

The Portrayal of Juvenile Delinquents in Film (1988-1997)

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Honors Project

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**Presented to the Department of History
and the Dean's Office of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the H&SS Senior Honors
Program**

Carnegie Mellon University

December 2009

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Chapter 1: Setting the Scene

In the early 1990s, scholars believed that crime rates for juvenile delinquents (JDs) would increase to unparalleled levels. This belief was based mostly on recent crime statistics, such as the claim that “Between 1985 and 1992, the rate at which males ages 14 to 17 committed murder increased by about 50 percent for whites and over 300 percent for blacks.”¹ Also, “Between 1985 and 1991 the number of juveniles in custody increased from 49,000 to nearly 58,000.”² From crime statistics like these, scholars generally concluded that juvenile crime was getting worse, and that it would eventually get much, much worse – “some analysts argued that what had typically only been only a threat to lower-class, inner-city dwellers, might become a reality for the rest of society.”³

Scholars pointed to the increase in the number of juveniles, a product of the baby-boom generation, as a reason for the increase in juvenile crime. They argued that an increase in juveniles naturally meant an increase in the number of JDs – “Based on well-replicated longitudinal studies, he [UCLA Professor James Q. Wilson] predicts that ‘the additional 500,000 boys who will be 14 to 17 years old in the year 2000 will mean at least 30,000 more murderers, rapists, and muggers on the streets than we have today’.”⁴ One scholar, John Dilulio, predicted that there could be three times the current number of

¹ Dilulio, John. "The Coming Of The Super-Predators." *The Weekly Standard* 27 November 1995: 23.

² *Ibid.*

³ McCord, Joan, Cathy Widom, and Nancy A. Crowell. "The Indeterminacy of Forecasts of Crime Rates and Juvenile Offenses." *Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Justice*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2001. 328.

⁴ Dilulio, John. "The Coming Of The Super-Predators." *The Weekly Standard* 27 November 1995: 23.

juveniles incarcerated by 2010,⁵ and that “All of the research indicates that Americans are sitting atop a demographic crime bomb.”⁶

On top of the fact that the number of juvenile crimes would increase, scholars also believed that the severity of their crimes would increase as well. Other longitudinal studies indicated that “each generation of crime-prone boys (the “6 percent”) has been about three times as dangerous as the one before it,” therefore meaning that this generation would be three times more dangerous as well.”⁷ So the picture was shaping up as more juveniles, and more dangerous juveniles.

Professor James Fox believed that these more dangerous juveniles would also be of a young age: “although the percentage of 18-24 year-olds has declined in recent years, younger teens have become more involved in serious violent crime, including homicide, thereby expanding the limits of the violence-prone group to as young as 14.”⁸ John Dilulio agreed, stating “what is really frightening everyone from D.A.s to demographers, old cops to old convicts, is not what's happening now but what's just around the corner--a sharp increase in the number of super crime-prone young males.”⁹

In 1995, Dilulio created a term revolving around the concept of an increasing number of JDs committing increasingly violent crimes. He called these JDs “super-

⁵ Elikann, Peter. "Introduction and Overview: Children at the Enemy." *Superpredators: The Demonization Of Our Children By The Law*. New York and Washington D.C.: Da Capo Press, 2002. 6.

⁶ Dilulio, John. "The Coming Of The Super-Predators." *The Weekly Standard* 27 November 1995: 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Bennett, William J., John J. Dilulio, and John P. Walters. *BODY COUNT: Moral Poverty...And How to Win America's War Against Crime and Drugs*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996. 27.

⁹ Dilulio, John. "The Coming Of The Super-Predators." *The Weekly Standard* 27 November 1995: 23.

predators.” In *Body Count*, a book by Dilulio, William J. Bennett, and John P. Walters, the authors state the following regarding super-predators and the state of juvenile delinquency in America in the early 1990s:

Based on all that we have witnessed, researched, and heard from people who are close to the action, here is what we believe: America is now home to thickening ranks of juvenile “super-predators” – radically impulsive, brutally remorseless youngsters, including ever more teenage boys, who murder, assault, rape, rob, burglarize, deal deadly drugs, join gun toting gangs, and create serious communal disorders. They do not fear the stigma of arrest, the pains of imprisonment, or the pangs of conscience. They perceive hardly any relationship between doing right (or wrong) now and being rewarded (or punished) for it later. To these mean-street youngsters, the words “right” and “wrong” have no fixed moral meaning.¹⁰

Dilulio believed there were “tens of thousands of severely morally impoverished juvenile super-predators,”¹¹ and that “by [his] estimate, we will probably need to incarcerate at least 150,000 juvenile criminals in the years just ahead. In deference to public safety, we will have little choice but to pursue genuine get-tough law enforcement strategies against the super-predators.”¹² The fear of an increasing number of JDs greatly alarmed society, and especially lawmakers.

To counteract this supposed crime wave, public policy regarding juvenile delinquency entered the “punitive era,” which focused on creating laws that would harshly punish JDs. According to scholars Jeffrey A. Butts and Daniel P. Mears, “The focus on juvenile crime policy shifted perceptibly toward incarceration, and state and federal lawmakers stepped up efforts to make the juvenile justice system more like adult justice system. States across the country enacted sweeping policy changes to make the

¹⁰ Bennett, William J., John J. Dilulio, and John P. Walters. “The Root Cause of Crime: Moral Poverty.” *BODY COUNT: Moral Poverty...And How to Win America's War Against Crime and Drugs*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996. 27.

¹¹ Dilulio, John. “The Coming Of The Super-Predators.” *The Weekly Standard* 27 November 1995: 23.

¹² *Ibid.*

juvenile system tougher.”¹³ A “tougher” system meant “more aggressive policing of juveniles, making it easier (or in some cases mandatory) to treat a juvenile who has committed certain offenses as an adult, moving decision making about where to try a juvenile from the judge to the prosecutor or the state legislature, changing sentencing options, and opening juvenile proceedings and records.”¹⁴ Also, many states passed laws that allowed more juvenile offenses to be brought to criminal court.¹⁵

The transformation of public policy regarding JDs altered the perception of the juvenile justice system. Butts and Mears stated, “During the 1980s and 1990s, the juvenile court system became so much like the criminal court system that some observers began to wonder whether it was necessary to maintain a separate juvenile justice system at all.”¹⁶ Others perceived that the U.S. could not maintain the more punitive policy, believing that we would soon run out of prison space.

Ultimately, the change toward a more punitive policy seemed to be unwarranted. In retrospect, as one scholar has concluded, “the alarmists were wrong, There will not be a coming youth crime wave. In 1995, juvenile crime stunned most criminal justice experts by actually moving downward, although it was a dip in a high plateau. Overall, violent crime arrests for youths dropped 2.9 percent. The following year confirmed it just

¹³ Butts, Jeffrey, and Daniel Mears. "Reviving Juvenile Justice in a Get-Tough Era." *Youth & Society* 33.2 (2001): 170.

¹⁴ McCord, Joan, Cathy Widom, and Nancy A. Crowell. "The Indeterminacy of Forecasts of Crime Rates and Juvenile Offenses." *Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Justice*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2001. 155.

¹⁵ Butts, Jeffrey, and Daniel Mears. "Reviving Juvenile Justice in a Get-Tough Era." *Youth & Society* 33.2 (2001): 175.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

wasn't just a temporary aberration, with an even more significant drop of 9.2 percent."¹⁷

Even Dilulio, the creator of the super-predator concept, eventually backed off of his theory that America was a "ticking crime bomb."

Putting it all together, three main stages emerged during the early 1990s in regard to juvenile delinquency: 1) the perception of an extremely high increase in the number of JDs, 2) the perception of an increase in the severity of the JDs' acts, and 3) public policy makers response to 1 and 2, which was to create more punitive measures for JDs.

These three stages ultimately proved to be part of an empirically incorrect picture of American crime trends. Society did not experience a massive increase in the number of JDs in the 1990s, and the JDs were not much worse than the JDs before them. Public policy makers' response to the supposed upsurge in juvenile crime appears to have been based on a fundamental misrepresentation of the current social scene.

¹⁷ Elikann, Peter. "Introduction and Overview: Children at the Enemy." *Superpredators: The Demonization Of Our Children By The Law*. New York and Washington D.C.: Da Capo Press, 2002. 8.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

I began my research by focusing on John Dilulio's idea of a "super-predator," an early 1990s term that described a purported massive recent increase in the most deviant, absolutely worst JDs in modern American history. I wanted to see whether these super-predators were portrayed as characters in films during the late 1980s and early-mid 1990s. I utilized Dilulio's article, "The Coming Of The Super-Predators" (1995), to better understand his claims about 1) who a super-predator was, 2) where these super-predators were coming from, and 3) why these super-predators had emerged in the 1980s/1990s.

Having studied Dilulio's analysis of the super-predator, I decided to use this characterization as my baseline for identifying modern juvenile delinquency films. I began my search with John Singleton's 1991 film, *Boyz n the Hood*, because 1) I had seen *Boyz n the Hood* a few times and knew that it significantly involved JDs; 2) I could already make some tenuous connections between Dilulio's super-predator and *Boyz n the Hood* characters; and 3) *Boyz n the Hood* was very successful at the box office, well covered by critics, and controversial – all of which led me to believe I could, relatively easily identify films similar to *Boyz n the Hood*; and 4) *Boyz n the Hood* was produced in 1991, falling right in the middle of the time period I wanted to focus on.

To find films similar in nature to *Boyz n the Hood*, I searched the Internet Movie Database (IMDB; www.IMDB.com), an on-line repository that provides a large amount of information regarding films and includes box office financial data, actor/actress information, directors, producers, etc. I used most of the detailed information later in the research process; at the time, I only utilized IMDB's "recommendations" feature, which suggests movies similar in nature to the film that I previously searched for. When

searching for *Boyz n the Hood*, the “recommendations” feature yielded five films, two of which looked potentially useful: *Menace II Society* and *New Jack City*. I confirmed their value to my study by reading the synopsis of the films along with a few critic reviews. I then searched for *Menace II Society* and *New Jack City* on IMDB.com, and looked at the films that IMDB recommended for those two films. I again read the synopses and a few critic reviews, which allowed me to select the films that, on a relatively superficial first glance, seemed to link the ideas of super-predator and juvenile delinquency.

After exhausting my options on IMDB.com, I went on to complete this same search process (using its own “recommendations” feature) on Amazon.com. I completed this “chain-like” research process until my list of potential films reached approximately 60 films.

I completed my list of initial films by scanning a few books that focused on film in the early 1990s. I looked at 1) *The J.D. films: Juvenile delinquency in the Movies*, by Mark Thomas McGee and R. J. Robertson, 2) *Black City Cinema: African American Urban Experiences in Film* by Paula J. Massood, and 3) *Framing Blackness: The African American Image* by Ed Guerrero. After reviewing the two websites and the three books, my list had ballooned to 70 films.

Realizing that 70 films would be far too many for rigorous analysis, I pared down the list by studying critics’ reviews of *all* the films. I got most of these critic reviews from such notable sites as *The New York Times*, Siskel and Ebert, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. These critic reviews gave me two things: 1) an idea of what the film was really about, and 2) how important this film was in the genre overall, and during the time period, in particular.

By having the critics tell me what the movie was about, I used them as a first screening, trusting them (somewhat naively, as it turned out) to accurately report the key subject matter the movie touched on. I then dismissed the movies that seemed to be far outside my scope, but (at this stage) retained the films that had even a peripheral connection to my original idea (JDs in film, especially the super-predator). I also used the critics to assess which films in the genre were most important, in terms of film history, to make sure I did not miss any landmark films.

Doing this left me with approximately 50 films, still too high for fine-grained analysis. I therefore narrowed my criteria for a suitable film by returning to where I started – the super-predator term, which I now looked at more critically. After doing a little more research, I became very interested in the fact that the term, super-predator, first appeared in 1995. This interested me because most of the films I had been finding were pre-1995.

This realization pushed me to further narrow the time period covered by my films. I decided to focus on a 10-year period that loosely surrounded the super-predator term, specifically 1988-1997. I chose to include seven years before 1995 and only two years after 1995 because, from a practical standpoint, this is when most of the films on my list were made. Had I studied only 1990-2000, five years on each side of 1995, I would have excluded a large number of films on my list. I also, very importantly, wanted to include enough films prior to the emergence of the super-predator term so that I could eventually analyze if the super-predator idea was evident in film before John Dilulio coined the term in 1995.

Narrowing the time period shortened my list to 32 films. I then watched or skimmed these films to see which were absolutely essential to my topic. I narrowed the final list to 24, leaving out the other eight films because they did not, in my judgment, centrally involve JDs (as many of the critics had initially led me to believe).¹⁸

Once I compiled my list of contemporary films, I created a short list of historical juvenile delinquency films (from approximately a half-century earlier) for purposes of comparison. I focused on these early films because I knew they portrayed JDs acting in groups. My goal was to compare the “group process” idea in the historical and contemporary films. I chose my four historical films because they are widely recognized by experts as representing a new way of covering JDs in film during the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁹

After creating my final list and watching each film one time, I started to create categories of characteristics by which the films could be compared. I ended up with 39 main categories and 16 sub-categories. All of these categories and sub-categories are listed in Appendix I under *Category Groupings*; all 39 categories and 16 sub-categories are also displayed in a spreadsheet in Appendix II titled *The Top 24 Juvenile Delinquency Films (1988-1997): Film Characteristics Spreadsheet*. This spreadsheet orders the films according to largest box office total.²⁰

¹⁸ The eight films excluded from this penultimate list included: *Strapped* (1993); *Gang Related* (1997); *Dragstrip Girl* (1994); *Bullet* (1996); *A Packing Suburbia* (1999); *Set it Off* (1996); *Sugar Hill* (1993); *American Me* (1992).

¹⁹ The four historical JD films are *Public Enemy* (1931), *Dead End* (1937), *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938), and *City Across the River* (1949).

²⁰ For an explanation of what each category means, see the *Category Definitions* in Appendix I.

I arrived at these 39 main categories and 16 sub-categories a few ways: 1) including what Dilulio believes are characteristics of a super-predator, 2) reoccurring themes or ideas I saw throughout the films, and 3) objective criteria that help to understand the who, what, when, where, and why of each film. By creating categories with these three focal points in mind, I tried to encompass as many aspects of the representation of juvenile delinquency in film as I could.

With my 39 main categories and 16 sub-categories in-hand, I attempted to identify comparisons across categories, but soon realized I had too many categories to draw a coherent, overall picture of the films. I therefore reassembled the 39 main categories into 13 groupings, which I called “category groupings.” Each category grouping contains topics that are similar in nature. The *Category Groupings* section in Appendix I lists them, and the accompanying *Reasons for Category Groupings* explains their logic.

