Minimizing White Race-Based Behavior and Neutralizing Oppression Discourse: An Interpretive Content Analysis of *Crash* (2005)

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This article provides a critical content analysis of the 2005 film *Crash* by focusing on how the film portrayed race and ethnic relations. The article focuses attention on instances of race/ethnic-based behavior and racially/ethnically stereotyped statements as the unit of analysis for the research. Qualitative interpretive content analysis is used to suggest that the majority of race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotypical statements by White characters in the film was minimized (through either providing context and explanation of the character's behavior, redeeming the behavior, depicting the minority character as instigating the behavior by the White character, or through reaffirmation of the stereotype), whereas the race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotyped comments from minority characters was not minimized and was portrayed in a very arbitrary manner that was devoid of context. Moreover, the use of commentary on oppression was a strategy that was used for young Black male characters in the film, but the nature of their discussions was trivialized by the film. These findings are framed in the context of organizational market demands of the mass entertainment media.

Keywords: film, crime, stereotypes, content analysis

INTRODUCTION

The 2005 film *Crash* won three different Oscar awards for Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay, and Best Editing. The focus of this film is on racial and ethnic tensions in the Los Angeles area and tells a fictional story that revolves around a series of criminal events in the Los Angeles area involving the interactions of a racially and ethnically diverse mix of characters. The main theme of the film is that all people subscribe to racial and ethnic stereotypes and that these stereotypes surface in a variety of ways as people continuously interact with one another in society. Film critics touted the film as being a movie that tackles the issue of race and ethnicity in a unique way.[a] Some critics also suggested that the film has the capacity to make viewers stop and think about racial and ethnic stereotypes and possibly do some soul-searching about their own attitudes and behaviors on the subject of interpersonal race and ethnic relations.[b]

Thus, for many, the movie *Crash* is seen as a cultural artifact that makes a tremendous statement about race and ethnic relations. But the film is not without its critics. In particular, Robert Jensen, Journalism professor at the University of Texas at

Austin and Robert Wosnitzer, a documentary producer, criticizes the film, referring to the film as a White-supremacist movie.[c] Given the importance placed on the film by many film critics and social commentators, a more thorough examination of the film's content is a worthy topic that contributes to the existing literature by further explicating exactly how films construct images and commentary about race/ethnic-based behavior and racial/ethnic stereotypes.

This article makes a contribution to the extant literature by providing a critical qualitative content analysis of the discourse and context within which race/ethnic-based behavior and verbally communicated racial/ethnic stereotype is presented in the film *Crash*. Such an analysis of the film *Crash* is important because it is a film that many tout as ground-breaking in its approach. However, this article suggests that the film *Crash* is not truly the ground-breaking statement on race/ethnic-based behavior and racial/ethnic stereotypes that many social commentators claim it to be; the article further argues that what the film actually does is present the issue of race/ethnic-based behavior and racial/ethnic stereotype from a mainly White frame of reference.

It is important to understand how and why the film *Crash* presents its statement about race and ethnicity in the manner that it did – within a White frame of reference – because a film such as this helps to establish the points of reference within which the general public views important social issues. *Crash* is the type of film that seeks to both entertain and inform. It entertains by using fictional characters to present straightforward and ubiquitous stereotypes in an often humorous manner.[d] It also informs audiences by providing scripted contexts through which important social issues (race and ethnic relations) are to be understood and discussed. It is important to understand how *Crash* uses a White frame of reference for such understandings and discussions because such a scenario speaks directly to how and why mass media socially construct information that squares best with the "reality" of the White status quo.

The article first reviews the basic plot of the film *Crash*. Second, the article reviews the extant literature on the use of race/ethnic-based stereotype in mass media to provide a framework for the analysis. Third, the article identifies ways that race/ethnic-based behavior and racial/ethnic stereotypes are present in the film *Crash* by conducting a textual analysis of the film. The analysis suggests that the film minimizes the race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotypes in the film by White characters through several distinct processes: providing contextual and explanatory information, portraying the minority character as the initiator of the interaction, subsequent redemptory conduct by the character, and reaffirmation of the stereotype. Fourth, the article shows how the film neutralizes arguments of oppression by Black characters in the film. Lastly, implications of these interpretive findings are then discussed.

PLOT OF THE FILM

The film focuses on the lives of the 23 main characters and how the lives of these characters cross paths in indiscriminate ways. The plot revolves around a series of criminal events that involves the main characters through a series of different storylines.

Two young Black lower socioeconomic class males (Anthony and Peter Waters) commit an armed carjacking of the upper class District Attorney of Los Angeles (Rick Cabot) and his wife (Jean Cabot) after the character Jean Cabot is shown grabbing the arm of her husband in the presence of the two Black men. The character Jean Cabot then disparagingly remarks that a lower-class Hispanic male (Daniel) who came to her home to change the locks after the carjacking is going to sell the keys to her home to his gang-banger friends. The character reaches this conclusion through consideration of the appearance of the Hispanic character; he is dressed in baggy clothing and has tattoos.

The District Attorney becomes worried that he will either lose the "Black vote" (if he stringently pursues the matter) or the "law and order" vote (if he does not handle the crime as a serious matter). So the District Attorney enlists the help of one of his assistants (Jake Flanagan) to neutralize the damage. The District Attorney's office develops a plan to have the District Attorney do something to gain the appreciation of the Black community; they concoct a plan that involves convincing a Black detective from lower social class roots (Graham Waters) to withhold evidence in the case of a shooting of a Black undercover detective (Detective Lewis) by a White undercover detective (Detective Conklin) who had been involved in prior questionable shootings of Black people. Detective Waters agrees to do so in order to protect his brother (Peter Waters) from prosecution in a prior armed carjacking case that is not depicted in the film.

The plot also involves a White male racist police officer (Officer John Ryan) who makes disparaging comments to a Black female HMO Director (Shaniqua Johnson). The officer is also shown in a situation where he conducts a pat down search of a Black upper-class female (Christine Thayer) during a traffic stop while her husband (Cameron Thayer) is under the control of another officer (Officer Tommy Hanson). Officer Ryan ran his hands outside the clothing of Christine Thayer and then ran his hands up her dress in conducting the search. The facial expression of the character Christine Thayer clearly communicates that she was uncomfortable with the process. For the remainder of this article this interaction is referred to as an "implied sexual assault." This approach is taken because in the film the dominant frame of reference concerning the interaction is that the officer's conduct was inappropriate. At several points in the film the character Christine Thayer refers to the officer's behavior as "molestation." But in the film Officer Ryan is not involved in any scene that offers an alternative interpretation of the events.

The upper-class Black couple is impacted dramatically by the event and later in the film Cameron Thayer has an intense interaction with police after the two young Black males (Peter Waters and Anthony) attempt to steal his car. Officer Tommy Hanson (a White male) is appalled by his partner's (Officer John Ryan) behavior and asks his immediate supervisor to be assigned to another unit. But even the character of Officer Hanson is shown as morally questionable. Toward the end of the film, Officer Hanson shoots and kills an unarmed young Black male (Peter Waters) when he (Officer Hanson) reacts to what he perceives as strange and suspicious behavior by the young Black character.

The plot also involves a Persian man (Farhad Galzari) and his daughter (Dorri Galzari). Farhad Galzari becomes concerned for the safety of his family and business after his business is vandalized. The character purchases a gun and has the Hispanic male locksmith (Daniel) come to fix the lock on the door to the business. When his business is broken into again and burglarized/vandalized, Farhad Galzari becomes angry with the locksmith and takes his gun to confront the locksmith at his home. Also involved in the plot was a Chinese man and his wife. The Chinese man is shown as an organized crime member who illegally buys and sells Chinese persons. The Chinese characters are depicted rarely in the film. The Chinese man is shown getting run over by a car driven by the two young Black males (Anthony and Peter Waters) and then again in the hospital speaking to his wife. The Chinese woman is shown arguing with a Hispanic female detective (the partner of Detective Graham Waters) and then later in the film she is shown running into the hospital searching for her husband. On both occasions the Chinese female is shown as rude and as using derogatory comments toward other characters in the scenes.

RACIAL/ETHNICITY STEREOTYPES IN FILM AND TELEVISION

Racial threat theory suggests that as the relative size of the minority population increases members of the majority group will perceive a growing threat and will actively take steps to reduce the minority threat (Blalock, 1967; Parker, Stults, & Rice, 2004). The theory was first elaborated by Hubert Blalock (1967). Blalock (1967) argued that the minority population represents a threat to the majority for two main reasons: competition over economic and political power. The main proposition that scholars have tested from Blalock's theoretical statement is whether official social control of minorities increases as the size of the minority population increases (Jackson & Carroll, 1981; Liska & Chamlin, 1984; Liska, Lawrence & Benson, 1981). Other scholars have expanded on the racial threat hypothesis by considering the social control impacts of fluctuations in Black-on-White crime, arguing that social control of the African-American population increases when Black-on-White crime increases (Chamlin & Liska, 1992; Eitle, D'Alessio & Stolzenberg, 2002; Liska & Chamlin, 1984).

