



Rabbi Shea Hecht Ovens

(Morning. Spring. A building on Eastern Parkway. A large room with a very long conference table. There are pictures of Lubavitcher men on the walls. Rabbi Hecht is wearing a shirt, open at the neck. He has several crisp one-dollar bills in his shirt pocket. These are, apparently, dollar bills that the Rebbe has given him. It is the custom that the Rebbe gives out one-dollar bills on Sunday. Rabbi Hecht has a beard. He wears glasses, traditional Hasidic garb, including tsitses (ceremonial fringes that hang over his belt) and a red yamulke with gold trim which is ripped. His daughter comes in frequently to get money from him. He keeps telling her to wait until he is finished. She becomes more and more agitated. His brother also enters frequently to ask him questions, and to tell him he's late.)

What is my goal?

My goal is not
to give anybody a message
that we plan on working things out
by integrating
our two
things.

By a person understanding more of their own religion
they will automatically respect another person.

The respect that my religion teaches me has nothing to do
with understanding you.

See, there's a problem.

If

the only way I'm going to respect you
is based on how much I understand you,
no matter what it is

in certain circles you're gonna run into problems.
Number one,
we are different,
and we think we should and can be different.
When the Rebbe said to the Mayor
that we were all
one people,
I think
what the Rebbe is talking about is that,
that common denominator that we're all children of God,
and the
respect we all have to give each other under that banner.
But that does not mean that I have to invite you to my
house for
dinner,
because I cannot go back to your home for dinner,
because you're not gonna give me kosher food.
And I said,
so, like one Black said,
I'll bring in kosher food.
I said eh-eh.
We can't use your ovens,
we can't use your dishes,
it's, it—
it's not just a question of buying certain food,



it's buying the food,
preparing it a certain way.
We can't use your dishes, we can't use your oven.
The—the higher you go
the more common denominator.
And what the Rebbe was saying,
you as the Mayor
don't get caught up in the differences,
you're—
from your position is—
you have to look at it as one city
and one
human race.
We are all New Yorkers
and therefore I will protect all New Yorkers.
You see
preferential treatment
suggests
that you're giving the person
the police car
not because they need the police car
but because
they are who they are.
You're not gonna
give them the housing
because they
need the housing—
you're giving it because of who they are.
But
just because I'm a Jew

therefore I
shouldn't get the police car.
The question is
a synagogue
that has five thousand Jews
leave
the synagogue
at the same time,
do they have a police car to stop the traffic?
The answer is every—single—synagogue,
temple,
mosque,
in
the
world
stops traffic
when five thousand people have to walk out
at the same time.

The Reverend Al Sharpton Rain

(As before.)

The D.A.
came back with no indictment.
Uh, so then our only course
was to ask for a special prosecutor
which is appointed by the Governor,
who's been hostile,
and to sue civilly.
When we went into civil court
we went to get an order to show cause.
The judge signed it and gave me a deadline of three days.
The driver left the country. . . .
No one even said, "Why would he run?
If he did no wrong."
If you and I were in an accident we'd have to go to civil court.
Why is this man
above the law?
So they said, "He's in Israel."
So I said,
"Well, I'll go to Israel to show best efforts."
And the deadline
was,
I had to serve him by Tuesday,
which was Yom Kippur—
that was the judge's decision not mine.

therefore I
shouldn't get the police car.
The question is
a synagogue
that has five thousand Jews
leave
the synagogue
at the same time,
do they have a police car to stop the traffic?
The answer is every—single—synagogue,
temple,
mosque,
in
the
world
stops traffic
when five thousand people have to walk out
at the same time.

The Reverend Al Sharpton Rain

(As before.)

The D.A.
came back with no indictment.
Uh, so then our only course
was to ask for a special prosecutor
which is appointed by the Governor,
who's been hostile,
and to sue civilly.
When we went into civil court
we went to get an order to show cause.
The judge signed it and gave me a deadline of three days.
The driver left the country. . . .
No one even said, "Why would he run?
If he did no wrong."
If you and I were in an accident we'd have to go to civil court.
Why is this man
above the law?
So they said, "He's in Israel."
So I said,
"Well, I'll go to Israel to show best effits."
And the deadline
was,
I had to serve him by Tuesday,
which was Yom Kippur—
that was the judge's decision not mine.



