protected all around  
and they spilled out onto the streets  
and buses had to stop  
because this BIG BAND  
had to escort

the Rebbe from his house over there  
to the synagogue.  
So the Rebbe goes to the cemetery.  
Every time the Rebbe goes to the cemetery,  
which is once a week  
to visit his wife—dead wife—  
and father-in-law,  
the police  
lead him in escort  
charging down the street  
at seventy miles an hour in a metropolis—  
what do you want?  
*(Swift increase in volume and suddenly businesslike)*  
It happened that on this occasion that as they were coming  
back,  
uh,  
the police car  
with its siren,  
had gone over a main  
intersection with the light  
in favor  
of the police car.  
The Rebbe's Cadillac had passed  
when the lights had become amber  
and nobody expected the bodyguard van,  
uh,  
station wagon  
to deliberately go through the red light.  
So the traffic  
that had the right of way kept coming and

BANG!  
came the collision and the careening  
onto the sidewalk  
had to damage whoever was there  
and then, um, they were more concerned about licking  
their own  
wounds.  
Rather than pick  
the car off the boy  
who died as a result.  
And then the ambulance that came—  
the Jewish ambulance—  
was concerned about the people in the van  
while some boy lay dead,  
a black boy lay dead on the street.  
The people showed their anger,  
*(Increase in volume)*  
they burned and whatever else,  
upturned  
police cars  
and looted,  
and as a result,  
I think in retaliation, murdered one of the Hasidics.  
But that was just the match that lit the powder keg.  
It's gonna happen again and again.  
There's a Mexican standoff right now  
But it's gonna happen again.



## Anonymous Young Man #1 Wa Wa Wa

(7:00 or 8:00 P.M. Spring. A recreation room at Ebbets Field apartments. A very handsome young Caribbean American man with dreadlocks, in his late teens or early twenties, wearing a bright, loose-fitting shirt. The room is ill equipped. There are a few pieces of broken furniture. It is poorly lit. A woman, Kym, with dreadlocks and shells in her hair, is at the interview. It was originally scheduled to be her interview. The Anonymous Young Man #1 and the other Anonymous Young Man, #2, started by watching the interview from the side of the room but soon approached me and began to join in. Anonymous Young Man #1 was the most vocal. Anonymous Young Man #2 stood lurking in the shadows. A third young man, younger than both of them, wearing wire spectacles and a blue Windbreaker, who looks quite like a young Spike Lee, sat silent with his hands and head on the table the entire time. There is a very bad radio or tape recorder playing music in the background.)

What I saw was  
she was pushin'  
her brother on the bike like  
this,  
right?  
She was pushin'  
him  
and he kept dippin' around  
like he didn't know how  
to ride the bike.  
So she kept runnin'  
and pushin' him to the side.

So she was already runnin'  
when the car was comin'.  
So I don't know if she was runnin' towards him  
because we was watchin' the car  
weavin',  
and we was goin'  
"Oh, yo  
it's a Jew man.  
He broke the stop light, they never get arrested."  
At first we was laughin', man, we was like  
you see they do anything  
and get away with it,  
and then  
we saw that he was out of control,  
and den  
we started regrettin' laughin',  
because then  
we saw where he was goin'.  
First he hit a car, right,  
the tore a whole front fender off a car,  
and then we was like  
Oh  
my god,  
man, look at the kids,  
you know,  
so we was already runnin' over there  
by the time the accident happened.  
That's how we know he was drinkin'  
cause he was like  
Wa Wa Wa Wa

and I was like  
"Yo, man, he's drunk.  
Grab him,  
grab him.  
Don't let him go anywhere."  
I said,  
"Grab him."  
I didn't want him to limp off  
in some apartment somewhere  
and come back in a different black jacket.  
So I was like,  
"Grab him,"  
and then I was like, "Is the ambulance comin' for the kids?"  
'Cause I been in a lot of confrontations with Jews before  
and I know that when they said an ambulance  
is comin'  
it most likely meant for them.  
And they was like,  
"oh, oh."  
Jews right?  
"Ambulance comin', ambulance coming',  
calm down, calm down,  
God will help them,  
God will help them if you believe."  
And he was actin' like he was dyin'.  
"Wa Aww,  
me too,  
I'm hurt, I'm hurt, I'm hurt too."  
Wan nothin wrong with him,  
wan nothin wrong with him.