This body of research is an applicable frame of reference for the current study because mass media serves as the conduit through which the justifications for such controls are communicated to the general public. Prior mass media research has documented the use of stereotypical dialogue and depiction of minorities in a variety of modes of visual communication, including films (Park, Gabbadon, & Chernin, 2006), television programs (Baptiste, 1986; Lichter, Lichter & Rothman, 1994; Owens-Patton, 2001; Weigel, Loomis & Soja, 1980), televised sportscasts (Davis & Harris, 1998; Eastman & Billings, 2001; Hoberman, 1997; Lule, 1995; Rada, 1996; Rada & Wulfemeyer, 2005; Rainville & McCormick, 1977), news programs (Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002; Dixon & Linz, 2000, 2002; Meyers, 2004; Poindexter, Smith & Heider, 2003; Sabo, Jansen, Tate, Duncan & Leggett, 1996; Schaffner & Gabson, 2004), and advertisements (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Wilkes & Valencia, 1989). Collectively, this body of research has suggested that minority citizens, and in particular, African-

Americans, are often minimized and are portrayed as aggressive, as buffoons, as criminal, as ignorant, as lazy, and as menacing.

The theoretical media perspective of Croteau and Hoynes (2001) can be used to provide an explanation for why mass media have continued in the reinforcement of racial stereotypes. Croteau and Hoynes (2001) argued that mass media organizations predominately operate on the basis of a "market" model whereby decisions as to the content of mass-mediated communication to the public are based on the generation of profit for shareholders. Market-based concerns of mass media organizations become manifest in both assessments of audience desirability of the media content (Buckler & Travis, 2005; Chermak, 1995; Pritchard & Hughes, 1997) and in terms of the ease at which media organizations can produce output. In this regard, race/ethnic-based stereotypes prevail in mass media communication because stereotypes provide information gatekeepers with templates and ready-made scripts that ease audience understanding of material because the frame of reference is common and already understood by mass audiences (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Lundman, 2003; Oliver & Meyers, 1999). In essence, stereotypes persist because they square well with the mandate of the market model – that content be consistent with prior understandings and sentiment of the public and are therefore easy for the mass media organization to produce because no background or "evidence" is needed to "support" the message conveyed by the stereotype. Moreover, research has also suggested that stereotypical race-based depictions can have deleterious effects on consumers of the mass mediated content (Dixon, 2006; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Gilliam, Valentino, & Beckmann, 2002; Gorham, 2006; Valentino, Hutchings, & White, 2002).

Recent scholarship (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Pettigrew & Mertens, 1995) has focused on the notion that the stereotyped portrayal of minorities has become quite subtle in terms of form and meaning that is conveyed to the audience. Scholars have begun to drawn a distinction between blatant forms and more subtle forms of racial and ethnicity stereotype that can appear in film and other forms of mass media (Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Pettigrew & Mertens, 1995). Blatant portrayal of stereotypes, referred to by some scholars as "Jim Crow racism" (Unnever & Cullen, 2007) has been described as involving communication of an intense feeling that a minority group represents a serious social threat and presentation of minorities as being genetically inferior. The blatant stereotype also has been characterized as involving open and explicit hostility and negative emotions toward minority groups.

Coltrane & Massineo (2000) have also suggested that subtle presentation of stereotypes involve an exaggeration of cultural differences between minority groups and the majority group such that the majority group is *implicitly encouraged not to generate positive evaluations of minority group members*. While Coltrane & Massineo (2000) did not specifically identify it, subtle stereotypes also take the form of *encouraging the audience to draw positive evaluations of the majority group*. Both situations potentially deepen prejudicial feelings on the part of the majority group. This form of stereotype that focuses on culture difference has been referred to by some scholars as "symbolic racism" (Unnever & Cullen, 2007). This article asserts that differences in the context of

race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotypical statements across race and ethnicity are a form of subtle communication that appears in the film *Crash* and that the contextual differences across race and ethnicity encourages the audience to form positive evaluations of majority member characters and negative evaluations of minority characters.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

This article broadly explores the use of subtle differences (across character race/ethnicity) in the context within which race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotypes are communicated in one form of mass communication and how it might help to shape and influence pop culture. If the notion of subtle prejudice in mass media communication is accurate, one would expect to observe subtle differences in the context used by information gatekeepers to develop audience understanding of race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotyped statements across the racial and ethnic characteristics of characters. More specifically, the context developed by information gatekeepers to communicate information about the race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotyped statements of minority characters would be different than the context developed to communicate information about race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotyped statements of majority group characters. Moreover, the nature of such differences would be such that more positive evaluations of majority group characters would prevail relative to the evaluations of members of non-minority groups. This article uses the 2005 movie *Crash* to explore these proposed contextualized differences in presentation. More specifically, this study deconstructs specific scenes from the film in which race/ethnicity based behavior or statements were evident; the forthcoming analysis does not provide an analysis of each and every scene from the film.

The primary analytical method used is qualitative and takes the form of interpretive content analysis. The film places a variety of characters in situations and scenarios by which race/ethnic-based behavior and racial/ethnic stereotypes become apparent. Therefore, the article focuses on two primary aspects of the film: 1) the context within which the film presents race/ethnic-based behavior by characters; and 2) the context within which the film presents racial/ethnic stereotyped statements made by characters in the film. Race/ethnic-based behavior is defined in the analysis as any behavior engaged in by a character where there is an explicit or implicit suggestion that the character's behavioral pattern is based on the race/ethnicity of the individual in which the character is interacting or based on a reaction to racial/ethnic situations in society.

A racially/ethnically stereotyped statement is defined as a statement made by a character about another character or about race/ethnic relations in society that has an explicit or implicit racial/ethnic connotation inherent in the statement. In proceeding with the analysis, the approach was to focus only on main characters from the film. In order to be considered a "main character" in the film, a character had to have a speaking part in the film that contributed substantively to the plot of the film. For the purpose of this article, a "substantive contribution" to the plot of the film meant that the role of the character in the film contributes to the communication that the film is presenting to the

audience about the nature of race and ethnic relations in society. In all, there were 23 different main characters in the film. A summary of the race/ethnic-based behaviors and racially/ethnically stereotyped statements by the main characters is presented in the Appendix.

This article focuses attention on differences between the context within which race/ethnic-based and stereotyped behavior is presented in the film across character race/ethnicity. The analysis detects substantive differences in the race/ethnic-based behaviors and stereotypes that are present in the film. For purposes of this interpretive analysis, this paper distinguishes between race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotyped comments that occurred in three different situations: *between members of different racial and ethnic groups with disparaging connotation toward one of the characters involved (referred to as "Inter-Racial/Ethnicity")*, those that occurred *within race/ethnicity with disparaging connotation (referred to as "Intra-Racial/Ethnicity")*, and those that *provided commentary or illustration of race/ethnic relations in society (referred to as "Societal")*.

INTER-RACIAL/ETHNICITY STATEMENTS AND BEHAVIOR

In the film 10 of the 23 main characters are shown engaging in race/ethnic-based behavior or making stereotypical comments between race/ethnicity with clear disparaging connotation toward one or more of the characters in the scene. Of these characters five are White, three are Black, one was Hispanic, and one was Chinese. In total, there are 16 instances of this type of behavior in the film. In the film there is evidence of a clear pattern of differences in the presentation of this behavior across race/ethnicity of the character engaging in the disparaging behavior or making the stereotypical comment. There are clear differences in the context in which these statements and behaviors of White characters manifest themselves in comparison to those of minority characters. The race/ethnic-based conduct by White characters is presented in ways that minimize either the wrongfulness or impact of the conduct. This trend occurs through four primary methods of presentation: providing contextual and explanatory information, portraying the minority character as the initiator of the interaction, subsequent redemptory conduct by the character, and reaffirmation of the stereotype.

Contextualizing and Explaining White Prejudice

This method of minimization entails providing contextual information that explains the stereotypical behavior and statements of the White character. This method is used in the scenes involving Officer John Ryan, the outwardly racist police officer. This character is portrayed throughout the film as being racist in both his behavior and attitude. In one scene the character is shown speaking over the phone to a Black female HMO director (Shaniqua Johnson) about his father's diagnosed urinary tract infection. Officer Ryan becomes irritated and asks the woman for her name. She replies, "Shaniqua Johnson." To which the officer comments, in a blatantly racist and sarcastic tone, "Shaniqua. Big fucking surprise that is," a reference to the HMO Director's race. This comment communicates to the audience that Officer Ryan suspects that Shaniqua Johnson was African-American because her name signified this to him.

Since the character of Officer Ryan did not find it a "surprise" that he is speaking with an African-American, this interaction between these two characters can be further analyzed to understand the reasons that he reaches this conclusion. While the audience is left to judge the basis for this conclusion, the film did supply an explanation for his conclusion. In a later scene from the film, Officer Ryan states his belief that Shaniqua Johnnson was unqualified to hold her position. In a subsequent face-to-face interaction between these two characters, Officer Ryan's expresses his irritation with Shaniqua Johnson by saying, "All right. You know what I can't do? I can't look at you without thinking about the five or six more qualified White men who didn't get your job." The character Officer Ryan also is shown abusing his power and authority when he interacts with an upper-class Black couple (Cameron and Christine Thayer). The officer ran his hands up Christine Thayer's dress during a search her while her husband watches while under the control of another officer (Officer Tommy Hanson). Officer Ryan then flaunts his power by getting the husband to succumb to his authority by asking him to just give the couple a warning. Each of these instances from the movie communicates that Officer John Ryan may not be an ideal candidate to hold the position of law enforcement officer because he has stereotypical beliefs and because these beliefs impact his interactions with minority citizens.