So we went.
Alton Maddox and I
got on a plane,
left Monday night,
landed Tuesday morning,
went and served the American embassy, uh,
so that
if this man had any decency at all
he could come to the American embassy and receive service,
which he has not done to this day.
Come back,
went to court
and showed the judge the receipts,
and the judge said, "You made best efforts,
therefore you are now permitted,
by default,
to go ahead
and sue the rabbi or whomever
because you cannot do the driver."
So it wasn't just a media grandstand.
We wanted to show the world
one, this man *ran*

and was *allowed* to run, and, two, we wanted to be able to
legally go
around him,
to sue the people he was working for so that we can bring
them into
court and establish *why* and what happened.
And it came out in the paper the other day
that the driver in the other car didn't even have a driver's
license.

So we're dealing with a *complete* outrage here,
we're dealing with a double standard,
we're dealing with uh, uh, a, a
situation where
Blacks do not have equal protection under the law
and the media is used to castigate us
that merely asked for justice
rather than castigate those that would hit a kid
and walk away like he just stepped on a roach!
Uh,
there also is the media
contention of the young Jewish scholar
that was stabbed that night
and they've even distorted
saying *my words at the funeral*.
I *preached* the funeral.
Uh, [the newspaper said I]
helped to, to, uh, uh,
spark or, or, or, or, or *inspire* or *incite* people to kill him
[Yankel Rosenbaum]
when he was dead the day before
I came out there.

He was killed the night
that the young man
was killed with the car accident.
I didn't even get a call
from the family
'til eighteen hours later.
So there's a whole media distortion
to protect them [the Lubavitchers].
Nobody is talking about,
"Why
is this guy
in flight?"
If I was a rabbi
(I am a ministuh)
and my driver hit a kid,
I would not let the driver *leave*
and I certainlih would give my condolences,
or anything else I could,
to the family,
I don't care what race they are.
To this minute the Rebbe has never even uttered a word of
sympathy
to the family,
not even sent 'em a *card*
a flower or nothing!
And he's supposed to be a religious leader.
So it's treating us with absolute contempt
and I don't care how controversial it makes us.
I *won't* tolerate being insulted.
If you piss in my face I'm gonna call it *piss*.
I'm not gonna call it rain.

