

VIEWERS GUIDE



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USING THIS GUIDE

The Crips and Bloods: Made in America resource guide uses the film as an entry into conversation and action about issues explored in the film such as gangs, systemic and structural racism, economic justice and civil rights. A tool for students, teachers and concerned citizens, this guide offers content and resources for those who want to learn more and take action to improve conditions for “at-risk” youth. It is our hope that viewers will be inspired to help break the cycle of poverty, racism and violence that has taken so many young lives.

Background on the film and its content are presented as a complement to the film and discussion questions are provided to help facilitate productive discussion. The director and producers of *Crips and Bloods: Made in America* did extensive research and outreach to organizations working with gangs as they made this film. We’ve provided information on some of the resources they used here. And, perhaps most importantly, included in this guide is a list of things you can do and organizations you can support to help combat the issues explored in the film.

There’s a lot to talk about when it comes to *Crips and Bloods: Made in America*. We know the issue of gangs is complex and tied to a number of historical, systemic, structural and public policy issues. This guide is intended as a springboard toward increased dialog and action.

You can find out more about the film at www.cripsandbloodsmovie.com

SYNOPSIS

Renowned filmmaker Stacy Peralta (*Dogtown and Z Boys*, *Riding Giants*) examines the story of South Los Angeles and the gangs that inhabit it. Hard-hitting, yet ultimately hopeful, *Crips and Bloods: Made in America* not only documents the emergence of the Bloods and the Crips and their growth beyond the border of South Central, but also offers insight as to how this ongoing tragedy might be resolved.

I set out to make Crips and Bloods: Made in America to answer the following questions: if affluent, middle-class white American teenagers were forming gangs, arming themselves with automatic weapons and killing one another, how would our country respond? Would our government step in to investigate the crisis, counsel the victims, heal the community, and direct funds towards a lasting solution? Or would our government allow this violence to continue unabated, decade after decade after decade?

To me the answer is quite obvious; I don't believe our government would allow such a thing to ever take hold in white America as it would cause too much of a blight on our country's image.

-Stacy Peralta
Director of *Crips and Bloods: Made in America*



ABOUT THE ISSUE

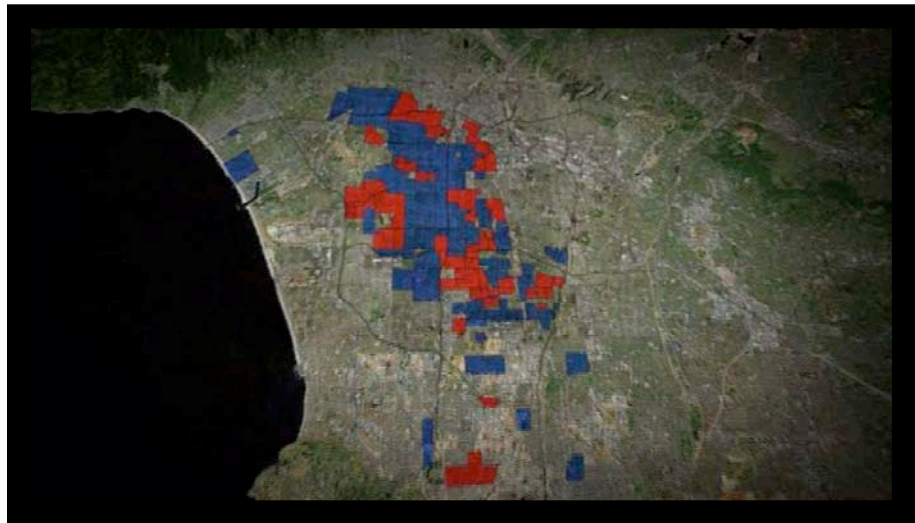


Crips and Bloods in Los Angeles

“You can't have hope livin' here. You have to be on your toes at all times, man, because anything, anytime, can happen to you.” ---SCRAP Grape Street Watts CRIPS

A cluster of neighborhoods lies in the heart of Southern California, streets and boulevards forming a grid between concrete ribbons of freeway. Surrounded by the California Dream, this region has a legacy. It is heavily guarded, yet no one is protected. Nearly a quarter of its young men will end up in jail or prison. Many others will end up dead. These neighborhoods in South Los Angeles are home to two of America's most infamous African-American gangs, the Crips and the Bloods.