But other scenes from the film work toward a sympathetic understanding of Officer Ryan that minimizes the officer's behavior. The film provides the viewer a built in and straightforward explanation of the officer's views and behavioral patterns. In one of the scenes with the character Shaniqua Johnson, Officer Ryan justifies his Affirmative Action reference by making the following statement:

> *Officer John Ryan*: You don't like me, that's fine. I'm a prick. My father doesn't deserve to suffer like this. He was a janitor. He struggled his whole life. Saved enough to start his own company. Twenty-three employees, all of them Black. Paid 'em equal wages when no one else was doing that. For years he worked side by side with those men, sweeping and carrying garbage. Then the city council decides to give minority-owned companies preference in city contracts. And overnight, my father loses everything. His business, his home, his wife. Everything! Not once does he blame your people. I'm not asking you to help me. I'm asking that you do this small thing for a man who lost everything so people like yourself could reap the benefits. And do you know what it's gonna cost you? Nothing. Just a flick of your pen.

This scene of the film minimizes the abhorrent conduct of Officer John Ryan by explaining his conduct and providing context to account for his racist comments and behavior. Moreover, the scene communicates the character's belief that Black people owe White people who help them a debt of gratitude. The film provides a justification to feel for the plight of Officer Ryan: Affirmative Action destroyed the life of the character's father. In a similar vein, the film takes a jab at Affirmative Action programs by providing evidence of the negative consequences of the policy; whereas no scene depicts how the program has helped minority citizens attain jobs that they are qualified to

hold. Several other different subsequent scenes of the film drive home the sympathetic tone that the audience is conditioned to feel toward Officer Ryan and his father. Two different scenes show Officer Ryan with his father suffering due to his medical condition that could have potentially addressed if the character of Shaniqua Johnson would have acted reasonably and with compassion. By providing context to explain the officer's conduct and by showing the character in humanistic frames of reference, the film communicates to the viewer that he or she should abhor the officer's conduct, but understand the sources and causes of the conduct.

Another example of how the film contextualizes and explains stereotypical attitudes and behaviors of White characters involves the storyline of Officer Tommy Hanson. Officer Hanson's depiction throughout the film is primarily that of a virtuous person and an ethical police officer. The character outwardly displays disapproval of his partner's overt racism. The character is even shown violating the "blue wall of secrecy" (Pollock, 2004) by reporting his partner's behavior to his supervisor. Additionally, the character is shown in one scene stepping into the line of fire of other officers so that he could talk with an irate Black character (Cameron Thayer) to prevent the use of deadly force against the character. But at the end of the film Officer Hanson is shown in a scene where he makes racially stereotyped judgments about one of the young Black male characters responsible for the carjackings (Peter Waters).

The character of Officer Tommy Hanson picks the young Black male up on a roadway just outside the city of Los Angeles and offers him a ride. The scene ended with Officer Hanson shooting and killing Peter Waters after a miscommunication occurs based on prejudicial assessments made by Officer Hanson. When Peter Waters went into his pocket to pull out a Saint Christopher figurine, Officer Hanson assumes that he was going after a gun (presumably because of the appearance and race his passenger), so the officer pulls his firearm and shoots him.

In this instance, police misconduct by a White officer against a Black citizen is portrayed in a manner that serves as either an excuse or justification for the officer's behavior: this type of misconduct is a result of miscommunication on the part of White officers that results partially because of the behavior of the minority citizen. This portrayal of this interaction shows the White officer as over-reacting; but this over-reaction is presented as being understandable to the audience because it is based on fear that White police officers have for Black males. Furthermore, the fear is justified for the viewer because the viewer knows the history of the character Peter Waters in the film; by this time the audience knows this character is a criminal, so the "judgments" of Officer Tommy Hanson are not inaccurate, but instead are based on very real circumstance that has been previously communicated to the audience. In addition, the audience is presented with visual evidence suggesting that the Black male is acting in a suspicious manner to the point that the suspicious behavior contributes to the White officer's misunderstanding of the interaction. When the Black male enters Officer Hanson's car, the following interaction occurs to communicate this misunderstanding to the audience.

Peter Waters: Really appreciate this.
Officer Tommy Hanson: You're welcome. So how long you been out there tonight? It's cold.
Peter Waters: Hour maybe.
Officer Tommy Hanson: Big surprise, huh?
Peter Waters: Yeah, this ain't exactly "pick up a brother" territory.
Officer Tommy Hanson: True. So where you headed?
Peter Waters: Anywhere the other side of the hill. That's some good music (referring to a country music song playing on the radio).
Officer Tommy Hanson: Mm-hmm (sarcastically).
Peter Waters: No, really. I'm startin' to understand it. Wrote me a country song myself just yesterday.
Officer Tommy Hanson: I'll bet you did (sarcastically). So what was goin' on in the Valley tonight? (looking down and noticing mud on the shoes of Peter Waters and his ripped jacket)
Peter Waters: Ice-skatin'.
Officer Tommy Hanson: Ice-skatin'.
Peter Waters: Love the ice-skatin'. When I was a kid, I always wanted to be a goalie.
Officer Tommy Hanson: Come on (sarcastically chuckling)!
Peter Waters: What, you... you think that's funny or somethin'?
Officer Tommy Hanson: I think you're having fun.
Peter Waters: Yeah. Whatever.

This dialogue is suggestive that two things are occurring. First, based on Officer Hanson's preconceived notions that young Black males are not interested in country music or ice skating, Officer Hanson is beginning to doubt the sincerity and truthfulness of Peter Waters. Second, Officer Hanson is collecting "evidence" that he uses to call the "story" of Peter Waters into question. Once again, this creates a scenario whereby the audience is prompted to provide excuses for the actions of Officer Tommy Hanson.

In the film there is also another built-in contextualized explanation for the conduct of the officer. During an earlier scene in the film involving Officer John Ryan and Officer Tommy Hanson, the character of Officer Ryan suggests that misconduct by police officers is an inevitable aspect of policing that develops in officers after they have been on the job for a while. And, given, the context of the scene (that it occurred immediately after Officer Ryan and Officer Hanson's interaction with Cameron and Christine Thayer and after Officer Tommy Hanson attempts to report the incident to a superior in the police department), the scene was construed in this analysis as providing a built-in explanation for the discriminatory behavior of Officer Ryan:

Officer Tommy Hanson: Hey. Maybe they didn't tell you, but I've been reassigned.
Officer John Ryan: Yeah, they told me. I just wanted to say, good luck and it was good ridin' with you.
Officer Tommy Hanson: You too.

Officer John Ryan: (tightly grabbing the hand of Officer Hanson) Wait till you've been on the job a few more years.
Officer Tommy Hanson: Yeah.
Officer John Ryan: Look at me, look at me. Wait till you've been doin' it a little longer. You think you know who you are, hmm? You have no idea.

This exchange communicates a common cultural understanding of police misconduct: faced with all the issues and difficult circumstances that police officers have to deal with on a day-to-day basis, their attitudes harden, and by default, they become stereotypical in their judgment and attitudes. By extension, what this dialogue suggests is that race/ethnic-based stereotypes and discrimination by police officers is an inevitable aspect of the policing profession. Thus, the film provides the audience with context and an explanation of stereotypical behavior by the White character.

Portraying the Minority in the Interaction as the Instigator

A scene from the film that involves Officer John Ryan's implied sexual assault of Christine Thayer uses victim precipitation in the interaction with police as a method of minimizing within race/ethnicity behaviors and statements with negative connotation by a White character. Prior to the implied sexual assault, Christine Thayer is shown as the instigator in her interaction with Officer Ryan:

Christine Thayer: (Stepping out of her vehicle end walking toward the officer) I told you he doesn't drink.
Officer John Ryan: Ma'am, I'm only gonna tell you one time to stay in the vehicle.
Christine Thayer: Ma'am?
Cameron Thayer: Honey, honey, I'm okay. I got this.
Christine Thayer: Don't you "ma'am" me. Who the hell do you think you're talking to?
Cameron Thayer: Look, Officer, my wife has had a couple of drinks...
Officer John Ryan: Both of you, turn around. Put your hands on top of your head and interlock your fingers.
Cameron Thayer: Wait. We're only a block away from our house.
Officer John Ryan: Hands on your head. Interlock your fingers. Hands on your head. Interlock your fingers.
Cameron Thayer: I'm a television director. Me and my wife were just coming home from an awards show.
Christine Thayer: Take your hands off him. He's done nothing wrong.
Officer John Ryan: Put your hands on top of your head, ma'am.
Cameron Thayer: Do what he says.
Christine Thayer: Fuck you!
Officer John Ryan: Put your hands...
Christine Thayer: And you keep your filthy fucking hands off me! You motherfucking pig!
Cameron Thayer: Just stop talking!
Officer John Ryan: That's quite a mouth you have. Of course you know that.

> *Christine Thayer*: Fuck you! That's what this is all about, isn't it? You thought you saw a White woman blowin' a Black man. That drove your cracker ass crazy.
> *Cameron Thayer*: Will you just shut your fucking mouth!
> *Officer John Ryan*: I'd listen to your husband, ma'am. Put your legs open.