They say that we beat up on that man  
that he had to have stitches because of us.  
You don't come out of an accident like that unmarked,  
without a scratch.  
The most he got from us was slapped  
by a little kid.  
And here come the ambulance  
and I was like, "That's not a city ambulance,"  
not like this I was upset right  
and I was like,  
"YO,  
the man is drunk!  
He ran a red light!  
Y'all ain't gonna do nothin'."  
Everbody started comin' around, right,  
'cause I was talkin' about  
these kids is dyin' man!  
I'm talkin' about the skull of the baby is on the ground man!  
and he's walkin'!  
I was like, "Don't let him get into that ambulance!"



And the Jews,  
the Jews  
was like private, private ambulance  
I was like, "Grab him,"  
but my buddies was like,  
"We can't touch them."  
Nobody wanted to grab him,  
nobody wanted to touch him,  
An' I was breakin' fool, man,  
I was goin' mad,  
I couldn't believe it.  
Everybody just stood  
there,  
and that made me cry.  
I was cryin'  
so I left, I went home and watched the rest of it on TV,  
it was too lackadazee  
so it was like me, man, instigatin' the whole thing.  
I got arrested for it  
long after  
in Queens.  
Can't tell you no more about that,  
you know.  
Hey, wait a minute,  
they got eyes and ears everywhere.  
What color is the Israeli flag?  
And what color are the police cars?  
The man was *drunk*,  
I open up his car door,  
I was like, when—

I was like, he'd been drinkin'  
I know our words don't have no meanin',  
as Black people in Crown Heights.  
You realize, man,  
ain't no justice,  
aint' never been no justice,  
ain't never gonna be no justice.

## Michael S. Miller "Heil Hitler"

(A large airy office in Manhattan on Lexington in the fifties. Mr. Miller sits behind a big desk in a high-backed swivel chair drinking coffee. He's wearing a yarmulke. Plays with the swizzle stick throughout. There is an intercom in the office, so that when the receptionist calls him, you can hear it, and when she calls others in other offices, you can hear it, like a page in a public place, faintly.)

I was at Gavin Cato's funeral,  
at nearly every public event  
that was conducted by the Lubavitcher community and  
the Jewish  
community as a whole  
words of comfort  
were offered to the family of Gavin Cato.  
I can show you a letter that we sent  
to the Cato family expressing, uh,  
our sorrow over the loss,  
unnecessary loss, of their son.  
I am not aware of a word  
that was spoken at that funeral.  
I am not aware of a—  
and I was taking notes—  
of a word that was uttered  
of comfort to the family of Yankele Rosenbaum.  
Frankly this was a political rally rather than a funeral.  
The individuals you mentioned—  
and again,

I am not going to participate in verbal acrimony,  
not only  
were there cries of, "Kill the Jews"  
or,  
"Kill the Jew,"  
there were cries of, "Heil Hitler."  
There were cries of, "Hitler didn't finish the job."  
There were cries of,  
"Throw them back into the ovens again."  
To hear in *Crown Heights*—  
and Hitler was no lover of Blacks—  
"Heil Hitler"?  
"Hitler didn't finish the job"?  
"We should heat up the ovens"?  
From *Blacks*?  
Is more inexplicable  
or unexplainable  
or any other word that I cannot fathom.  
The hatred is so  
*deep seated*  
and the hatred  
knows no boundaries.  
There is no boundary  
to anti-Judaism.  
The anti-Judaism—  
if people don't want me  
to use,  
hear me use the word anti-Semitism.  
And I'll be damned if,  
if preferential treatment is gonna

be the excuse  
for every bottle,  
rock,  
or pellet that's, uh, directed  
toward a Jew  
or the window of a Jewish home  
or a Jewish store.  
And, frankly,  
I think the response of the Lubavitcher community was  
relatively  
passive.

## Henry Rice Knew How to Use Certain Words

(Thursday, November 21, 1991. The Jackson Hole restaurant on Lexington Avenue in the thirties in Manhattan. Lunchtime, dimly lit, a reddish haze on everything, perhaps from a neon light. Mr. Rice, very neatly dressed, is eating a large, messy hamburger and horizontally chopped pickles. Drinking a Miller Lite. Beer is in a bottle next to a red plastic glass. He's wearing a baseball cap over very closely cut hair and a bright, multicolored, expensive-looking colored nylon jacket. Heavy new Timberland boots. Struggling to eat without making a mess of the food. At some point sits up from food and has his right hand or fist on his hip—a very unaffected but truly authoritative stance. Good-natured, handsome, healthy. Patsy Cline's "Crazy" is very loud on the jukebox.)