The creation of these category groupings proved to be critical in my research process. They allowed me to analyze the films on more of a macro level, and to derive broader conclusions about how JDs were portrayed in both the contemporary (1988-1997) and historical films (1931-1949). The four sets of questions (corresponding to chapter titles) under-girding my analysis are:

- I) Who are the JDs in films? Where do they come from, and what are their lives like?
- II) What types of crimes do the JDs commit? Why do they commit them, and how do they commit them?

III) What roles do gangs, group process, and the idea of a super-predator play in the films?

IV) What roles do the police play in the films, and how do they interact with JDs?

In my analysis, I address the topics in each chapter systematically. Within each section, I closely analyze the top eight grossing films, and then refer briefly to notable illustrations from the bottom 16 grossing films.²¹ My main goal is to clearly explain the typical characteristics of the most “successful” (i.e., most money earned) juvenile delinquency films. Stated another way, if given the opportunity to make a commercially successful delinquency film between 1988 and 1997, what characteristics, in hindsight, would I have wanted to include?

To explore this question, I have focused mainly on the top eight grossing films. These top eight films all grossed over 20 million dollars. The remaining delinquency films (16) Each grossed 13 million dollars or less. To enhance readability, my illustrative examples of dominant themes will drive primarily, though not exclusively, from the top 8 films.

²¹ Note the significant difference in box office totals between the eighth highest grossing film, *Do the Right Thing*, at \$27,545,445, and the ninth highest grossing film, *Juice*, at \$20,146,880, a difference of over seven million dollars

Chapter 3: Historical Films Analysis

To provide a longer-term historical context for my analysis of delinquency films in the late 1980s and early 1990s, I examined four pioneer examples of this genre: *The Public Enemy* (1931), *Dead End* (1937), *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938), and *City Across the River* (1949). Before analyzing these films as a group, I provide a short description of each film.

The Public Enemy follows the transformation of two young white, male JDs, Tom Powers (James Cagney) and Matt Doyle (Edward Woods), into full-blown gangsters. The early part of the film focuses on Tom and Matt as JDs; Tom and Matt commit a few delinquent acts, most notably tripping a girl on roller skates, selling “hot” watches, and drinking alcohol underage. These delinquent acts are not very extreme, but do foreshadow the violence and crime that Tom and Matt commit later in the film.

Dead End details the lives of a group of JDs (known as the Dead End Kids) in New York City. These JDs are all male, white, and between about 13 and 16 years old. Throughout they commit random acts of delinquency against other juveniles, adults, and cops. The delinquents’ actions are influenced by Baby Face Martin (Humphrey Bogart), a well-known gangster, and Dave (Joel McCrea), a community architect, who battle to provide guidance to the JDs – Baby Face Martin with negative guidance and Dave with positive guidance. The film follows the tribulations of the JDs, ultimately ending with one JD, Tommy (Billy Halop), cutting an adult with a knife, and his subsequent arrest by the cops. The very last scenes depict a battle between the two mentors, Baby Face Martin and Dave, which Dave wins by shooting and killing Baby Face.

Angels with Dirty Faces is the second installment of the Dead End Kids, in which Rocky Sullivan (James Cagney), a gangster, and Father Jerry Connolly (Pat O'Brien) attempt to get the kids to reform and become productive members of society. Father Connolly attempts to do this by involving the kids in the church and in constructive activities such as basketball, but he fails in reforming the kids' behavior. Rocky Sullivan, Father Connolly's boyhood friend, enters the picture after not having seen Father Connolly for many years, and tries to help him reform the kids. Rocky's ways of reforming are unorthodox, though, and end up driving the kids to more acts of delinquency. The film concludes with Rocky getting caught by the police, found guilty, and sentenced to death. The final scene shows Rocky crying for mercy as he enters the electric chair, a favor for Father Connolly, which shows the kids that committing crimes risks the ultimate retribution by the state.

City Across the River follows Frankie, a white, male, 17 or 18 year-old JD and his similar friends, who are all in a gang called the Dukes. The Dukes commit crimes throughout the film that include beating up a bartender for money, getting in a fight at a pool hall, and being truants. The film eventually focuses upon one main act of delinquency in which Frankie (Peter Fernandez) and Benny (Al Ramsen) shoot and kill their teacher with a gun they made in shop class. The film follows Frankie and Benny's best attempts to avoid getting caught, and then the eventual steps that lead to Frankie and Benny's arrest.

These four pioneer films allow one to assess the same questions that will be addressed in the analysis of the contemporary films: 1) Who are the JDs in films? Where do they come from, and what is their life like? 2) What types of crimes do they commit?

Why and how do they commit these crimes? 3) What roles do gangs, group process, and the idea of a super-predator play in the films? 4) What role do cops play in the films, and how do cops interact with JDs?

1) Who are the JDs in films? Where do they come from, and what are their lives like?

Before looking specifically at the JDs, one can look just at the directors to get a sense of who made these historical films, and perhaps why the films are so alike. All the directors are white and male. This gives some perspective when viewing what races and genders these directors decided to focus on. In all of the historical films, the directors focused on JDs just like themselves - white and male, without exception. Also, all of the directors framed their JDs as roughly the same age, but the films covered JDs as young as thirteen years old and as old as 18 years old. The majority of the JDs in the films were between 14 and 16 years old.

The directors lead us to believe that these white, male, JDs of roughly the same age all lead pretty similar lives. In regard to class, all of the JDs are part of the lower class and live in a predominantly white neighborhood (as portrayed in the film) – three films are set in New York City and one in Chicago. The similarities continue in regard to the JDs not having children out of wedlock and not being involved with the church - neither exists in these JDs' lives.

Drugs, on the other hand, are much more prevalent in the JDs' lives, occurring in three of the four historical films. The JDs are very tempered in their drug use, though – alcohol and tobacco only. A final pervasive trait is that only one of the four historical

films involves school. Even though the JDs are mid-teenagers, school is not portrayed as a focal point of their lives.

The JDs' mentors, on the other hand, have greater variety, which provides a much more fruitful analysis because of the myriad of mentors in the films. I define mentors as "the presence of an older influence on the JDs' lives; this influence can be positive or negative, but must be instrumental in forming the ideas/actions of the JD." In the historical films, as with the contemporary films, this influential older figure varies greatly. In *Dead End*, *Angels with Dirty Faces*, and *City Across the River*, older gangsters as well as community figures - architect, priest, and community organizer, respectively - act as mentors for the JDs.

Such a strong presence of mentors begs the question of where the JDs' parents are in these films. The answer is that they are simply not around. Only one historical film, *City Across the River*, devotes serious attention to the JDs' parents. In *City Across the River*, the mother and father of Frank try to get him to behave correctly, and the family even moves to a new neighborhood to help this cause. Unfortunately, Frank still ends up committing crimes. Beyond these parents, the historical films would lead one to believe that parents were not an instrumental part in their kids' lives. This is quite surprising, considering that two of the films; *Dead End* and *Angels with Dirty Faces*, focus on JDs around 15 years old.

Significant relationships with females are also mostly absent in the lives of the JDs. The relationship between JDs and females in the historical films is tenuous at best. Females do not often appear because they are not central to the story. *Angels with Dirty Faces* focuses on JDs trying to be miniature gangsters and emulating their idol, Rocky

Sullivan; *Dead End* focuses on JDs trying to cause as much of a ruckus in the neighborhood as possible, *The Public Enemy* follows the ascent of Tommy and Matt to the life of gangsters, and *City Across the River* focuses on JDs who revolt against their teacher, kill him, and spend their time running from the cops.

Although females are not central to *City Across the River*, it is the one historical film that does portray juveniles interacting with females. Three instances stand out. The first is when Theodore “Crazy” Perrin (Joshua Shelley) asks a girl to go out on a date with him. Right before the date happens, one of Crazy’s friends sees the girl waiting and asks her to go with him; she leaves and stands up Crazy. Later in the film Crazy attempts to make this girl like him but ultimately fails. The second instance is when the Dukes, the name of the JD’s group, are at a dance with a group of girls. Each Duke is portrayed with one female, and we are left to assume that a few of them may be dating, or in a relationship. In all of the historical films, this is the *only* time JDs are portrayed in any significant relationship with females. The third instance is when Benny and Frankie ask two girls, Betty Maylor (Sue England) and Annie Kane (Barbara Whiting), to corroborate Benny and Frank’s story (basically to lie for them) so that Benny and Frank would have not get in trouble for shooting and killing their teacher. The girls do not succumb to the pressure.

From these three instances, the females are still mostly peripheral to the story, but they do have some effect on the JDs; in the first instance, a JD is trying to start a relationship with a female; in the second instance, a few JDs are portrayed as having a significant relationship with a female; in the third instance, two JDs need two females to

save them from getting into trouble. These instances in *City* represent the only significant instances that females in the four historical films.

The typical life of a JD in a historical film could be stated as: white, male, 13-18 years old, no children, some experience with alcohol, most likely not in school or seriously engaged in school, have some kind of adult mentor who is not his parent, without the church present or even his parents significantly involved in his life, and probably no serious relationship with females.

2) What types of crimes do the JDs commit? Why do they commit them, and how do they commit them?

On the whole, the JDs do not commit very serious crimes in the films, the main (obvious) exception being the killing of the teacher and beating up of a bartender in *City Across the River*. In the other films, the crimes are mostly theft, assault, and use of illicit drugs. All of the films involve personal and property crime in some way. These are tempered acts of delinquency, meaning that the delinquents are not out causing a mass ruckus in society or ravaging their local communities.

The main reason behind the JDs committing these crimes seems to be for fun. Only in *City Across the River* do the JDs commit a crime for money or commit a crime by accident. A notable example of the JDs committing a crime for fun is in *Dead End* when the kids harass the rich white boy, take his clothes, and run away. The only reason behind this crime is for enjoyment.

The people against whom the JDs had their “fun” were not always other white, male JDs. In *Public Enemy*, the JDs trip a white juvenile girl; in *Dead End*, they steal from and harass a male juvenile, and one JD stabs the father of that same white juvenile;

in *Angels with Dirty Faces*, one JD throws a tomato at a white cop and another temporarily takes a baby carriage from a white couple. This trend continues in *City Across the River* where the white, male JDs protest in class against their white, male teacher; this protest eventually results in one of the JDs shooting and killing the teacher.

So, while white males commit the crimes, their crimes are not always aimed against white males. No group of white people is beyond the scope of their delinquencies. JDs will commit crime against other JDs, adults, juveniles, and cops.

When the JDs commit crimes, they do not often use guns. The older gangsters or cops mostly use the guns. For the older gangsters, the guns are used against either other older gangsters or against the police. For the police, the guns are used against the older gangsters. The only instance in which the JDs use a gun is when Benny and Frank confront their teacher in *City Across the River* and end up killing him with a gun they made in class.

3) What role do gangs, group process, and the idea of a super-predator play in the films?

Most of the crimes in the historical films occur when JDs act as a cohort. I label them (or they label themselves) “street gangs” because they commit crimes as an organized group. For example, the 6-8 JDs who commit crime in *Angels with Dirty Faces* are different from the two JDs in *The Public Enemy* who simply get into mischief.

Within these gangs of JDs, no one JD or set of JDs emerges as much worse than the others. The super-predator term does not seem at all relevant to the JDs of this time period. In some cases there is a leader of the gang, or someone who might commit the most crime, but he is not portrayed as an amoral, conscience-less youth.

4) What role do cops play in the films, and how do cops interact with JDs?

Cops appear in every historical film and are portrayed the same way as well – out to protect the public. The cops show up when something goes wrong. In *City Across the River*, the cops question Frankie and Benny about the murder of their teacher; in *Dead End*, the cops chase after the JD who knifed an older man; in *Public Enemy*, the cops chase after the two JDs who break into the train car. In each case, the police are reactive to the JD's crime. Lastly, when the JDs interact with cops, one cannot see the JD go to juvenile court, even though they are usually of juvenile court age.

Conclusion

The historical films are very similar to each other in regard to who the JDs are (age, race), where they come from (location, setting), and the type of lives they lead (school, mentors, parents, drugs, etc). Some variety exists in the types of crimes they commit, but most of the crimes are committed in groups, non-lethal, and for fun. No one JD within the group is clearly worse than the others; the super-predator term clearly does not apply. Lastly, the delinquents' interactions with cops are minimal; the only consistent interaction between cops and kids comes when a JD gets caught.

Chapter 4: Short Descriptions of the Top Eight Juvenile Delinquency Films, (1988-1997)

1) *Boyz n the Hood* (1991)

Boyz n the Hood follows the lives of Tre Styles (Cuba Gooding Jr.) and Doughboy (Ice Cube), two African-American teenagers growing up in Los Angeles. Tre and Doughboy lead two very different lives. Tre is focused on school, getting a job, and taking the direction of his father, Furious Styles (Laurence Fishburne). Doughboy is focused on his reputation on the streets, maintaining a tough image, and protecting his neighborhood. The film uses these focal points to show the disparate ways that Tre and Doughboy deal with an array of problematic situations, specifically murder, disrespect, drugs, police brutality, and relationships with females. Ultimately, the film tries to capture socially and psychologically what it is like to grow up in the “hood” in Los Angeles.

2) *New Jack City* (1991)

New Jack City primarily focuses on police officers trying to bring down Nino Brown (Wesley Snipes), an adult drug dealer, and his drug (crack cocaine) gang, the Cash Money Brothers. The JD aspect of the film is seen with Pookie (Chris Rock), an older teenager and recovering drug addict. Pookie wants to turn his life around and offers to help police officer Scotty Appleton (Ice-T) infiltrate Nino Brown’s drug operation, with the hope of eventually shutting the operation down. Scotty accepts Pookie’s offer, and from that point on, the film follows Pookie’s relapse into drug addiction and his problems with the law. Pookie’s drug lapse ultimately causes the police’s secret

infiltration to be exposed, which leads to a massive gunfight between the police and Nino's gang.

3) Colors (1988)

Colors details the relationship between two cops, one older and experienced, Officer Danny McGavin (Robert Duvall), and one young and a hot-shot, Officer Bob Hodges (Sean Penn). The film uses these divergent personalities to show the different ways that police can deal with crime and gangs in Los Angeles. No one crime or instance defines the film; rather, the film displays a smattering of instances of cop/JD confrontation. These include arresting delinquents on the street for drug possession, chasing delinquents through commercial business areas, arguing with delinquents, and finally, a shootout with a mix of delinquents and adult gangsters. From these instances, the film tries to shed some light on the relationship between JDs and cops, and what might be done to improve their relationship.

