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Can't Stop Won't Stop

Jeff Chang

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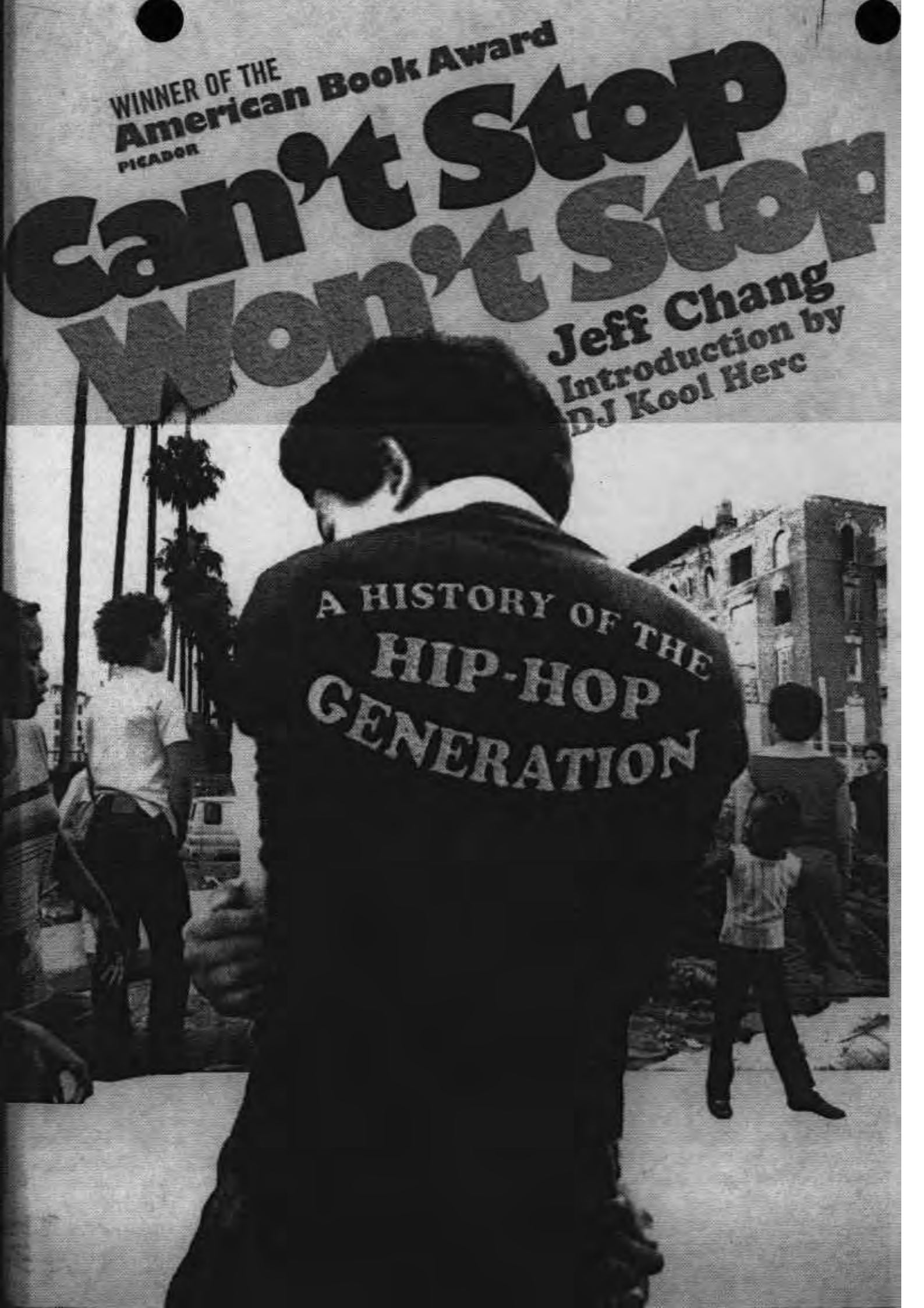

To Lourdes, who walks with me

To Eugene and Eleanor and Nestor and Melinda,
who haven't always understood where we were going
but packed lunch and warm clothes anyway