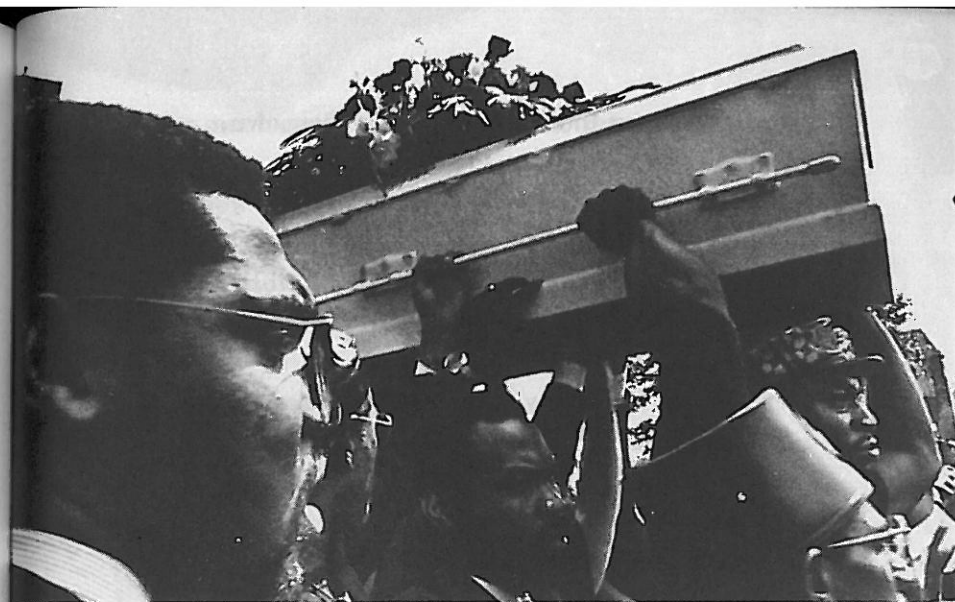
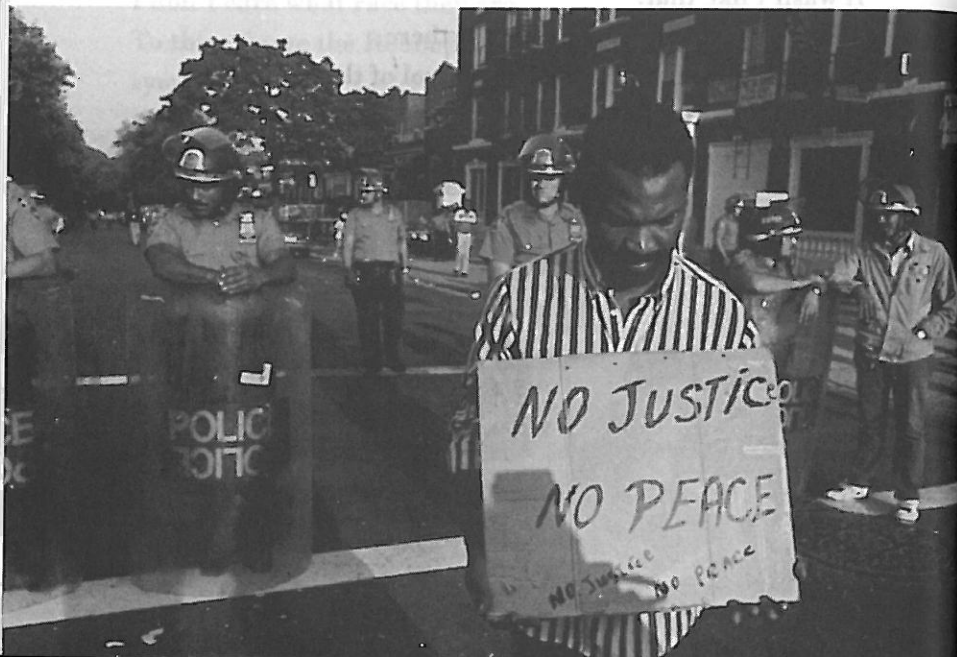
Richard Green Rage

(2:00 P.M. in a big red van. Green is in the front. He has a driver. I am in the back. Green wears a large knit hat with reggae colors over long dreadlocks. Driving from Crown Heights to Brooklyn College. He turns sideways to face me in the back, and bends down, talking with his elbow on his knee.)

Sharpton, Carson, and Reverend Herbert Daughtry
didn't have any power out there really.
The media gave them power.
But they weren't turning those youfs on and off.
Nobody knew who controlled the switch out there.
Those young people had rage like an oil-well fire
that has to burn out.
All they were doin' was sort of orchestratin' it.
Uh, they were not really the ones that were saying, "Well
stop, go, don't go, stop, turn around, go up."
It wasn't like that.
Those young people had rage out there,
that didn't matter who was in control of that—
that rage had to get out