4) Don't Be a Menace (1996)

Don't Be a Menace parodies many of the African-American films that focused on inner-city life during the early- to mid-1990s. The title itself gives some indication of which films. *Don't be a Menace* is actually a shortened version of the title, *Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the Hood*. The different parts of the title come from the movies that are parodied the most – *Menace to Society*, *South Central*, *Juice*, and *Boyz n the Hood*. Components are taken from these four films (as well as others not named in the title), and blown to absurd proportions.

For example, *Loc Dog* (Marlon Wayans) is a twist on the JD character O-Dog (Larenz Tate) from *Menace II Society*. *Loc Dog* shows his power by revealing a nuclear weapon to someone who challenges him. The film uses *Boyz n the Hood* as its framework for a plot, but overall the film aims just to poke fun more generally at the African-American films of this time period.

5) Grand Canyon (1991)

Grand Canyon focuses on the interplay of six very different adults living in Los Angeles. These adults include tow-truck driver Simon (Danny Glover), businessman Mack (Kevin Kline), Mack's wife Claire (Mary McDonnell), Mack's secretary, Dee (Mary-Louise-Parker), Dee's coworker Jane (Alfre Woodward), and movie producer Davis (Steve Martin). Each of these adults lives their lives independently, but often end up in many situations together, several of which are complicated by juvenile crime or racial tension. These are the scenes upon which I focus.

For example, Mack (a Caucasian) gets stopped in an area of Los Angeles and is confronted by four African-American JDs with guns. The scene that follows involves Simon (an African-American) showing up with his tow truck to tow Mack's car, and also help Mack out of danger. Ultimately, the film tries to show how adults from different backgrounds deal with the difficulty of living in Los Angeles.

6) Menace II Society (1993)

Menace II Society portrays how a few teenagers, O-Dog (Larenz Tate) and Caine (Tyron Turner) get into trouble in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, and how they deal with life in the ghetto. O-Dog commits random acts of violence throughout the film

and revels in his machinations. The film shows this right away with O-Dog shooting and killing two Korean clerks in a store. We later see O-Dog watching the killing again and again on tape for fun. Caine, on the other hand, is not as violent or immoral as O-Dog. Caine does commit crimes, but throughout the film he is on a moral quest to find out what is right for him. Caine eventually decides what is right for him by moving out of his neighborhood. But before he can leave, he is gunned down in a drive-by shooting.

7) Do the Right Thing (1989)

Do the Right Thing depicts a typical summer day in Brooklyn. The film revolves around Mookie (Spike Lee), an older teenager who works as a pizza delivery boy for Sal (Danny Aiello), the owner of the local pizza shop. Through Mookie's interactions with Sal, through other local people's interactions with Sal, and through interactions between whites and blacks in the neighborhood, we are shown the extraordinary racial tension in the neighborhood. For example, Buggin Out (Giancarlo Esposito), a young African-American male, challenges Sal as to why he does not have any African-Americans' pictures hanging on the wall of his pizza shop. Buggin Out and Sal get into a very heated verbal confrontation. All of this racial tension reaches a head at the very end of the film when Radio Raheem (Bill Nunn), a young African-American male, is killed by the police. The final scenes show mayhem as African-Americans riot in the neighborhood in response to the crime.

8) Juice (1992)

Juice delineates the lives of four teenagers from Harlem - Q (Omar Epps), Bishop (Tupac Shakur), Steel (Jermaine 'Huggy' Hopkins), and Raheem (Khalil Kain). Early in

the film, the four get into a few entanglements with other groups of juveniles and they commit petty crimes. The film's inciting incident occurs when the quartet hears that one of their friends has been shot and killed. This greatly angers Bishop and puts him on a warpath to get "juice," or respect.

From this point on, we see Bishop committing random acts of violence to get respect. He persuades the group to rob a store, where he kills the clerk. Bishop continues to commit crimes, but his three friends do not always agree with what he wants. Bishop thinks they are turning on him and might tell on him, so he turns on them. He eventually kills two of them, and attempts to kill the third. In the end, Bishop and Q get into a physical confrontation, which Bishop loses by falling off a building to his death.

Box Office Receipts

The highest grossing of these eight films is *Boyz n the Hood* at 57 million dollars; eighth on the list is *Juice* at 20 million dollars, a difference of 37 million dollars. Within these extremes a few patterns emerge: all of the top five films grossed over 30 million dollars, and all of the top eight films grossed over twenty million dollars. The average gross for the top eight films was over 37 million dollars.²²

The largest difference between box office totals occurs between the two highest grossing films, *Boyz n the Hood* (\$57,504,069) and *New Jack City* (\$47,624,253), a difference of almost ten million dollars. Similar big declines continue throughout the top eight grossing films. The next big decline occurs between the third and fourth films, *Colors* (\$46,616,067) and *Don't Be a Menace* (\$39,255,889), a difference of more than

²² The average gross amount for the bottom sixteen films was significantly less at 3.6 million dollars.

seven million dollars. Similarly, the difference between the fourth and fifth films, *Don't Be a Menace* (\$39,255,889) and *Grand Canyon* (\$33,243,020), and the difference between the seventh and eighth films, *Do the Right Thing* (\$27,545,445) and *Juice* (\$20,146,880), is approximately seven million dollars. All of these significant differences were *at least* five million dollars, showing the amount of box office disparity among the top eight highest grossing films.²³ I have grouped them together for analytic purposes, but from a financial perspective they were certainly not equally “successful.”

Directors

The directors of the top eight films were all male, and six of the eight directors were black. The fact that males directed all the films is not very notable, as males also directed 15 of the 16 films at the bottom of my list. The only female directed *Mi Vida Loca*, which was also the only film to devote substantial attention to female JDs. “Delinquency films” are most definitely a male genre.

Unlike gender, the race of the top eight film directors varies greatly from the race of the bottom 16 films’ directors. A disproportionate number of black directors have films within the top eight grossing films. Blacks directed three of the top five grossing films, and six of the top eight grossing films. This means that white directors only produced two of the top eight grossing films.²⁴ White directors, by contrast, directed 12 of the 16 lowest grossing films.

²³ All of the films not in the top eight grossed below 13 million dollars, with 12 of the 16 films grossing below five million dollars, and eight out of the 16 films grossing below three million dollars.

²⁴ The two films in the top eight directed by whites are *Colors* and *Grand Canyon*.

For the top 24 films, only Spike Lee has two movies on the list, *Clockers* and *Do the Right Thing*. Looking into the overall careers of these directors, one can see they have two things in common: 1) they did not go on to direct more, if any, films regarding juvenile delinquency, and 2) they directed these films at the beginning of their career, usually as one of their first five projects.

In conclusion, the data show that the most successful films were directed by black males, usually as a one-time experience and not as a genre for which they became widely known as directors.

Chapter 5: Who Are the Juvenile Delinquents?

Gender

In all top eight films, the JDs are male. In fact, all 24 of the films portray male JDs. As noted before, only *Mi Vida Loca*, the 15th highest grossing film, portrays male JDs and female JDs. To repeat the obvious: male JDs were central to successful JD films during this time period.

Age

The age of the JDs in the top eight films ranged from 12 to 21, but the films focused mostly on JDs between 17 and 21.²⁵ The ages of the JDs in the bottom 16 films ranged from approximately 9 to 21, but mainly between the ages of 15 and 18.²⁶ Comparing the two sets of films, we see that the top eight more often involve older JDs (17+ years), but that JDs as young as 15 or 16 sometimes appear in both the top eight and bottom 16 films.²⁷

An example of older JDs in the top eight occurs in one of the early scenes in *Grand Canyon*. Mack finds himself surrounded by a group of older JDs, approximately 17-21, who verbally harass and intimidate him as he waits for a tow truck to tow his broken car. A second example is in *Menace II Society*; we are immediately exposed to O-

²⁵ One of the few exceptions is in *Colors*. The young JDs are present in one of the early scenes where Officer Hodges and Officer McGavin stop a group of approximately six young black male JDs wearing blue bandanas (presumably Crips), two of whom are most likely 12 or 13 years old. This is only one of a few scenes in the film that show JDs this young.

²⁶ Three films in the bottom 16, *Kids*, *Fresh*, and *Squeeze*, also involve JDs of a very young age. These three films differ from the top eight films because they focus on very young JDs (9 – 15 years old).

²⁷ Overall, 22 of the films included JDs that were at least 16 years old (the two exceptions were *Fresh* and *Kids*), demonstrating that most focused on older (15 years and higher) JDs.

Dog (Larenz Tate), 17-18 years old, robbing a convenience store. Both of these films, like most of the top eight, continue to focus on older JDs.

Race

The racial heritage of the JDs includes blacks, whites, and Hispanics. The JDs are exclusively black in 13 of the films, white in nine, Hispanic in four, and black and Hispanic in two. The top eight grossing films all include black JDs, and two of those films include Hispanic JDs as well.

It is of note that *none* of the top eight films involves white JDs. All nine portrayals of white delinquents, and the other four instances of Hispanic delinquents, occur in the lowest 16 grossing films.

The Life of a JD – Children, School, Mentors, Church, Drugs

Children

Four of the top eight films, *Don't Be a Menace*, *Menace II Society*, *Do the Right Thing*, and *Juice* portray JDs with children of their own.^{28 29} All of the JDs portrayed with children are male.³⁰ The ways in which the JDs deal with their children greatly varies; some JDs care for their children while others show complete disregard. In *Do the Right Thing*, for example, Mookie is shown caring for his child, lying in bed with him and his girlfriend. This is a short scene, but it movingly shows Mookie acting fatherly with his child.

²⁸ Only two films outside the top eight portray JDs with children, *Mi Vida Loca* and *South Central*.

²⁹ This is very different from the historical films, which do not show any JDs with children.

³⁰ The only exception occurs outside the top eight, in *Mi Vida Loca*, where both male JDs and female JDs have children.

Other films portray the JDs as having little regard for their children. In *Menace II Society*, Illena (Erin Leshawn Wiley) tells Caine over the phone that she's pregnant, to which Caine responds, "Why you telling me.... Look, I ain't got time for this. Peace." A similar rejection of parental duties occurs in *Juice* when Raheem and Keesha (Bruklin Harris) get in a fight. Keesha tells Raheem, "I need a real man. I'm not letting my child to grow up like you and your friends," to which Raheem responds, "Well fuck you then. I don't need your tired ass anyway bitch." The two part ways, and Raheem's child is not mentioned again in the film.

Boyz n the Hood offers a mix of both of these ways of caring for children, but does it from the perspective of two juveniles who are *not* delinquents. On the one hand, Tre, is so concerned about not becoming a father that he has avoided sex completely. On the other hand, Ricky, one of Tre's good friends, is the complete opposite; only 18. Ricky has a child who is about two years old. Ricky does not care for his child, and constantly puts pressure on his girlfriend to take care of him.

The Tre - Ricky dichotomy reveals that being a JD does not necessarily dictate how a JD will be portrayed as treating his child. That said, there is a difference between how JDs and juveniles reject their fatherly duties. In *Menace to Society* and *Juice*, the rejection of the child is complete and without remorse. In *Boyz n the Hood*, the rejection of the child is more off-handed -- more like not wanting to deal with parenthood for the time being, not necessarily a total rejection of the child.

School

Though mentioned in five of the top eight films, school is not the focus of any.³¹ In other words, school is presented as peripheral to the JDs' lives in the top eight films, but is often mentioned.³² What the films say about school and JDs comes largely through what the characters say, not what they do. Sometimes the reference to school is neutral or positive, but it is often negative.

A neutral reference to school occurs in *Grand Canyon*, when Roberto (Jeremy Sisto), a 15- or 16 year-old white kid, mentions that he has an English exam to study for. A more positive reference occurs at the very beginning of *Juice* when Q's mom screams at him (age 16-17) to get out of bed and go to school. This at least shows that the mother values the importance of school. Q quickly ends this positive feeling, though, by saying that what his mom is doing to him is "bull shit."

Q's reaction represents the majority of the instances regarding school. For example, in *Menace II Society*, Caine, an 18-year old JD, states, "I didn't go to school but half the time; the other half of the time I was selling dope. Growing up out here there was shit that you couldn't want in the classroom." This rejection of school is also apparent in *Juice* when Q shows up to school and cannot remember his locker combination.

³¹ The only film in which school is the focus of the film is *187*, which involves a teacher, Professor Trevor Garfield (Samuel L. Jackson) trying to teach a group of rowdy juveniles in a Los Angeles high school. The relationship between Garfield and his students eventually spirals out of control; Garfield commits crimes against his students to get back at them for stealing his watch and for killing his friend's dog.

³² Eleven of the bottom 16 films do not even mention school. Only one of the historical films mentions school.

Even though these reactions might lead one to believe that school was overwhelmingly a site of failure, a few JDs enjoyed scholastic success. Caine (the one who said he went to school half the time and sold dope) was actually portrayed as a high school *graduate*. This is the highest level of education attained by any of the JDs. The only reference to higher education occurs in *Boyz n the Hood*, as Tre and Brandi (Nia Long) go on to college at the very end of the film.³³

Via parody, *Don't Be a Menace* highlights the lack of education for JDs. For example, when Loc Dog (18-20 years old) goes to apply for a job, he is wholly under-qualified. This is made quite clear because of the foil character placed beside Loc Dog in the scene, an established white male with degrees from Ivy league schools (Loc Dog touts that he has done time in county jail). Loc Dog eventually gets a job as a crash dummy for testing cars' safety, making the point that he is only qualified to incur physical pain. A second, perhaps more telling scene, occurs when Loc Dog is talking about 18-year old male Malik planning to go to college, at which point a white sniper shoots and kills Malik. The scene is clearly suggesting that 1) young black males should not realistically expect to go to college, and 2) the white man will try to keep the black man from progressing educationally.

Overall, the JDs in my 24 films are in high school; the only exception is in the early part of *Boyz n the Hood*, where the JDs are portrayed as middle school students.³⁴

Mentors

³³ *Boyz n the Hood* also presents the only situation in which standardized testing (SAT) occurs.

³⁴ Even in middle school, the scene was contentious; one boy talks back to the teacher, which leads to two boys taunting the other with threats of violence.

I define a mentor as the presence of an adult influence on the JDs' lives; this influence can be positive or negative, but it must be instrumental in forming the ideas/actions of the JD. By this definition, the JDs have mentors in five of the top eight films. These mentor figures vary greatly – parents, grandparents, cops, and even older gangsters.³⁵ Four out of the five mentors in the top eight films mentor the JDs in positive ways.³⁶

In *Grand Canyon*, the positive mentor for Otis (Patrick Malone), a JD, is his uncle Simon. Simon repeatedly tries to give Otis advice, and tries to get Otis to stop hanging out with his gang of friends. The following is an exchange between Simon and Otis:

Simon: "Plenty have gotten out Otis."
Otis: "I don't want out."
Simon: "Bull shit."
Otis: "Without my set I'm nothin'. They care about me man."
Simon: "You wanna be gangbangin when you're 25?"
Otis: "Shit. I'll never live to be 25. I gotta roll."