I went back home and got my bike  
because I knew I would have to be  
illusive.

I was there in body and in spirit  
but I didn't participate in any of the violence  
because basically I have a lot to lose.

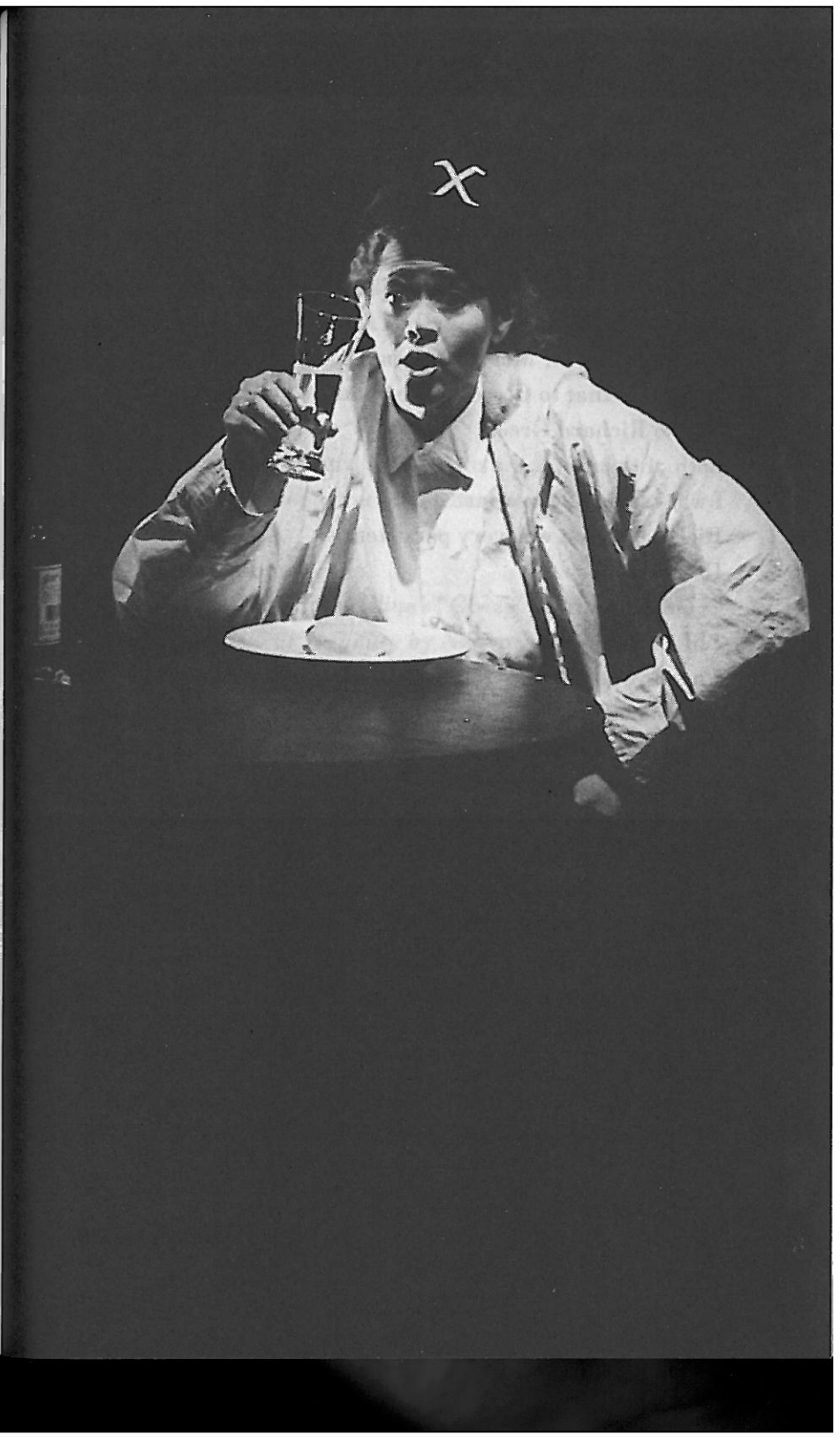
But I was there  
and I would have defended myself if it was necessary,  
most definitely.

