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Haunting Interruptions: Race, Infrastructural Violence, and Spatial Memory in Ferguson, Missouri, United States

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ABSTRACT

This article engages race, infrastructural violence, and spatial memory in Ferguson, Missouri—the St. Louis suburb where police killed 18-year-old Michael Brown, Jr. in August 2014. It examines Black communities' use of blockades, space-based protests, and infrastructural disruption in Ferguson before and after the teenager's execution. It argues that Black subjects deploy tactics of spatial intervention not only to claim space in Ferguson but also to haunt its geography and collective memory. I interrogate how Black people disrupt space to remember and expose the legacies of racialized violence in the local geography. These disruptive practices—what I call "haunting interruptions"—impede infrastructures to indict the racist logics undergirding (sub)urban life and to perform a public recollection of irreparable, place-based violence. Examining historical and contemporary protests in Ferguson, I showcase how Black subjects employ haunting as an essential mode of refusal and critical memory in anti-Black geographies.

1 | Introduction

On August 9, 2024, the family of Michael Brown Jr. (affectionately known as Mike Mike)[1] gathered nearly 300 community members for a march through the historically white suburbs of north St. Louis County (North County), Missouri. Held on the tenth anniversary of Mike Mike's unjust police killing, the mobile protest allowed the community to grieve his decade-long absence and indict the ongoing legacies of antiblackness in the local landscape. Demonstrators began at Normandy High School, where Mike Mike graduated on August 1, 2014. They culminated the march on Canfield Drive in southeastern Ferguson where he was killed 8 days after his commencement. Along their journey, protestors overtook the streets of North County, staging a mobile blockade (Nyers 2025). They remembered and avenged the Black teenager by disfiguring the spatial order and transgressing the rules of the road. Demonstrators impeded the movement of cars. They vexed motorists and passersby with chants, shouting, "Mike Brown means we've got to fight back" and "whose streets, our streets." The group, however, did not make appeals to local or state officials for recompense. Its immediate aims were not directed toward achieving state remedy, because there was no reparation for the theft of life. Instead, marchers blocked traffic on major county roads and disrupted the order of suburban life to deliver an urgent reminder to everyone traversing the streets: they cannot move on, nor will they ever forget.

The 4.5-mile march, symbolic of the 4.5 h state officials left Mike Mike's body on the scalding pavement, called attention to the irreparable wound caused by the beloved 18-year-old's defacement. The demonstration concluded at the apartment complex on Canfield Drive, in the exact spot where Mike Mike perished (called Ground Zero by the activist community). Here, the collective condemned the enduring realities of injustice and unfreedom. Ferguson activist and former US Congresswoman Cori Bush summarized these sentiments while addressing the solemn crowd: "There has still not been justice for this family.

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There has still not been change—not enough for Black folks to feel it."

Gathered in the "space of death" (Holland 2000), most were perhaps unaware of the tradition of critique and refusal they were extending. Nearly 50 years prior, Black tenants of the same complex congregated in a similar manner to remember state-sanctioned harms, refuse social marginality, and demand sufficient shelter. The apartments, initially constructed in 1970 for single, white adults, underwent hasty demographic change, catalyzed by a rapid influx of Black families. As white residents fled and Black tenancy expanded in the 1970s, the complex's owners neglected the project, inciting Black renters to protest conditions of indecency, police surveillance, and disrepair. Thus, the grieving community assembled to memorialize Mike Mike was situated in a historical, place-bound struggle over Ferguson's racial geography. By disrupting historically white spaces and transit infrastructures, Black demonstrators unveiled the spectral intimacies between past and present relations of power in the local built environment.

In this article, I investigate the repeated use of blockades, space-based protests, and infrastructural disruption by Black people in Ferguson. I examine the mnemonic work of these practices and argue that these spatial tactics are pursued not simply to assert rights to cities but to haunt them. Black communities employ "haunting as a spatial method" (Best and Ramírez 2021) and stage interventions in (sub)urban spaces to uncover and remember the legacies of unresolved racial injury embedded in hostile geographies. These hauntings of physical and symbolic landscapes occur through recurrent practices of interruption that demand witness to previous and ongoing harms, expose infrastructures as sites of unredressed and palimpsestic racial violence, and upend spatial hegemonies that naturalize Black suffering. These disruptive practices—what I call *haunting interruptions*—obstruct infrastructures, such as roads and highways to reveal and indict the racist logics underlying (sub)urban life. Haunting interruptions perform public refusals to forget or move past place-based violence.

In Section 2, I explicate how racialized infrastructural violence (Rodgers and O'Neill 2012) shapes the historical and contemporary geography of metropolitan St. Louis. Focusing on St. Louis city and Ferguson, I demonstrate the pivotal role of housing and transit infrastructures in fomenting uneven racial geographies and mobilities in the region. Section 3 narrows its geographic scope to southeastern Ferguson, particularly the Canfield Green Apartments (originally named The Village) where Mike Mike was tragically killed by police in 2014. It chronicles the racial history of the complex, tracing its abrupt transition from a living community for single, white adults to a residential option for Black families displaced by the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe Homes in the mid-1970s. I showcase how this demographic transformation contributes to the complex's continual production as a geography of racialized risk (Rios 2020) where infrastructural violence, suffering, and policing are expected. Section 4 theorizes haunting interruptions. In Section 5, I ground the concept through a speculative reading of a 1976 picket led by Black tenants in The Village. I draw connections between this action in the seventies and demonstrations related to Mike Mike's killing between 2014 and 2024. In each case, I find that Black subjects in Ferguson use disruption and blockage not only to demand transformations to city spaces or force state or corporate action but to remember racial suffering that is entrenched and beyond repair. I conclude by returning to the memorial march to show how haunting interruptions sustain critical place-based memory and critique unjust spatial relations across time.

2 | Infrastructural Violence: Rails, Roads, and Race-Making in Greater St. Louis

The sight of hundreds of Black pedestrians in the streets of North County would have infuriated the county's chiefly white populace in the late-19th century. For most of the region's history, white governments and private citizens thwarted Black physical mobility in areas designated as protected enclaves. But more than a century later, marching through spaces imperiled by decades of underdevelopment and white abandonment, Black protestors defied the perilous history of St. Louis and its suburbs.

St. Louis was incorporated in 1823, 3 years after Missouri's admission into the Union as a slave state. By the time of the city's formal incorporation, however, it was already a place that aroused the dreams of settlers and slaveholders. The embarkation point for the infamous Corps of Discovery Expedition led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in 1804, St. Louis was imagined as the nation's imperial seat from which Indigenous dispossession and genocide, slavery, and white freedom could be charted (Berger 2015). Lewis, Clark, and an enslaved servant named York journeyed up the Missouri River to index Native peoples, explore trade routes, and map natural landscapes. As historian Walter Johnson (2020, 18) reminds, this expedition was a "military reconnaissance operation" conceptualized by Thomas Jefferson to enumerate Indigenous life and land for the purposes of waging war and fashioning US empire.