In this exchange, Simon tries to get Otis to think about his future, and how there is a way out of his current predicament. Even though Otis rejects Simon's advice, Simon provides a positive influence. Later in the film, Simon helps Otis again after the police chase him down. Simon acts as if he were Otis's father.

In *Menace II Society*, the positive mentor for Caine is Mr. Butler (Charles S. Dutton), a high school teacher and the father of one of Caine's friends, Sharif (Vonte Sweet). Mr. Butler suggests that Caine leave the neighborhood and go to Kansas with

³⁵ The mentors in the bottom 16 films are just as diverse; the mentor in *187* is a teacher, in *Basketball Diaries* it is a high school coach, and in *Squeeze* it is a community organization.

³⁶ In eight of the bottom sixteen films the JDs have mentors. The mentor is positive in all but one of these films. The exception is *Blood In, Blood Out*, which focuses on Hispanic gangsters mentoring younger boys to become gangsters.

Sharif. He tells Caine, “Being a black man in America isn’t easy. The hunt is on, and you’re the prey. All I’m saying is, survive.” After this conversation, Caine did something that most of the JDs do not; he listened to the advice. Caine states, “Mr. Butler had me thinking because he was the only one that gave a damn. He was talking about surviving for good.” Caine heeds the advice and decides to leave with Ronnie (Jada Pinkett Smith) for Atlanta. Caine’s decision to leave is unfortunately too late: he is gunned down in a drive-by shooting as he is packing to leave the neighborhood for good.

A third example of a positive mentor is Furious Styles in *Boyz n the Hood*. Furious provides insight and structure for his son, Tre, throughout the film. Early on, Tre moves in with his father, and Furious immediately requires Tre to rake all the leaves in the yard and do chores, all an effort to teach Tre how to be responsible.³⁷ Later on, when Tre is older, Furious is there to mentor him immediately after Ricky is gunned down. Tre initially defies Furious and leaves with Doughboy to take revenge against the people that killed Ricky, but he eventually returns home without committing a crime.

The portrayal of the mentors in *Grand Canyon*, *Menace II Society*, and *Boyz n the Hood* suggests that JDs are not all hard-core, and that they will listen to a variety of mentors. It is of note that all three of these mentors were quite a few years older (15 years and more) than the JDs. Where mentors in the films were closer in age to the JDs, they generally gave them poor advice or led them toward a more deviant path.

³⁷ Tre’s friends, Doughboy and Ricky, just watch Tre clean up leaves. Their parents enforce less structure in their lives. The film ultimately shows the effects of this different child-rearing strategy by depicting Ricky making poor choices and Doughboy committing crime; Tre, on the other hand, ends up going to college.

A young mentor shows up only once in the top eight films.³⁸ Caine, a JD himself, acts as a mentor to Ronnie's young boy, who is only six or seven years old. In one scene, Caine instructs the boy how to shoot a gun. At this point, the boy's mother walks in, stops the lesson, and scolds Caine. What's interesting is that Caine does not see a problem with what he was doing. He claims that he only knows about such things because he himself had an older mentor who taught him what "being a hustler was all about." JDs perpetuating their delinquent ways through mentoring seems to be the cycle portrayed here.³⁹

In conclusion, the JDs have mentors in five of the top eight films, and four of these mentors are older and positively influence the JDs. The one mentor who exerts negative influence is much closer in age to the JD.

Church

Many factors compete for the JD's attention; the church (religion in general) is definitely not one of them. Only two films in the top eight, *Don't Be a Menace* and *Menace II Society*, and one in the bottom 16, *Original Gangstas*, mention church or God; in all three films the presence of the church is fleeting. The JDs in contemporary films live their lives almost wholly independent of religion.

Don't Be a Menace's mention of the church is a simple parody of a preacher asking for donations and the patrons not asking questions about where the money is

³⁸ Young mentors show up a few times in the bottom 16 films. In *Blood In, Blood Out*, the JDs follow the lead of whatever older gang members tell them to do.

³⁹ *Menace II Society* acknowledges this point in a way. In the final scenes, Caine goes to visit his mentor in jail. Pernell tells Caine, "Go with Ronnie, Caine. Take care of my son. I can't do shit for him in here. Teach him better than I taught you. Teach him the way we grew up was bullshit. All right?" These lines support the assertion that an older mentor with experience is necessary for a juvenile to positively lead his life.

going. The whole scene is meant to poke fun at religious hypocrisy and has nothing to do with juvenile delinquency.

The only instance where the church is used as a positive influence in the JDs' lives occurs in *Original Gangstas*. Set in Gary, Indiana, *Original Gangstas* focuses on two competing gangs, the Rebels and the Diablos. In an attempt to end gang warfare, the local reverend, Reverend Dorsey (Paul Winfield), meets with a few Diablo and Rebel leaders. The meeting ends without a resolution, after which Reverend Dorsey states, "I think World War III was declared." The church, by the admission of its own representative, had no effect on the delinquents' behaviors.

Caine, a JD in *Menace to Society*, reiterates this idea; he rejects the church just like the Rebels and Diablos rejected the church. Caine refused to listen to his grandfather, who said things like, "boys, the lord didn't put you here to be shooting and killing each other. It's right there in the bible. Exodus 20:13 'Thou shall not kill.'" O-Dog, Caine's friends and fellow JD, believes that God does not care about them; he states, "Look where he put us," referring to the poor condition of his neighborhood and situation in life. Caine also states, "Grandpa always coming at us with religion, but every time it would go in one ear and out the other." This makes sense in the context of all the other films; the church has very little effect on the JDs.⁴⁰

Drugs

⁴⁰ Sharif, a friend of Caine's, proves to be the exception. Sharif is not a JD and does practice religion. He claims, though, that he "used to get into all kinds of shit before he joined the nation (of Islam)."

Six of the top eight films exhibit JDs using drugs.⁴¹ The most common drugs are alcohol (three films), weed (two films), and crack (three films).⁴² When drugs are used, it is not hard-core addiction. Casual drug use appears as a minimal but integral part of the culture and situations in which JDs are present. Part of the casual drug use occurs when the JDs are just hanging out and relaxing. In *Boyz n the Hood*, Doughboy drinks a 40 while playing dominos at a summer block party. In *Juice*, Steel (17 years old) drinks a 40 while making lunch in his house. Per form, *Don't be a Menace* exaggerates this by showing Ashtray's (Shawn Wayans) fridge stock full of 40s and nothing else.

In several films, it is not the use but the dealing of drugs, specifically weed and crack, which are at the center or periphery of the action.⁴³ In *Boyz n the Hood*, Doughboy does a drug deal with a guy on the street, and in *Colors*, cops find a few Crips with crack on them. *Menace II Society* elevates this drug dealing a bit when Caine makes a pot full of base on his stove, but this is the only time we see JDs possessing massive amounts of drugs, and in this case Caine is only making the drugs, not using them.

Only Pookie in *New Jack City* does not use drugs casually; he is depicted as an addict (to crack). Pookie first appears as a recovering crack addict who eventually becomes clean, and then relapses when he goes undercover at a crack warehouse. Pookie's situation should be viewed as an anomaly among the JD films of the late 1980s and 1990s.⁴⁴ The entire plot of *New Jack City* focuses on a drug culture, and Pookie is put

⁴¹ JDs use drugs in nine of the bottom 16 films.

⁴² Drugs are defined as any illicit substance for juveniles, according to the law.

⁴³ This is very true in *Mi Vida Loca*, in which Sad Girl (Angel Aviles) and Ernesto (Jacob Vargas) sell drugs to make money but do not use the drugs themselves.

⁴⁴ A similar anomaly occurs in *Basketball Diaries*. Jim Carroll (Leonardo DiCaprio) is a middle-school-aged boy who becomes a crack addict.

in an especially tempting special situation, something which none of the other JDs in film are exposed to.

In sum, while drug use is part of the plot in most of the top eight films, it is not a central concern. Most JDs are portrayed as using drugs not regularly but casually.⁴⁵

*Male JDs and Females*⁴⁶

In five of the top eight films, males JDs have a significant relationship with a female.⁴⁷ Three of these can be characterized as “love” relationships.⁴⁸ A “love” relationship only shows up in snippets throughout the films, meaning that JDs’ relationships with females are not central to the most successful films in the JD genre.

In *Juice*, we only have one scene with Q and his love interest Yolanda (Cindy Herron), an older, already married woman. In this scene, Q meets Yolanda at her place, and is greeted by Frank (Eric Payne), presumably Yolanda’s husband. Frank leaves, and Q and Yolanda have sexual relations. Beyond this scene, though, there is nothing else regarding Yolanda in the film. A similar situation happens in *Do the Right Thing*. Mookie’s girlfriend only appears at the beginning and end of the film, when he and his girlfriend are lying in bed. Both of these portrayals lead one to believe that the girlfriend is not a large part of the JDs’ lives.

⁴⁵ The bottom 16 films follow this same trend – casual drug usage and small amounts of drug dealing.

⁴⁶ Because the JDs are almost all male, I chose to focus only on the relationship between male JDs and females.

⁴⁷ Six of the bottom 16 films show male JDs in a significant relationship with females.

⁴⁸ Four of the six significant relationships with females portrayed in the bottom 16 involve love relationships.

Very different from “love” relationships, five of the top eight films show JDs disrespecting teenage females.⁴⁹ Disrespect is defined as not showing common courtesy, being verbally insulting, and being physically abusive. Respect is simply defined as showing common courtesy. The disrespect is mostly verbal insults or objectifying women. For example, in *Boyz n the Hood*, Doughboy gives up his place in the front of a banquet line because, as he says, “Ho’s gotta eat too.”⁵⁰ Another example is in *Juice* when Steel and Q celebrate that Steel “finally got that ass.” Since females are not central to the films, it’s through these subtle references that one can see that JDs mostly disrespect females.

Although teenage females are generally disrespected, the girls are mostly portrayed as independent. (I deem them independent if they act according to their own desires and do not blindly follow the males in their lives.) In the top eight, four of the films portray females as independent, two as dependent (and two do not portray females at all).⁵¹ An example of an independent female is Brandi (Nia Long) in *Boyz in the Hood*. Brandi is in a relationship with Tre, but acts according to her own desires. This is most apparent when she and Tre discuss having sex. Tre says that he wants to have sex, but Brandi refuses because she wants to wait until they are married. Brandi operates wholly on what she wants and not what Tre wants.

⁴⁹ Six of the bottom 16 films show JDs disrespecting females and three films show them respecting females.

⁵⁰ *Don’t be a Menace* also spoofs the JDs’ disrespect for females with a scene in which a little kid (eight or nine years old) asks the person he’s talking to on the phone, “where them hoers at.”

⁵¹ In the bottom 16 films, the number that portray females as independent and dependent is roughly the same as in the top eight – six independent and three dependent.

The JDs' Economic Circumstances

In the top eight films the JDs lived mostly in houses. In only one film were the JDs depicted as living in an apartment. This is quite interesting considering that 20 of the 24 films portray JDs as clearly lower class in economic status.⁵²

In most films, the financial situation seems bleak. Only two films in the top eight (and three in the bottom 16) show the parents employed, and only two JDs in *all* 24 films have jobs (Tre in *Boyz n the Hood*, who works at a clothing store in the mall, and Mookie in *Do the Right Thing*, who delivers pizza).⁵³ A few other JDs make money other ways, the most common being selling drugs (*Menace II. Society*, *South Central*).⁵⁴ Another example is Q in *Juice*, who enters a DJ audition to make some quick money. Since the JDs do not have stable jobs and their parents' source of income is not apparent, it is difficult to understand why or how the films, from a financial perspective, depict so many JDs as living in houses.

This is also perplexing because most of the JDs live in the city. In fact, all but one of the 24 films are set near a major city; eight are set near New York City, ten near Los Angeles, and five near other cities (one film is set in the rural eastern part of the United

⁵² The only film location close to a middle/upper class occurs in *Where the Day Takes You*, which is set in Hollywood. But one can quickly tell that the JDs are not part of the middle/upper class because they panhandle for money and sleep under a bridge.

⁵³ *Don't Be a Menace* comments on the inability of blacks to find jobs in a scene in which Loc Dog applies for a job as a crash dummy. The message here is that he is only smart enough to be rammed into a wall. The film also comments on blacks getting jobs in general; Ashtray's dad tells Ashtray, "look, let me tell you what my father told me. Give up. Dreams are for suckers, ain't no future for you, and don't think about getting no job, cause the black man ain't got no place in the workforce."

⁵⁴ *Fresh* portrays Fresh (Sean Nelson) as a 9-year old drug dealer. *Where the Day Takes You* is unique in portraying JDs panhandling for money.

States).⁵⁵ One should note, though, that the domiciles of delinquents are not central to most JD films, which generally provide only glimpses of the JD's home life. For example, in *Juice*, one of the few interactions with the JD's home is at the very beginning when the JDs are getting ready to go to school. After that, the home is rarely mentioned, much less seen on screen.

A final point about the film's geographic setting is that the JDs are raised primarily in a community in which just one race is present. All but one of the top eight films features a wholly black community.⁵⁶

JDs' Parents

Family structure is portrayed as follows in the top eight JD films: four show both a two-parent and single parent family structure; one shows only a single-parent family structure; and three do not show the parents at all.⁵⁷

The JD films do not necessarily portray two-parent families as more responsible than single-parent families.⁵⁸ Somewhat surprisingly, no matter the number of parents,

⁵⁵ The film set in the rural eastern part of the United States is *Heathers*. *Heathers*, which is about a high school JD, J.D. (Christian Slater), who helps a classmate, Veronica (Winona Rider), get back at her enemies by killing them.

⁵⁶ *Grand Canyon* shows the JDs growing up in a neighborhood in which there is a mix of races.

⁵⁷ The JDs' parents in the bottom 16 films compare to the top eight - most are single parents. Nine of the bottom 16 films also show a one-parent structure, two show both a two-parent and one-parent structure, one shows a two-parent structure, and four do not show parents at all.