Portraying the character of Christine Thayer in this interaction as an instigator minimizes the conduct of the officer for the viewing audience. The belligerent conduct of the Black female character, her tendency not to follow orders, and because she walks upon the officer in the scene, the officer, and the audience, is provided with circumstances that reasonably defends the decision to conduct a pat-down search of the couple. This reaffirms the notion that in interactions between Black citizens and White police officers, police officers simply respond to the demeanor of the minority citizen who instigates the negative interaction. A similar exchange occurs between police officers and the upper-class Black male character Cameron Thayer in which the Black character is also portrayed as an instigator. After police see Cameron Thayer beating Anthony (after Anthony attempted to steal his car and after Anthony called Cameron Thayer a "nigger") and then observe Cameron Thayer and Anthony jump into a vehicle and speed away, the police pursue the two Black men. The police corner the two men and order them out of the vehicle:

> *Police Officer*: Hands in plain sight! Step out of the vehicle! Hands in plain sight! Step out of the vehicle! Slowly step out of the vehicle.
> *Cameron Thayer*: Get out of my car.
> *Anthony*: You so brave, you get outta the car, man.
> *Police Officer*: Turn off the engine. Throw the keys out the window.
> *Cameron Thayer* (stepping out of the car and walking toward the police): You fucking want me? Here I am, you pig fuck!
> *Police Officer*: Lie face down on the ground. Spread your arms and legs.
> *Cameron Thayer*: No, you lie face down!
> *Police Officer*: Don't come any closer! Down on your knees!
> *Cameron Thayer*: Fuck you! What are you gonna do? Pull the fucking trigger!
> *Police Officer*: On your knees now!
> *Cameron Thayer*: You get on your knees and suck my fucking dick!
> *Police Officer*: Do I look like I'm fucking joking with you?
> *Cameron Thayer*: That's what you look like, a fucking joke to me.
> *Police Officer*: This man is making threatening gestures.
> *Cameron Thayer*: Threatening gestures? You wanna see a threatening gesture? I got a threatening gesture.

By handling police-minority citizen interactions in this way (where White officers simply respond to the behavior of minority citizens), the film is able to sidestep the broader cultural and social issues of racial discrimination and profiling by police. This method of handling police-minority citizen interaction provides a one-sided portrayal of social issues related to how race/ethnicity impacts officer judgment in the use of their

discretion. And by only depicting police abuse of authority as a response to the behavior of minority citizens, the film relieves police of any responsibility for negative outcomes.

Moreover, what was lost in the clash between Officer John Ryan and Christine Thayer is that the original justification for the stop appears highly questionable, something that is acknowledged by Officer John Ryan's partner, Officer Tommy Hanson, before the stop is made. A police dispatcher is heard reporting a stolen vehicle that matches the make, model, and color of the vehicle driven by Cameron Thayer. Officer Hanson says to Officer Ryan "That's not it. That's not the vehicle, John. The plates don't match. Nobody jacks a car and takes it to Studio City." But despite the sound logic of Officer Hanson, Officer Ryan proceeds with his interest in investigating the vehicle and its passengers by shining a mounted light into the vehicle driven by Cameron Thayer. It is this action that leads Christine Thayer suddenly appear when she removes her head from the area of her husband's lap. Officer Ryan then expresses satisfaction because he now has justification for the stop; he says "They were doin' something."

At each successive stage of the sequence of scenes involving Officer Ryan and Christine Thayer, the questionable behavior of the officer is resolved in the favor of the officer because of some action of the Black character. After the stop is initially shown as questionable, this is resolved by the fact that Christine Thayer had been performing a sexual act on her husband while he was driving. The legitimacy of the stop is further diminished by Christine Thayer's belligerent behavior. This reinforces the notion that when police officers pull over or harass a Black citizen that the actions of police are typically justified because the minority is, in the words of Officer Ryan, "doin' something" wrong.

This interpretation of what the film communicates in these two scenes is obviously just that, an interpretation, one that is open to debate. Some may take exception to this interpretation by asserting that these two characters did, indeed, engage in actions that led to the reactions of the police officers. In essence, one could argue that in both scenes, citizen characters (Christine and Cameron Thayer, respectively) fail to yield to the socially conveyed authority of the police officers in these scenes; thus, the police response is entirely reactive. But it should also be pointed out that if one chooses to make such an interpretation concerning police authority, the film is reinforcing a hierarchal system of police power and authority – one that many scholars have suggested is no longer in line with what citizens expect from agents of the criminal justice system. In essence, recent scholarship has suggested that citizens expect a more egalitarian approach to authority and power yielded by police and court officials (Buckler, Cullen & Unnever, 2007; Sherman, 2002; Tyler, 1990). Sherman (2002) also argued that the tendency for criminal justice agents to use hierarchal power and authority methods is reinforced in television programs and films that focus on criminal justice.

Redeeming Behavior

The conduct of Officer John Ryan toward the character Christine Thayer (the implied sexual assault) is also minimized in the film through a separate and distinct method. His conduct is also minimized by showing him redeeming his prior bad acts. In

the film, the day after the implied sexual assault, Christine Thayer is in a car crash in which her car is overturned on the street. By twist of fate, Officer Ryan is the officer there to give her aid. When she first recognizes the officer she becomes irate and non-cooperative, yelling, "anyone but you!" Officer Ryan is able to calm her to the point that he could provide assistance. Just as Officer Ryan is about to pull her from the car, other officers arrive and notice that the car is about to catch fire so they pull Officer Ryan from the car without her. But Officer Ryan pulls away from the officers and goes back into the car and grabs her and then pulls her to safety just as the vehicle explodes. The scene then shows the character of Christine Thayer embracing Officer Ryan and then looking back to him as she was taken by other officers to receive medical attention. This scene communicates that while White officers do sometimes engage in misconduct and abuse their authority, they also are the people who place their lives on the line to protect the public and maintain order and public safety. In this respect, the race/ethnic-based behavior of the officer is minimized by communicating that while the prior conduct of the officer is abhorrent, the officer is there for the Black citizen when she needed him.

The race/ethnic-based behavior of District Attorney Rick Cabot is also redeemed in the film. It is difficult to characterize the actions and comments of this character as race/ethnicity-based or "stereotypical" with negative connotation in a traditional sense because the statements and behavior of the character are much more ambiguous than those of many of the other characters. What can be said about the behavior of this character is that the character uses race/ethnicity in ways that helps him politically, so this behavior meets the criterion of engaging in race/ethnicity-based behavior. The manifest nature of this concern of the character is adequately illustrated by a scene from the film that occurs just after his victimization by the two Black men during the armed carjacking. The character states, "I'm the goddamn District Attorney of Los Angeles. If my car gets jacked, it's gonna make news. Fuck! Why did these guys have to be Black? I mean, why? No matter how we spin this, I'm either gonna lose the Black vote or I'm gonna lose the law-and-order vote…….If we can't duck this thing, we're gonna have to neutralize it. What we need is a picture of me pinning a medal on a Black man."

The comments of the District Attorney in the film have negative connotation as well. The statement occurs when the District Attorney is speaking with a Black assistant to the District Attorney named Karen. When the District Attorney makes this statement, his assistant sits stone-faced, showing little emotion and only provides the response of "You're worrying too much. You have a lot of support in the Black community." The major indication of tension in the scene comes from another assistant to the District Attorney (Bruce) whose facial expressions sent a message that he could not believe what he was hearing from the District Attorney. The behavior of the District Attorney is classified as disparaging because a Black person was present and because there was an implicit suggestion in the character's statement that Blacks were not capable of separating loyalty to one's race from the need to pursue offenders who engage in violent crime even when the offender is Black.

The film subtly redeems the use of race/ethnicity as a political tool by this White character. The District Attorney's office orchestrates a way for the District Attorney to

be perceived as racially neutral in his pursuit of justice and maintain the "law and order" vote while not offending the Black community. The District Attorney's office provides an honest account of the carjacking to the press, but then deflects attention from the carjacking by focusing attention on the shooting of Detective Lewis by Detective Conklin. The District Attorney's Office accomplishes this by convincing the lead detective in the case (Detective Graham Waters, an African-American) against Detective Conklin (the White detective that shot Detective Lewis) to ignore evidence suggesting that Detective Conklin may have been justified in the shooting ($300,000 found in the car driven by Detective Lewis). An assistant to the District Attorney, Jake Flanagan, is able to convince Detective Waters to play along by promising to reduce charges against the detective's brother in the armed carjacking case in which his brother was one of the perpetrators.

But the obvious misconduct by the detective and members of the District Attorney Office is redeemed in the film due to the apparent noble end result and the benefits of doing so to the African American community of Los Angeles:

> *Detective Graham Waters*: You can do this dance if you want to, but I'm willing to bet when the coroner's report comes back tomorrow it's going to say that Detective Lewis was coked out of his head.
> *Jim Ferguson (Assistant to the D.A.)*: Fucking Black people, huh?
> *Detective Graham Waters*: What did you just say?
> *Jim Ferguson (Assistant to the D.A.)*: I mean, I know all the sociological reasons why per capita eight times more Black men are incarcerated than White men. Schools are a disgrace. Lack of opportunity. Bias in the judicial system. All that stuff. All that stuff! But still, it's gotta get to you, on a gut level as a Black man, they just can't keep their hands out of the cookie jar. Of course, you and I know that's not the truth. But that's the way it always plays, doesn't it? And assholes like Lewis keep feeding the flames. It's gotta get to you.
> *Detective Graham Waters:* What did you say you did for the D.A. again?
> *Jim Ferguson (Assistant to the D.A.)*: You coach ball down in Compton. Am I right?
> *Detective Graham Waters:* Oh, please, don't do that. Don't act like you know something about me, okay?
> *Jim Ferguson (Assistant to the D.A.)*: What do you think those kids need... to make them believe, to give them hope? You think they need another drug-dealing cop or do you think they need a fallen Black hero?