By the mid-19th century, the gateway city emerged as one of the country's urban beacons of capitalist modernity. Allured by the West and prospects for international trade, slaveholders and agricultural settlers migrated to the region from the Upper South (Burke 2010) and conspired with politicians to bring the railroad to St. Louis. After the republic's acquisition of California and the southwestern territories following the Mexican–American War in 1848, and the "discovery" of gold in 1849, the railroad became a priority in St. Louis. Railroad proponents across Missouri fixated on the city with the intent to establish reliable transportation to the western coast and profit from imperial expansion. On the 75th anniversary of the nation's independence, a groundbreaking ceremony for Missouri's first line, the aptly named Pacific Railroad, was held in St. Louis on July 4, 1851 (Hansen et al. 2022).

Another line, the North Missouri Railroad (NMRR), was chartered in 1851 (Grant 2004). In 1853, 13 businessmen were elected to its governing board. Colonel John O'Fallon was named the company's first president. O'Fallon, the nephew and adoptee of William Clark, was a railroad magnate, US military veteran, and "likely the wealthiest man and largest slaveholder" in St. Louis at the time of his election (Ward and Schmidt 2021). He earned his fortune "through the machinations of white settler colonialism, first by supplying colonial expeditions hastened in

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large part by his uncle, William Clark, and later through investments in enslavement, land, banking, and railroads which built on these networks" (ibid.). O'Fallon's selection as the NMRR's inaugural president demonstrated how the railroad intersected with practices of Native genocide, land dispossession, and racial slavery. It also showcased the centrality of infrastructural violence to the geography of St. Louis.

The NMRR, commencing in downtown St. Louis and progressing northwesterly, also brought the town of Ferguson into being where it began as a train station. Although it was named for William B. Ferguson, an Ohioan migrant who deeded land to the NMRR for a depot in 1855, the suburban settlement had been an agricultural haven for the white, slaveholding elite. Thomas Thruston January, one of the wealthiest landowners and slaveholders in historical Ferguson, was elected Vice President of the NMRR in 1854 and supervised its Committee on Location and Construction. He successfully campaigned to route the railroad line from its terminus in St. Louis through his expansive farm at the northwestern edge of Ferguson's present city boundaries.

White settlers, like O'Fallon and January, used the railroad and other transit infrastructures to steal and decimate Indigenous land throughout St. Louis. In the 1850s, white St. Louisans began destroying sacred earthworks of the Cahokia Mounds system—the largest pre-Columbian, Native metropolis north of Mexico (National Park Service 2016). Dirt from the mounds was used to literally pave the way for the city's roads and railways. While January and other settler capitalists leveraged stolen wealth and political influence to lay iron rails across Missouri, they subjected the bondswomen and men they owned to iron instruments of torture and bondage. White residents, across class and creed, affirmed their liberal citizenship through the modern mobilities afforded by rail travel. Railways provided white settlers access to larger commodity markets, expanded their social networks, and catalyzed the development of suburban residences for families looking to escape the central city. Black inhabitants, by contrast, were immobilized by "architectures of confinement" (Shabazz 2015). Against the legal backdrop of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which mandated the capture and re-enslavement of Black escapees, freedpeople and captives alike found their movements scrutinized and derailed by the surveillance regimes of slaveholders (Berlin 1992; Browne 2015; Campbell 2012; Cresswell 2016). Thus, the color line in early St. Louis County was as entrenched and hard as the metal tracks that defined its prominence. Such hierarchical "patterns of mobility and confinement," William Conroy (2023, 1129) notes, constitute "colonial *techniques of racialization*." White society, he continues, naturalizes sharply unequal social and spatial mobilities as "both the presupposition and result of 'race' itself" (ibid.). In antebellum St. Louis and Ferguson, the advent of railway infrastructure made this technique of racialization ironclad by securing the expansion of white spatial sovereignty through the plunder of Native geographies and Black life.

In the post-emancipation period, St. Louis and its suburbs implemented modern techniques of urban planning and infrastructural development, which brought new ideas about racial difference, modernity, and power. These ideas materialized in infrastructure. By 1869, the largest Cahokian earthwork in St. Louis, known as "Big Mound," was completely destroyed and used as fill dirt for the NMRR (Cleary 2024). Railway and streetcar lines in Reconstruction-era St. Louis practiced hostility to Black riders, especially Black women travelers. Conductors routinely banished them to substandard "smoking" cars or subjected them to severe bodily injury (Belanger 2022). Throughout the late-19th and early-20th centuries, racial segregation came to dominate the spatial character of the St. Louis region.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the spatial politics of race hardened dramatically, shifting the form and demographics of American cities. Black, southern migrants moved northward to escape racial terror and test a hopeful yet discriminatory wartime labor market (Lipsitz 1995; Wilkerson 2011). Concurrently, new approaches to social and spatial organization—namely, the federal subsidization of white homeownership, government-sponsored transportation infrastructure, and surges in private real estate development—instigated the migration of the white middle class out of city centers and into the urban and suburban peripheries (Connolly 2016; DiMento and Ellis 2012; Frey 1979; Massey and Denton 1993). Federal and corporate entities like the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) provided white families low-interest loans to purchase homes or recover foreclosed properties. Black families, on the other hand, were largely barred from accessing government-backed loans and denied essential opportunities for home buying and wealth creation. HOLC employees generated reports and security maps that coded Black enclaves as unworthy of investment, which imposed devastating impacts on Black urban life in the 20th century (Faber 2020; Hillier 2003).

The HOLC residential security map for St. Louis city and its suburbs (Figure 1), published on May 15, 1937, codified inequalities in urban space and opportunity. The sections designated as precarious (in yellow and red) included areas with high concentrations of Black residents, as well as African American enclaves in St. Louis County (Kinloch, Missouri's first all-Black town, is represented in the upper right corner). The green and blue areas generally coincided with established white neighborhoods, many of which were protected by restrictive covenants. Ferguson, the lone blue region in the map's upper right corner, bordered several negatively coded zones, most notably Kinloch. HOLC's maps and appraisals of risk enshrined existing racial and spatial power relations, worsening an adverse housing landscape shaped by restrictive covenants and inequitable government policy (Hillier 2003; Rothstein 2018; Taylor 2019; Wright 2005). These geographic instruments reified decades of exclusionary urban practice and defined Black communities as worthless.