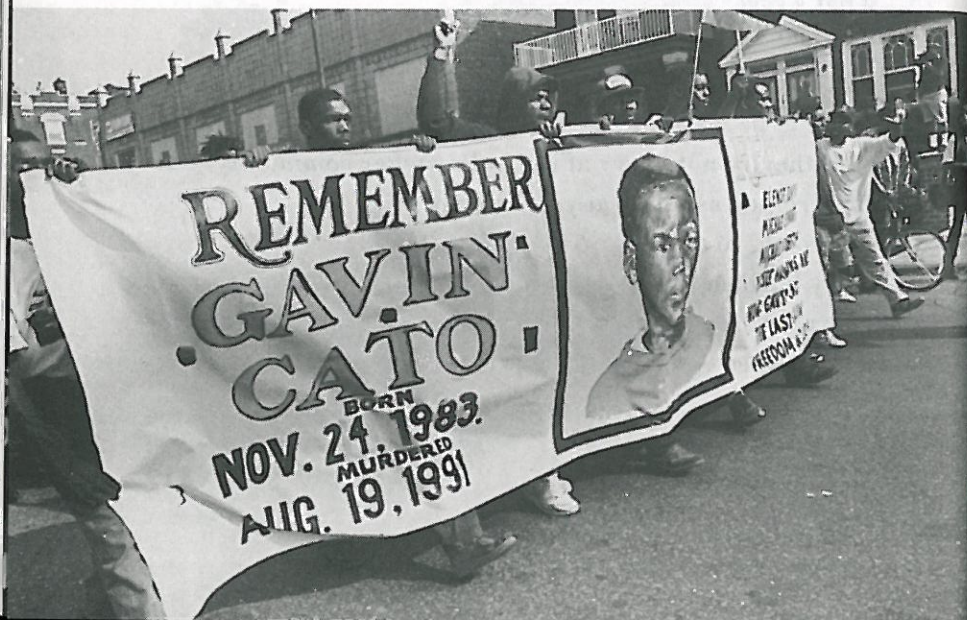


and that rage
 has been building up.
 When all those guys have come and gone,
 that rage is still out here.
 I can show you that rage every day
 right up and down this avenue.
 We see, sometimes in one month, we see three bodies
 in one month. That's rage,
 and that's something that nobody has control of.
 And I don't know who told you that it was preferential
 treatment for
 Blacks that the Mayor kept the cops back. . . .
 If the Mayor had turned those cops on?
 We would still be in a middle of a battle.
 And
 I pray on both sides of the fence,
 and I tell the people in the Jewish community the same thing,
 "This is not something that force will hold."



Those youfs were running on cops without nothing in their
 hands,
 seven- and eight- and nine- and ten-year-old boys were
 running at
 those cops
 with nothing,
 just running at 'em.
 That's rage.
 Those young people out there are angry
 and that anger has to be vented,
 it has to be negotiated.
 And they're not angry at the Lubavitcher community
 they're just as angry at you and me,
 if it comes to that.
 They have no
 role models,
 no guidance

so they're just out there growin' up on their own,
their peers are their role models,
their peers is who teach them how to move
so when they see the Lubavitchers
they don't know the difference between "Heil Hitler"
and, uh, and uh, whatever else.
They don't know the difference.
When you ask 'em to say who Hitler was they wouldn't
even be able
to tell you.
Half of them don't even know.
Three quarters of them don't even know.
(Phone rings, Richard picks it up, it's a mobile phone)
"Richard Green, can I help?
Aw, man I tol' you I want some color
up on that wall. Give me some colors.
Look, I'm in the middle of somethin'."
(He returns to the conversation)
Half them don't even know three quarters of 'em.



Just as much as they don't know who Frederick Douglass
was.
They know Malcolm
because Malcolm has been played up to such an extent now
that they know Malcolm.
But ask who Nat Turner was or Mary McCleod Bethune or
Booker T.
Because the system has given 'em
Malcolm is convenient and
Spike is goin' to give 'em Malcolm even more.
It's convenient.