⁵⁸ *Don't be a Menace*, however, recognizes inherent difficulties in single-parent family structures. In a scene with Loc Dog and Ashtray, Loc Dog says it's just so tough "growing up in the hood without a positive black role model."

the adult caretakers are mostly portrayed as responsible.⁵⁹ For example, in *Menace II Society*, Ronnie, the single mother of Anthony (Julian Roy Doster), a very young JD, perhaps eight or nine years old, shows that a single parent can be responsible. Ronnie continually steers Anthony clear of bad influences; she tells people not to smoke weed while Anthony is in the house; she tells older JDs that Anthony cannot drink beer; she stops Anthony from playing with a gun. Ronnie just uses common sense to control what Anthony is exposed to.⁶⁰

An example of a two-parent family structure acting responsibly occurs in *Boyz n the Hood*. Tre's parents, Furious and Reva Styles (Angela Bassett), work together to raise Tre. For the majority of the film, Tre is raised mostly by his father, who works very hard to keep him in line, telling him to do his chores and not go out with his friends, and teaching him about sexual responsibility. But Tre's life is not wholly independent of his mother. He still talks on the phone with his mother and regularly visits her. While the parents are split up, they continue to act like a responsible two-parent family.

While most of the single- and two-parent families are portrayed as responsible, there are exceptions. For example, in *Menace II Society*, both of Caine's parents expose him to a life of vices at a young age (approximately age nine). Caine states, "I caught onto the criminal life real quick. Instead of keeping me out of trouble, they turned me on to it." Caine's father, Tat (Samuel L. Jackson), sells dope and Caine's mother is a heroin

⁵⁹ According to my criteria, a responsible parent cares for and provides for the child; an irresponsible parent does not guide or provide for the child

⁶⁰ Another example of a responsible single parent occurs in *Juice*; Q's mom tells him that she was talking to the lady down the hall, and that her boy was going to the ACME school to make money and that Q should do something like that. This exchange shows that Q's mom places a value on education and is trying to steer him down a positive path.

addict.⁶¹ The scene in which Tat gets into an argument with a guy over a poker game exemplifies the poor parenting. In this scene, Tat gets riled up and ends up shooting someone on a dare, all with Caine watching. Caine stated, “It was the first time I saw my father kill somebody, but it wasn’t the last.”

An example of an irresponsible single parent occurs in *Boyz n the Hood*. When Tre and his friends are hanging out on a porch, a baby runs into the street, and Tre picks it up. A frantic mother runs into the street and grabs the baby, then asks Tre for rock (crack). From this exchange, we are led to believe that the mother is an irresponsible crack-head who cannot take care of her child.

Taking a broader view, we see two patterns emerge regarding parents and responsibility: 1) If the parents are irresponsible, they are probably on drugs. This is true for two films in the top eight with irresponsible parents, and it is true of five of the six films in the bottom 16 with irresponsible parents. 2) The parents, regardless of being responsible or irresponsible, are mainly portrayed as jobless. In only two of the top eight films are parents clearly employed, and in both instances they are portrayed as responsible parents.⁶²

Overall, even though the JD films mainly contain single-parent families, most portray the parents as responsible, although exceptions exist. Also, the few times that parents acts irresponsibly, the parents are most likely on drugs and unemployed. Said

⁶¹ Caine’s dad was killed in a drug deal when he was ten, and his mom was too strung out on drugs to raise him, so he went to live with his grandparents. The arrangement was supposed to be temporary, but his mom died from an overdose so he stayed with his grandparents.

⁶² In only three of the bottom 16 films are the parents employed, and in two of these cases the parents are portrayed as responsible.

another way, if parents are not on drugs and have a job, they are more likely to be portrayed as responsible.

Chapter 6: Juvenile Delinquents and Crime

Crimes Committed

Many of the crimes that JDs commit in the top eight films also occur in the bottom 16. In the top eight, the crimes that occur most often are murder (5), robbery/theft (5), drive-by shootings (4), and assault and battery (3). In the bottom 16, the crimes committed most often are murder (9), robbery/theft (7), assault and battery (5), and drive-by shootings (3). Beyond these, not many other types of crimes are portrayed in the top eight films. The bottom 16, however, show a greater variety of crimes, including rape, animal brutality, and tagging. But these crimes are not the norm. Overall, the types of crimes committed in the top eight films are not significantly different from those in the bottom 16.

Reason Committed

For the top eight, the purported reason for the crime, and the number of films in which the crime occurred, are as follows: respect⁶³ - 7, revenge⁶⁴ - 6, fun⁶⁵ - 3, and money⁶⁶ - 1. For the bottom 16, the purported reason for the crime, and the number of films in which the crime occurred, are: respect - 7, revenge - 7, fun - 5, and money - 4. These data clearly show that “respect” and “revenge” were the top two reasons that JDs committed crimes in the delinquency film genre of the late 1980s and 1990s.

⁶³ “Respect” means that the JD commits the crime to gain respect from friends or enemies.

⁶⁴ “Revenge” means that the JD commits a crime against a person who already committed a crime against him or her.

⁶⁵ “Fun” means that the JD commits a crime for the pure enjoyment of the act.

⁶⁶ “Money” means that the JD commits a crime against someone in order to get money from him or her.

The closing scenes of *Boyz n the Hood* exemplify both respect and revenge as reasons for committing a crime.⁶⁷ The first part depicts Ricky (Morris Chestnut) a juvenile, being gunned down by a few JDs. These JDs shot Ricky because Ricky had physically bumped into one of them at an earlier point in the film, which the JDs took as a sign of disrespect. So, in response, the JDs killed Ricky to get respect and revenge. The next scenes involve Doughboy (Ice Cube) going with Tre and two friends to get revenge (and respect) by killing the JDs that killed Ricky. Doughboy eventually finds and kills these JDs, thus getting his revenge. At the every end of the film, this cycle of violence, fueled by revenge and respect, ends when Doughboy is shot and killed and Tre moves off to college.⁶⁸

While many crimes in the JD films are similar because they involve respect and revenge, there are still crimes committed for other reasons; take “fun,” for example. An example happens in *Grand Canyon* when a group of JDs confront Mack (Kevin Kline), a middle-aged white guy, who is sitting inside his broken down car in a “bad” Los Angeles neighborhood. These JDs tell Mack to get out of the car and threaten him with a gun. Simon (Danny Glover), a tow-truck guy, shows up before we can see what the JDs would have done to Mack, but the perception was that the JDs were just having fun with Mack.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ The closing scenes of *Juice* also exemplify how respect is a motive for committing crimes. These scenes depict a standoff between Bishop and Q on top of a roof, which Q wins. As Q is leaving the roof, a spectator tells him that he now has the “juice.” “Juice” is a slang term for respect. The whole film revolves around who has this “juice.”

⁶⁸ This cyclical process of violence also occurs in *Colors* between two gangs, the Bloods and Crips, and in *Original Gangstas* between the Diablos and the Rebels.

⁶⁹ One of the JDs does show a gun and uses it to gain respect from Simon and Mack. Simon acknowledges that the JD is more powerful than he because of the gun. This suffices for the JD and he allows Simon to tow Mack’s car.

Overall, one can conclude that the JD film genre showed kids committing crimes for four main reasons: 1) respect, 2) revenge, 3) fun, and 4) money.

What on What Crime?

In 19 of the 24 films, the JDs commit crime against their race only. However, four of the five times that JDs commit crime against another race occur in the top eight films, so these films display a disproportionately large amount of interracial crime for the genre as a whole.⁷⁰

An example is in *Do the Right Thing* when Mookie (Spike Lee), a black JD, throws a trash can through the window of Sal's (white adult) pizza shop.⁷¹ Mookie's action is the catalyst for large-scale destruction. The following scene shows black juveniles inundating the pizza shop, breaking everything in sight, and setting fire to the shop. This scene stands out because the JD's crime was committed against another race, and because that other race *did not* have JDs in the film. This only happens two other times, once in the top eight (*Grand Canyon*) and once in the bottom 16 (*Angel Town*).

There are two films, though, *Colors* and *Juice*, that do show JD vs. JD interracial crime, and they both occur in the top eight. In *Juice*, we see Bishop (Tupac Shakur) get into a verbal confrontation with a few Puerto Rican JDs over whether Bishop had talked to the cops about them. The Puerto Rican gang eventually beats up Bishop, but Bishop gets revenge by shooting and killing the Puerto Rican gang leader. This is one of the *very rare* instances of *interracial* JD conflict.

⁷⁰ The bottom 16 films contain only one instance of interracial crime.

⁷¹ The reason Mookie threw the garbage can in the first place was because he was angry; a white cop had just choked to death Radio Raheem, an innocent juvenile.

So, while interracial JD conflict does not usually occur in the 24 films, it does occur in four of the top eight films. Out of the four instances of interracial conflict, two are between JDs and adults, while the other two are between JDs and JDs.

Crimes Committed Against Whom?

JDs in the top eight films commit crimes against JDs, adults, juveniles, and cops, more often than do JDs in the bottom 16 films.⁷² Three of the top eight films show JDs committing crimes against three of the four possible categories. This happens only twice in the bottom 16. Also, compared to JDs in the bottom 16, JDs in the top eight committed a disproportionate number of crimes for most categories.

Broken down by category, the numbers are as follows:

The JD vs. JD crime occurs in five of the top eight grossing films, and in seven of the bottom 16 grossing films.

JD vs. Adult crime occurs in five of the top eight grossing films, and in ten of the bottom 16 grossing films.

The JD vs. Juvenile crime occurs in three of the top eight grossing films, and in three of the bottom 16 grossing films.

JD vs. Cops crime occurs in all five of the top five grossing films, and in six of the top eight grossing films, but only in three of the bottom 16 grossing films.

This statistical overview suggests that films showing JDs committing crimes against a multitude of demographics made the most money. Specifically, the films that showed JDs taking on cops made the most money of all.

⁷² Overall, JDs commit crime against other JDs in 15 films, against adults in 15 films, against juveniles in 10 films, and against cops in nine films.

JD v. JD Crimes

When a JD commits a crime against another JD, it most likely stems from an interpersonal problem between the two. In other words, it is *not* a random event. How these problems or issues between the individuals begin varies. In some cases, it is because one JD disrespected another (*Boyz n the Hood*). In others, it is because a JD bothered another JD's sister (*Menace II Society*), or it could be because one JD thinks that another JD squealed on him to the cops (*Juice*).

When the JDs commit crimes on other JDs, they often do so in small groups, not alone.⁷³ For example, in *Boyz n the Hood*, three JDs drive by in a car and gun Ricky down because Ricky had disrespected them earlier in the film while walking through Crenshaw. To retaliate, a few of Ricky's friends, most notably Doughboy and Tre, drive around and search for Ricky's killers. When they find Ricky's killers, Doughboy systematically kills all three.

Almost the same exact scenes happen in *Menace II Society*. A few JDs kill a cousin of Caine's. In response, Caine and his friends kill the JDs that killed his friend. "I never killed nobody before, but when they killed my cousin, I knew I was gonna kill them," says Caine. Naturally, the friends of the slain JDs respond; in this case by doing a

⁷³ There is an exception to this. While most films show a group of JDs committing crimes against other JDs, a few films (*Menace II Society*, *Juice*) depict the JD alone committing crimes. In these cases, the JD usually commits heinous acts that his JD counterparts would not. In these few cases I deem the JD a super-predator. For more on the portrayal of super-predators in the delinquency films, see Chapter 7.

drive-by shooting against Caine and his friends. As these examples show, the crimes were committed in small groups and there was a reason for each crime.⁷⁴

JD vs. JD crimes constitute a large part of the crimes committed in the films. *Don't be a Menace* tries to spoof the high volume of JD vs. JD violence. The opening scene depicts a Los Angeles street and a JD talking to the audience. This boy is promptly shot to death by another who continues speaking the now dead JD's lines; this happens once more. The point of these quick, senseless killings is to poke fun at the high volume of JD on JD violence in the delinquency genre.

JD vs. Adult Crimes

While JDs do commit crimes against adults in five of the top eight films, the child-adult encounter is not the focus of the films. Rather, the films focus on the plight of JDs and the crimes they commit against other JDs. For example, in the beginning of *Menace II Society*, O-Dog robs a convenience store and kills the owners; we do not see O-Dog commit crimes against adults throughout the rest of the film.

A similar situation happens in *Juice* when Bishop, Q, Steel, and Raheem rob a convenience store, and Bishop shoots and kills the cashier. The quartet wanted to get some money quickly, so they worked together to set up an alibi (Q's DJ competition), and then robbed the store. This is one of the only instances where the JDs committed a

⁷⁴ These two examples represent the general way in which JD on JD crimes are portrayed – in small groups. I have defined this as “group process” (for further discussion, see Chapter 7).

crime against adults.⁷⁵ The other crimes were mainly against other JDs (themselves actually).⁷⁶

Only in *Do the Right Thing* is JD vs. Adult crime the focus of the film. Toward the end of the film, a state of chaos occurs in the Bedford-Stuyvesant streets after a cop kills Radio Raheem. Mookie throws a trash can into Sal's pizza shop window, and JDs (as well as some adults) plunder and set Sal's and other white-owned stores ablaze. This scene is the culmination of much racial tension throughout the film; until this point, little if any crime had been committed.

JD v. Non-Delinquent Juvenile Crimes

JDs commit the least amount of crime against non-delinquent juveniles.⁷⁷ This makes sense because most of the crimes the JDs commit are either to achieve revenge or respect, not for fun. Therefore, one would not expect them not to commit crimes against non-delinquent juveniles. When the JDs do commit such crimes, it usually is not on purpose.

In *Colors*, JDs kill an innocent girl in a drive-by shooting. She was not the target; the gang members she was hanging out with were. In *Boyz n the Hood*, a few older JDs steal a football from Ricky, but eventually give it back. Short, individual instances like these represent how JDs commit crimes against innocent juveniles. That JDs steer clear of non-delinquent juveniles seems purposive on the filmmakers' part. Juveniles provide

⁷⁵ Another instance is when the quartet works together to steal records from a record store. Q distracts the female clerk with charming banter as his accomplices pilfer records.

⁷⁶ The one film that blatantly does not adhere to this generalization is *Original Gangstas*. This film is about two gangs, the Diablos and the Rebels, but a large portion focuses on two old, former gang members and their violence against the two gangs.

⁷⁷ This is true for the bottom 16 films as well; in only three do JDs commit crimes against non-delinquent juveniles.

no way for the JDs to gain respect or revenge. Since the non-delinquent juveniles in these films do not give the JDs a reason to go after them, the JDs largely ignore them.⁷⁸

Crime Type (Personal versus Property)

Every contemporary film shows a JD committing both personal crime *and* property crime. Personal crime is defined as crime that directly physically harms an individual. Property crime is defined as crime that harms an individual's belongings. Although the crimes vary from film to film, both types of crime show up in all 24 films. Both types also showed up in each of my historical films.

The conclusion that personal and property crime is in *every* film is not shocking; every film depicts the JDs committing a multitude of crimes. Anyone could skim through the films and probably stop on a JD committing some crime without even trying.