Racial discrimination in housing and employment prompted noteworthy legal challenges, but none substantively disrupted the racial and spatial status quo. In 1948, the landmark *Shelley v. Kraemer* case emerged after a white resident, citing a restrictive covenant, attempted to block a Black family from moving into a St. Louis neighborhood. The justices' opinion declared that racially restrictive covenants were not legally enforceable by the courts. The continuance, however, of covert and overt exclusionary practices, accompanied by escalations of white vigilante violence, ensured that segregation was maintained through extralegal means, such as riots and home bombings (Connolly 2016; Massey and Denton 1993; Meyer 2001;

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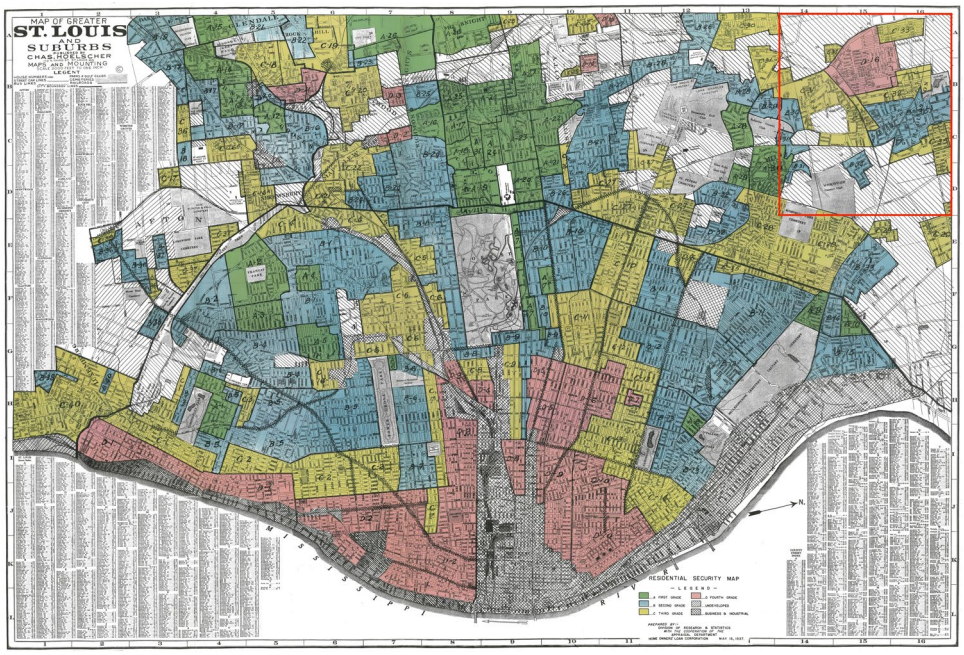

FIGURE 1 | HOLC residential security map for St. Louis City and its suburbs, 1937. The red box in the upper right corner delineates the suburb of Ferguson (coded blue), Berkeley (coded yellow), and the all-Black town of Kinloch (coded red) (map courtesy of the US National Archives).

Sides 2004; Taylor 2014). The legal ruling, and others like it, failed to disrupt the prevailing racial commonsense that Black occupancy diminished white spaces and property. Writing about *Shelley v. Kraemer* and other cases, cultural theorist Gershun Avilez (2008, 136–137) observes, "[r]egardless of whether the covenant under consideration was upheld or not, none of these cases question[ed] the validity of covenants as legal documents; all implicitly recognize[d] the White right to exclude Black people." This unquestioned white right to exclude Black people was exercised in cities across the country as developers, public agencies, and white homeowners erected segregation walls and race barriers to keep Black people out of white neighborhoods (Travieso 2020). Black urban dwellers in the United States faced constraints similar to those experienced by their diasporic counterparts in places, such as Jamaica, South Africa, and Brazil, where racist deployments of infrastructure also marginalized Black working-class communities and fortified segregated spaces (Alves 2018; Caldeira 2020; Carnegie 2016; Chari 2024).

White separatist doctrine buttressed hegemonic ideals of family, citizenship, and community, and suburbanization spatialized this structure of feeling (Jackson 1987; Lipsitz 2011; Massey and Denton 1993). White citizens increasingly defined the suburbs not simply as the favored spatial configuration in US society but as the moral ground of whiteness itself. The urban city, by contrast, was defined as the site of Black cultural pathology. Consequently, suburbs in North County adopted practices of exclusionary zoning that privileged single-family dwellings while prohibiting land use for multifamily housing and industry (Gordon 2020). Where restrictive covenants wavered due to their lack of judicial power, "[s]ubsequent policies about land use, development, and taxation sought to protect the cumulative benefits and underlying spatial and racial logics of the outlawed forms of overt discrimination" (Lipsitz 2011, 75). Much like other American suburbs, developers in St. Louis County built single-family homes, subdivisions, and shopping centers while campaigning for major road projects to connect these places together. The suburb represented the "'new city' of the postwar era" and "a vision of how community space should be constructed in an economy and society built on mass consumption" (Cohen 1996, 1052–1053).

Ferguson embodied the suburban ideal that enticed white Americans after World War II. It boasted a reputation as a sundown town (Loewen 2006; Rothstein 2014; Wright 2000) with a segregationist tradition derived from its antebellum origins. The Federal Highway Act of 1956 affirmed white suburban desires, and the construction of the I-70 and I-270 expressways in St. Louis County generated demand for housing in Ferguson. Developers built subdivisions near schools, religious institutions, and regional shopping centers, all easily accessible by motorized traffic. Meanwhile, African American migration to St. Louis city skyrocketed, leaving more Black families besieged by infrastructural encroachment, confinement, and dwindling city services (Averett 2025; Gordon 2016; Johnson 2020; Lipsitz 1995; Rios 2020). Roads, like the railroads that preceded them, reproduced a decentralized spatial order that expanded white mobilities and truncated Black space. These white suburban spatialities demonstrated what Kimari and Ernstson (2020) term the "imperial remains" of 19th century infrastructural regimes. Automotive transit closely followed the spatial contours set by imperial railroads of the antebellum and postbellum periods. Furthermore, the symbolic and cultural persistence of frontier logics, private property, and racialized mobility in the discursive life of white suburban settlement[2] showcased the haunted "residues ... of racism and [settler] colonialism" in housing and roadway infrastructure (Kimari and Ernstson 2020, 827).

After racist practice and federal sanction elevated auto-centric, racially homogenous suburbs as the normative and valued

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spatial-familial pattern, techniques of "surveillance, regulation, and incarceration [became] justified as forms of frontier defense" against supposedly deviant Black people and spaces (Lipsitz 2011, 13). White suburbanites, thus, drew on a familiar strategy in North County: the containment and policing of Black mobility through infrastructural violence. In the 1960s, for instance, Ferguson residents barricaded Suburban Avenue, a major thoroughfare running between the city and the neighboring Black town of Kinloch. A march against the race barriers, led by Kinloch residents after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968, compelled Ferguson leaders to remove the obstructions. As late as 1976, however, Ferguson considered white residents' requests to erect 10-ft high fences along Suburban Avenue. Although these proposals were never implemented, white residents' moral panics, disguised as concerns for traffic safety, repeatedly framed Black presence as a problem to be controlled.

3 | From Pruitt-Igoe to Canfield Green Apartments: A Changing-Same Racial History

On February 15, 1970, the first section of an apartment complex called "The Village" opened in southeastern Ferguson on Canfield Drive off West Florissant Avenue. Upon the complex's full completion, it encompassed 414 apartments, distributed across 18 buildings. Yet, the group of one- and two-bedroom apartments was not marketed toward families. It was billed instead as luxury apartments for single, young adults without children.