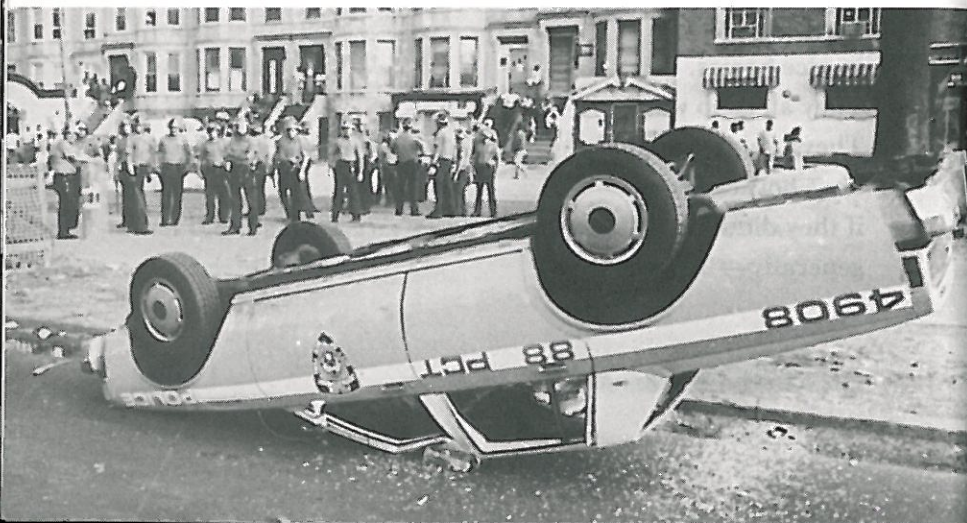
Roslyn Malamud The Coup

(Spring. Midafternoon. The sunny kitchen of a huge, beautiful house on Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights. It's a large, very well-equipped kitchen. We are sitting at a table in a breakfast nook area, which is separated by shelves from the cooking area. There is a window to the side. There are newspapers on the chair at the far side of the table. Mrs. Malamud offers me food at the beginning of the interview. We are drinking coffee. She is wearing a sweatshirt with a large sequined cat. Her tennis shoes have matching sequined cats. She has on a black skirt and is wearing a wig. Her nails are manicured. She has beautiful eyes that sparkle are very warm, and a very resonant voice. There is a lot of humor in her face.)

Do you know what happened in August here?
You see when you read the newspapers.
I mean my son filmed what was going on,
but when you read the newspapers . . .
Of course I was here
I couldn't leave my house.
I only would go out early during the day.
The police were barricading here.
You see,
I wish
I could just like
go on television.
I wanna scream to the whole world.
They said
that the Blacks were rioting against the Jews in Crown
Heights

and that the Jews were fighting back.
Do you know that the Blacks who came here to riot were
not my
neighbors?
I don't love my neighbors.
I don't know my Black neighbors.
There's one lady on President Street—
Claire—
I adore her.
She's my girl friend's next-door neighbor.
I've had a manicure
done in her house and we sit and kibbitz
and stuff
but I don't know them.
I told you we don't mingle socially
because of the difference
of food
and religion
and what have you here.
But
the people in this community
want exactly
what I want out of life.
They want to live
in nice homes.
They all go to work.
They couldn't possibly
have houses here
if they didn't
generally— They have

two,
 um,
 incomes
 that come in.
 They want to send their kids to college.
 They wanna live a nice quiet life.
 They wanna shop for their groceries and cook their meals
 and go to
 their Sunday picnics!
 They just want to have decent homes and decent lives!
 The people who came to riot here
 were brought here
 by this famous
 Reverend Al Sharpton,
 which I'd like to know who ordained him?
 He brought in a bunch of kids
 who didn't have jobs in
 the summertime.
 I wish you could see the *New York Times*,
 unfortunately it was on page twenty,
 I mean, they interviewed
 one of the Black girls on Utica Avenue.



She said,
 "The guys will make you pregnant
 at night
 and in the morning not know who you are."
 (*Almost whispering*)
 And if you're sitting on a front stoop and it's very, very hot
 and you have no money
 and you have nothing to do with your time
 and someone says, "Come on, you wanna riot?"
 You know how kids are.
 The fault lies with the police department.
 The police department did nothing to stop them.
 I was sitting here in the front of the house
 when bottles were being thrown
 and the sergeant tells five hundred policemen
 with clubs and helmets and guns
 to duck.
 And I said to him,
 "You're telling them to duck?
 What should I do?
 I don't have a club and a gun."
 Had they put it—
 stopped it on the first night
 this kid who came from Australia . . .
 (*She sucks her teeth*)
 You know,
 his parents were Holocaust survivors, he didn't have to die.
 He worked,
 did a lot of research in Holocaust studies.
 He didn't have to die.

What happened on Utica Avenue
was an accident.
JEWISH PEOPLE
DO NOT DRIVE VANS INTO SEVEN-YEAR-OLD BOYS.
YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING? BLACK PEOPLE
DO NOT DRIVE
VANS INTO SEVEN-YEAR-OLD BOYS.
HISPANIC PEOPLE DON'T DRIVE VANS INTO
SEVEN-YEAR-OLD BOYS.
IT'S JUST NOT DONE.
PEOPLE LIKE JEFFREY DAHMER MAYBE THEY DO IT.
BUT AVERAGE CITIZENS DO NOT GO OUT AND TRY
TO KILL

(Sounds like a laugh but it's just a sound)

SEVEN-YEAR-OLD BOYS.