Three examples of personal crime are 1) in *New Jack City* when Pookie shoots at a cop, 2) in *Menace II Society* when O-Dog shoots and kills two Korean store owners,⁷⁹ and 3) in *Juice* when a few Puerto Rican JDs beat-up Bishop, a black JD, because the Puerto Ricans believed Bishop snitched on them to the cops. Three examples of property crime are 1) in *Colors* when the Crips do a drive-by shooting when a funeral is taking place for a Blood, 2) in *Do the Right Thing* when Mookie and others JDs destroy Sal's pizza shop and set it ablaze, and 3) in *Juice* when Q distracts the girl working at the record store so his friends can steal a lot of records by concealing them in a newspaper.

⁷⁸ *Heathers* is an exception to this generalization. J.D. (Christian Slater) kills a few juveniles that Heather (Winona Ryder) does not like, and J.D. ends up trying to kill everyone in the school by blowing it up. *Heathers*, though, comes off as a fantastical portrayal of a psychotic delinquent in a make-believe world.

⁷⁹ After killing the Koreans, O-Dog immediately commits a property crime by stealing from the cash register.

These six examples show a narrow range of the wide variety of personal and property crimes committed in every film.

Crimes Charged Against JDs/ JDs in Jail

The JDs commit a large number of crimes; however, they are often not formally charged for these crimes. No films in the top eight (and only three in the bottom 16) mention or show the JD being charged with a crime. This is quite significant considering that the JDs interact with cops in over 75% of the top eight films.⁸⁰ The high likelihood of JD - Cop interaction also makes one wonder why only one film in the top eight (and five in the bottom 16) portray JDs in jail.⁸¹

Guns Involved in Crime?

When JDs commit crimes, they often use guns. Seven of the eight top films, and 12 of the bottom 16 films, show JDs using guns to commit crime.^{82 83} In the top eight, JDs use guns against other JDs (5 films), adults (3 films), cops (2 films), and juveniles (2 films).⁸⁴

One can further categorize how JDs commit crimes against these different demographics. Against other JDs, the guns are used mostly in drive-by shootings or

⁸⁰ Chapter 8 further examines the JD – Cop interaction.

⁸¹ In the three films in which formal charges are filed against the JD, the JD is also shown going to jail.

⁸² *Don't be a Menace* spoofs the high volume of gun usage in films in a scene where Loc Dog is getting his clothes ready, and as part of his wardrobe he tries to match his gun to fit with his clothes.

⁸³ The one film in the top eight not to portray JDs using guns is *Do the Right Thing*.

⁸⁴ In the bottom 16 films, the numbers are roughly proportional. JDs use guns against other JDs in 7 films, adults in 5 films, cops in 3 films, and non-delinquent juveniles in 1 film.

shoot-outs. Against adults, they are used mostly to gain temporary power over the adults (two of three films show JDs robbing a store). Against cops, the guns are used mostly to stop the cops from chasing the JD. And against juveniles, the guns are used randomly; one cannot predictably tell when a JD will use a gun.

JDs typically use guns against other groups of JDs, especially drive-by shootings and shootouts. This is the case in *Boyz n the Hood* when a few JDs do a drive-by shooting and kill Ricky, Doughboy's brother; this is also the case in *Colors* when a Hispanic gang does a drive-by shooting on a Crip's party. The only exception to this is Bishop in *Juice*, who uses a gun to commit crime against his best friends, simply because he thinks that his friends will tell on him for killing a store clerk. This example is also different because Bishop only targets one JD at a time. When JDs in *Boyz n the Hood*, *Colors*, and *Menace II Society* used guns, they typically used them against a group of JDs, not individual JDs.

JDs use guns much less often against adults than against JDs; the primary use of guns against adults is to gain temporary power. In *Juice* and in *Menace II Society*, the guns are used to rob a convenience store. The only other time a JD uses a gun against an adult occurs in *Grand Canyon* when a JD shows Mack and Simon his gun in order to gain power and respect. So, unlike when JDs commit crimes against other JDs, there is no original intent to hurt or kill the adults.⁸⁵

The story is very different when cops are involved. When JDs commit crimes against cops, a gun is often involved and there is definitely intent to injure (and perhaps kill) the cops. For example, in *New Jack City*, when Scotty (Ice-T), a police officer,

⁸⁵ While there is no intent to hurt or kill, in the two scenes in *Juice* and *Menace II Society* where the JDs rob a convenience store, a JD ends up killing the clerks.

chases Pookie (Chris Rock), a JD, Pookie shoots at Scotty to try to get away.⁸⁶ Pookie did not care that Scotty was a cop; Pookie was willing to risk hurting or killing a cop to escape.⁸⁷

The same occurs at the end of *Colors*; Officer McGavin and Officer Hodges confront a Hispanic gang to arrest a few of them for killing approximately seven or eight rival gang members. When the two officers arrive, the Hispanic gang greets the officers with loads of gunfire, which ends up killing Officer Hodges. This gang included both JDs and adult gang members, so one cannot say that all the gunfire came from JDs. No matter the age, none of the Hispanics shied away from the officers, which means that they were willing to hurt or kill cops. This example, coupled with that of *New Jack City*, shows that JDs view law enforcement as an enemy.

Finally, JDs rarely use guns against juveniles who do not present a threat to them. The one instance that stands out occurs in *Menace II Society* when O-Dog kills a crack-head who says something that O-Dog doesn't like, and O-Dog shoots and kills him. This is completely random violence, and is not common in the top eight or the bottom 16 films. In fact, O-Dog's entire pattern of behavior is an anomaly. JDs do not usually concern themselves with non-delinquent, non-threatening juveniles; therefore, there are not many crimes that involve JDs using guns against them.

To summarize, JDs commit crimes with guns mostly against other JDs, and these crimes often involve a gang. JDs commit fewer crimes against adults, and the use of guns against adults is only to gain power temporarily. Differing from this is JDs' use of guns against cops, where the JDs use guns to hurt, injure, and deter cops from approaching or

⁸⁶ Scotty had just walked in on Pookie dealing drugs.

⁸⁷ Ultimately, Scotty ends up shooting Pookie in the toe, and Pookie is arrested anyway.

chasing them. Lastly, JDs rarely use guns to commit crimes against non-delinquent juveniles.

Why Are Guns Used?

Almost without fail, JDs use guns to commit crime, but the motive for committing the crime with a gun varies. In the top eight films, the motives are respect (6), revenge (5), money (2), and safety (2). Respect means that the JD showed a gun to gain respect or authority in a situation, or used a gun to commit a crime, which would give him respect among his peers. Revenge means that the JD used a gun in a crime against the person who already committed a crime against him or her. Safety means that the JD used the gun to defend himself. Fun means that the JD committed a crime with a gun just for the apparent enjoyment.

JDs use guns mostly to gain respect. For example, in *Don't be a Menace*, Loc Dog pulls a gun on Preach (Chris Spencer) and Crazy Legs (Suli McCullough) to make his point that the game they are playing (Po'nopoly, a take on Monopoly) is over. When Loc Dog shows his gun, Preach and Crazy Legs immediately stop playing the game and follow Loc Dog's commands. Loc Dog knew that a gun was an immediate way to get his point across and to gain respect for his wish to end the game. Achieving a high level of peer respect is mainly what the JDs seem to gain from their guns.^{88 89}

In addition to just *showing* their guns to gain respect, the JDs also *use* guns to gain respect. This happened primarily in the bottom 16 films, largely to portray a

⁸⁸ In *Straight out of Brooklyn*, the JDs use a gun to stick up a drug dealer and take his briefcase full of cash. The JDs understood the power of a gun, and therefore ensured their success by robbing the drug dealer with a gun.

distinctive gang mentality. For example, in *South Central*, Bobby (Glenn Plummer) becomes an O.G., original gangsta, by shooting and killing a man, and he thereby officially becomes a Deuce (name of a gang). Another example is in *Original Gangstas* where a new member of the Rebels is forced to shoot and kill a storeowner to prove his commitment to the gang.

The second most common reason JDs use guns is to get revenge. Revenge takes many forms, but it often involves JD #1 attacking JD #2 who has already committed a crime against him. This occurs in a multitude of films - *Boyz n the Hood*, *Colors*, *Don't be a Menace*, and *Menace II Society*. The important point is not that it happens a lot, but rather that when a JD tries to get revenge with a gun, it almost always leads to someone's death. All four of the aforementioned films ends with JDs dying due to gunfire from other JDs.

Money and safety are, respectively, the third and fourth most common reasons JDs use guns, but these reasons are rarely evident in the top eight films. Using guns for money only happens twice, in *Menace II Society* and *Juice*. In regard to using a gun for safety, two of the JDs keep a gun on them just to be prepared for offensive or defensive action. In *Boyz n the Hood*, Doughboy keeps one on him just in case he needs it. In *Menace II Society*, O-Dog keeps it on him for the same reason.⁹⁰

In conclusion, JDs most often use guns to gain respect – either by showing a gun or firing it. They also use guns to get revenge, which often results in JDs shooting each other. The two less frequent reasons for using a gun are to gain money and achieve safety (or at least to be ready to respond to a dangerous situation).

⁹⁰ Both Doughboy and O-Dog use guns for respect as well. Both conspicuously show off their guns to gain respect from their peers and enemies.

Chapter 7: Juvenile Delinquents, Gangs, and Group Process

In each film, the predominant social relationship among the JDs can be categorized as either part of a formal gang or just as friends. I define “gang” as an organized group that regularly commits crime together, whereas “friends” are small groups that may or may not commit crime together. The JDs are also portrayed, on occasion, as doing crimes alone.

The top eight films generally depict JDs committing crime with friends (6 films), and only rarely alone (1 film) or as part of a gang (1 film).⁹¹ Tre and Doughboy in *Boyz n the Hood* exemplify the “friend” relationship that occurs in most delinquency films. These two characters are not part of a gang, but are very loyal to each other (and a few other mutual friends). When Ricky (Morris Chestnut) is killed Tre, Doughboy and a few of their mutual friends immediately prepare to murder the JDs that killed Ricky.

Juice is another example. Bishop, Q, Steel, and Raheem are four high school teenagers who hang out together, and commit crime together. After hearing that a friend, Blizzard (Darien Berry), was shot and killed, the JDs decide to commit a crime together. Comparing the *Boyz n the Hood* and *Juice* examples, one can see that the JDs were originally friends before committing crimes together. Some catalyst spurred them to become delinquent and commit crimes as a group.

Although JDs commit a majority of the crimes with friends, *New Jack City* depicts a JD committing crime by himself, and *Colors* depicts JDs committing crimes as

⁹¹ In the bottom 16 films, the JDs commit crimes as friends in eight, alone in three, and as part of a street gang in five. The number of films in the bottom 16 depicting JDs with friends or alone is proportional to the top eight; the bottom 16, however, disproportionately depict the JDs as belonging to street gangs.

part of a gang.⁹² In *New Jack City*, Pookie is portrayed as a drug addict who deals drugs, and at his worst point, shoots at a cop who tries to break up his drug deal. The film mostly focuses on Pookie's rehabilitation and we never see him portrayed as part of a gang or with friends. The other "non-friend" example, *Colors*, depicts JDs as part of two organized gangs, the Bloods and the Crips. The JDs are part of a multitude of crimes throughout the film, most notably a scene in which one JD, Hightop (Glenn Plummer), is chased through a kitchen of a restaurant. Along with this we see drive-by shootings and a shoot-out with police at the end of the film.

Since most of the crimes are committed with friends, it is not surprising that the size of the groups the JDs commit crime with is relatively small - between two and five individuals. When the crime is committed with a gang, the numbers are much larger, usually between 10 and 50, with an average of approximately 20 gang members. Therefore, the relationship among the JDs greatly determines the number of JDs involved in a crime. A gang committing crimes means more JDs; just friends (or alone) means significantly less JDs committing crimes.

Inevitably, the number of JDs involved in a crime directly relates to group process, i.e., whether the delinquents are portrayed as acting purposively in groups when doing their crimes. Nearly all of the top eight films (7) exhibit group process, and likewise in the bottom 16 films (only three of these do not exhibit group process). So, the JD films are overwhelming about how groups of kids come together and interact in doing crime: juvenile delinquency is a social act.

⁹² Gangs are much more prevalent in the bottom 16 films. In five -- *187*, *Blood In, Blood Out*, *Mi Vida Loca*, *Original Gangstas*, and *South Central* -- the JDs are greatly involved in gang-on-gang conflict. These gangs are usually quite large: an average size of 20 and a range between 10-50 gang members.

Super-predator

In 1995, as we saw earlier, John Dilulio created the term “super-predator” to describe a trend he saw toward an increasing number of juveniles committing increasingly violent crimes. Evaluating the characters in the JD films by his definition, only two of the top eight films, in my judgment, portray a super-predator in action – *Menace II Society*, and *Juice*.

In *Menace II Society*, O-Dog perfectly fits the bill of a super-predator; a quote from O-Dog’s close friend, Caine, might describe it best: “O-Dog [is] the craziest nigga alive, America’s nightmare – young, black, and didn’t give a fuck.” O-Dog’s carefree attitude becomes very apparent at the beginning of the film when he and Caine rob a convenience store. In this scene, a female Korean clerk bugs O-Dog and Caine, telling them to “hurry up and buy” and not to drink beer in the store. Annoyed by the clerk, O-Dog and Caine check out, at which point the male Korean clerk says to O-Dog, “I feel sorry for your mother.” O-Dog flips out over this utterance, pulls out his gun and shoots both clerks. He goes on to steal the money from the cash register and the video surveillance tape. Later in the film we see O-Dog playing and replaying the robbery tape for his friends, reveling in his killing.

O-Dog’s willingness to use deadly force, and to do so without remorse, is what defines him as super-predator. A second example of O-Dog as super-predator occurs when he and Caine are getting ready to get revenge on the people who shot Caine and Caine’s cousin. Caine says, “I ain’t kill old people or kids,” to which O-Dog says, “Shit,

I'll smoke anybody. I just don't give a fuck." In the next few scenes we see O-Dog and Caine opening fire, killing the guys who killed Caine's cousin.⁹³

Bishop in *Juice* is eerily similar to O-Dog in *Menace II Society*. Bishop commits crimes without caring whom it affects; all Bishop cares about is himself, and how he can gain power over others. Specifically, Bishop is after "juice," a slang word meaning respect/power over others. Bishop wants "juice" from everyone, especially his friends and enemies on the street.