To Jonathan and Solomon, who will soon be leading us

Special Livication to
Rita Fecher, Benjamin Davis, Richie Perez and the Ancestors

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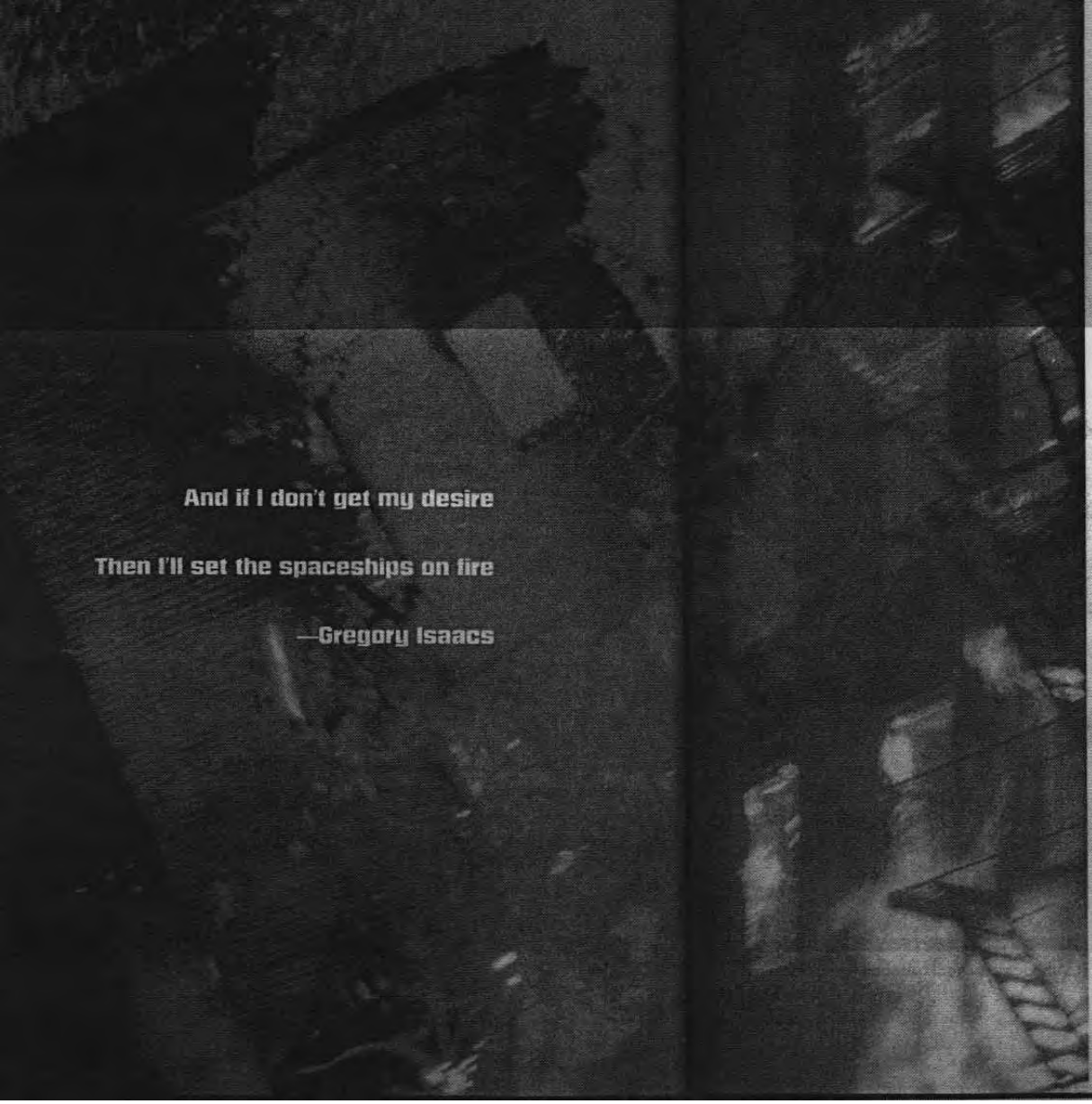

And if I don't get my desire

Then I'll set the spaceships on fire

—Gregory Isaacs

LOOP 1

Babylon Is Burning

1968–1977

"Ladies and gentlemen, there it is."
Photo © Matt Daly/Code Red/911 Pictures

The St. Athanasius school baseball team, South Bronx
Photo © Mel Rosenthal

1.