It was an accident!

But it was allowed to fester and to steam and all that.

When you come here do you see anything that's going on,
riots?

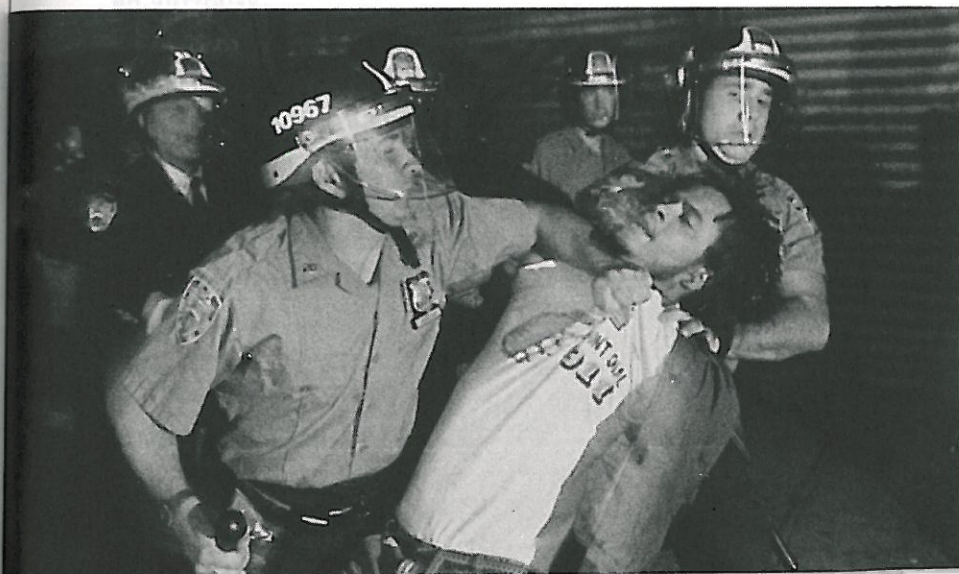
No.

But Al Sharpton and the likes of him like *Dowerty*,
who by the way has been in prison
and all of a sudden he became Reverend *Dowerty*—
they once did an exposé on him—
but

these guys live off of this,
you understand?

People are not gonna give them money,
contribute to their causes
unless they're out there rabble-rousing.

My Black neighbors?
I mean I spoke to them.
They were hiding in their houses just like I was.
We were scared.
I was scared!
I was really frightened.
I had five hundred policemen standing in front of my house
every day
I had mounted police,
but I couldn't leave my block,
because when it got dark I couldn't come back in.
I couldn't meet anyone for dinner.
Thank God, I told you my children were all out of town.
My son was in Russia.
The coup
was exactly the same day as the riot
and I was very upset about it.
He was in Russia running a summer camp
and I was very concerned when I had heard about that.
I hadn't heard from him
that night the riot started.