"[T]he singles complex," writes historian Matthew Lasner (2014), "emerged in response to the growing desire on the part of young unmarried adults for well-serviced, well-equipped rental housing outside of traditional urban centers." In the 1960s and 1970s, young adults questioned the cultural norms of nuclear domesticity embraced by their parents. Aided by feminist mobilizations around sex and gender equality, higher educational attainment, and increased earning power, unattached white adults rejected midcentury cultural values in favor of alternative modes of suburban living. These socioeconomic and cultural conditions inspired new desires and, hence, a new market for communal living spaces. Accordingly, many abandoned single-family homes in favor of residential options geared toward social interaction, leisure, and sexual freedom. Dubbed "swingsites for singles," these suburban apartment communities proliferated across the United States, catering to single adults eager to discard the cultural and spatial conventions of their parents (ibid.).

Singles' sites like The Village, therefore, differed from the high-rise housing projects that symbolized racial tumult and decay in the white suburban imagination. These multi-unit dwellings were "garden apartments"—low-rise, medium-density, apartment communities oriented around shared amenities and communal courtyards (Hess 2005; Horowitz 1983; Lasner 2014). In Ferguson, these residences were concentrated in the southeast away from the older, wealthier districts in the northwest. They attracted white adults seeking the comforts of suburban life with some added thrill.

The Village targeted this demographic in its design and marketing materials. The units included patios or balconies, entertainment bars, and luxury amenities, such as cocktail lounges, electric heat and air conditioning, outdoor sporting areas, coin-operated laundry, and optional maid and valet services. The property employed a full-time social director tasked with organizing events, sports tournaments, hobby groups, excursions, and live entertainment. Advertisements for the complex appealed to prospective tenants by teasing its novel utility infrastructure and sexually-open atmosphere.[3] The major I-70 and I-270 highways were easily accessible from the apartments, a point consistently emphasized in its advertisements. A regional mall called the Northland Shopping Center was located a short drive away and offered an array of retail options, services, and attractions. Stated plainly, The Village was marketed as an exclusive living community designed to meet the social, cultural, and libidinal needs of middle-class, white adults.

As The Village welcomed white singles to Ferguson, Black households in St. Louis confronted a different reality. Government-led urban renewal, though framed as a public good, ultimately destroyed Black working-class neighborhoods. Once Black families were displaced, corporate entities recaptured vacated areas and earned tax incentives to kick-start redevelopment schemes (Lang 2009). Public housing projects billed as interventions in this crisis also failed due to poor public policy and a general indifference to Black suffering. The largest and most notorious of these projects, Pruitt-Igoe, deteriorated after years of government mismanagement and public abandonment. First opened in 1954, the complex of 33 high-rise buildings foundered because of the state's inability to address the racial and class inequities affecting Pruitt-Igoe's Black residents (Bristol 1991). By 1970, Pruitt-Igoe faced imminent demolition.

Public officials, reporters, planners, and others blamed Pruitt-Igoe's breakdown on its Black tenants. The true culprits behind its ruination "would be buried, however, under the weight of a powerful narrative about the cultural dysfunctions of Black communities, dysfunctions that rendered them—in this nation's racial imaginary—the antithesis of social life and being" (Ferguson 2015, 141). The widely televised demolition of Pruitt-Igoe on April 21, 1972, provided a visual correlate to this narrative of racial dysfunction. Pruitt-Igoe's failure, while manufactured by decades of racist public and private practice, was rearticulated as evidence of Black pathology and disordered living.

The destruction of Pruitt-Igoe pushed Black families northward, making historically white North County suburbs, such as Ferguson spaces of racial contest in the 1970s (Gordon 2016). The surging demand for residential options among Black renters, coupled with new fair housing laws, forced the suburban landscape open. By the middle of the seventies, The Village apartments in Ferguson eventually opened its units to families. The combination of these factors resulted in a rapid increase in Black tenants. With sudden demographic shifts, The Village drew the ire of white suburbanites in Ferguson and nearby Jennings. Almost immediately, the complex became burdened

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by absentee owners, infrastructural neglect, overcrowding, and rising rents. By 1975, just 5 years after its initial opening, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* described The Village as "an apartment complex on the city's north side that is experiencing an abrupt racial change" and "the scene of frequent police action" (St. Louis Post-Dispatch 1975).

As The Village became predominantly Black, its quality of amenity changed drastically. The physical condition of the apartments declined. Where advertisements flaunted the complex's design and infrastructure several years before, Black residents now complained of "'deplorable conditions' in the 400 garden apartments," including roach infestations, potholes, poor landscaping, aging paint, and faulty plumbing (St. Louis Post-Dispatch 1976). The project's recreational spaces (e.g., tennis courts, golf course, clubhouse, and swimming pool), pillars of its early fanfare, waned as Black tenancy hastened. The swift deterioration of the complex demonstrated Rodgers and O'Neill's (2012, 405) assertion that "structural forms of violence often flow through material infrastructural forms" and "remind us that social suffering is often experienced in material terms." The Village's devolution was further exacerbated by violent policing—a political reality that persists in the complex today.

In 1977, The Village was rebranded as the Canfield Green Apartments. This new moniker sought to recover the project's garden apartment principles and restore it as a place of dignity and value. But the presence of Black residents in Ferguson muddied the municipality's racist distinctions between urban (Black) space that is violable and suburban (white) space that is defensible (Rios 2020). Black residents in The Village/Canfield Green Apartments confronted conditions similar to those at Pruitt-Igoe, revealing a regional tradition of wielding infrastructure to define the "proper" place of Blackness. This tradition endures in the subjugation of the complex's residents through racist discourse and geographic containment. In 1979, the Missouri Court of Appeals permitted the municipality of Jennings to install road barricades on two residential streets, Ellison and Clarion Drives, located in a subdivision adjacent to the complex. The barriers prevented Black motorists living in Canfield Green from driving through the subdivision (*Jones v. City of Jennings* 1979). Thirty-five years later, Darren Wilson would use his police vehicle as a barricade to stop Mike Mike and his friend from walking down Canfield Drive. Shortly after, Wilson fatally shot the fleeing teenager.

4 | Theorizing Haunting Interruptions

Palimpsests of racial and spatial violence are hidden beneath the presumed neutrality of infrastructure and geographic space. Scholars of Black Geographies have discussed how approaching geographies as static misreads how space is produced and disappears the operations and contestations of power intrinsic to the places we inhabit (Alves 2014; Gilmore 2007; Hawthorne 2019; Lewis 2022; McKittrick and Woods 2007; Summers and Fields 2024; Williams 2021). Katherine McKittrick (2006, xi) explains that "[g]eography's discursive attachment to stasis and physicality, the idea that space 'just is,' and that space and place are merely containers for human complexities and social relations, is terribly seductive: that which 'just is' not only anchors our selfhood and feet to the ground, it seemingly calibrates and normalizes where, and therefore who, we are." Said differently, the taken-for-grantedness of space reifies the supposed givenness of race and racial hierarchy. McKittrick cautions against spatial analyses that "fall back on seemingly predetermined stabilities, such as boundaries, color-lines, 'proper' places, fixed and settled infrastructures and streets, oceanic containers" (ibid.).