In this scene, Jim Ferguson justifies the agenda of the D.A. by suggesting that the corrupt approach of the D.A.'s office is acceptable because of the benefits that will be reaped by the Black community. To Ferguson, if Blacks disproportionately commit crime, it is because of negative, crime-producing environments, and if this is the case, the people of these communities need hope, not another reinforcement of the perpetual Black stereotype. Thus, the D.A. is presented as a defender of the interests of the Black community, thereby, redeeming the "race/ethnicity as politics" flaw that he is originally depicted as possessing. Additionally, this manner of redeeming the use of race/ethnicity

as a political tool communicates the notion that the members of the Black community are not smart or adept enough to realize that Detective Lewis was just one Black man who committed crime and needed to be punished. This reinforces a belief that Blacks are not able to separate themselves from their race and want to see justice done, even in a case that involves a Black police officer that was potentially corrupt.

Reaffirmation of the Stereotype

A final method the film uses to minimize stereotypical conduct by a White character with negative connotation toward another character in the scene is reaffirmation of the stereotype. This method is used to minimize the stereotyped conduct of character Jean Cabot (wife of District Attorney Rick Cabot). This character is shown grabbing her husband's arm and pulling closer to him when she spots two young Black men walking toward her in the film. The gesture is out of perceived fear of Black men by White people. The young Black males are then shown discussing the actions of Jean Cabot. But then the film shows the two young Black males (Peter Waters and Anthony) in a manner that reinforces the stereotype of young Black males as criminal:

> *Anthony*: Wait, wait, wait. See what that woman just did? You see that?
> *Peter*: She's cold.
> *Anthony*: She got colder as soon as she saw us.
> *Peter*: Ah, come on, don't start.
> *Anthony*: Man, look around you, man. You couldn't find a Whiter, safer or better-lit part of this city right now. But yet this White woman sees two Black guys who look like UCLA students strolling down the sidewalk, and her reaction is blind fear? Look at us, dawg. Are we dressed like gangbangers? Huh? No. Do we look threatening? No. Fact – if anybody should be scared around here, it's us! We're the only two Black faces surrounded by a sea of over-caffeinated White people patrolled by the trigger-happy L.A.P.D. So you tell me. Why aren't we scared?
> *Peter*: 'Cause we got guns?
> *Anthony*: You could be right (the characters then pull out their weapons and committed an armed carjacking of Rick and Jean Cabot).

Not only did this scene reinforce the existing stereotype of the young Black male as criminal, but this approach to communicating information about racial and ethnic stereotypes also serves the function of personally excusing and justifying the original behavior of the character Jean Cabot. This justification of her behavior becomes apparent shortly after the armed carjacking during a conversation between Rick and Jean Cabot about a Hispanic locksmith who came to their home to replace the locks:

> *Jean Cabot (raising voice)*: I would like the locks changed again in the morning. And you might mention that we'd appreciate it if next time they didn't send a gang member.
> *Rick Cabot*: A gang member? You mean that kid in there?
> *Jean Cabot*: Yes, yes, yes. The guy with the shaved head, the pants around his ass, the prison tattoo.

Rick Cabot: Those are not prison tattoos.
Jean Cabot: Oh, really? And he's not gonna sell our key to one of his gangbanger friends the moment he is out our door?
Rick Cabot: We've had a tough night. It'd be best if you went upstairs...
Jean Cabot: And wait for them to break in? I just had a gun pointed in my face.
Rick Cabot: You lower your voice!
Jean Cabot: And it was my fault because I knew it was gonna happen. But if a White person sees two Black men walking towards her, and she turns and walks in the other direction, she's a racist, right? Well, I got scared and I didn't say anything. And ten seconds later I had a gun in my face! I am telling you. Your amigo in there is gonna sell our key to one of his homies. And this time it'd be really fucking great if you acted like you actually gave a shit!

So for this character, her initial reaction, to pull her husband closer in the presence of two Black men, is justified because what she "knew" was going to happen actually happened. This then allows the character to safely transpose her understanding of what just had happened with the Black men onto Daniel (the Hispanic male locksmith who was in the Cabot home replacing their door locks) because his appearance fit the qualities and appearances of the typical "gangbanger." These views of Black and Hispanic men by the character Jean Cabot went largely unexplored and unchallenged for the remainder of the film. The only change in attitude that the character later experiences was an acknowledgement that her housekeeper Maria (a Hispanic woman) is the best friend that she has after the housekeeper was the only person available, and in some ways, willing, to help her after she fell down a flight of stairs. While this is an important epiphany to have at a personal level, and one that potentially changes the characters outlook and approach to interpersonal relations, it really did not speak to, or challenge, the character's stereotypical beliefs about minority males.

A similar approach is used by a White male storeowner in the film who was selling a handgun to the Persian storeowner (Farhad Galzari) so that he could protect his store and family from would-be burglars and vandals. The character of Farhad Galzari is shown talking with his daughter (Dorri Galzari) at the counter with the White male gun store owner looking over them. The following exchange occurs:

White male gun store owner: (agitatedly and sarcastically) Yo, Osama! Plan a jihad on your own time. What do you want?
Farhad Galzari: Are you making insult at me?
White male gun store owner: Am I making insult "at" you? Is that the closest you can come to English?
Farhad Galzari: (yelling) Yes, I speak English! I am American citizen.
White male gun store owner: Oh, God, here we go.
Farhad Galzari: (yelling) I have right like you. I have right to buy gun.
White male gun store owner: (yelling) Not in my store, you don't! Andy, get him outta here now!
Dorri Galzari: Go wait in the car.
White male gun store owner: (yelling) Now. Get out!

> *Farhad Galzari*: (yelling) You're an ignorant man!
> *White male gun store owner*: (yelling) Yeah, I'm ignorant? You're liberating my country. And I'm flying 747s into your mud huts and incinerating your friends? Get the fuck out!

The gun owner then is shown in an exchange with the character Dorri Galzari (Farhad Galzari's daughter). The store owner talks down to her by making sexually based insinuations when he sarcastically uses the notion of shooting a firearm metaphorically as a reference to sex.

> *Dorri Galzari*: You can give me the gun or give me back the money. And I am really hoping for the money.
> *White male gun store owner*: What kind of ammunition do you want?
> *Dorri Galzari*: Whatever fits.
> *White male gun store owner*: We got a lot of kinds. We got long colts, short colts, bull heads, flat nose, hollow points, wide cutters, and a dozen more that'll fit any size hole. Just depends upon how much *bang* (voice infection on the word "bang") you can handle.
> *Dorri Galzari*: I'll take the ones in the red box.
> *White male gun store owner*: You know what those are?
> *Dorri Galzari*: Can I have them?

In this exchange the White gun store owner uses the events of 9/11 to justify and explain his racially/ethnically prejudicial comments. Given the nature of this exchange, and given that there is no other exchange between people of Middle Eastern decent and a White person in the film, the film is able to suggest that the source of racial/ethnicity prejudice against people of Middle Eastern descent can be simply traced to the events of 9/11. So once again, the threat (this time from people of Middle Eastern descent) is shown as being real and tangible. The only distinction between the minimization of Jean Cabot's behavior and that of the White gun store owner is the nature of the affirmed stereotype. Jean Cabot's behavior is minimized by information from the film (that the Black characters conformed to the stereotype). Whereas the source of the minimization for the White gun store owner's comment is a historical reality to which viewers are familiar.

Inter-Racial/Ethnicity Statements and Behavior by Minority Characters

Qualitative data from the film suggests that minority status characters that displayed race/ethnicity-based behaviors and stereotyped attitudes with negative connotation toward another character in the scene are not afforded the same treatment that White characters received. In this regard, the race/ethnicity-based behavior of minority characters is presented in the film as being quite arbitrary with little evidence of minimization or context. There are four Black characters, one Hispanic character, and one Chinese character that are depicted as directing behavior or statements with racially/ethnically negative connotation toward other characters in the film. There are five different instances of this type of an exchange. One exchange involves the Hispanic

detective (Maria) and the Chinese character directing racial/ethnic insults toward one another after they are involved in a car crash that occurs at the beginning of the film:

> *Police Officer*: I need to see your registration and insurance.
> *Chinese Woman*: Why? It's not my fault! It's her fault! She do this!
> *Maria (Hispanic Detective)*: My fault?
> *Police Officer*: Ma'am, you really need to wait in your vehicle.
> *Maria (Hispanic Detective)*: My fault?
> *Chinese Woman*: Stop in middle of street! Mexicans no know how to drive. She "blake" too fast.
> *Maria (Hispanic Detective)*: (sarcastically) I "blake" too fast? I "blake" too fast. I'm sorry you no see my "blake" lights.
> *Police Officer*: Ma'am.
> *Maria (Hispanic Detective)*: See, I stop when I see a long line of cars stopped in front of me. Maybe you see over steering wheel, you "blake" too!
> *Police Officer*: Ma'am!
> *Chinese Woman*: I call immigration on you! Look what you do my car.
> *Maria (Hispanic Detective)*: Officer, can you please write in your report how shocked I am to be hit by an Asian driver!

