
Handout for ***Felicia (1965): A Day in the Life of a Watts Teenager***

Felicia, a short film created in 1965, tells the story of a Black teenage girl (Felicia Bragg) living in the Watts community of Los Angeles, California. The filmmakers, Alan Gorg, Bob Dickson, and Trevor Greenwood, were film students attending the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). They started filming in 1963. The filmmakers spent time getting to know Felicia and her family before they began filming. They recorded Felicia's account of her life, her expectations, and her perspective on living in Watts as a high school junior. They edited the recording to provide a voice-over monologue for the film's narration. Trevor Greenwood said, "The comments were crucial in developing the structure of the film. Nothing was scripted. The comments were her own."

Questions:

1. What are Felicia's educational goals? Does she think she will be able to accomplish them?

2. The film opens with Felicia's observation, "I guess what impresses me most in other neighborhoods is a sense of space. There's nothing jammed up against anything else, and there's lots of room to breathe." Describe the images you see.

3. Review your description of the neighborhood shown in the introduction. How does Felicia's neighborhood look in comparison?

4. Who are the members of Felicia's family? How does she describe them? Do they get along with one another?

5. How does the train contribute to environmental racism in the Watts community?

6. What comments does Felicia make about her high school (Los Angeles Jordan High School)?

7. According to Felicia, what are her predominantly white peers' educational and professional aspirations across town? How do her white peers' aspirations differ from her high school peers in Watts?

8. What is Felicia's opinion of the local junkyard business? Do you agree with her? Why or why not?

9. Why does Felicia want to stay in Watts?

10. Does this film give you better insight into the Watts community before the Watts Rebellion in August 1965?