The Crips and Bloods sprang up in Los Angeles in the late 1960s and early 1970s after a cycle of racial injustices and economic hardships had stripped hope and opportunity from a previously thriving African-American community. It was here, just a few miles from the gated communities and sprawling mansions of Beverly Hills and Bel Air, where this nation's most bloody and costly outbreaks of civil unrest erupted — not once, but twice, 27 years and just three miles apart. On these streets over the past 30 years, more than 15,000 people have been murdered in an ongoing cycle of gang violence that continues unabated.



This a map of gang territories around the Los Angeles area. Red signifies Bloods, while Blue signifies Crips.

GANGS IN THE US

Gangs have existed in the U.S. for centuries, but participation in recent years represents an all time high. The Crips and Bloods are two of the largest gangs and have spread across the globe. However a wide range of racial ethnic and socioeconomic groups make up gangs in the U.S. today.

The Department of Justice estimates there are approximately 30,000 gangs, with 800,000 members, impacting 2,500 communities across the United States, and according to the FBI at least 400,000 youths are currently in gangs nationwide. The Journal of the American Medical Association believes violent street gangs are active in 94 percent of all medium and large sized cities in America.

Experts agree many young people join gangs because they live in areas where there are not alternative ways for them to spend their time and their families often do not have the time and resources to provide alternatives.



RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

It's a belief that our society did not contribute to the formation of this problem. That's the story of the scapegoat. The gang member is the scapegoat. Nothing's our fault, it's their fault. We didn't create them... they're inevitably incorrigible.

-Tom Hayden, Author of *Street Wars: Gangs and the Future of Violence*

Social Justice is the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within a society.

Structural racism is the silent opportunity killer. It is the blind interaction between institutions, policies and practices which inevitably perpetuates barriers to opportunities and racial disparities. Conscious and unconscious racism continues to exist in our society. But structural racism feeds on the unconscious... The structural arrangements produced by the walling off of resources and opportunities produces the racial disparities we see today -- like higher poverty rates, greater infant deaths and lower high school graduation rates in communities of color. Racial disparities are the symptoms of our collective illness -- structural racism. Whether its education reform, the environment, the workplace, urban planning and development, affordable housing or health care, we must make the role of race visible and understand the structures our institutions construct so that we may rebuild them to create opportunities for us all. ---

From The Center for Social Inclusion

http://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/struct_racism.html

Most of the people we meet in *Crips and Bloods: Made in America* have been living under economic and social circumstances that have made it difficult for them to break free of gangs. The “school to prison pipeline,” a trend of criminalizing, rather than educating our nation’s youth, is another contributing factor to the cycle of gang violence. Additionally, the majority of today’s gang members come from single parent homes, often with no father figure and a mother struggling to make ends meet. Circumstances like these, coupled with structural racism illuminate how, as the Bureau of Justice reported in 2003, 28 percent of African-American men, more than one in four, will be jailed or sent to prison, in their lifetime.



For those born into a cycle of poverty, violence, and lack of opportunity, there are few routes to the American Dream.

MOVEMENT IN LA NOW TO END GANG VIOLENCE

Los Angeles needs a Marshall Plan to end gang violence... City approaches must address the conditions in neighborhoods and the unmet needs of children that allow gangs to take root, flourish and expand.

--Connie Rice Co-Director Advancement Project

Today, the streets of South L.A. have given rise to a new sort of gang, determined to fight not simply for turf or colors, but for the lives of the next generation.

These peacemakers, many of them former gang members, have stepped out from behind the guns, and are now standing between them. Literally risking their lives with the formation of street level gang intervention organizations.

Privately funded, receiving almost no support from either state or federal governments, these grassroots movements are taking the first crucial steps towards stopping the cycle of gang violence. There's much more work to do, and as economic times get harder the challenges faced by people working to end gang violence increase—but so do the opportunities for real structural change.