Necropolis

The Bronx and the Politics of Abandonment

When you come to the ballpark, you're walking into a place that is all deception and lies. . . . There's nothing truthful at the ballpark. Except the game.

–Barry Bonds

It was a bad night for baseball in the South Bronx–an angry arctic wind, an ominous new moon.

The largest crowd of the year filled Yankee Stadium for the second game of the 1977 World Series, the New York Yankees versus the Los Angeles Dodgers, east coast versus west.

The Yankees were the best team money could buy. When Major League Baseball raised the curtain on free agency before the 1977 season, owner George Steinbrenner opened his checkbook and with a $3 million offer landed the biggest prize in the game, home-run slugger Reggie Jackson, the son of a Negro Leaguer who had received seven dollars a game. For the Yankees–who did not sign their first Black player until nine years after Jackie Robinson broke the color line–Jackson was their most expensive signing in history.

Manager Billy Martin seethed. He had opposed signing Jackson. He refused to attend the press conference introducing Jackson in pinstripes. As the season began, he cold-shouldered the star, sometimes benched him. When he was upset, he called Jackson "boy."

Jackson got along no better with his new teammates. Some resented his salary, even though white players like Catfish Hunter had million-dollar contracts as well. They thought Jackson too flamboyant, flaunting his blonde girlfriends in the Rolls-Royce Corniche that Steinbrenner had bought him. But it was

his arrogance that finally turned them. In a magazine article, Jackson dissed captain Thurman Munson, saying, "This team, it all flows from me. I've got to keep it all going. I'm the straw that stirs the drink." Maybe he had not meant to say it that way. Maybe he was just telling the truth. Jackson's teammates stopped talking to him.

During a June game against the Red Sox, the tension finally exploded. After Jackson missed a flyball in right field, Martin angrily pulled him off the field. Jackson trotted slowly and angrily for the dugout. "What did I do?" he asked Martin.

"What did you do?" Martin barked. "You know what the fuck you did."

"I wasn't loafing, Billy," Jackson protested. "Nothing I could ever do would please you. You never wanted me on this team. You don't want me now. Why don't you just admit it?"

"I ought to kick your fucking ass!" Martin screamed.

Jackson lost it. "Who the fuck do you think you're talking to, *old man*?"[1] The Yankee coaches leaped up to restrain Martin from punching Jackson, while TV cameras rolled.

That night in his hotel room, Jackson came to tears in front of a small group of news reporters. "It makes me cry, the way they treat me on this team. The Yankee pinstripes are Ruth and Gehrig and DiMaggio and Mantle and I'm a nigger to them," he moaned. "I don't know how to be subservient."[2]

It had been thirty seasons since Jackie Robinson, playing one game, had changed another, by taking Ebbets Field in Dodger blue. The postwar thrust away from racial segregation began with the pivotal cultural moment when Robinson stepped out of that formerly whites-only dugout.

After Robinson retired, he brought his commitment to integration into politics. The 1960s had begun, the Dodgers were in Los Angeles, and Ebbets Field was sprouting boxy brick and concrete beanstalks, honoring Jackie with towering public housing projects. American politics was lurching to catch up with the changes already felt in the culture and Robinson's legacy was being openly questioned.

In 1963, one of those inquisitors was Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, who made a point of appearing at a massive Harlem rally with a firebrand named Malcolm X. A contemporary of Robinson, Malcolm had been in jail

while Jackie was on the field. Both had seen the worst of America. Both wanted the best for their children. But their lives had not brought them to the same conclusions. At the heart of the issue was the age-old African-American question: Shall we fight for the nation or build our own? Shall we save America or ourselves?

Robinson denounced the congressman for aligning with the Black Muslim. "You have grievously set back the cause of the Negro," Robinson wrote in an open letter to Powell on the pages of the *New York Amsterdam News*. "For you are aware—and have preached for many years—that the answer for the Negro is to be found, not in segregation or in separation, but by his insistence upon moving into his rightful place—the same place as that of any other American—within our society."