I weaved around trouble.

When something broke out, I moved back,  
when it calmed down, I would move back in on the front line.

I was always there.

And Richard Green heard me saying something to a bunch  
of kids





about *voting*  
about the power of *vote*  
the power of *numbers*  
and he said,  
uh,  
I said, "Get away from me, you're an Uncle Tom,  
get away from me.  
Get back in your Mercedes-Benz!"  
No! I said that to Clarence Norman  
and to Richard Green,  
both of them.  
I was tearing them apart.  
Richard Green was very persistent.  
He said,  
"Look, Mr. Rice,  
I like the way you speak.  
I need you.  
Please help me.  
I'm a community activist. . . .  
ba, ba, ba, ba, ba."  
*(He drops some food on his clothes, or so it seems, he  
looks and grins)*  
It didn't get on me.  
"I'm a community activist.  
I need your help,  
please help me,"  
and so forth.  
Again,  
I didn't pay him no mind  
but we spoke

some  
the next day after that,  
after the incidents that took place on that corner  
of Albany Avenue.  
A brother was beat up—  
cops rushing into the Black crowd  
didn't rush into the Jewish crowd,  
cops rushed into the Black crowd  
started beatin' up  
Black people.  
But the next day Richard came by in a yellow van,  
a New York City Department of Transportation van,  
with a megaphone,  
yellow light flashing,  
*(Music segues from Patsy Cline's "Crazy" to Public Enemy's  
"Can't Truss It," or Naughty by Nature's "O.P.P.")*  
the whole works  
and, um,  
he said,  
"Henry, I need you in this van.  
Drive around with me.  
Let's keep some of these kids off the street tonight."  
I said, "Okay."  
He said,  
"The blood  
of Black men are on your hands tonight!"  
I said, "Okay."  
We drive around in the van,  
"Young people stay in the house!  
Mothers keep your children in the house,

please.”

So I began fillin’

I began feeling like

I had to do it

after he told me that,

“the blood of the Black man”

were on my hands,

you know.

Richard Green sure know how to use certain words.

*(He giggles)*

I remember reaching Albany Avenue—

kids were being chased by the police.

I jump out with a portable megaphone,

I tell them, “Stop running!

The cops won’t chase you!

and they won’t hit you!”

The next thing I know,

cop grabs my megaphone hits me in the head with a stick,

handcuffs me,

and takes the megaphone out of my hand.

So I’m like,

“Wait a minute

I’m doing a community service for the mayor’s office.”

They don’t want to hear it.

Matter of fact,

they still have the megaphone ’til this day.

I’m like,

“Richard Green get me

out of this police car, please!”

So a Black captain came by,

thank God,

and he says, “What’s goin’ on?”

Richard Green explained it to him.

He said, “Let him go.”

Get back in the van,

there’s another Brother in the van,

starts saying,

“Non violence!”

to the young Brothers.

They begin throwing bottles at the, uh,

at the van.

One guy got so upset

he had a nine-millimeter

fully loaded.

He said, “Get the hell out of this neighborhood!”

I told Richard Green, “Take me on home. Shit!”

The next day

more violence:

fires,

cars being burnt,

stores being broken into,

a perception that Black youth

are going crazy in Crown Heights

like we were angry over

nothing,

understand?

## Norman Rosenbaum My Brother's Blood

(A Sunday afternoon. Spring. Crisp, clear, and windy. Across from City Hall in New York City. Crowds of people, predominantly Lubavitcher, with placards. A rally that was organized by Lubavitcher women. All of the speakers were men, but the women stand close to the stage. Mr. Rosenbaum, an Australian, with a beard, hat, and wearing a pin-stripe suit, speaks passionately and loudly from the microphone on a stage with a podium. Behind him is a man in an Australian bush hat with a very large Australian flag which blows dramatically in the wind. It is so windy that Mr. Rosenbaum has to hold his hat to keep it on his head.)