To get this "juice", Bishop will do anything, which includes killing his friends. For example, when Q tells Bishop he's crazy, Bishop puts a gun to Q's head and tells him,

I am crazy, but you know what else? I don't give a fuck. I don't give a fuck about you. I don't give a fuck about Steel, and I don't give a fuck about Raheem either. I don't give a fuck about myself"... Look, I ain't shit. I ain't never goin' be shit. And you less of a man than me so as soon as I decide that you ain't goin' be shit, POW [Q pretends as if hand is a gun and shoots it at Raheem]. So be it. You remember that motherfucker, cause I'm the one that y'all need to be worried about. Partner.

In the scenes that follow, we see Bishop shoot two of his best friends, Steel and Q, because he does not think they are respecting him, and because he believes they will snitch. Bishop's mind is portrayed as completely warped by the pursuit of power and respect.

While both Bishop and O-Dog mostly fit Dilulio's description of a super-predator, it is important to note that they are much older than the youth Dilulio was mainly trying to bring attention to. He predicted that the JDs of the future would be much younger (10-

⁹³ Another scene in which O-Dog kills a crack-head cements his image as a super-predator. In this scene, a crack-head offers O-Dog some cheeseburgers. O-Dog becomes irate at the crack-head and kills him in broad daylight.

12 years old) than Bishop and O-Dog, who are between 17 and 18 years old. Also, Dilulio predicted that there would be a wave of super-predators, not just certain individuals who clearly stood out as the very worst of their JD peers. Only these two films portray characters as super-predators; none of their JD counterparts in either film are nearly as violent.⁹⁴

To summarize, *Menace II Society* and *Juice* are the only two among the top eight JD films that show super-predators in action. But in both cases, the super-predator characters fit within the normal age range of JDs; they are not the young adolescent “crazies” that Dilulio was trying to focus public attention on.

⁹⁴ This is also the case in *Heathers*, where a JD commits crime without remorse. But he is the only JD in the entire film.

Chapter 8: Juvenile Delinquents and Cops

Cops are present in all top eight JD films, and the delinquents interact with the cops in each of them. This pattern differs from the bottom 16 films, in which cops and JDs interact in only six.

The cops' behavior in the films varies in many ways, but their actions can be broken down into two general categories, negative and positive. A cop's behavior is negative if he uses unnecessary force, insults citizens, or is corrupt. In other words, the cop's behavior is not positive, which includes protecting the public and generally following proper police procedure. In six of the top eight films, the cops are portrayed as negative; in only two of the top eight films are cops portrayed in a positive light.⁹⁵

Negative portrayals of cops almost always include some type of racist or obviously oppressive behavior. For example, in *Boyz n the Hood* Tre and Ricky are pulled over and harassed by a cop. The cop asks Tre what gang he is a part of, wrongly assuming that Tre is part of a gang, and then he puts a gun to Tre's neck to intimidate him. The cops unnecessarily harassed Tre and Ricky, making it seem as if their agenda all along was just to harass the boys.

This scene from *Boyz n the Hood* is one of many in which cops use excessive and/or racist behavior to unfairly treat JDs. A similar scene occurs in *Menace II Society* when Caine and Sharif (African-Americans) are physically abused by cops, arrested, and then dropped off in Hispanic gang territory. The unstated but obvious point of the scene

⁹⁵ The bottom 16 films depict a much more even-handed representation of cops. In four the cops are portrayed as negative and in three as positive (they are not portrayed in nine of the 16 films).

is that the cops hoped the Hispanics would cause further harm to Caine and Sharif for being two African-Americans in Hispanic territory.⁹⁶

Another example occurs in *Do the Right Thing* just before Mookie throws a garbage can into Sal's pizza shop window. Cops show up to contain juveniles who are mad at Sal, the local pizza owner.⁹⁷ While trying to contain the juveniles, a few cops grab Radio Raheem to restrain him, but one of the white cops actually chokes and kills Raheem. There was no need to kill Raheem; he was not violent or causing any sort of problem.⁹⁸ Subsequent chaos ensues as the African-American juveniles pillage the stores owned by whites.

These experiences of injustice lead JDs to have a jaded attitude toward cops. In *Do the Right Thing*, for example, Cee (Martin Lawrence) states, "It's not even safe in our own neighborhood." Caine from *Menace II Society* reinforces this sentiment by stating, "Growing up in the hood, we were used to getting sweated by the cops. I mean they would follow us in the car and turn away. I mean they would stop us for no reason and question us, especially with a car like mine...I knew we was in for it."

JDs in the films feel a visceral, overwhelming distrust toward cops. Whenever cops become involved in their lives, JDs always assume the worst. An example occurs in *Juice* when Q is being questioned by police and states, "If you want us to be guilty, then

⁹⁶ A few Hispanics actually took Caine and Sharif to the hospital, the exact opposite of what the police had hoped.

⁹⁷ *Buggin' Out* (Giancarlo Esposito), a young, black, adult male, led a group against Sal and his pizza shop because Sal refused to put pictures of African-Americans on his wall. Sal would only display pictures of Italian-Americans.

⁹⁸ Another example of getting arrested or assaulted by a cop for doing nothing occurs in *Don't be a Menace* when Ashtray and Loc Dog are arrested. According to Ashtray, the only reason "We got arrested [was] for being black on a Friday night."

we'll be guilty," implying that the cops have ultimate control, and that they also have an agenda to persecute African-American juveniles.^{99 100 101}

While cops generally act highly negatively toward JDs (not unlike the cop-JD relationship in the historical films), this is not always the case. For example, in *New Jack City*, Scotty Appleton, a cop, works with Pookie to get him off drugs. Scotty even goes so far as to give Pookie a job working for the police once Pookie is clean. Pookie does eventually relapse, but Scotty sticks by Pookie, helping Pookie out when he gets caught in the middle of a police sting operation on a major drug dealer.

Colors brings both the negative and positive portrayals of cops together, allowing one to see two distinct ways cops can deal with JDs. Officer McGavin favors a more hands-on, aggressive (negative) approach when dealing with JDs. For example, to stop a JD from tagging a wall, McGavin takes the spray paint can and spray paints the JD's face. Another example is when McGavin punches a drug dealer because McGavin thinks the drug-dealer looks at him wrong.¹⁰² On the other hand, Officer Hodges favors a more cooperative, responsible (positive) way of dealing with JDs. For example, when Hodges' car is hit with a brick and he finds the group of JDs that were probably responsible, he

⁹⁹ *Don't be a Menace* parodies how cops control JDs in the films. In this scene, the police approach Ashtray and Loc Dog like they are going to arrest them, but instead the cops pull out a speakerphone and yell ridiculous things at them, including "strike a pose" and "rubber-baby-bubble-bumpers."

¹⁰⁰ Even with this supposed agenda, the cops' interactions with the JDs rarely result in the JD going to juvenile court; it only occurs once in the films of the late 1980s and 1990s (*New Jersey Drive*).

¹⁰¹ In a few cases, the JDs do not just "take it" from the cops; some fight back. This most notably occurs in the final scenes of *Colors* in the shootout between a Hispanic gang and two officers, and in the car-chase scene when a Crip shoots at the officers as they chase him. In the final shootout, one of the Hispanics actually kills Officer Hodges.

¹⁰² One of the scenes shows a community meeting in which community members raise concerns about police violence. One says, "Cops are treating community members like criminals right in front of our kids."

opts to talk it out with the JDs rather than immediately use brute force. Hodges' way of policing was to create rapport with the JDs. He stated, "If you try to fight every son of bitch on the street, you'll never make it. You'll never make it 20 years." Hodges saw police brutality as counter-productive to reducing crime, and felt that working collaboratively with JDs (without condoning their behavior) would yield better results.

In conclusion, the top eight films mostly portray cops negatively; the cops are the enemy, a mutually shared perspective. Often these cops physically and verbally abuse JDs. This behavior leads many of the JDs in the films to believe that the cops are out to get them, and that the police want to control them as part of a racist or otherwise discriminatory "agenda." But not all cops are portrayed this way. A few are portrayed positively, shown as trying to help JDs and acting as sensible and fair enforcers of the law. Even with these few exceptions, the overall perspective is that cops desire to harm JDs, not help them or treat them fairly.

Chapter 9: Epilogue

At the end of Chapter 2, I stated:

“My main goal is to clearly explain the typical characteristics of the most “successful” (i.e., most money earned) juvenile delinquency films. Stated another way, if given the opportunity to make a commercially successful delinquency film between 1988 and 1997, what characteristics, in hindsight, would I have wanted to include?”

In order to answer this broad question, one must first answer four smaller questions about the portrayal of JDs in the most successful delinquency films: 1) Who are they? 2) What crimes do they do? 3) Are group process and gangs central? 4) What is the relationship between JDs and the police?

Who are the JDs in the top eight films? Demographically, they are portrayed primarily as male, black, and 16 – 21 years old. This generalization holds for all of the top eight films except *Colors* and *Juice*, where a few Hispanics were included, and *Colors*, which portrayed a very young JD (perhaps as young as 12).

There is no exception for gender: all of the JDs in the top eight films are males.¹⁰³

Moving beyond simple demographics, a few patterns emerge regarding the JDs' lifestyle, specifically regarding attendance in school and drug usage. In half of the top eight films the JDs are in high school, and in one other film a JD is portrayed as having graduated from high school. But while school figures in the lives of the delinquents in a majority of the films, the school's actual role is minimal. Most references to school occur in conversation only and are not part of the action.

¹⁰³ One exception does exist, but it occurs in the bottom 16 films. *Mi Vida Loca* portrays female JDs along with male JDs.

For example, in *Juice*, Q's mom tells him that he should go to the ACME school – that's it. Rarely are JDs shown in school or doing homework. In *Juice*, for example, when Q (Omar Epps) goes to open his school locker, he cannot even remember the combination; he has been gone from school long enough to forget the quotidian task of opening his locker.

Quite different are drugs, which thoroughly pervade the JD films. JDs in six of the top eight films use drugs, most often alcohol, crack, and weed. The JDs, however, are not usually portrayed as addicts.¹⁰⁴ Their drug usage is very casual. For example, in *Boyz n the Hood* Doughboy and his friends drink 40-ounce beers while sitting on the porch stoop. Rarely does the drug usage extend beyond this humdrum kind of portrayal.¹⁰⁵

Actual crimes committed by JDs, most of which are quite serious in nature, are portrayed much more commonly in the top eight than in the bottom 16 films I examined. This generalization covers all sorts of crimes: against other JDs, non-delinquent juveniles, adults, and cops. I conclude from this that the films that made the most money in the late 1980s and 1990s graphically showed the most crime and violence. Violence paid, at least for the filmmakers.

But why are these JDs committing so much crime? The two main reasons suggested by the films are: 1) to gain respect from friends or enemies, and 2) to gain revenge against a person who already committed a crime against the JD. These two reasons illuminate broad patterns of action in the films. When a JD commits a crime against another JD, it is generally

¹⁰⁴ One exception does exist: Pookie in *New Jack City* is a crack addict who beats the addiction, but then relapses.

¹⁰⁵ In the historical films, school also plays a minor role in JDs' lives (the one notable exception being *City Across the River*). In regard to drug usage, the historical films also portray JD drug use as casual; the only slight difference is that the historical JDs only used alcohol while more contemporary JDs use a variety of substances.

not a random event, but rather to resolve a specific problem or issue with his victim. His aim is to seek respect, or revenge, or both. One of the most famous instances in the delinquency genre occurs in *Boyz n the Hood* when Ricky is gunned down, after which Doughboy responds by stalking and killing the people that killed Ricky. Retaliatory violence like this creates an ongoing cycle of criminal action throughout the films.

When JDs commit these crimes, they usually do so in small groups (2-5) of friends. This dynamic occurs in seven of the top eight films. Therefore, group process, committing crimes in an organized way, is the common way to portray juveniles. To my surprise, however, street gangs are not central to the action in the top eight delinquency films, occurring only once. Also not very common in the films are JDs who commit crimes entirely on their own initiative and by themselves.

In my research, I was particularly on the look-out for the portrayal of so-called super-predators: the amoral, extremely violent JDs that were alleged by several scholars in the 1990s to represent a new type of delinquent who was more vicious than delinquents at any time in the past. I found JDs fitting this profile in only two of my top eight films, *Menace II Society* and *Juice*. In these films, the super-predators do indeed kill without remorse, just as super-predators were alleged to do, and both individuals conspicuously revel in their crimes. But, in the end, there were only two of them, leading me to conclude that the super-predator was not a common character in the most successful delinquency films of the late 1980s and 1990s.

Even though very few JDs are portrayed as super-predators, the cops in the delinquency films treat the kids very harshly, without a touch of sympathy or effort to work

with or help them. The JDs understandably believe that the cops are out to get them -- that the police want to control JDs as part of a vendetta-driven, social control “agenda.”

A slight modification of this generalization involves the good cop/bad cop dichotomy portrayed in *Colors*, which pits Officer Hodges (Robert Duvall) and Officer McGavin (Sean Penn) against each other. Officer Hodges believes in creating rapport with JDs, an effort to reform their behavior through cooperation. Officer McGavin, however, believes in a more physical, unsympathetic approach, an extreme example of which is McGavin’s stopping a JD from tagging a wall by taking the JD’s spray-paint can and spray-painting his face. Most cops in the JD films are portrayed as variants of Officer McGavin -- as harsh, uncompromising, brutal adversaries of delinquent youth.

In sum, my research reveals several overarching characteristics of the most popular JD films of the late 1980s and 1990s. To create a box office smash via the delinquency genre, producers generally served up protagonists who were male, black, mid- and older teens who had minimal interaction with school, regularly used drugs, committed vicious crimes in order to gain respect or revenge from their victims (i.e., their crimes were not random), and committed crimes with groups of 2-5 friends (but not as part of formal gangs). The delinquents were generally not portrayed in the psychotic image of the so-called super-predator; at the same time, the cops fiercely hated them and their relationships with the delinquents were almost uniformly hostile and antagonistic.

It remains for future researchers to compare and contrast these prominent characteristics of the most successful delinquency films of the late 1980s and 1990s with those of earlier and more recent time periods. I believe the research methodology I have

created can serve as a model to further develop this under-studied topic in American social and cultural history.