Actions taken by Black communities to force a different reading and memory of place unsettle the alleged normalcy of abusive geographies. These recurrent efforts refute claims of geographic neutrality and haunt sociospatial formations that conceal and sustain racial suffering. Social theorist Avery Gordon (2008) writes that haunting uncovers obscured, unredressed, and ongoing social violence. It is "one way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life" (Gordon 2008, xvi). Best and Ramírez (2021) extend this formulation, suggesting that haunting can illuminate how racialized and gendered property logics underwrite urban geographies, even as built environments change over time. Haunting becomes a spatial method and "mode of refusing displacement, banishment, and archival erasure" (Best and Ramírez 2021, 1045).

Building on this scholarship, I theorize haunting interruptions as blockades and other modes of space-based protest that intervene in the naturalization and misremembering of racial geographies. They introduce repeated and provisional irruptions of critical spatial memory into the mundane order of cities, "mark[ing] the slippages and disruptions that diverse formations of violence—frequently in process, durational, undisclosed, or unknown—imbue in everyday life" (Mitamura and Larasati 2025, 2). Where scholars have explored the spatial dimensions of haunting through embodied performance (Best and Ramírez 2021), gravestone murals (Okechukwu 2022), and archives (Percel 2024), I offer this concept to consider how Black subjects effect hauntings through practices of interruption that re-present the built environment as always in flux. These practices excavate and denaturalize unredressed racial injury embedded in unjust spatial arrangements.

My conceptualization of haunting interruptions builds on the literature exploring blockades and other forms of spatial intervention as disruptions of racial-capitalist and settler-colonial violence (Blomley 1996; Bosworth and Chua 2023; Boyce et al. 2019; Coulthard 2014; Estes 2019; Maharawal 2023; Woznicki and Cowen 2017). As forms of spatial protest that disrupt movement, haunting interruptions exemplify Peter Nyers's (2025, 120) formulation of blockades as "brake[s] in a society that privileges motion and mobility." Similarly, haunting interruptions are deployed to decelerate the violence of carceral geographies and "register the injustices of the contemporary racial capitalist order" (Chua and Bosworth 2023, 1302). Beyond their political exigencies, haunting interruptions also produce new political solidarities and social relations. They reflect Sasha Davis' (2024, 1390) claim that "people engaging in blockades … are not just attempting to block something, but attempting to *reorient* social relations and material circulations within a place and across space." Indeed, haunting interruptions seek to reorient the physical and memory landscape of (sub)urban geographies, using infrastructural stoppage to create openings

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for grief and suffering to be publicly acknowledged. To borrow from Nyers (2025, 119) again, haunting interruptions engender "subversive (mis)usages of transit infrastructure" that "have the effect of revealing forgotten truths, of allowing things that were un-seen to be seen."

Haunting interruptions extend the literature on blockades in at least two ways. First, the concept attends to the discursive dimensions of blockade activity. Haunting interruptions do not only entail territorial acts that interrupt physical circuits of capital; they also encompass *discursive* acts that impede the unfettered movement of hegemonic discourse. The memorial march in North County, for instance, involved the blockading of suburban streets. Crucially, the mobile demonstration also effected a *discursive blockade* in the suburbs' sonic and mnemonic geographies, "marking the landscape with signs of death and grief" and "bring[ing] to consciousness and signification spaces and places that might otherwise be perceived as death neutral or untouched by death" (Gibson 2011, 147).

Secondly, haunting interruptions are not reducible to calls for political change or acts seeking state or corporate intervention. Charmaine Chua and Kai Bosworth (2023, 1303) write that "a core feature of the blockade is the *politicisation of interruption* to leverage demands on a state and/or capitalist target." By contrast, haunting interruptions use blockades and other forms of infrastructural disruption to incite confrontations around memory and social injury that are *irremediable*. While they may include demands for recompense, their specific function is to indict violence for which repair is impossible. Haunting interruptions, therefore, exceed struggles for social and civic inclusion, political recognition, or liberal justice. They are generative refusals (Chua and Bosworth 2023; Simpson 2017) of the existing spatial order that bear witness to a cumulative injustice that is ongoing and beyond state remedy. The ongoingness and irreparability of this harm means that the desire and need for interruption never dissipate; interruption is literally and figuratively *unyielding*. As Tuck and Ree (2016, 642) suggest, "[h]aunting lies precisely in its refusal to stop" and "this refusal to stop is its own form of resolving."

5 | Visualizing Haunting Interruptions

From the 1970s to the present, Black demonstrators repeatedly staged haunting interruptions across Ferguson. In the seventies, when The Village hemorrhaged white lessees and admitted Black renters in its ranks, occupants formed a representative body called the Village Tenant Association to bolster resident advocacy. The association organized daily pickets of The Village's management office to disrupt the company's administrative functions and protest its gross negligence of the apartments. As this page from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* demonstrates (Figure 2), one picketer drew on the visual and political memory of Pruitt-Igoe during her protest. An image on the page showed a Black female protestor, Mrs. Joann Richard, standing outside of the manager's office and holding a sign. The placard read, "The Village Ferguson's Pruitt-Igoe" in large, block lettering. Richard was a former tenant in the undermaintained Vaughn Towers high-rise complex located near

north/west

20

ST LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1976
ONE OF TWO SECTIONS 1-2N/W

Housing Standards Approved After Changes In Ferguson

The Ferguson City Council has given final approval to a minimum housing standards code including many revisions suggested by Councilman Carl Kersting.

City Manager James D. Arnold said Kersting had given him a list of some 45 points on which Kersting felt that there should be some change.

The code, which will require owners to put property in good condition before it is sold or rented, has been on the council's agenda for about three years.

An occupancy permit will be required for those buying or renting homes or apartments.

Mayor Charles Grimm explained that this would help eliminate such problems as those being experienced by the residents of The Village, an apartment complex near the Northland Shopping Center.

Residents have complained of poor maintenance conditions kept by the project's absentee landlord, a Florida management firm.

City standards would have to be met before the apartments could be rented.

The changes most frequently suggested by Kersting involved the use of the words "adequate and appropriate". In several instances the council agreed to remove these words.

Many residents who attended the meeting Tuesday night spoke in favor of the ordinance suggesting that it was the only way to curb blight in the city.

After the insistance of Kersting and fellow councilmen Andrew F. Thurmond and Douglas Mussell, the ordinance will be on the ballot for a popular vote on November 2.

Mayor Charles Grimm said that he has no doubt that the minimum housing standards ordinance will be unanimously approved by Ferguson voters who have come to see the need for such legislation.