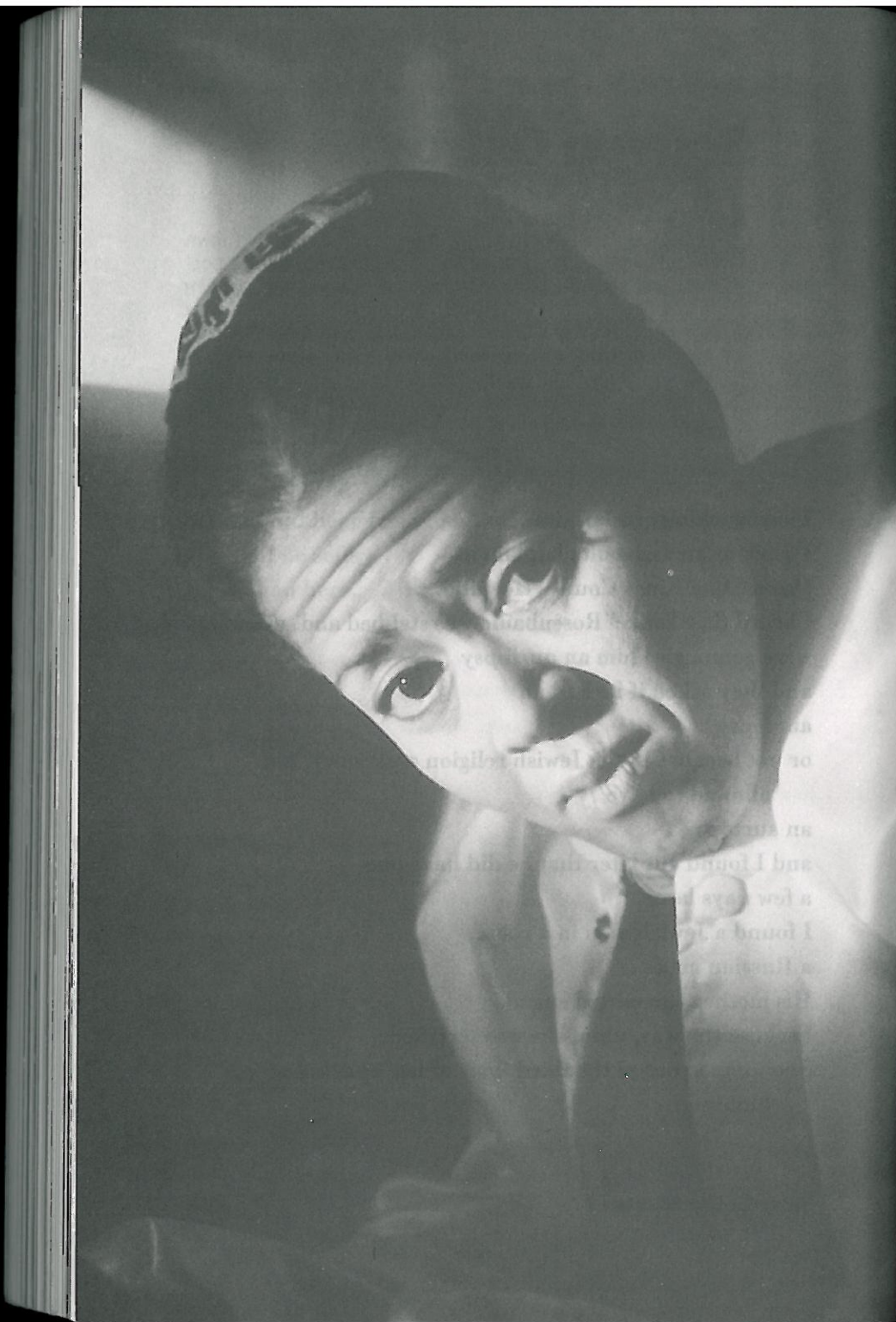


When I did hear from him I told him to stay in Russia,
he'd be safer
there than here.
And he was.

Reuven Ostrov Pogroms

(9:00 P.M. November 1991. In a basement of a Crown Heights house. Mr. Ostrov wears a yamulke. Eating popcorn and sliced apples. Very low, gentle-sounding *nigunim* music plays in the background, it almost sounds like New Age music, perhaps because traditional music is played on a modern electronic keyboard instrument. In the show, I wore a basketball jacket with project CURE's insignia, which Mr. Ostrov did not do at this interview, but previously had at a basketball game. He is clean-shaven, which is unusual for a a Lubavitcher man his age. He had chosen to shave his beard. He has a very rich, deep voice.)

I was working in a hospital.
I work as an assistant chaplain at
Down State Kings County Hospital.
I heard that Yankel Rosenbaum was stabbed and, um, they
were gonna give him an *aurtopsy*
and they asked if he had an
aurtopsy
or not because in the Jewish religion a person is not
allowed to have
an aurtopsy
and I found out later that he did have one
a few days later.
I found a Jewish man in a room,
a Russian man.
His mother committed suicide
because she was, uhm, she was terrified.
She jumped out of the third floor of her apartment
building,



committed suicide.
The mother originally came from Russia.
I was speaking to her son
in one of the rooms near the morgue
trying to get his mother not to have an aurtopsy
and he was telling me that the mother
came from Russia eleven years ago
and the mother left Russia eleven years ago
because of the hardships that they had over there,
and when they came to America
and when this thing started to happen in Crown Heights.
It became painful
and it felt like, like there was no place to go.
It's like you're trapped,
everywhere you go there's Jew haters.
And then he told me she commit suicide,
told me the next morning he woke up
he heard the doorbell ring.
He wasn't,
she wasn't there.
He noticed that the window was open,
which is never open
because she was afraid of the cold
even in the summertime.
And he saw his mother
with blood all over her
landed head first
on the concrete side of the apartment building.
After that we already knew this was getting serious,
because we had,

we had Sonny Carson come down
and we had, um,
Reverend Al Sharpton come down
start making pogroms.