PORTRAITS CRIPS AND BLOODS: MADE IN MADE IN AMERICA

There are barriers, invisible barriers, social barriers. And their job is to re-enforce that barrier.

In a free society, I'm walkin' down the street, police got the nerve to ask me, "Where you goin'?" "Where you comin'.... Do you stop and ask anybody else in this society, man, "Why do you exist?" You understand what I'm sayin'?" But you got the nerve to ask me that, all day, every day? Now what do you think that does to me psychologically? What does that tell me? What message am I being fed? Every day.

So, you don't understand it, every day he's feeding me a spoonful of hatred. Every day, that's my diet, a spoonful of hatred. You see? And it's just a question of when is this going to erupt. And upon whom is it going to erupt?



Am I gonna attack myself? Am I gonna attack my brother? You understand? Am I gonna attack my own image in the mirror? Am I going to eventually attack the cause of my anger and my frustration?

*But the point this, I'm a walkin' time bomb. I'm gonna go off. Some day, somewhere, on somebody.
The question is: "Upon whom?"
--Kumasi*

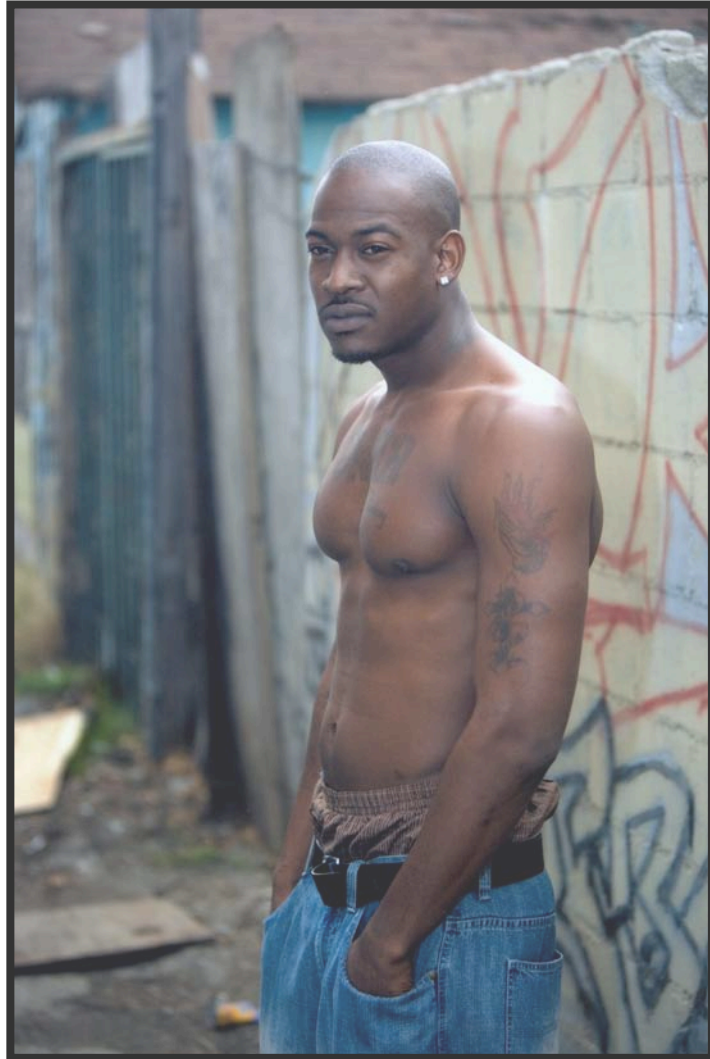
Kumasi, 61, was born in Bronx, NY and moved to South Los Angeles at age three, and joined the Slausons at age ten. He still considers himself a Slauson, however, he became an inactive member when the gang became inactive around 1967, when Kumasi was 20 years old. Kumasi served five terms, roughly eighteen years, in the U.S. Prison System over the span of his life. He currently works as a consultant and activist within his community and as a consultant in the entertainment industry.