In another scene, after being rear-ended by a non-English speaking driver, Shaniqua Johnson's character says to the other driver "Aah! Oh, my God! What the hell is wrong with you? Uh-uh! Don't talk to me unless you speak American!" In another scene, the character of Graham Waters (Black Male) is shown insulting his Hispanic lover when he refers to her as "White" and then as "Mexican":

> *Graham Waters*: (speaking to his mother on the phone) No. No, he's not here, Mom. I'm not gonna go looking for him. Look, he'll be home when... Just leave it alone. Mom, I can't talk to you right now, okay? I'm having sex with a White woman. (Hanging up the phone) Okay, where were we?
> *Maria (Hispanic Detective)*: I was White, and you were about to jerk off in the shower.
> *Graham Waters*: Oh, shit! Come on. I would've said you were Mexican, but I don't think it would've pissed her off as much.
> *Maria (Hispanic Detective)*: Why do you keep everybody at a certain distance, huh? What, you start to feel something and panic?
> *Graham Waters*: Come on, Maria. You're just pissed 'cause I answered the phone.
> *Maria (Hispanic Detective)*: That's just where I begin to get pissed. I mean, really, what kind of man speaks to his mother that way?
> *Graham Waters*: Oh, this is about my mother. What do you know about my mother?
> *Maria (Hispanic Detective)*: If I was your father, I'd kick your fucking ass.
> *Graham Waters*: Okay. I was raised badly. Why don't you take your clothes off, get back into bed and teach me a lesson?

> *Maria (Hispanic Detective)*: You want a lesson? I'll give you a lesson. How 'bout a geography lesson? My father's from Puerto Rico. My mother's from El Salvador. Neither one of those is Mexico.
> *Graham Waters*: Ah. Then I guess the big mystery is who gathered all those remarkably different cultures together and taught them all how to park their cars on their lawns?

What each of these three scenes has in common is that minority characters are shown engaging in race/ethnic-based behavior and making stereotyped comments that are devoid of minimization through either of the methods the film uses to minimize behaviors and stereotyped comments of the White characters. In fact, each of these three illustrations of minority-generated race/ethnicity-based behavior and stereotyped statements with negative connotation directed at other characters in the scene are presented in very arbitrary contexts. These stereotyped judgments are presented as if to only say "members of other minority races/ethnicities engage in stereotypes too."

There are only two possible exceptions to this general trend in handling negative connotation stereotypes generated by minority characters, and both of these instances involve an upper-class minority character. Context is provided in the film to explain the behavior of Cameron and Christine Thayer following their negative altercations with the police. The film explains their behavior by suggesting that the characters continuously struggle with the notion of being Black while maintaining a largely White upper-class lifestyle. The tension that the two characters experienced in this regard is evident in a scene from the film right after the traffic stop altercation with Officer John Ryan:

> *Christine Thayer*: Do you have any idea how that felt? To have that pig's hands all over me? And you just stood there! And then you apologized to him?
> *Cameron Thayer*: What did you want me to do? Get us both shot?
> *Christine Thayer*: They were gonna shoot us on Ventura Boulevard! Pathetic.
> *Cameron Thayer*: Well, maybe you would've been satisfied with just being arrested.
> *Christine Thayer*: Oh, I get it. Much better to let him shove his hand up my crotch than get your name in the paper.
> *Cameron Thayer*: You finally got me figured out, 'cause see, that's exactly what I was worried about right there.
> *Christine Thayer*: Oh? You weren't afraid that all your good friends at the studio were gonna read about you in the morning and realize he's actually Black?
> *Cameron Thayer*: You need to calm down right now.
> *Christine Thayer*: What I need is a husband who will not just stand there while I am being molested!
> *Cameron Thayer*: They were cops for God sakes! They had guns! Maybe I should've let them arrest your ass. Sooner or later you gotta find out what it is really like to be Black.
> *Christine Thayer*: Fuck you, man. Like you know. The closest you ever came to being Black, Cameron, was watching The Cosby Show.

> *Cameron Thayer*: At least I wasn't watching it with the rest of the equestrian team.
> *Christine Thayer*: You're right, Cameron. I got a lot to learn 'cause I haven't quite learned how to shuck and jive. Let me hear it again. Thank you, mister policeman. You sure is mighty kind to us poor Black folk. You be sure to let me know next time you wanna finger-fuck my wife.

There is further illustration of this in the film when Cameron Thayer is shown reacting aggressively to being called a "nigger" and when his character is told that one of the actors under his tutelage is not acting "Black" because he was not talking "Black". In summary, when race/ethnicity-based behavior and stereotyped statements with negative connotation directed toward another person in the scene were made by White characters, the film provides a built-in method of minimizing the conduct. And each of these instances by White people are directed toward Black characters or behavior by a Black character led to the stereotype (when Jean Cabot directed race/ethnicity-based stereotyped comments toward the Hispanic locksmith, Daniel). On the other hand, when minority characters are shown making comments or engaging in behavior with negative connotation and the behavior is directed toward another character in the scene, the behavior is not minimized and is presented in a very arbitrary context. The exception to this trend is when upper-class Black characters are presented as engaging in behavior with negative connotation directed at another character. Here, the behavior is minimized by referring to an identity tension between being Black while living an upper-class (presumably White) existence. Thus, there is some indication in the film that social class is also an important factor that can explain the use of context and explanation for race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotypes.

INTRA-RACIAL/ETHNICITY STATEMENTS AND BEHAVIOR

There are three different instances in the film where a member of a minority group directs race/ethnicity-based behavior or stereotyped comments toward another member of the same minority group. In each of these instances, a Black character is shown as engaging in disparaging behavior toward another Black character or toward Blacks in general. The first instance of this occurs when the character of Detective Waters comments that Detective Conklin had "shot himself the wrong nigger" when it is discovered that the Black person that the detective had gunned down was a detective of the Hollywood division in the L.A.P.D. The character of Anthony is also shown referring to another Black character as a "nigger" when he tells Peter Waters that a character that passed by called "Mo Phat" was a "nigger" – seemingly because the passer-by character stole from Black people and not White people. The third occurrence of this is when the character of Anthony called Cameron Thayer a "nigger" as he was carjacking his Black SUV. Cameron Thayer was then shown reacting to this in an aggressive manner by physically confronting Anthony and shouting at him "Say that again! Say that again! You stupid motherfucker! Say that again, huh! Call me a nigger again!"

Each of these instances communicates different things about the use of derogatory statements within the same racial group. In the first instance, the Black character

Detective Waters seems to be placing himself in the shoes of the White character Detective Conklin and thinking about how Detective Conklin might have viewed the Black person that he had just gunned down – as a "nigger." The remaining two instances lend themselves to further analysis. Each of these two instances involves a young lower-class Black male referring to another Black person as a "nigger." In the second instance, the term is used against another lower-class Black male that the character using the statement (Anthony) regarded with contempt because he stole from Black people instead of White people, primarily because he feared White people. This suggests that the character Anthony regarded a Black person who would steal from a White person as being acceptable, but a Black person who steals from another Black person as being deserving of the term "nigger." The last instance of this appears to simply communicate the disapproval of the term that upper-class Black people hold.

COMMENTARY ON RACE/ETHNICITY RELATIONS (SOCIETAL)

Eight of the instances of race/ethnicity-based or stereotyped behaviors involve commentary between the characters about the subject of race/ethnicity. Most instances of this are rather docile in terms of the meanings being communicated. For instance, in one scene, a Persian woman whose family store is ransacked and vandalized by anti-Arab vandals is shown telling her daughter that the vandals wrote a disparaging comment about Arabs. This prompts the character to wonder "when did Persian become Arab?" In two other separate scenes the character of Christine Thayer is shown first yelling at her husband for not doing anything to protect her against Officer John Ryan because he is afraid that all of his high society friends would realize he is Black if his name appears in the paper, and then apologizing to her husband and explaining her defiant behavior by saying that she could not stand to see the officer take her husband's "dignity". In one scene Officer Tommy Hanson is shown reporting the behavior of his partner Officer John Ryan to a higher authority in the department (a Black male) who acknowledged that the L.A.P.D. was a racist organization but then suggests that to get to the position he had acquired as a Black man in the organization, one does not make waves.

But most of the discussions about race/ethnicity in the film occur between the characters Peter Waters and Anthony. But in terms of communicating the concerns about race and race relations of Black people as a population, the film did not depict much by virtue of true substance. Instead, the topics of discussion between these two characters about race and oppression in the United States contain a "ridiculous" element that was likely discarded by the typical viewer of the film because of the extreme nature of the assertions made. For instance, one discussion focuses on whether riding on a bus was oppressive:

> *Anthony*: What the hell do you think you doin' right now, man?
> *Peter Waters*: Wavin' down the bus.
> *Anthony*: Put your hand down, dawg! Are you outta your mind? You actually expect me to get on a bus?
> *Peter Waters*: No. I was hopin' we could push your car across town. You know why? 'Cause we just don't do stuff like that no more.

> *Anthony*: You have no idea, do you? You have no idea why they put them great big windows on the sides of buses, do you?
> *Peter Waters*: Why?
> *Anthony*: One reason only. To humiliate the people of color who are reduced to ridin' on 'em.
> *Peter Waters*: I didn't know that.
> *Anthony*: You could fill the Staples Center with what you don't know.