*Al do lay achee so achee aylay alo dalmo*  
My brother's blood cries out from the ground.  
Let me make it clear  
why I'm here.  
In August of 1991,  
as you all have heard before today,  
my brother was killed in the streets of Crown Heights  
for no other reason  
than that he was a Jew!  
The only miracle was  
that my brother was the only victim  
who paid for being a Jew with his life.  
When my brother was surrounded,  
each and every American was surrounded.  
When my brother was stabbed four times,  
each and every American was stabbed four times  
and as my brother bled to death in this city,



while the medicos stood by  
and let him bleed  
to death, it was the gravest of indictments against this  
country.

One person out of twenty gutless individuals  
who attacked my brother has been arrested.  
I for one am not convinced that it is beyond the ability of  
the New York police  
to arrest others.

Let me tell you, Mayor Dinkins,  
let me tell you, Commissioner Brown:  
I'm here,  
I'm not going home,  
until there is justice.

## Norman Rosenbaum Sixteen Hours Difference

(7:00 A.M. Spring. Newark Airport, Departure Gate, Continental Airlines. Mr. Rosenbaum is moments before his flight to LA and then back to Australia. Wearing a pinstripe suit with an Australian fit. Hat. Suitcase. He has sparkling blue eyes with a twinkle, rosy cheeks, and a large smile throughout the interview.)

There's sixteen hours difference between New York and  
Melbourne  
and I had just gotten back to my office  
and I had a phone call from my wife,  
and she said she wanted me to come home straight away  
and I sensed the urgency in her voice.  
I said, "are you all right?" She said, "Yeah."  
I said, "are the children all right, you know the kids?" She  
says, "yeah."  
So I'm driving home and I'm thinking, I wonder what's  
the problem now, you know?  
We had some carpenters doing some work, I wonder if  
there has been a disaster,  
some sort of domestic problem,  
and I thought, oh my God, you know, my parents,  
I didn't even ask after them,  
how insensitive not to even ask after my parents,  
and I've got a grandmother eighty-five years old, same  
sort of thing.  
So I get home,



I walk in the door,  
and a friend of mine was standing there,  
close friend,  
does the same sort of work as me, he's a barrister and an  
academic,  
and he sees me and he says,  
"There's got a pro—  
uh,  
we've got a problem.  
There's a problem."  
I thought he was talking about a case we were working on  
together,  
he says, "'Z come,  
come and sit down."  
He goes to me,  
"There's been a riot in New York,  
been a riot in Crown Heights,  
Yankel's been stabbed and he's dead."  
And  
my brother was the last in the world,  
I hadn't even given him a thought.  
I mean the fact that my brother  
could be attacked  
or die,  
it just hadn't even entered my mind.  
At first I appeared all cool, calm and collected.  
I then  
started asking questions  
like who told you,  
how do you know,

are you sure?  
I just asked the question,  
you know,  
are you sure?

# Anonymous Young Man #2 Bad Boy

(Evening. Spring. The same recreation room as interview with Anonymous Young Man #1. Young Man #2 is wearing a black jacket over his clothes. He has a gold tooth. He has some dreadlocks, and a very odd-shaped multicolored hat. He is soft-spoken, and has a direct gaze. He seems to be very patient with his explanation.)

That youth,  
that sixteen-year-old  
didn't murder that Jew.

*(Pause)*

For one thing,  
he played baseball, right?

He was a atha-lete,  
right?

A bad boy  
does

bad things.

Only a bad boy coulda stabbed the man.

Somebody who  
does those type a things,

or who sees  
those types a things.

A atha-lete  
sees people,  
is interested in athletics,  
stretchin',

exercisin',  
goin' to his football games,  
or his baseball games.

He's not interested  
in stabbin'

people.

So  
it's not in his mind

to stab,  
to just jump into somethin',

that he has no idea about  
and

sta—

and kill a man.

A bad boy,  
somebody who's groomed in badness,

or did badness

before,

stabbed the man.

Because I used to be a atha-lete

and I used to be a bad boy,

and when I was a atha-lete,

I was a atha-lete.

All I thought about was atha-lete.

I'm not gonna jeopardize my athleticism

or my career to do anything

that bad people do.

And when I became a bad boy

I'm not a atha-lete no more.