PORTRAITS CRIPS AND BLOODS: MADE IN MADE IN AMERICA

I joined the gang, not only for the protection, but for the love, for the unity, to be a part of a family.

I wrestle with my moral issues a lot, man, because I know that ultimately this ain't the way that God, or society, intended it to be. So, a lotta times, man, I know morally I'm a good individual, but sometimes I gotta put that moral state of mind behind me and become an animal. --Shaka

Shaka, 28, was born in Los Angeles as Rodney Morales. He joined Mad Swan Bloods (currently known as Family Swan Bloods) at the age of thirteen. While he still considers himself a Swan, he became less involved with the gang after he became a father at age 25, and has become inactive in recent years.



Shaka has spent three terms, totaling six years, in the U.S. Prison System. He is currently working as a Hip Hop and Reggae Artist in the music industry. Shaka is also working on starting up a church and basketball program for at-risk youth.

PORTRAITS CRIPS AND BLOODS: MADE IN MADE IN AMERICA

I grew up in a house where my grandma and my uncle, everybody was sellin' drugs. You, know what I'm sayin'? I grew up to where when the police raid, they handed me drugs to hide...

When cocaine came into our area, it broke up a lotta homes. You know? A lot of people just thought crack was the way out. You know? Without even thinkin' about they kids. You know what I'm sayin'? That what broke a lotta homes up. If that crack wouldn't never come, we'd probably still have nice little homes and nice little families. You know? But when that came, that, like, tore everything apart. --Scrap

Scrap, 32, was born in Los Angeles, as Raymond Ford. He feels he was born into a gang, growing up in Jordan Downs Housing Project, in Watts. He became an active member of the Grape Street Watts Crips at 11 years old. He became inactive in 2003 at 28 years old after his best friend was murdered. As a juvenile, he spent one year in a Youth Authority Camp. He currently works full time as a Football Coach, and part time for in the parks doing gardening work for the city.



TIMELINE: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THE RISE OF THE CRIPS AND BLOODS

1940's →

The World War II era changed conditions for African-American's in the US. Prior to WWI the vast majority of African-American's in the US lived in the south. However the wartime economy created opportunities around the country. Between the 1940s and 1970s over 4 million African-American's migrated from the South to cities across the country. For the first time, African-American's were integrated in the American work economy and were earning enough to join the working and middle classes of economic culture. In Los Angeles, many African-Americans were setting up lives that looked much like American dream.

Economy – In the late 1950s the economy was changing. The industrial economy filled with solid paying factory jobs was diminishing. In its place an economy based on information, service and information was taking hold. By the late '60s, manufacturing plants begin to disappear taking with them the middle class jobs that helped so many African-American families establish themselves for the first time as equal members of the US work force.

← **1950's and 1960's**

1950s and 1960s Civil Rights Movement – The Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s changed circumstances for African-Americans in the US. Significant gains were made for Civil Rights, however racism and economic injustice persisted, sustaining a cycle of oppression against many African-Americans

In Los Angeles, racism could be seen in the ethnographic layout of the city. African-Americans were subject to unwritten rules keeping them living and functioning in specific parts of the city. From 1950 to 1966, the Los Angeles Police Department was commanded by Chief William Parker who instituted harsh policies against African-Americans. According to historians, it was an open secret that one of the tacit duties of the LAPD was to make sure people were in the right neighborhoods at the right time.

1965 →

The Watts Riots - At 7 p.m., on August 11th, 1965, 21-year-old Watts resident, Marquette Frye, was pulled over by the California Highway Patrol, on suspicion of drunk driving. Police insisted on impounding Frye's car, despite being less than two blocks from his home. Frye's mother, Rena, who owned the car, joined the rapidly growing crowd, who along with Marquette, grew increasingly belligerent over what they felt was the heavy-handed police response. These events led to the start of several days of unrest.