On the same pages, Malcolm X himself responded to Robinson: "You have never shown appreciation for the support given you by the Negro masses, but you have a record of being very faithful to your White Benefactors."[3]

Later that year, in Washington, D.C., Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech. In Harlem, days of street protests over education and poverty gave way to nights of clashes between white police and Black youths, the start of the long, hot summers that gripped America the rest of that turbulent decade.

As the '60s drew into the '70s, King and X were gone, the well of faith and idealism that had sustained the movements against the forces of rationalization and violence drained, and a lot of Black dreams—integrationist or nationalist—simply burned. For the next generation, there would be no more water for the fires. Robinson would approvingly quote his former adversary: "Jackie, in days to come, your son and my son will not be willing to settle for the things we are willing to settle for."[4]

So there was Reggie Jackson in a finely appointed hotel room in the summer of 1977, slugging behind both civil rights and Black power, playing one game and the other. "I'm a big, Black man with an IQ of 160, making $700,000 a year, and they treat me like dirt," Jackson said. "They've never had anyone like me on their team before."[5]

Four months later, when baseball fans filed into Yankee Stadium for the World Series on that cold hungry October night, many debts of history were

waiting to be redeemed. New Yorkers had never forgotten Jackie Robinson's Dodgers or forgiven owner Walter O'Malley for pushing Robinson out and stealing the team from Brooklyn. To them, the very existence of the Los Angeles Dodgers represented the triumph of greed and betrayal. But the Dodgers were like a red Corvette in a Malibu morning, a team perpetually speeding into the future. Home runs came easily to them; four of their hitters had topped thirty homers that year. Two of them were Black, two were white.

The Yanks had already taken Game One. But in this game, by the third inning, three Dodgers had already hit Catfish Hunter's pitches to the beer-drenched bleachers. In four at-bats, Jackson never even got on base. It was useless. Down by four runs, the Yankees would never catch up. The crowd turned ugly. Smoke bombs traced slow arcs in the air and firecrackers crackled off the concrete. Drunks tossed their cups over the top deck rails. Fans hurdled the retaining walls and dashed across the outfield, stopping play. Fights erupted in the stands. The winds picked up, howling in from the west.

Outside the stadium, over the right field stands, past the most secure parking lot in the South Bronx, just a mile to the east, wisps and curls of grey smoke drifted into the sky. Then the gusts caught and ashen clouds billowed. A small crowd gathered at Melrose and 158th Street for a five-alarm show, a passing distraction as ordinary as a World Series. Beyond the game, the abandoned Public School 3 was aflame and imploding.

"Ladies and gentlemen, there it is," Howard Cosell told 60 million viewers as the helicopter cameras zoomed in on PS 3. "The Bronx is burning."

Mass Movements

In 1953, the future of the Bronx could be seen along the seven-mile man-made trench cutting through it. Once an unbroken continuum of cohesive, diverse communities, the trench was now the clearing for the Cross-Bronx Expressway, a modernist catastrophe of massive proportions.

As the gray concrete slab plowed from the east into the South Bronx toward Manhattan, it left behind a wake of environmental violence. "(W)here once apartment buildings or private homes had stood were now hills of rubble, decorated with ripped-open bags of rotting garbage that had been flung atop them," the historian Robert Caro wrote. "Over the rumble of the bulldozers came the staccato,

machine-gun-like banging of jackhammers and, occasionally, the dull concussion of an exploding dynamite charge."[6] These were the sounds of progress.

Forward in the Expressway's path, the Irish and Jewish families that had once occupied well-appointed, if not plush, lower-middle-class apartments had been given months to relocate, with a paltry $200-per-room as compensation. In the meantime, as they struggled to find new quarters in a city with few vacancies, they huddled in heatless, condemned buildings. The man responsible for all of this was named Moses. Robert Moses, the most powerful modern urban builder of all time, led the white exodus out of the Bronx.

It began with a master plan designed in 1929 by the New York Regional Plan Association. The business interests behind the master plan wanted to transform Manhattan into a center of wealth, connected directly to the suburbs through an encircling network of highways carved through the heart of neighborhoods in the outer boroughs. Buoyed by a post–World War II surge of government investment, Moses rose to unparalleled power. He saw his immortality fixed in the roads; they were monuments to a brutal kind of efficiency. The Cross-Bronx Expressway would allow people to traverse the Bronx from the suburbs of New Jersey through upper Manhattan to the suburbs of Queens in fifteen minutes.