Produce Stand Zoning Cleared

John and Patsy Smith's Produce Market, at 10537 Lackland Road in north St. Louis County, should be back in business soon. The St. Louis County Planning Commission has recommended approval of the Smiths' request to rezone the property for combined residential and commercial use.

The Smiths bought the half-acre commercial tract last June, planning to build a home on part of it and operate a seasonal produce stand on the other half. After operating the stand for two months, they were forced to shut down because the tract was zoned for highway service types of business, not retail commercial use.

The Smiths will be required to donate additional easement for the eventual widening and improvement of Lackland Road by the County Highway Department, but will not be required to pay any part of the widening cost. The commission's recommendation will be sent to the County Council for final action.

The commission voted to deny a request for planned commercial zoning for a small tract on the west side of Lindbergh Boulevard, south of Inverness Lane. Ed Twenton, the property owner, had proposed combining a first floor office equipment sales and service office with two apartments on the second floor. The tract, presently zoned residential, is in a subdivision.

Residents of the subdivision had opposed the rezoning on the ground that the trust indentures of the subdivision prohibited any such commercial operations. Planning director John R. Baggs said that although the county is not legally bound to honor such private restrictions, the development as presented was too intense a use for the tract in question. He said, however, that he thought the tract was not suitable for single-family housing.

The commission approved a permit for the Mars Oil Co. to remodel its present station at 9884 Halls Ferry Road and convert it to a self-service operation.

community

towns

FLORISSANT Mayor James J. Eagan has come out in strong support of the proposed state amendment to eliminate the sales tax on food and drugs, which will be on the Nov. 2 ballot.

THE ST. JOHN CITY COUNCIL has postponed action on a five per cent across-the-board pay

schools

THE RITENOUR SCHOOL BOARD has agreed to sell the school district's warehouse at 2700 Woodson Road for $52,500. The district will convert the high school garage into a new warehouse at an estimated cost of $20,500. By selling the old warehouse, the district expects to save $7500 a year in operating costs.

MISMANAGEMENT PROBLEM: Mrs. Joann Richard, a tenant at the Village Apartments in Ferguson, picketing the manager's office to draw attention to what she called "deplorable conditions" in the 400-unit complex. (Post-Dispatch Photo)

Ferguson Apartment Residents Claim Complex Is Deteriorating

Some tenants at the Village Apartments in Ferguson have begun daily picketing of the manager's office in an effort to dramatize what they called "deplorable conditions" in the 400 garden apartments.

The 72-acre complex, containing 35 buildings, is on Canfield Drive off West Florissant Avenue, three blocks north of Northland Shopping Center. In a move to better represent themselves before the owners of the complex, the protesters have formed a group called the Village Tenant Association.

The group, headed by Lavoy Reed, charges that the management has failed to keep up the complex because more blocks have moved into it.

The group says some of the apartments are infested with roaches and that the management has failed to do anything about it.

The group alleges that the holes in the parking lots have not been repaired, that the lawns have not been maintained properly, that the clubhouse has not been kept open year round, that some of the apartments have not been painted since the opening of the complex and that the stairways have not been painted for quite some time.

In a list of demands presented to Arlen Realty Management, Inc., owner of the complex, the group says the number of residents in each apartment should be limited. There are one- and two-bedroom apartments.

Reed said that the management has

See VILLAGE, Page 2N-W

FIGURE 2 | Article discussing poor conditions in The Village. Joann Richard, a Black tenant, is pictured holding a sign that says: "The Village Ferguson's Pruitt-Igoe." The story ran in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on September 16, 1976 (used here with permission; approved excerpts © September 16, 1976, St. Louis Post Dispatch).

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Pruitt-Igoe but moved to The Village for a better residential experience. She disclosed, however, that "the apartments [in The Village] were well kept when the population was predominantly white … [n]ow that they have more blacks … they are going to let it go down" (St. Louis Post-Dispatch 1976). In her protest and commentary, I assert that Richard critiqued a discursive regime that marked (and marks) white subjects as deserving of amenity and abundant life and Black subjects as deserving of disrepair and premature death. She articulated this indictment through an engagement with the figure of Pruitt-Igoe. Roderick Ferguson (2015, 141–142) writes that "Pruitt-Igoe is the symbol of an affective history in which blackness is always and already understood as a candidate for social and actual death, a history in which whiteness is socialized to maintain its independence at whatever cost." I read Richard's picket as a rejection of this history and a rebuke of the "deplorable conditions" that circumscribed Black tenancy in Ferguson and greater St. Louis. By situating The Village within the representational memory and affective history of Pruitt-Igoe, Richard indirectly disrupted racist myths that framed Pruitt-Igoe's downfall as a consequence of Black cultural pathology. Her sign functioned as a mnemonic device, merging the critical spatial memory of Pruitt-Igoe with the current predicament of Black residents in The Village. In addition to the *spatial* intervention produced by the tenants' picket, I contend that Richard effected a *discursive* interruption of the prevailing cultural traffic pertaining to race, space, and power in the region. Richard's statements rearticulated The Village's and Pruitt-Igoe's problems as consequences of racial abandonment and corporate malpractice rather than the fallacious and given explanation of Black lowliness. While Richard's protest was addressed to the owners of the apartment complex and municipal leaders in Ferguson, her political act, I argue, exceeded the plea for corporate and municipal action. Richard also haunted the regional spatial order by tying geographies of Black suffering and infrastructural violence in urban St. Louis together with those in suburban Ferguson. Richard mobilized the figure of Pruitt-Igoe, and its attendant cultural politics of race and infrastructure, to demonstrate the recursiveness of Black displacement and spatial subjection throughout greater St. Louis. She conjured Pruitt-Igoe out from ruin to reveal its ghastly afterlife and afterimage, replicated in the suburban context.

My contention here is that Richard refused to forget or move past the infrastructural violence, the decay, the abandonment, the class exploitation, and the social suffering imposed onto Black life in Pruitt-Igoe. Where hegemonic thought framed Blackness as the carrier of dysfunction, Richard offered a counternarrative. Her sign ("The Village Ferguson's Pruitt-Igoe") turned the city of Ferguson into a possessive noun with ownership of and responsibility for the strife and decay endured by the Village's

FIGURE 3 | Demonstrators occupy South Florissant Road, the main thoroughfare in Ferguson's downtown district, during the "We Can't Stop Now" National March in Ferguson on March 21, 2015. Michael Brown Sr. and activist Anthony Shahid lead the blockade, carrying a coffin to symbolize Mike Mike's assassination by Ferguson police (used here with permission; photograph courtesy of Richard Reilly).

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Black tenants. The subtle statement defined Ferguson, and the white spatial imagination upholding the county's uneven geography, as the makers of urban failure, not the Black body. I argue that Richard's protest and sign, beyond calling for material change, were meant to haunt Ferguson. The phrase was not written as a question nor was it structured to solicit argument or resolution. It was presented as a statement of fact—a truth that remembers, demands witness to, and testifies against the indefensible and ongoing trouncing of Black lives and spaces. Richard's obstructive acts delivered an epistemological critique of racialized space. She did not simply claim and transform space through her disruptive picket; she haunted it by publicly performing a "very particular way of knowing what has happened, and is happening" (Gordon 2008, 8).