Post Watts Uprising - For many African-Americans the Watts Uprising was a wake-up call. From '65 until about '71, gang activity in L.A. was at an all-time low, because so many young people were joining organizations like The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, the Black Panther party and becoming involved with the Black Power Movement. However, the mid and late 1960s saw the systematic assassination of great Civil Rights and Black community leaders including Martin Luther King and Malcolm X – a signal to many African-Americans that their leadership and equality continued to be repressed.

← **Late 1960s**

Late 1960s

Rise of Crips post Black-Power - In the late 1960s, from the playground of Fremont High School the first signs of the Crips emerged- led by South L.A. teenager, Raymond Washington; generally credited as the Crips' founding member. In response, a number of rival gangs formed an alliance, calling themselves Bloods- a moniker adopted by African-American soldiers serving in Vietnam.

Late 1970's



In 1975, The Los Angeles Times sent reporters into the streets, to assess progress in the City's black communities ten years after the Watts rebellion. The reporter reported a scene that was much worse, "the fearful lived behind protective bars and double locks. High schools are graduating functional illiterates. Some black people have got businesses, some professionals have gotten into significant jobs, but if you talk about the masses, or that guy who was in trouble in 1965, it is more difficult now."

1980's

Crack cocaine first hit the streets of Los Angeles in 1981, and proved to be a major tipping point for an already vulnerable community. The influx of cocaine broke up families. Around this time there was also an increase in incarceration of African-Americans at disproportionate rates.

1992

Rodney King Uprising

On April 29th, 1992, twenty-seven years and five miles away from the flashpoint of the 1965 Watts rebellion, rioting again broke out. The most violent, costly outbreak of civil unrest in U.S. history as an explosion of angry protest touched off by the outcome of the controversial Rodney King LAPD police brutality trial.

Post LA Uprising - In the aftermath of '92's uprising, a high profile private sector initiative was formed to create Rebuild LA.

The \$6 billion investment program defined its goals as long-term systemic change. And promised to create 74,000 new jobs within the riot zone over the next five years.

At the same time, a tentative truce between several Crip and Bloods sets helped establish a tone of optimism for South L.A.'s war-weary community. But just one year later, with many South L.A. neighborhoods still in ruin... Rebuild LA quietly closed its doors .

Current effort to end gangs- Today, the streets of South L.A. have given rise to a new sort of gang, determined to fight not simply for turf or colors, but for the lives of the next generation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• UNDERSTANDING GANGS

Gang membership for the people we meet in *Crips and Bloods: Made in America* was almost a right of passage. It seemed difficult to escape being a member or being a victim of a gang.

1) How do you think growing up in an impoverished neighborhood, or one where everyone around you is in a gang, would impact your life? If you were growing up in South Central Los Angeles do you think you might have been tempted as a young person to join a gang?

2) Kumasi, a former member of the Slausons says of gangs “part of the mechanics of oppressing people... is to pervert them to the extent that they become the instruments of their own oppression.” We see in the film that Los Angeles has often tried to end gang efforts with after school and job training programs, only to quickly halt these efforts to end gang violence at the root cause. What do you think of Kumasi’s theory? Do you think if life-skills programs started over the years to end gang violence had continued we would we see a decrease in gang membership?

3) We hear Shaka, a Mad Swan Blood talk about the internal struggle of being in a violent gang, “ I wrestle with my moral issues a lot, man, because I know that ultimately this ain't the way that God, or society, intended it to be. So, a lotta times, man, I know morally I'm a good individual, but sometimes I gotta put that moral state of mind behind me and become an animal.” Can you imagine circumstances where you would do the same thing? What parallels do you see between gang violence and warfare?

4) One of the most dramatic sequences in *Crips and Bloods: Made in America* is one featuring several mothers who have lost their sons to gang violence. Do you know anyone who’s been a victim of gang violence? How did looking at these women’s faces make you feel?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• STRUCTURAL RACISM AND RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Throughout *Crips and Bloods: Made in America* we hear gang members talking about the challenges of racism. We see first hand how silent forces and unspoken inequalities have impacted every aspect of their lives. It's impossible to consider why the people we meet in *Crips and Bloods: Made in America* joined gangs without considering the circumstances of their lives.