In engineering terms, it was the most difficult road ever built. Caro wrote, "The path of the great road lay across 113 streets, avenues, and boulevards; sewers and water and utility mains numbering in the hundreds; one subway and three railroads; five elevated rapid transit lines, and seven other expressways or parkways, some of which were being built by Moses simultaneously."[7] More important, 60,000 Bronx residents were caught in the crosshairs of the Expressway. Moses would bulldoze right over them. "There are more people in the way—that's all", he would say, as if lives were just another mathematical problem to be solved. "There's very little real hardship in the thing."

In Manhattan's ghettos, using "urban renewal" rights of clearance to condemn entire neighborhoods, he scared off thriving businesses and uprooted poor African-American, Puerto Rican, and Jewish families. Many had no choice but to come to the places like east Brooklyn and the South Bronx, where public housing was booming but jobs had already fled. Moses's point, one of his associates said, was that "if you cannot do something that is really substantial, it is not worth doing."[8]

In his grand ambitions, high modernism met maximum density. Vast housing complexes were designed on the idyllic-sounding "tower-in-a-park" model, a concept that had been advanced by the modernist architect Le Corbusier as part of his vision of a "Radiant City." Bronx River Houses and Millbrook Houses opened with 1,200 units each, Bronxdale Houses with over 1,500 units and Patterson Houses with over 1,700 units.

To Moses, the "tower-in-a-park" model was a blackboard equation that neatly solved thorny problems—open space in the urban grid, housing for the displaced poor—with a tidy cost-efficiency. It also happened to support the goals of "slum clearance," business redevelopment, and the decimation of the tenants' union movement.[9] So in the New York area's construction explosion of the 1950s and '60s, middle-class whites got sprawling, prefab, white picket-fence, whites-only Levittown suburbs, while working-class strugglers and strivers got nine or more monotonous slabs of housing rising out of isolating, desolate, soon-to-be crime-ridden "parks."

By the end of the decade, half of the whites were gone from the South Bronx. They moved north to the wide-open spaces of Westchester County or the northeastern reaches of Bronx County. They followed Moses's Cross-Bronx and Bruckner Expressways to the promise of ownership in one of the 15,000 new apartments in Moses's Co-op City. They moved out to the cookie-cutter suburbs that sprouted along the highways in New Jersey and Queens and Long Island. Traversing the Cross-Bronx Expressway, Marshall Berman would write, "We fight back the tears and step on the gas."[10]

White élite retrenchment found a violent counterpart in the browning streets. When African-American, Afro-Caribbean, and Latino families moved into formerly Jewish, Irish, and Italian neighborhoods, white youth gangs preyed on the new arrivals in schoolyard beatdowns and running street battles.[11] The Black and brown youths formed gangs, first in self-defense, then sometimes for power, sometimes for kicks.

Political organizations like the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords competed with these neighborhood gangs for the hearts and minds of those youths for a time, but they soon invited constant, sometimes fatal pressure from the authorities. The optimism of the civil rights movement and the conviction of the Black and Brown Power movements gave way to a defocused rage and a long

exhaustion. Militants turned their guns on themselves. Curtis Mayfield, who had once sung "Keep on Pushing" for Martin Luther King Jr. and other freedom marchers, now warned of the "Pusherman." Heroin dealers, junky thieves and contract arsonists filled the streets like vultures. One Bronx cop waxed philosophical: "We are creating here what the Romans created in Rome."[12]

One official told author Jill Jonnes, "The idea always was to bypass Manhattan with the ugliness as much as possible. You had public housing and highways in the South Bronx, and then, on top of both of those, which were destabilizing enough, you added a deliberate program of slum clearance to displace the worst. You were then at the point that it all started to go downhill."[13]

Bad Numbers

Here was the new math: the South Bronx had lost 600,000 manufacturing jobs; 40 percent of the sector disappeared. By the mid-seventies, average per capita income dropped to $2,430, just half of the New York City average and 40 percent of the nationwide average. The official youth unemployment rate hit 60 percent. Youth advocates said that in some neighborhoods the true number was closer to 80 percent.[14] If blues culture had developed under the conditions of oppressive, forced labor, hip-hop culture would arise from the conditions of no work.