Public, political performances that bear witness to "what has happened and is happening" are what connect Joann Richard and her comrades to present-day activists who rose to defend the memory of a slain teenager in 2014. Steps away from where Joann Richard launched her haunting picket in 1976 lies the sullied concrete where the beloved teenager perished almost 40 years later. The *Post-Dispatch*'s designation of the complex as a scene of frequent police action in 1975 foreshadowed the lethal act and turbulent struggles that placed the complex on the world stage in August 2014. For nearly a year after Mike Mike's killing, residents and organizers constructed and defended a makeshift memorial of flowers, mementos, candles, stuffed animals, and traffic cones on the blood-stained street. Everyday Black people interrupted the quietude of suburban life in Ferguson to remember Mike Mike. They performed the sonic registers of Black grief (e.g., chanting, wailing) and vocalized what Best and Hartman (2005) call "black noise." As protestors voiced "political aspirations that are inaudible and illegible within the prevailing formulas of political rationality" (Best and Hartman 2005, 9), they turned the whiter, wealthier, and quieter streets in northwest Ferguson into raucous, pedestrian funeral processions (Figure 3).

Demonstrators shut down local businesses that criminalized and exploited Black residents (Figure 4). They shut down Ferguson roads paved with monies collected from the gratuitous policing of Black mobility (Figure 5). They disrupted movement and commerce, turning streets into stages to enact grief and alternative forms of sociality (Bjork-James 2020; Chua and Bosworth 2023; Klanderud 2023). Black pedestrians defied the Manner of Walking in Roadway statute in Ferguson that inflated municipal revenues and left many Black residents in a cycle of indebtedness, immobility, and manufactured criminality (Derickson 2016). Defined in section 44–344(a) of Ferguson's code of ordinances, the statute declares that "[w]here sidewalks are provided, it shall be unlawful for any pedestrian to walk along and upon an adjacent roadway." The US Department of Justice's (2015) investigation of the Ferguson Police Department found that, between 2011 and 2013, this law was almost exclusively enforced against Black residents. Despite being 67% of the population, the report informs, Black residents accounted for 95% of all Manner of Walking in Roadway charges. Accordingly, protestors placed their bodies in front of moving cars to challenge the regimes of racialized mobility, infrastructural violence, and capitalist expropriation that haunted the suburban geography from the antebellum period to the present. As Ferguson activist, David Whitt, put it: "we was occupying the streets that we paid for" (Folayan and Davis 2017).

During the 10-year memorial march for Mike Mike in August 2024, demonstrators refused to stop for vehicles, upending the cultural and spatial supremacy afforded to automobiles in US

FIGURE 4 | Protestor demonstrates outside of Ferguson Market and Liquor (now Elite Market and Grill) on West Florissant Avenue in August 2018. The convenience store's owner falsely accused Mike Mike of theft and released video footage used as justification for Officer Wilson's initial stop and eventual murder of the teenager (used here with permission; photograph courtesy of Richard Reilly).

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FIGURE 5 | Protestors blockade South Florissant Road near the Ferguson Police Department in August 2019, 5 years after Mike Mike's extrajudicial killing (used here with permission; photograph courtesy of Richard Reilly).

cities (Savitzky and Cidell 2023) and avenging the teenager's fatal immobilization. In a local context where municipal leaders spent 10 years trying to forget Mike Mike and erase his defilement, the Brown family refused to stop haunting Ferguson with his memory. The family placed four billboards throughout Ferguson and wider North County, each bearing a large image of Mike Mike. Two were positioned along major thoroughfares at the western and eastern boundaries of Ferguson. One billboard overlooked the I-70 expressway, addressing commuters traveling through North County. A final signboard stood in Ferguson's downtown district, directly facing the Ferguson Police Department responsible for Mike Mike's murder. This placard (Figure 6) depicted Mike Mike dressed in his cap and gown, surrounded by an anonymous crowd. The streets "Canfield Dr." and "W. Florissant" were distinctly visible, calling attention to the exact spaces where Mike Mike was gunned down and where an uprising emerged in his wake. In all, the billboard sought to trouble current members of Ferguson's police force with the bloodied memory of a young, prospering Black man executed by one of their former officers. During the memorial march, the group paused at one billboard near West Florissant Avenue and Canfield Drive. Standing beneath the large sign, Cal D. Brown, Mike Mike's mother-in-love, dear friend, and visionary behind the billboard memorials, communicated a haunting reminder to the gathered crowd and delayed drivers:

> There are, strategically, billboards all over the city of Ferguson. Mike Brown Jr. said "the world gone know his name." And I strategically put [them] here in Ferguson, because every day, when they leave their homes and they go to work, they should be able to see the face of a young man that they took way too soon. *They need to understand that our family will not, will not stop.*
>
> (emphasis added)

Hauntings, writes Aida Mariam Davis (2024, 37), occasion the "consistent reappearances of ghosts and they are unavoidable." Cal D. Brown's remarks suggested that the intent behind the billboard campaign was to make the terrible reality of Mike Mike's death unavoidable in the everyday lives of Ferguson residents. The billboards haunted the city's collective memory and interrupted its tendency toward forgetfulness and erasure by making Mike Mike's damning specter a part of drivers' daily commutes. In doing so, the billboards impeded oppressive state forces that

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FIGURE 6 | Billboard advertising the 10th Annual Michael Brown Memorial Weekend in Ferguson in August 2024. The placard features Mike Mike's graduation photograph, as well as the street intersections where he was assassinated. The Brown family deliberately placed this billboard across from the Ferguson Police Department (photograph by author).

FIGURE 7 | Barricade placed on August 4, 2024, at Mike Mike's memorial on Canfield Drive. The barriers blocked vehicles from driving past the memorial site (photograph by author).

drive what Judith Butler (2015) calls the "differential distribution of public grieving." In the face of continued municipal efforts "to regulate and control who will be publicly grievable and who will not" (ibid.), the billboards, physical blockades, and boycotts represent open acts of "rebellious mourning" (Milstein 2017) that affirm the undeniable value of Mike Mike's life.

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FIGURE 8 | Activists rebuild a street memorial in Mike Mike's honor every August. On the tenth anniversary of his killing, community members placed 100 fists alongside the memorial, each bearing the name of a person murdered by police (used here with permission; photograph courtesy of Richard Reilly).

Haunting interruptions such as these abound in historical and contemporary space-based actions that reject geographies of racial domination and assert Black people's right to life, shelter, and bodily autonomy. Ferguson, from the railroad depot to the apartment complex, has long practiced a brutal spatial logic. This explains why the suburban city endures as a crucible of racial and political contest, and more specifically, why its built and memory landscapes remain turbulent sites of racial struggle. Black residents and community members in Ferguson, past and present, have endured incessant threats to and outright denials of their spatial sovereignty. Yet, they have refused annihilation by haunting anti-Black geographies and sustaining critical spatial memory.