1) Early on in the film Kumasi and Bird talk about growing-up in South Central LA and being turned away from the Boy Scouts because they were African-American. As a child, how do you think an experience like this would have impacted your self-worth and your feelings toward society? Have you ever encountered a situation where you were not allowed to participate because of your race, gender, religion or sexual preference?

2) From the start of *Crips and Bloods: Made in America*, we see how geography has impacted African Americans- from the Racist LA Police Chief of the 1950s who made sure “people were in the right neighborhoods at the right times” to young men growing up in Central LA- just miles from the beach- who have never seen the Ocean. Do you think a new kind of segregation exists today? Can you identify racial barriers in your town or city? When do you think they formed and how frequently are they crossed today?

3) Skipp Townsend a former Rollin' 20s BLOOD said “Nowadays, the fathers, or the black men my age, are either dead or in jail. And one of the problems we have is, if they're gonna try to arrest the problem, that means they're puttin' all the black men in jail.” Similarly, Manic Bey, a former member of the Long Beach Crips said “There's never no cycle to get us out of this. There's just a cycle to get us back into it.”

Both men are explaining the extent to which the problems of gangs are entrenched in their communities. What do you think this does to young men growing up in these communities? What do you see as some possible solutions?

4) As Tom Hayden stated; “If you had 15,000 people killing each other, in any other country, there would be diplomats, there would be mediators, it would go to the U.N.”

What policy changes should be made to make our government more accountable?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• THE BIG PICTURE

1) At the end of *Crips and Bloods: Made in America*, we see former gang members turning their lives around. For example Raymond Ford who pulled back from his gang after his son saw him selling drugs... “Right then I made a choice in my life. Whether I was gonna stick by them... or stick by us. "Us" is meaning me, my neighborhood, my gang. "Them" meaning my kids. So, I chose to stick with them.” What do you think it takes to make this kind of choice? What institutions are out there to help someone like Raymond? How could more gang members be led to the path Raymond chose?

2) Both the 1965 Watt’s “Riots” and the 1992 Rodney King “Riots” or Rebellion started because of singular incidents which symbolized a racist system going too far. Of the 1965 unrest Ron Wilkins says “We just got more and more upset. It was a cumulative thing. It was one racist traffic stop too many.” What impact do you think these unrests have had on the African-American community? On history? What are some other ways social movements have been moved forward?

3) We have elected the first African-American President of the U.S. How do you think this might impact the racism we see in *Crips and Bloods: Made in America*? What impact do you think this will have on young men and women making choices in their lives? What efforts can we as a society put forth to take advantage of this opportunity?

HOW TO HELP

What you can do....

- * Screen this movie
- * Write to your community leaders
- * Volunteer with organizations working to end the problem
- * Advocate to your city council

Much of the crucial work of gang intervention is done at a grassroots level with little or no support from federal agencies. Whilst donations of money are urgently needed to fund this vital work, there are other ways you can support this work. Perhaps you have a used computer you can donate? Perhaps you need some work done and can provide a former gang member with gainful employment?

The following organizations all participated in making CRIPS AND BLOODS: MADE IN AMERICA and many of the leaders of these organizations appear in the film. Any assistance you can provide to help their work is greatly appreciated.

HOW TO HELP: CONTACT INFO

The Amer-I-Can Program
Jim Brown
269 South Beverly Drive #1048
Los Angeles, CA 90212
(310) 652-7884 Phone
<http://www.amer-i-can.org/>
info@amer-i-can.org

Unity One
Lechein Taylor
(323) 228-3592 Phone
(323) 933-7636 Fax
<http://www.unityonenow.com>
lasheentaylor@yahoo.com

The Reverence Project
Aqeela Sherrills
Mailing Address:
9101 Hooper Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90002
<http://www.TheReverenceProject.com>
<http://www.wattsarts.com>

UNITY TWO, Chapter 2
"Pete" Cavitt
Mailing Address:
207 W. 74th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90003
(323) 758-4657 Phone
(323) 719-4290 Phone
geraldcavitt1@sbcglobal.net