Carmel Cato Lingering

(7:00 P.M. The corner where the accident occurred in Crown Heights. An altar to Gavin is against the wall where the car crashed. Many pieces of cloth are draped. Some writing in color is on the wall. Candle wax is everywhere. There is a rope around the area. Cato is wearing a trench coat, pulled around him. He stands very close to me. Dark outside. Reggae music is in the background. Lights come from stores on each corner. Busy intersection. Sounds from outside. Traffic. Stores open. People in and out of shops. Sounds from inside apartments, televisions, voices, cooking, etc. He speaks in a pronounced West Indian accent.)

In the meanwhile

it was two.

Angela was on the ground

but she was trying to move. Gavin was still.

They was trying to pound him.

I was the father.

I was 'it, chucked, and pushed,

and a lot of

sarcastic words were passed towards me

from the police

while I was trying to explain: It was my kid!

These are my children.

The child was hit you know.

I saw everything, everything,

the guy radiator burst

all the hoses,

the steam,

all the garbage buckets goin' along the building.
And it was very loud,
everything burst.
It's like an atomic bomb,
That's why all these people
comin' round
wanna know what's happening.
Oh it was very outrageous.
Numerous numbers.
All the time the police sayin'
you can't get in,
you can't pass,
and the children laying on the ground.
He was hit at exactly eight-thirty.
Why?
I was standing over there.
There was a little child—
a friend of mine
came up with a little child—
and I lift the child up
and she look at her watch at the same time
and she say it was eight-thirty.
I gave the child back to her.
And then it happen.
Um, Um . . .
My child, these are the things I never dream about.
I take care of my children.
You know it's a funny thing,
if a child get sick and he dies
it won't hurt me so bad,

or if a child run out into the street and get hit down,
it wouldn't hurt me.
That's what's hurtin' me.
The whole week
before Gavin died
my body was changing,
I was having different feelings.
I stop eating,
I didn't et
nothin',
only drink water,
for two weeks;
and I was very touchy—
any least thing that drop
or any song I hear
it would effect me.
Every time I try to do something
I would have to stop.
I was
lingering, lingering, lingering, lingering,
all the time.
But I can do things,
I can see things,
I know that for a fact.
I was telling myself,
"Something is wrong somewhere,"
but I didn't want to see,
I didn't want to accept,
and it was inside of me,
and even when I go home I tell my friends,

“Something coming I could feel it
but I didn’t want to see,”
and all the time I just deny deny deny,
and I never thought it was Gavin,
but I didn’t have a clue.
I thought it was one of the other children—
the bigger boys
or the girl,
because she worry me,
she won’t et—
but Gavin ’ee was ’ealtee,
and he don’t cause no trouble.
That’s what’s devastating me now.
Sometime it make me feel like it’s no justice,
like, uh,
the Jewish people,
they are very high up,
it’s a very big thing,
they runnin’ the whole show
from the judge right down.
And something I don’t understand:
The Jewish people, they told me
there are certain people I cannot be seen with
and certain things I can not say
and certain people I can not talk to.
They made that very clear to me—the Jewish people—
they can throw the case out
unless
I go to them with pity.
I don’t know what they talkin’ about.

So I don’t know what kind of crap is that.
And make me say things I don’t wanna say
and make me do things I don’t wanna do.
I am a special person.
I was born different.
I’m a man born by my foot.
I born by my foot.
Anytime a baby comin’ by the foot
they either cut the mother
or the baby dies.
But I was born with my foot.
I’m one of the special.
There’s no way they can overpower me.
No there’s nothing to hide,
you can repeat every word I say.