6 | Conclusion

Days before the memorial march on August 9, 2024, Black folks in Ferguson gathered on Canfield Drive, outside of the storied apartment complex. They convened mere yards away from the site where Joann Richard had launched her protest five decades before. The group also stood in the exact place where, in 2014, Mike Mike's body lay sullied and neglected for more than 4 h. Within this palimpsest of violence and vigilance, attendees placed road barricades at both ends of the memorial site (Figure 7). This action continued a decade-old ritual of appropriating road barriers—the infrastructural devices historically used to confine Black life in Ferguson—toward contrary ends. Activists used the barriers to prohibit vehicular traffic on Canfield, interrupting the hegemonic and normative functions of the road to make space for communal and private grief.

When the march occurred days later, the mournful crowd culminated its wayward procession through the suburbs on the blocked-off street. After walking past Ellison and Clarion Drives (the two streets white residents closed off to Black motorists in 1979), participants laid 1000 royal blue roses in the street, each flower adorning the footsteps Mike Mike took before his fatal encounter with Darren Wilson. Blue, Mike Mike's favorite color, embellished the black road; the vibrant petals formed a sapphire trail leading up to the rectangle of asphalt where he expired. Along the same sidewalks that Wilson sought to forcibly consign Mike Mike and his companion, activists hammered 100 wooden fists into the buffer zones facing the street, each bearing the name of a person killed by police (Figure 8). The memorial did more than simply remember Mike Mike's death; it interrupted and appropriated infrastructure—the streets, structures, signs, and sidewalks—to expose the irreparable and ongoing injury of antiblackness. By making death and suffering visible on Canfield, community members commanded observance of the always too many Black lives subjected to geographies of captivity and death. They insisted on the grievability of Black life (Butler 2015), transforming the built environment to show just how deeply their lives matter(ed).

These disruptions of historically white space, performances of collective grief, and blockades of infrastructure exemplify the power of haunting interruptions. From Joann Richard's 1976 picket to the space-based interventions staged in the wake (Sharpe 2016) of Mike Mike's execution, these disruptive acts evince an oppositional geographic consciousness that undermines the spatial amnesia intrinsic to (sub)urban spaces. These acts showcase the insurgent political force of spatial memory, especially when mobilized in social and geographic contexts where compounding racial and infrastructural violence makes repair impossible or structurally insufficient. Haunting interruptions, because they unfold "squarely in the path of the state's violence tendencies … create numerous outlets for the expression of [collective] pain and rage" (Hart 2017, 16).

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Infrastructures in Ferguson and beyond have concretized and obscured recurrent social injuries that articulate Black life as terminally out-of-place and subject to containment, disrepair, and death. Haunting interruptions, in turn, obstruct infrastructural orderings and cultural traffics that produce Black bodies, spaces, and mobilities as violable. They reveal the historical ghosts of antiblackness and their geographic permutations in everyday life.

Among its many articulations and intensities, antiblackness is an assault on space and memory. It attempts to obliterate Black geographies, epistemologies, and lifeworlds by introducing pain and deadliness large enough to devastate our capacity to remember. Yet haunting interruptions exemplify a rebuke of forgetfulness. In Ferguson and elsewhere, Black people transform their precarious or negated rights to cities into durable imperatives to remember, even when memory hurts.[4] The significance of these radical interventions in space "lies not in the[ir] ability to overcome this condition or provide remedy but in creating a context for the collective enunciation of this pain" (Hartman 1997, 51). In the face of racial banishment, erasure, and domination, Black people in Ferguson continue to respond: we are still here, we reject what is happening now, and we will never forget what you did.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

Endnotes

[1] In her memoir, *Tell the Truth and Shame the Devil: The Life, Legacy, and Love of My Son Michael Brown*, McSpadden and LeFlore (2016, 4) write: "When Mike Mike was born, he was adored, doted on, and loved by me and his daddy, my siblings, and his grandparents on both sides, who helped with his rearing. He was our beautiful, unplanned surprise—my first son, a first grandson, and the first nephew in my family. And then, one day our Mike Mike was shot and killed by a police officer on Canfield Drive in Ferguson, Missouri, and suddenly his name was being spoken everywhere: Mike Brown Jr., Michael Brown, or just Brown ... but never Mike Mike, never our family's name for him, the name that marked him as special to us and those who knew him for real." Heeding his mother's words, I use "Mike Mike" throughout this article. This is a deliberate choice to honor how his family and community affectionately call(ed) on him. This descriptive shift counters the racial hegemonies and politics of naming that attempt to further dislocate victims of lethal police violence from the communal relations and kinship structures in which they are embedded. By using Mike Mike, I hope to reiterate the fullness of his life, to resist reducing his livingness to the fatal event that punctuated his physical existence, and to amplify the truth that he was and remains special and worthy of love.

[2] A representative example of this can be found in a 1955 advertisement for the Northland Hills Subdivision in southeastern Ferguson. To appeal to prospective homebuyers, the developer, Schuermann Building and Realty Company, invokes the Oklahoma Land Run of 1889—the government-sanctioned land rush resulting in the capture of nearly 2 million acres of Native land by white settlers in Oklahoma. The ad provides details about the subdivision's features and location; however, it also includes a cartoonish illustration of more than a dozen late-19th century settlers traveling via horse drawn carriage toward a modern single-family home. The drawing depicts a hand firing a smoking gun to commence the speedy travelers toward the brick ranch house. Just below the rounding carriage, a sign states "Northland Hills or Bust" in capital letters. Above the carriage, a small block of text begins: "The famed 'Oklahoma Land Run' took place in 1888" The largest text on the page concludes the sentence. Positioned above the single-family home in the advertisement's upper right corner, it reads: "... This time it's to Schuermann's Northland Hills." The advertisement's explicit reference to the Oklahoma Land Run of 1889 showcases the endurance of frontier logics in suburban life. It blatantly codes white flight to the suburban peripheries as a modern form of exclusionary settlement and land capture abetted by federal policy. The advertisement appeared in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on May 15, 1955.

[3] One such advertisement appeared in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on September 24, 1972. Against a backdrop of interspersed male and female biological symbols, the ad reads: "At the Village ... one thing usually leads to another. Things seems to happen, when everyone gathers at The Village Clubhouse ... some for cocktails or games, others, to see what develops ... ? Or, guys run into some of the girls coming from a tennis match ... and there's a party. No matter who's air conditioned apartment at The Village they head for, it's totally electric. And, everyone has a wood paneled bar. So, soon the party spreads ... some on the patio ... some by the pool ... and others ...? The Village is for *you!*" The advertisement appeals to prospective tenants through sexual innuendo and references to modern utility infrastructure.

[4] Here, I am thinking of the annualized memorial ceremonies and disruptive space-based protests in honor of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Oscar Grant III, and many other beloved kin murdered by police.

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