Advancement Project Los Angeles
Connie Rice, Co-Director
1545 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 800
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 989.1300 Phone
(213)989.1309 Phone
<http://www.advanceproj.org>

SideWalk University: A Pro Gang Institute
T. Rodgers Ph.G, Gangologist
Forgiveness One Human Being at a Time:
A Life Experience
The one the OG bangers call!
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 191795
Los Angeles CA. *90019
(323) 294-2649 Phone
(323) 295-0331 Fax
Sidewalku@hotmail.com
www.TRodgers.com

Voices Behind the Walls
Apollo Payne
(323)445-5459Phone
voicesbehindthewalls.com
jpapollombp@yahoo.com

Peace Makers
Minister Tony Muhammad
8713 South Vermont Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90044
(310) 671-1585 Phone
MinTonyla27@aol.com

Project Cry No More
Vicky D. Lindsey, Executive Director /
Founder
(non profit 501(c)(3) support group for murdered
victims' loved ones)
Mailing Address:
622 S. Keene Ave.
Compton, CA. 90220
(310) 438-0075 (direct)
projectcrynomore@aol.com

I-Can Youth Foundation
Rock Johnson
3435 Wilshire
Suite 2870
Los Angeles 90010
213.761.5570
<http://www.icanallstars.com>

C.H.A.N.G.E.
Don Won
9329 E. Cedar Street Apt. #11
Bellflower, CA 90706
(562) 965-4040 Phone
<http://www.castinghopeforchange.com>
myprochange@yahoo.com

Building Communities and Families
Maniac Bey
6590 Long Beach Blvd., #230
Long Beach, CA 90805
(562) 413-5572 Phone
(714) 827-5070 Fax
<http://www.b-c-f.org>
buildingcf@yahoo.com

Maximum Force Enterprises
Aquil Basheer
The Crisis Survival Training Center
The B.U.I.L.D. Youth Empowerment Program
(Brotherhood for Independent Leadership
through Discipline)
1409 West Vernon Ave.
Los Angeles, CA. 90010
(323) 295-1904 Office
(323) 294-1223 Fax
<http://www.maximumforceenterprises.com>
takechargeinc@aol.com

HOW TO HELP: CONTACT INFO

CHECK WEBSITE FOR UPDATED LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS

2nd Call
Skipp Townsend
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 191476
Los Angeles, CA 90019
(310) 916-1902
<http://2ndcall.org>
skipptownsend@yahoo.com

Homeboy Industries
130 W. Bruno St. Los Angeles, CA
90012
(323) 526-1254 (Phone)
(323) 526-1257 (Fax)
www.homeboy-industries.org
info@homeboy-industries.org

Films by Youth Inside
Alex Munoz-Creative Director
8320 Lincoln Blvd #202
Los Angeles, CA 90045
310-980-0134 Phone
<http://www.fyifilms.org>
alex@fyifilms.org

RESOURCES

SUGGESTED READING

Knowledge is power and the more we know the better we are able to understand a tragic situation such as the one that exists not just in South LA but in inner cities across America and around the world. The following books were all hugely beneficial in researching the issues of gang violence and informing the production of *CRIPS AND BLOODS: MADE IN MADE IN AMERICA*.

Violence: Our Deadly Epidemic and Its Causes
by James Gilligan, M.D.

L. A. City Limits: African-American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present
by Josh Sides

Fire This Time
by Gerald Horne

Rivers of Blood, Years of Darkness: The Unforgettable Classic Account of the Watts Riot
by Robert E. Conot

Street Wars: Gangs and the Future of Violence
by Tom Hayden

Do or Die
by Léon Bing

Slipping Into Darkness: A True Story from the American Ghetto
by M. Rutledge McCall

Is Bill Cosby Right?: Or Has the Black Middle Class Lost Its Mind?
by Michael Eric Dyson

The 50 Most Asked Questions About Gangs
by T. Rodgers

The Great Black Way: L.A. in the 1940s and the Lost African-American Renaissance
by R.J. Smith

Crips: The Story of the L.A. Street Gang from 1971-1985
by Donald Baker