In another instance, the two men are shown discussing the oppressive nature of country and hip hop music:

> *Anthony*: Nah, nah. You wanna listen to music of the oppressor, you go right ahead, man.
> *Peter Waters*: How in the lunacy of your mind is hip-hop music of the oppressor?
> *Anthony*: Listen to it, man! "Nigger this, nigger that." You think White people go around calling each other honkies all day, man? "Hey, honky, how's business?" "Going great, cracker. We're diversifying."
> *Peter Waters*: How 'bout this, huh? Listen. You like that? Man's singin' about lynchin' niggers.
> *Anthony*: And you think there's a difference, don't you? Huh?
> *Peter Waters*: Gonna buy me a rope and lynch me a nigger.
> *Anthony*: You have absolutely no idea where hip-hop music comes from, do you?
> *Peter Waters*: I'd shoot 'em dead first but I done broke my trigger.
> *Anthony*: See, back in the 1960's we had smart, articulate Black men.
> *Peter Waters*: Gonna get out my sheet. Put my hood on my head.
> *Anthony*: Like Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver, Fred Hampton.
> *Peter Waters*: Gonna string 'em up good.
> *Anthony*: These brothers were speaking out, and people were listening!
> *Peter Waters*: Then they'll be dead
> *Anthony*: Then the FBI said, "No, we can't have that."
> Peter Waters: Home of the brave and the land of the free.
> *Anthony*: "Let's give the niggers this music by a bunch of mumbling idiots and sooner or later, they'll all copy it, and nobody will be able to understand a fucking word they say. End of problem."

So even though Black characters are at the heart of the film's commentary on race and ethnicity relations, the film depicts these discussions in a very superficial manner. Instead of dealing with issues that many Blacks and other minorities likely place at the top of their concerns about race and ethnicity relations (employment discrimination, use of force by police, and housing discrimination, to name a few), the film limits its primary communication about race relations from the African-American characters to whether various forms of popular culture are oppressive and whether riding the bus is oppressive. What the film is communicating about oppression by the young Black male characters,

that oppression exists, is minimized by the very nature and subject matter through which the message is being relayed.

DISCUSSION

Because *Crash* is a film that is viewed by many film and social commentators as dealing specifically and squarely with racial/ethnic stereotypes in society, there is an expectation that racial/ethnic stereotypes would be handled in a unique and responsible way. But the qualitative evidence in this article suggests that the discourse on stereotypes shown in the film is best categorized as being "more of the same." The film minimizes the race/ethnicity-based behavior and stereotypes of White characters while presenting race/ethnicity-based stereotypes and behavior of minorities as being quite arbitrary and devoid of context, explanation, and redemption. Moreover, the qualitative data and interpretive analysis suggests that the film degrades "oppression" discourse of Black characters. Thus, the film depicts White and minority characters differently with respect to the use of race/ethnic-based behavior and stereotyped communication. White characters that display race/ethnicity-based behavior and stereotyped statements are presented in a positive light – as being the victim of social circumstances that led them to have stereotyped and prejudicial attitudes. Minority characters, on the other hand, are shown as being criminal, as holding arbitrary stereotyped beliefs, as using derogatory statements against members of their own race, and as holding extreme views about the nature of oppression.

Given the subject matter and the apparent purpose of the film (to get people talking about racial/ ethnic stereotypes), the nature of the qualitative interpretation of the film begs the question: why? Why did a film whose producers proclaim the focus to be on the issue of racial/ethnic stereotypes[e] resort to presenting race/ethnicity in such a manner that maximized positive evaluations of majority characters while maximizing the likelihood that the oppression discourse of the film would be dismissed by the average viewer. In order to answer this question, it is necessary to consider this situation in the context of a pure market model – one that maintains that in many situations a particular mass mediated depiction will be based on marketing criteria. In this regard, one explanation is that even though the film set out to address racial/ethnic stereotypes in society, this focal issue of the film still needs to be presented to the public in a simple, straightforward way that conforms to existing and dominant frames of reference that are easy to understand from the perspective of the main and targeted viewer of the film.

A dominant frame of reference for considering the young Black inner-city male is of a deviant, a defiant, a criminal, a troublemaker, and a hood. To present young Black male characters in other frames of reference would present a barrier to the existing frame of reference that is assigned to young Black males. Similarly, to present White characters as blatantly racist without providing context, explanation, redeeming behavior, or reaffirming the stereotype that they are communicating, would be threatening to the image of White people. To present White police officers engaging in race/ethnicity-based behavior or making stereotyped statements in the absence of context to justify or explain such behavior would also be threatening to the self-image of White viewers of the

film. Furthermore, to present legitimate (i.e., non-criminal) young Black male characters engaging in discussion about racism and how they are impacted by institutionalized forms of racism would also be threatening; so the young Black male characters are shown discussing oppression in extreme terms that are easily dismissed by the audience.

These qualitative research findings have both theoretical and practical relevance. From a theoretical standpoint, the research suggests that scholars should continue to explore the more subtle forms of racial stereotypes that are depicted in film and on television. One avenue for further theoretical inquiry is the discourse and context utilized to communicate meaning behind the depiction of race-based behavior and stereotyped judgments of characters and how these vary by race of the character. From a more practical standpoint, what these findings suggest is that filmmakers should become more cognizant of their use of racial stereotypes in the production of film and televised content and endeavor to modify their approaches when presenting information to the public on both majority and minority characters.

ENDNOTE

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APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF RACE-BASED BEHAVIOR AND STEREOTYPED STATEMENTS THAT WERE DEPICTED IN THE FILM *CRASH (2005)*

Initiator of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype	Receiver of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype	Summary of the Behavior/Comment	Context of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype/How the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype was Minimized in the Film
Chinese Woman	Hispanic Female Detective (Maria)	Mexicans don't know how to drive; I will call immigration on you	Communication of a stereotype; no minimization of the stereotyped comment in the film
Hispanic Female Detective (Maria)	Chinese Woman	Maybe if you could see over the steering wheel, you "blake" too; I am shocked to be hit by an Asian driver	Communication of a stereotype; no minimization of the stereotyped comment in the film
White Male Gun Store Owner	Farhad Galzari (Persian Male Store Owner)	Osama, plan the jihad on your own time; is that the closest you can come to English?; I am flying 747s into your mud huts incinerating your friends	Communication of a stereotype; minimized by a historical reference to 9/11 that was a recent reality that the viewer is familiar with
Anthony (Young Black Male)	No One - Discussion with Peter Waters (Black Male)	We got poor service because the Black waitress sized us up and concluded that Black people do not tip	Communication of Anthony's tendency to see oppression of Blacks in most social settings; an interpretive comment about racial stereotypes in society - minimizations not applicable
Jean Cabot (White Female)	Anthony and Peter Waters (two young Black males)	Grabbed husband's arm and pulled him closer when she spotted the two Black men walking toward her	Communication of the "blind fear" that many White people have in the presence of Black men; minimized by the fact that the two Black men ended up committing a violent crime against Jean Cabot and her husband
Graham Waters (Black Male Detective)	No One - Conversation With Hispanic Female Detective (Maria)	Looks like Detective Conklin shot himself the wrong nigger	Example of Black person who uses the term "nigger"; use of a racial term that is used by a member of the racial group that the comment is meant to disparage - no minimization applicable
Jean Cabot (White Female)	Daniel (Hispanic Male Locksmith)	The gang banger in there with his prison tattoos, pants down to his ass, and the shaved head will sell our keys to his "homie" friends	Illustration of how people take experiences with people and extrapolate them to other people in a racist manner; minimized by the fact that the two Black men ended up committing crime and the character is simply using what happened in that satiation to justify her stereotyped judgment of Daniel
District Attorney Rick Cabot (White Male)	No One In Particular - Discussion With His Staff, One Of Whom Was A Black Female (Karen)	No matter how we spin the carjacking we are either going to lose the Black vote or the Law and Order vote so we must neutralize this; we need a picture of me pinning a medal on a Black man	Used to set up the notion that the DA is looking to use race as a political tool to neutralize the effect of the carjacking; minimized later in the film when Jake Flanagan suggests that the Black community is benefiting from the D.A.'s conduct because the Black community needs a fallen Black hero, not another Black drug dealer
Officer John Ryan (White Male)	Shaniqua Johnson (Black Female HMO Administrator)	Your name is Shaniqua. Big surprise that is.	Communication of a stereotype; minimized by the officer's explanation about his father and how Affirmative Action ruined his business and personal life

Initiator of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype	Receiver of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype	Summary of the Behavior/Comment	Context of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype/How the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype was Minimized in the Film
Christine Thayer (Black Female)	Officer John Ryan (White Male)	Takes exception to being called "ma'am" and yells disparaging comments at the officer, calling him a pig and a cracker	Communication of the nature of police misconduct against Blacks; behavior is slightly minimized when the officer molests her (proof that officers engage in misconduct); but Christine Thayer is presented as initiating the negative interaction (not following orders and yelling disparaging comments at officers); the minimization of her comments is reduced later in the film when the officer saves her life and her feelings toward the officer are implied to have changed
Officer John Ryan (White Male)	Cameron Thayer (Black Male) and Christine Thayer (Black Female)	Officer molests Christine Thayer and then disparages Cameron Thayer by making him ask for forgiveness from the officer	Implication is made that the officer's behavior is based on his perception of his power and authority over Blacks; the officer's behavior toward Christine Thayer is later minimized when he saves her from a burning vehicle just as it explodes; the officer's behavior is also minimized by his discussion with Officer Tommy Hanson when Officer Ryan suggests that his attitudes developed as a result of the nature of the policing career
Christine Thayer (Black Female)	No One - Discussion With Cameron Thayer (Black Male)	What I need is a husband who will stand up for me and not worry about what his high society friends think when they actually figure out that he is Black	Communication that upper-class Blacks struggle with a tension between being Black while living an existence that places them in contact most frequently with upper-class White people - interpretation of own race - no minimization is applicable
Peter Waters (Black Male)	No One - Discussion With Anthony (Black Male)	Country music is music of the oppressor; it is about lynching niggers	Communication of Black views of prejudice and stereotype in popular culture; an interpretive comment about race and society - minimizations not applicable
Anthony (Black Male)	No One - Discussion With Peter Waters (Black Male)	Hip-Hop is music of the oppressor; it is "nigger this, nigger that"; White people do not walk around all day calling one another "honky" or "cracker"; Hip-Hop is music of the oppressor because the FBI did not want smart and articulate Black role models; the FBI wanted Black role models that no one can understand (rappers and Hip-Hop artists)	Communication of Black views of prejudice and stereotype in popular culture; an interpretive comment about race and society - minimizations not applicable
Unnamed Police Administrator (Black Male)	No One - Discussion With Officer Tommy Hanson (White Male)	It is hard to get ahead in a racist organization like the L.A.P.D.; a Black man in an upper-level position can have that taken away if he rocks the boat too much	Communication of the view that the LAPD is a racist organization; an interpretive comment about race and society - minimizations not applicable
Initiator of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype	Receiver of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype	Summary of the Behavior/Comment	Context of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype/How the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype was Minimized in the Film
Detective Graham Waters (Black Male)	Hispanic Female Detective	Calls the Hispanic Detective a "White woman" then calls her a Mexican; when she voices displeasure and tries to set him straight he says "Then I guess the big mystery is who gathered all those remarkably different cultures together and taught them all how to park their cars on their lawns?"	Communication of a stereotype; no minimization of the stereotyped comment in the film