When the sound of automobiles replaced the sound of jackhammers on the length of the Cross-Bronx Expressway, the fuel was in place for the Bronx to burn.

Apartment buildings passed into the hands of slumlords, who soon figured out that they could make more money by refusing to provide heat and water to the tenants, withholding property taxes from the city, and finally destroying the buildings for insurance money. As one fireman described the cycle: "It starts with fires in the vacant apartments. Before you know it, it's the whole wing in the building."

The downward spiral created its own economy. Slumlords hired rent-a-thugs to burn the buildings down for as little as fifty dollars a job, collecting up to $150,000 on insurance policies.[15] Insurance companies profited from the arrangement by selling more policies. Even on vacant buildings, fire paid. Groups of organized thieves, some of them strung out on heroin, plundered the burned buildings for valuable copper pipes, fixtures, and hardware.

A fireman said, "Every fire in a vacant building had to be arson. No one lives there, and yet when we pull up, the fire's out thirty windows." He continued, "People move out. The landlord starts to cut back on his maintenance. When he stops making the profit, more and more apartments become vacant . . . and, before you know it, you have a block with no one living there."[16]

Journalists Joe Conason and Jack Newfield investigated arson patterns in New York City for two-and-a-half years and found that insurance agents made commissions based on the number and dollar amount of policies they sold. "There is simply no incentive for banks, insurance companies, or anyone else with money to invest in building or rebuilding dwellings at reasonable rents," they wrote. "In housing, the final stage of capitalism is arson."[17]

But some argued that the South Bronx presented indisputable proof that poor Blacks and Latinos were not interested in improving their lives. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, New York's Democratic senator, was heard to say, "People in the South Bronx don't want housing or they wouldn't burn it down."[18] In 1970, he had written an influential memo to President Richard Nixon, citing Rand Corporation data on fires in the South Bronx and bemoaning the rise of radicals like the Black Panthers. "The time may have come," he famously wrote, "when the issue of race could benefit from a period of 'benign neglect.' "

Moynihan would later complain that he was misunderstood, that the memo should never have been leaked to the press, that he never meant to suggest services should be withdrawn from Black communities. But whatever his intention, President Nixon had pencilled "I agree!" on the memo and forwarded it to his Cabinet.[19] When it became public, "benign neglect" became a rallying cry to justify reductions in social services to the inner cities, further fuel for the backlash against racial justice and social equality.

When "benign neglect" was inflated into pseudo-science, the results were literally explosive. Armed with unsound data and models from the Rand Corporation, city politicians applied a mathematics of destruction to justify the *removal* of no less than seven fire companies from the Bronx after 1968.[20] During the mid-1970s budget crisis, thousands more firefighters and fire marshals were laid off. As the ecologists Deborah and Rodrick Wallace would put it, the result was a "contagion" of fires.

Less than a decade later, the South Bronx had lost 43,000 housing units, the

equivalent of four square blocks a week. Thousands of vacant lots and abandoned buildings littered the borough. Between 1973 and 1977, 30,000 fires were set in the South Bronx alone. In 1975, on one long hot day in June, forty fires were set in a three-hour period. These were not the fires of purifying rage that had ignited Watts or a half dozen other cities after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. These were the fires of abandonment.

1977

Not just another summer. The bottom point of the loop between Malcolm X's assassination and Public Enemy's call to arms. The year of the snake. A time of intrigue and uprisings, coups and riots.

After dark on July 13, as if an invisible hand was snuffing them, the streetlights blew out. The city had plunged into a blackout. Looters took to the streets in the ghettos of Crown Heights, Bedford-Stuyvesant, East New York, Harlem and the Bronx. At Ace Pontiac on Jerome Avenue, fifty brand new cars were driven out of the showroom. On the Grand Concourse, shopkeepers armed themselves with guns and rifles, but for the next thirty-six hours most would be helpless against the rushing tide of retribution and redistribution.