I'm a bad boy,

and I'm groomin' myself in things that is bad.  
You understand, so  
he's a athalete,  
he's not a bad boy.  
It's a big difference.  
Like,  
mostly the Black youth in Crown Heights have two things  
to do—  
either DJ or be a bad boy, right?  
You either  
DJ, be a MC, a rapper  
or Jamaican rapper,  
ragamuffin,  
or you be a bad boy,  
you sell drugs or you rob people.  
What do you do?  
I sell drugs.  
What do you do?  
I rap.  
That's how it is in Crown Heights.  
I been livin' in Crown Heights mosta my life.  
I know for a fact that that youth, that sixteen-year-old,  
didn't kill that Jew.  
That's between me and my Creator.

## Sonny Carson Chords

(Lunchtime. Spring. A fancy restaurant in Brooklyn. Sonny tells me it's where all the judges come for lunch. White linen tablecloths. Light wood walls, lamplight next to the table. Tile floor. He is eating crab cakes. He is dressed in a black turtleneck and a gray jacket. He has on a mud cloth hat. He has an authority stick with him, and it lays on the table. His bodyguard, wearing a black leather jacket, enters in the middle of the interview. Sonny chides him for being late.)

It's going to be a long hot summer.  
I'm connected up with the young people all over the country  
and there's a thread  
leading to an eruption  
and Crown Heights began the whole thing.  
And the Jews come second to the police  
when it comes to feelings of dislike among Black folks.  
The police,  
the police,  
believe me, the police—  
I know the police and the police know me  
and they turned that whole place into an occupied camp  
with the Seventy-first Precinct as the overseers.  
And don't think that everything is OK within that precinct  
among those officers  
either.  
Don't think that,  
don't think that.  
You know the media has always painted me as the bad  
guy—

that's OK!  
I'm a good guy to pick on.  
Their viewers don't like me either,  
they really don't like me because I *am* the bad guy,  
I am the ultimate bad guy  
because of my relationship to the young people in the city.  
I understand their language.  
I respect them as the future.  
I speak their language. They don't even engage in long  
    dialogue  
anymore  
just short.  
"Words."  
It always amazes me  
how the city fathers,  
the power brokers,  
just continue to deny what's happening.  
And it is just getting intolerable for me to continue to watch  
this small  
arrogant  
group of people continue to get this kind of preferential  
    treatment.  
They sit on the school board.  
A board of nine  
and they have  
four members, and their kids don't even go to public  
    school.  
So that's the kind of arrogance I'm talking about.  
I have no reason to be eagerly awaiting the coming  
    together of our

people.  
They owe me first.  
I'm not givin' in just like that,  
I don't want it.  
You can have it.  
Like my grandmother said,  
"Help the bear!  
If you see me and the bear in a fight,  
help the bear—  
don't help me,  
help the bear."  
I don't need any of it from them!  
And I'm not gonna advocate any coming together and  
    healing of  
America  
and all that shit.  
You kiddin'?  
You kiddin'?  
Just 'cause I can have the fortune of walking in here  
and sitting and talking  
and having a drink,  
it appear that I have all the same kinds of abilities  
of other folks in here.  
No, it's not that way.  
'Cause tonight  
by nighttime it could all change for me.  
So I'm always aware of that, and that's what keeps me goin'  
today  
and each day!  
(*He eats*)



I have  
this idea  
about a film.  
See,  
these kids, they got  
another kinda rhythm now,  
there's a whole new kinda  
step that they do.  
When I first heard rap  
I was sittin' in a huge open kinda stadium,  
boys and girls high school field,  
and I heard these kids come out and start rappin',  
and I'm listening  
but it's not really clickin',  
but I was mesmerized though.  
But it was simontaneous  
all around the country  
and I said, "Oh shit,"  
and everybody I knew who was young was listenin' to it  
and I said, "Wow."  
Because I have always been involved with young people  
and all of a sudden I got it,  
I really heard the rhythm,  
the chords,  
the discord.  
There's a whole new sound  
that the crackers are tryin' to get, but they can't get it.  
I heard it on a television commercial.  
One of the most beautiful pieces of art  
that I ever witnessed

was a play  
called  
um,  
um,  
um,  
'bout, 'bout the Puerto Rican gang—  
no, no, no, no, no—  
the Puerto Rican gang,  
the musical  
that was on Broad—  
yeah,  
*West Side Story*—  
the answer should be  
a musical.