

off the fence.

Lost Tapes, The (Series 1)

4 x 60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. Pearl Harbour

This is the story of how American went to war – told with only media available at the time it happened – the last months of 1941. We follow reports on how most Americans want nothing to do with the war raging in Europe, and how the saber rattling by the Japanese in the Pacific was ignored. Despite please from military officials in Hawaii that the U.S. Naval Base Pearl Harbor was in danger, no one paid much attention – until the early morning hours of Dec. 7, 1941. Using extremely rare recordings of live coverage of the event, to following the breaking news Stateside, to the impassioned speech of U.S. President Roosevelt proclaiming that moment “a day that will live in infamy,” The Pearl Harbor Tapes takes viewers into the story of that fateful time in a way never done before in a documentary film – in real time. We have uncovered dozens of little-known archival sources that will contribute to making this one of the defining films of the Japanese attack and its aftermath.

2. L.A. Riots

On the afternoon of April 29, 1992, the powder keg that was the city of Los Angeles, exploded. A jury in the all-white community of Simi Valley had just found four white LAPD officers not guilty in the brutal, videotaped beating of an African American taxi driver named Rodney King.

Roiling resentment against the police, which under Chief Daryl Gates had an “us against them” mentality, turned the City of Angeles into a war zone. In South Central, motorists were pulled from their vehicles and beaten. Television viewers saw one white man, Reginald Denny, pulled from his tractor trailer, beaten to a pulp and then witnessed a rioter slam a huge cinderblock into the Denny’s head while he lay helpless on the ground. The L.A. riots had begun.

For six days the city was under siege, taken over by mostly by thugs who used the King verdict as an excuse to run rampant. Stores were looted. Korean shop owners armed themselves and shot anyone who tried to storm their stores. Hundreds of fires burned for days, making L.A. resemble the oil fields of Iraq when Saddam Hussein’s fleeing troops set alight oil wells in the desert.

Police abandoned entire neighborhoods, instead trying to protect upscale enclaves like West Hollywood and Beverly Hills. Daryl Gates said during a press conference, "Let it burn." Long-standing scores between gangs, neighbors and anyone with a grudge were violently settled.

One of the more sane voices during the mayhem was King himself, who pleaded with people, "Can't we all just get along?" Media coverage of the riots was intense, both on the ground and from the air. Reporters were shot. This program uses these remarkable reports, along with police and military recordings to bring-to-life these horrific days when the residents of Los Angeles – and the national – helplessly watched America's second city lose all control.

A citywide curfew was imposed, but the violence continued. It wasn't until the National Guard arrived days later, that order was restored, with armed troops patrolling the streets, and even thousands of Guardsmen standing at parade rest along Los Angeles beaches, not allowing anyone near the water.

3. Patty Hearst

This is the story Patricia Campbell "Patty" Hearst, granddaughter of American publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst, who became known for events following her 1974 kidnapping while she was a 19-year-old student living in Berkeley, California. Hearst was abducted by a left-wing terrorist group known as the Symbionese Liberation Army. After being isolated and threatened with death, she became supportive of their cause, making propaganda announcements for them and taking part in illegal activities. 19 months after her kidnapping, by which time she was a fugitive wanted for serious crimes. She was captured and held in custody, despite speculation that her family's resources would prevent her spending time in jail. At her trial, the prosecution suggested that she had joined the Symbionese Liberation Army of her own volition, and sexual activities between her and SLA members had not amounted to rape. She was found guilty of bank robbery and sentenced to 35 years in jail. After 22 months in jail Hearst's sentence was commuted by President Jimmy Carter, and she was pardoned by President Bill Clinton in 2001.

4. Son of Sam

On July 29, 1976, 18-year-old Donna Lauria and her friend, 19-year-old Jodi Valentini, were sitting in Valentini's car just after 1 a.m. in the Pelham Bay section of the Bronx in New York. They were talking about their evening at a nearby nightclub. As Lauria open the car doo to get out, she saw a man appear from the shadows and move quickly from the car. Before she could react, the man pulled a handgun from a paper bag, crouched into a firing position, and unloads a single shot into Lauria's chest. She died instantly. He shot again, striking Valentini in the thigh – and he then fled. Valentini survived. In the hospital, she told police the shooter was a white male, about 5 foot 9, weighing 160 pounds, with short dark hair. Neighbors confirmed seeing a man matching that description earlier that evening in an unfamiliar yellow compact car.

The Son of Sam Murders had begun.