"That particular night, one thing I noticed," a resident would later say, "they were not hurting each other. They weren't fighting with each other. They weren't killing each other."[21]

"It was an opportunity for us to rid our community of all the people who were exploiting us," graffiti writer James TOP told historian Ivor Miller. "The things that were done that day and a half were telling the government that you have a real problem with the people in the inner cities."[22]

A thousand fires were set. Prisoners at the Bronx House of Detention blazed up three dormitories. Hundreds of stores were cleaned out.

Smoke and glass, police and thieves even got into sitcom character George Jefferson's clothes, perplexing the laugh track. In the made-for-TV version of the blackout, George left his Upper East Side deluxe apartment in the sky to protect his uninsured dry cleaning business in the South Bronx, the one where he had begun his road to the riches. "I ain't gon' clean it up," he vowed. "I'm gon' close it up." There, he confronted looters until he was mistaken for one and nearly arrested by Black cops. In the end, a Bronx resident convinced George to keep his

Black business open. It was the kind of tale of reversal that the hip-hop generation would grow up to love: what moves on up must be brought right back down, 360 degrees.

Under Mayor Abraham Beame, mighty New York City was heading toward massive financial ruin. In mourning the city's fallen glory, columnists had prattled on about the broken subway system and the prostitution in Times Square. But these were mere totems next to the magnificent destruction of the South Bronx. In the words of one Dr. Wise, a neighborhood clinic director, the South Bronx was nothing less than "a Necropolis—a city of death."[23]

For his CBS report *The Fire Next Door*, reporter Bill Moyers led his crew across the East River to follow a Bronx fire company. They plunged into scenes of chaos: burning apartment buildings emptying families into the night streets; anxious firemen cutting away a roof to save an occupied building; neighborhood kids—many of them laughing, happy to be on television, no longer invisible—gathering on a rooftop to help firemen aim a hose at the threatening flames of the building next door.

Moyers also returned to capture the grim aftermath: an elderly Mrs. Sullivan waiting for a moving truck that would never come, her few remaining belongings ransacked by youths as she stood on the stoop being interviewed by Moyers; a young Black mother in a Panther-styled leather jacket and bright orange headwrap describing life with her two children in a burned building, her cold room's only decoration a magic-markered list of the Five Percenters' Supreme Mathematics written on the blank white wall ("7: God; 8: Build or Destroy; 9: Born; 0: Cipher").

"Somehow our failures at home paralyze our will and we don't approach a disaster like the death of the Bronx with the same urgency and commitment we carry to problems abroad," Moyers concluded as he stepped out of a building scorched black against brown brick, blue sky visible through the topmost windows. The shot pulled back to reveal a block of 100-foot ghost-shell structures casting long afternoon shadows against each other on the desolate street.

"So the Vice President travels to Europe and Japan, the Secretary of State to the Middle East and Russia, the UN ambassador to Africa," Moyers solemnly intoned. "No one of comparable stature comes here."[24]

Then, a week before Catfish Hunter's first pitch in the World Series, President

Carter emerged from a state motorcade at Charlotte Street in the heart of the South Bronx—three helicopters overhead, a passel of Secret Service agents at his side—to gaze silently upon four square blocks of dead city.

Even the gangs who had once claimed this turf—the vicious Turbans and the fearsome Reapers—were now gone, as if they had been blown to dust by the forces of history. The president stood amidst the smashed brick and concrete, stripped cars, rotting vermin, shit and garbage—his secretary of housing and urban development Patricia Harris, Mayor Beame and a small army of reporters, photographers, and cameramen wagging behind.

The president took in the devastation. Then he turned to Secretary Harris. "See which areas can still be salvaged," he said softly.

The Wasteland

Here was the unreconstructed *South*—the South Bronx, a spectacular set of ruins, a mythical wasteland, an infectious disease, and, as Robert Jensen observed, "a condition of poverty and social collapse, more than a geographical place."[25] Through the 1960s, the Bronx's prefix was merely descriptive of the borough's southernmost neighborhoods, like Mott Haven and Longwood. But now most of New York City north of 110th Street was reimagined as a new kind of "South," a global south just a subway ride away. Even Mother Teresa, patron saint of the world's poor, made an unannounced pilgrimage.