Initiator of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype	Receiver of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype	Summary of the Behavior/Comment	Context of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype/How the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype was Minimized in the Film
Anthony (Black Male)	No One - Discussion With Peter Waters (Black Male)	Calls a Black male thief that they just crossed paths with a "nigger"; draws a distinction between stealing from a White person and stealing from a Black person; Black people who steal from other Blacks do so because they fear White people	Communication of Anthony's hatred and distain for White people; no minimization of the stereotyped comment in the film; an interpretive comment about one's own race - minimizations not applicable
Anthony (Black Male)	No One - Discussion With Peter Waters (Black Male)	I am not taking the bus; the reason why they put the big windows in buses is to humiliate the people of color that are reduced to riding the bus	Communication of Anthony's tendency to see oppression of Blacks in most social settings; an interpretive comment about race and society - minimizations not applicable
White Male Movie Director	Cameron Thayer (Black Male)	Asks if Jamal (a Black actor) is seeing a speech coach because he is talking "a lot less Black lately"; says that Jamal is not supposed to be the smart one in the scene	Communication of a stereotype that Blacks are not as smart as White people; the comment is primarily used to communicate the difficulties that Cameron Thayer experiences with race identity (being Black in an upper-class environment); the comment was not minimized in the film
Officer John Ryan (White Male)	Shaniqua Johnson (Black Female HMO Administrator)	Explicitly stated his belief that Shaniqua Johnson obtained her job because of Affirmative Action; implied that there were more qualified White men	Communication of a stereotype; Minimized by the officer's explanation about his father and how Affirmative Action ruined his business and personal life
Wife of Farhad Galzari (Persian Female)	No One - Discussion With Dorri Galzari (Persian Female)	After the family store was vandalized she mentioned that the vandals wrote that they were Arab; she wonders, "when did Persian become Arab"	Communication of the ignorance of many people who hold stereotyped beliefs; an interpretive comment about race/ethnicity in society - minimizations not applicable
Christine Thayer (Black Female)	No One - Discussion With Cameron Thayer (Black Male)	She apologizes for her behavior when she and her husband was stopped by police; she says that it upset her to see the police taking away her husband's dignity	Communication that when police officers disparage upper-class Blacks it is viewed as an attack on the dignity of the Black person; an interpretive comment about one's own race - no minimization applicable
Anthony (Black Male)	No One	Anthony is shown releasing the Thai/Cambodian people after he apparently refused to sell the people to the car shop owner	Communicates that even Anthony (portrayed as a criminal car thief) has limits in terms of what he will do to earn money when he refused to sell the Thai/Cambodian people to the criminal car shop owner; the implication is made that doing so would offend the character of Anthony and reinforce the justifications for slavery

Initiator of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype	Receiver of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype	Summary of the Behavior/Comment	Context of the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype/How the Race-Based Behavior or Stereotype was Minimized in the Film
Shaniqua Johnson (Black Female)	Unidentified Character That Could Not Speak English	After a car crash she gets out of her car to confront the other driver - once she realized that the other driver could not speak English she said "Uh uh. Don't talk to me unless you speak American!"	Communicated discriminatory and rude conduct directed toward non-English speaking people; the behavior was not minimized in any way

[a] Film critics Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat wrote: In *The Cheating Culture,* David Callahan writes, "As income differences among Americans have grown larger in recent decades, so have social differences. The enduring correlation between ethnicity and income aggravates the problem, piling ethnic and cultural differences on top of class differences. Looking at each other across the chasms of class and race, many Americans see little reason to believe that they share each other's values — and little reason to trust each other." The end result of this is a divided society where the poisonous effects of intolerance and hatred manifest in everyday interactions between people. Very few filmmakers have dealt with this phenomenon and quite a few movies have even reinforced this lack of trust with their racist characters and coddling of the so-called "Winning Class. Three cheers for writer Paul Haggis, who adapted the script for *Million Dollar Baby* and is making his feature film directorial debut with *Crash.* Over the years, this Emmy-winning writer for such series as *thirtysomething, L.A. Law,* and *EZ Streets* has fined tuned his craft as evidenced in this morally rich, nuanced, and poignant drama set in Los Angeles where he has lived for more than 25 years. "My aim with this film," Haggis has written, "is to explore how intolerance is a collective problem. I did not set out to offend or ignite controversy, but to look at many different people, each with his or her unique perspective. Film enables us to walk, however briefly, in the shoes of strangers. In that sense, I hope that *Crash* succeeds not so much in pointing out differences, but in recognizing our shared humanity." We would add that the film is also about the incivility and conflict that result from living in a fear-based society, where strangers are treated as potential enemies or combatants. http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/films.php?id=9729. Film critic Ross Anthony wrote: "Crash" unabashedly takes a painful look at the dangerous jagged edge of prejudice. Within the four walls of one of the United States' largest cities (Los Angeles) the film sets spinning several independent story lines each of which display an example of cultures clashing. White, Black, Asian, Latino, Middle-Eastern -- we watch as pre-judging has very inhuman and even fatal consequences. It's rather obvious that the film is encouraging us to catch ourselves, monitor our own prejudices, temper our rush to judgment especially based on skin color. http://rossanthony.com/C/crash.shtml.

[b] Film critic Roger Ebert wrote: Not many films have the possibility of making their audiences better people. I don't expect "Crash" to work miracles, but I believe anyone seeing it is likely to be moved to have a little more sympathy for people not like themselves. The movie contains hurt, coldness and cruelty, but is it without hope? Not at all. Stand back and consider. All of these people, superficially so different, share the city and learn they share similar fears and hopes. Until several hundred years ago, most people everywhere on earth never saw anybody who didn't look like them. They were not racist because, as far as they knew, there was only one race. You have to look hard to see it, but "Crash" is a film about progress. http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050505/REVIEWS/50502001/102.

[c] Jensen and Wosnitzer acknowledge that the "central theme of the film is simple: Everyone is prejudiced - black, White, Asian, Iranian and, we assume, anyone from any other racial or ethnic group. We all carry around racial/ethnic baggage that's packed with unfair stereotypes, long-stewing grievances, raw anger, and crazy fears. Even when we think we have made progress, we find ourselves caught in frustratingly complex racial webs from which we can't seem to get untangled." But Jensen and Wosnitzer also assert that this presentation by the film obscures a fundamental point – that "this state of affairs is the product of the actions of us White people. In the modern world, White elites invented race and racism to protect their power, and White people in general have accepted the privileges they get from the system and helped maintain it. The problem doesn't spring from the individual prejudices that exist in various ways in all

groups but from White supremacy, which is expressed not only by individuals but in systemic and institutional ways." Thus, Jensen and Wosnitzer conclude that ""Crash" is White supremacist "because it minimizes the reality of White supremacy. Its faux humanism and simplistic message of tolerance directs attention away from a White-supremacist system and undermines White accountability for the maintenance of that system. We have no way of knowing whether this is the conscious intention of writer/director Paul Haggis, but it emerges as the film's dominant message." http://www.blackcommentator.com/176/176_think_crash_jensen_wosnitzer.html.

[d] Don Cheadle Quote: "These are not issues that to me are new. These are not issues that are, to me, daring and risky. Look, this is what goes down. This is how people think. This is how people talk. This is what happens when people aren't being polite. And, you know, can we be honest enough to admit that? And I guess that's what the challenge of this film is – to say 'You know you want to laugh at that. You know its wrong to laugh at that.' So, go ahead and laugh at that. And then examine – why was that funny to me? And, why was I struggling with 'is it okay to laugh?' That, to me, is the best thing that a film can do: really raise questions and make you examine your own motives." *Crash*, 2005, "Behind the Scenes."

[e] Paul Haggis Quote: "I hope they're moved. And I hope they're torn. And I hope they walk away talking and just talking to their friends. What was that about? And arguing. I remember standing outside of a movie a couple of years ago and arguing with my friends about what had happened and we just had polarized positions, I hope that's what happens here. I want to polarize people. Once you get people angry, you can get them talking and when you get them talking, you can solve problems." *Crash*, 2005, "Behind the Scenes."