The mayor's office rushed out a report entitled *The South Bronx: A Plan For Revitalization*. "The most damaging indicators cannot be measured in numbers," the report concluded. "They include the fear that prevails among many business people in the South Bronx over the future of the neighborhood, concern over the security and safety of investments; the waning faith and sense of hopelessness that induces many of them to give up and flee to other areas."[26]

Edward Logue, an urban renewal official recruited to work in New York City after leveling some of Boston's historic neighborhoods, spun it differently for a reporter: "In a marvelous, sad way, the South Bronx is an enormous success story. Over 750,000 people have left in the past twenty years for middle-class success in the suburbs."[27]

But other wonks were less disingenuous. Professor George Sternlieb, the director of the Center of Urban Policy at Rutgers University, said, "The world can

operate very well without the South Bronx. There's very little in it that anyone cares for, that can't be replicated elsewhere. I have a science-fiction vision of coming into the central city in an armored car."[28]

One mayoral official, Roger Starr, following the Rand Corporation and Senator Moynihan, articulated an end-game policy of "planned shrinkage" in which health, fire, police, sanitation, and transit services would be removed from the inner-cities until all the people that remained had to leave, too—or be left behind.[29] Already, schools had been closed and abandoned, after first being starved of arts and music programs, then of basic educational necessities.

Moses himself imagined a capstone befitting his career. In 1973, in retirement, at the age of eighty-four, he declared, "You must concede that this Bronx slum and others in Brooklyn and Manhattan are unreparable. They are beyond rebuilding, tinkering and restoring. They must be leveled to the ground." He proposed moving 60,000 South Bronx residents into cheap, high-rise towers to be erected on the grounds of Ferry Point Park. The best apartments there could have a fine vista of the sparkling, trash-filled East River, the gleaming suburbs of Queens to the east, the barbed wire and brutal towers of Rikers Island to the west, and the jets leaving LaGuardia Airport for distant cities.

Just a Friendly Game of Baseball

During the sixth game of the 1977 World Series, Reggie Jackson stepped up to the plate in Yankee Stadium. He had homered in the two previous games, bringing the Yankees to the brink of a championship, three games to two. Tonight history would call. Against three pitchers and three pitches, Jackson slammed three home runs. In dramatic fashion, the Yankees won 8 to 4.

As Yankee pitcher Mike Torrez secured the last out, thousands of fans rushed the field. They ran after Jackson, who mowed some of them down as he dashed for the dugout. They tore the seats off their moorings. They grabbed handfuls of sod and second base. They tossed flying bottles at the mounted police. Near third base, cops gave a man a concussion. Above the chaos and confusion of the mob, three words cohered: "We're number one!"[30]

In the locker room, the triumphant Jackson and Martin grinned ear-to-ear, wet with champagne. They gave each other a bear-hug. Jackson waved a gold medallion of Jackie Robinson at reporters, and said "What do you think this man would think of me tonight?"[31]

Columnist Dave Anderson caught Thurman Munson and Jackson as the celebration wound down:

"Hey coon," called the catcher, grinning. "Nice goin', coon."

Reggie Jackson laughed and hurried over and hugged the captain.

"I'm goin' down to the party here in the ballpark," Thurman Munson said, grinning again. "Just white people, but they'll let you in. Come on down."

"I'll be there," Reggie Jackson said. "Wait for me."

. . .

Thurman Munson reappeared. "Hey, nigger, you're too slow, that party's over but I'll see you next year," the captain said, sticking out his hand. "I'll see you next year wherever I might be."

"You'll be back," Reggie Jackson said.

"Not me," said Thurman Munson. "But you know who stuck up for you, nigger, you know who stuck up for you when you needed it."

"I know," Reggie Jackson said.[32]

It was 1977. A new arrow of history was taking flight.

In Kingston, Jamaica, the reggae group Culture sang a vision of Babylon beset by lightning, earthquake and thunder. The two sevens had clashed, they warned. The apocalypse was upon Babylon.

But in their own way, the new generation—to whom so much had been given, from whom so much was being stolen, for whom so little would be promised—would not settle for the things previous generations had been willing to settle for. Concede them a demand and they would demand more. Give them an apocalypse, and they would dance.