APPENDIX I

Category Groupings and Definitions

Category Groupings

1. **Box Office/ Director**
 - Box Office
 - Director
 - *Gender of Director*
 - *Race of Director*
2. **Who Are the JDs?**
 - Gender of JDs
 - Age of JDs
 - Race of JDs
 - What on What Crime (race)?
3. **The JD Lifestyle – Children, School, Mentors, Church, Drugs**
 - JDs Have Children?
 - JDs in School?
 - JDs Have Mentors?
 - Church Present in JDs' lives?
 - JDs use Drugs?
 - *What Drugs Do the JDs Use?*
4. **The JD Economic Lifestyle**
 - Predominant House Type
 - JDs' Source of Livelihood
 - JDs Have Jobs?
 - Low, Mid., Upper Class?
 - Place Where Film is set
 - *Type of Community*
5. **JD Family Structure**
 - Family Structure of JDs
 - *JD Parent Type*
 - *JD Parents on Drugs?*
 - *JDs Parents Employed?*
6. **Crimes Committed – the Who and Why**
 - Crimes Committed
 - *Crimes Committed Against Whom?*
 - *Reason for Crime*
7. **Crimes Committed – Crime Type, JD Legal Consequences**
 - Personal Crime by JDs?
 - Property Crime by JDs?
 - Crimes Charged to JDs
 - JDs in Jail?
8. **JD Crime vs. JDs, Adults, Non-Delinquent Juveniles, and Cops**
 - JD vs. JD Crime?
 - JD vs. Adult Crime?
 - JD vs. Non-Delinquent Juveniles Crime?
 - JD vs. Cops Crime?
9. **JDs and Guns**
 - Guns used by JDs?
 - *JDs Use Guns Against Whom?*
 - *Why Are guns used by JDs?*
10. **JDs and Gangs, Group Process, and Super-predators**
 - Relation to Other JDs
 - *Size of JD Groups*
 - Group Process?
 - Super-predator?
11. **JDs and Cops**
 - Cops Significant in Film?
 - How are Cops Portrayed?
 - JDs Interact with Cops?
 - *Juvenile Court?*
12. **JDs and Females**
 - JD Significant Relationship w/ F?
 - *JD Love Relationship?*
 - How Are Females Treated by Guys?
 - How Are Females Portrayed?

Explanation of Category Groupings

1. Box Office/ Director

Information regarding the Box Office total and Director of the films is paired together because both pieces of information are simply factual. Also, this pairing allows me to analyze which directors produced the most monetarily successful films.

2. Who Are the JDs?

Information regarding the JDs is factual – gender, race, what race committed crime, and on what race did it commit that crime. Objective pieces of information immediately lets one know what type of JD is being dealt with, and also allows one to see if any pattern exists between the gender or race of a JD and the race of the individual JD commits a crime against.

3. The JD Lifestyle – Children, School, Mentors, Church, Drugs

Information regarding the JD lifestyle includes items that may affect how the JD was raised or is currently living his or her life. All of these categories – children, school, mentors, church, and drugs -- are factors that can influence the JD's life in a major way, positively or negatively. Since these lifestyle factors are so disparate, they are included all together in one category for easy reference.

4. The JD Economic Lifestyle

Information regarding the JD economic lifestyle includes anything that sheds light on his financial situation. Since these economic factors are so disparate, they are included all together in one category for easy reference.

5. JD Family Structure

Information regarding the JD's family structure focuses on parents only.

6. Crimes Committed – the Who and Why

Information regarding the "who" and the "why" of crimes committed aims to understand the basic features of JD's actual criminal behavior. Since this information is so basic, yet so important, it is differentiated from the other Crimes Committed category, # 7.

7. Crimes Committed – Crime Type, JD Legal Consequences

Information regarding crime type and the legal consequences for the JD are in one category to help group their crimes into the basic categories of property versus personal crimes, while also showing what response (if any) the law took to the JDs' criminal activities.

8. JD Crime vs. Other JDs, Adults, Non-Delinquent Juveniles, and Cops

Information regarding whom JDs commit crimes against is complex, simply because JDs commit crimes against almost everybody. All of the people that the JDs offended in the films have been included in this category.

9. JDs and Guns

Information regarding guns is its own category because guns pervade the JD films. No other weapons appear nearly as often, and guns are extremely important in many of the films.

10. JDs and Gangs, Group Process, and Super-predators

Information regarding gangs, group process, and super-predators is all related because it demonstrates how JDs generally commit crimes in groups, and are portrayed such in the films

11. JDs and Cops

Information regarding cops includes anything regarding cops. Cops are their own category and are central to the JD films.

12. JDs and Females

Information regarding JDs and females reveals how filmmakers intended to portray these mostly non-delinquent females, as well as to show how the two genders interact.

Category Definitions

1. Box Office/ Director

- a. Box Office – The total money earned from people watching the film in movie theaters
- b. Director – The person credited with directing the movie
 - i. *Gender of Director* – The gender of the director
 - ii. *Race of Director* – The race of the director

2. Who Are the JDs?

- a. Gender of JDs – The gender of the JDs primarily involved in the film
- b. Race of JDs – The race of the JDs primarily involved in the film
- c. What on What Crime (race)? – The race of the JDs and who the JDs commit crime against

3. The JD Lifestyle – Children, School, Mentors, Church, Drugs

- a. JDs Have Children? – Whether or not the JD has borne children
- b. JDs in School? – The presence of school in the JDs' lives. If school is mentioned in some way, what level education has the JD achieved?
- c. JDs Have Mentors? – The presence of an older influence on the JDs' lives; this influence can be positive or negative, but must be instrumental in forming the ideas/actions of the JD
- d. Church Present in JDs' lives? – Does the church play any role in the life of the JDs?
- e. JDs use Drugs? – Whether or not the JDs use drugs in the film
 - i. *What Drugs Do the JDs Use?* – The drugs that the JDs use

4. The JD Economic Lifestyle

- a. Predominant House Type – The type of dwelling that the juvenile lives in; Apt meaning apartment
- b. JDs' Source of livelihood – Where the JDs get their money from
- c. JDs Have jobs? – The presence of conventional jobs in the JDs' lives
- d. Low, Mid., Upper Class? – The class level, according to wealth, of the JDs
- e. Place Where Film is set – The setting of the film
 - i. *Type of Community* – Type of setting (city, suburb, or rural) and the primary race of the individuals in the setting

5. JD Family Structure

- a. Family Structure of JDs – The number of parents present in the JD's life
 - i. *JD Parent Type* – A generalization about the parent; responsible, meaning adequately caring for child; irresponsible, meaning that the child is left without guidance; crack-head, meaning that the parent is on drugs; NA means that the presence of parents could not be detected
 - ii. *JD Parents on Drugs?* – The presence of drugs in the parents' lives
 - iii. *JDs Parents Employed?* – The presence of a job in the JDs' parents lives

6. Crimes Committed – the Who and Why

- a. Crimes Committed – The predominant types of crimes committed in the films
 - i. *Crimes Committed Against Whom?* – The people against whom the crime is committed

- ii. *Reason for Crime* – The explanation, explicit or implicit, for why the crime was committed

7. Crimes Committed – Crime Type, JD Legal Consequences

- a. Personal Crime by JDs? – Crimes committed by JDs cause harm to another person's body
- b. Property Crime by JDs? – Crimes committed by JDs cause harm to the another person's personal property
- c. Crimes Charged to JDs – The crimes charged to the JD when arrested
- d. JDs in Jail? – Do the JDs ever appear in jail?

8. JD Crime vs. JDs, Adults, Non-Delinquent Juveniles, and Cops

- a. JD vs. JD Crime? – The presence of JDs committing crime against other JDs
- b. JD vs. Adult Crime? – The presence of JDs committing crime against adults
- c. JD vs. Non-Delinquent Juveniles Crime? – The presence of JDs committing crime against non-delinquent juveniles
- d. JD vs. Cops Crime? – The presence of JDs defying or committing crimes against cops

9. JDs and Guns

- a. Guns used by JDs? – The presence of JDs use guns in the film
 - i. JDs Use Guns Against Whom? – The person against whom the gun is used
 - ii. When Are Guns Used by JDs? – The circumstances in which the gun is used, and also the perceived reason for using the gun

10. JDs and Gangs, Group Process, and Super-predators

- a. Relation to Other JDs – The predominant relationship among the JDs. A drug gang focuses on doing drug deals as an organized group; a street gang is an organized group that commits crimes that do not involve drugs; friends commit crime but not in an organized way (like a gang); alone means that the JD acts alone when committing crime
 - i. *Size of JD Groups* – The estimated size of the group of JDs based on scenes from the film; NA means that the size of the gang could not be determined from the film, or that a gang did not exist
- b. Group Process? – When committing crime, do the JDs act in groups or by themselves? If in groups, then the answer is yes. If not in groups, the answer is no
- c. Super-predator? – Whether or not at least one of the JDs portrays the characteristics of a SP as defined by John Dilulio

11. JDs and Cops

- a. Cops Significant in Film? – The presence of cops within the film
- b. How are Cops Portrayed? – What seems to be the purpose of the cops in film? More specifically, how the cops relate to the JDs
- c. JDs Interact with Cops? – The presence of cops being in direct contact with JDs
 - i. *Juvenile Court?* – The presence of JDs in juvenile court

12. JDs and Females

- a. JD Significant Relationship with Females? – The presence of a male JD’s significant relationship with a female
 - i. *JD Love Relationship?* – The presence of a love relationship between a male JD and a female
- b. How Are Females Treated by Guys? – Generally, the way in which females are treated by males in the film
- c. How Are Females Portrayed? – Generally, how the film characterizes females

APPENDIX II

The Top 24 Juvenile Delinquency Films (1988-1997): Film Characteristics Spreadsheet

1. Box Office/ Director

Film	Box Office	Director	<i>Gender of Director</i>	<i>Race of Director</i>
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	\$57,504,069	John Singleton	Male	Black
New Jack City (1991)	\$47,624,253	Mario Van Peebles	Male	Black
Colors (1988)	\$46,616,067	Dennis Hopper	Male	White
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	\$39,255,889	Paris Barclay	Male	Black
Grand Canyon (1991)	\$33,243,020	Lawrence Kasdan	Male	White
Menace II Society (1993)	\$27,900,000	Albert Hughes; Allen Hughes	Male; Male	Black; Black
Do The Right Thing (1989)	\$27,545,445	Spike Lee	Male	Black
Juice (1992)	\$20,146,880	Ernest R. Dickerson	Male	Black
Clockers (1995)	\$13,040,603	Spike Lee	Male	Black
Fresh (1994)	\$8,094,616	Boaz Yakin	Male	White
Kids (1995)	\$7,417,210	Larry Clark	Male	White
187 (1997)	\$5,716,080	Kevin Reynolds	Male	White
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	\$4,496,583	Taylor Hackford	Male	White
New Jersey Drive (1995)	\$3,565,508	Nick Gomez	Male	White
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	\$3,269,420	Allison Anders	Female	White
Original Gangstas (1996)	\$3,014,000	Larry Cohen	Male	White
Straight Out of Brklyn (1991)	\$2,712,293	Matty Rich	Male	Black
Basketball Diaries (1995)	\$2,424,439	Scott Kalvert	Male	White
South Central (1992)	\$1,373,196	Stephen Milburn Anderson	Male	White
Heathers (1988)	\$1,108,462	Michael Lehmann	Male	White
Angel Town (1990)	\$855,810	Eric Carson	Male	White
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	\$390,152	Marc Rocco	Male	White
Hurricane Streets (1997)	\$334,041	Morgan J. Freeman	Male	White
Squeeze (1997)	\$10,300	Robert Patton-Spruill	Male	Black
City Across the River (1949)	NA	Maxwell Shane	Male	White
Angels W. Dirty Faces (1938)	NA	Michael Curtiz	Male	White
Dead End (1937)	NA	William Wyler	Male	White
Public Enemy (1931)	NA	William A. Wellman	Male	White

2. Who Are the JDs?

Film	Gender of JDs	Age of JDs	Race of JDs	What on What Crime (race)? *(VV) = Vice Versa
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	Male	12 -- 18	Black	Black on Black
New Jack City (1991)	Male	17 -- 21	Black	Black on Black
Colors (1988)	Male	12 -- 18	Black, Hispanic	Black on Black, Black on Hisp (VV)*
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	Male	16 -- 21	Black	Black on Black
Grand Canyon (1991)	Male	17	Black	Black on White
Menace II Society (1993)	Male	17 -- 21	Black	Black on Black
Do The Right Thing (1989)	Male	17 -- 19	Black	Black on White
Juice (1992)	Male	17 -- 18	Black, Hispanic	Black on Black, Black on Hispanic (VV)
Clockers (1995)	Male	10; 17 -- 21	Black	Black on Black
Fresh (1994)	Male	9 -- 10	Black	Black on Black
Kids (1995)	Male	10 -- 15	White	Black on Black
187 (1997)	Male	15 -- 18	Hispanic	White on White
New Jersey Drive (1995)	Male	17 -- 19	Black	Black on Black
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	Male	14 -- 18	Hispanic	Hisp on Hisp
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	Female; Male	14 -- 18	Hispanic	Hisp on Hisp
Original Gangstas (1996)	Male	15 -- 21	Black	Black on Black
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	Male	17 -- 18	Black	Black on Black
Basketball Diaries (1995)	Male	15 -- 17	White	White on White
South Central (1992)	Male	10 -- 11; 18 -- 21	Black	Black on Black
Heathers (1988)	Male	16 -- 18	White	White on White
Angel Town (1990)	Male	16 -- 17	Hispanic	Hispanic on White
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	Male	17 -- 21	White	White on White
Hurricane Streets (1997)	Male	16 -- 18	White	White on White
Squeeze (1997)	Male	14 -- 15	Black	Black on Black
City Across the River (1949)	Male	15 -- 17	White	White on White, White on Hispanic
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	Male	15 -- 6	White	White on White
Dead End (1937)	Male	10 -- 13	White	White on White
Public Enemy (1931)	Male	14 -- 19	White	White on White

3. The JD Lifestyle - Children, School Mentors, Church, Drugs (Sheet 1/2)

	JDs Have Children?	JDs in School?	JDs Have Mentors?	Church Present in JDs' lives?
Film				
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	Yes	High School	Father	No
New Jack City (1991)	No	NA	Cop	No
Colors (1988)	No	NA	Older Gangsters	No
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	Yes	High School	No	Yes
Grand Canyon (1991)	No	High School	Uncle	No
Menace II Society (1993)	Yes	Graduated High School	Parents, Older Gangster, Grandpa	No
Do The Right Thing (1989)	Yes	NA	No	No
Juice (1992)	Yes	High School	No	No
Clockers (1995)	No	NA	Cop and Older Gangster	No
Fresh (1994)	No	NA	No	No
Kids (1995)	No	NA	No	No
187 (1997)	No	High School	Teacher	No
New Jersey Drive (1995)	No	High School	Older Brothers, Mother	No
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	No	NA	Older Gangsters	No
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	Yes	NA	No	No
Original Gangstas (1996)	No	NA	No	Yes
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	No	NA	No	No
Basketball Diaries (1995)	No	High School	High School Coach	No
South Central (1992)	Yes	No	Father	No
Heathers (1988)	No	High School	No	No
Angel Town (1990)	No	NA	No	No
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	No	NA	No	No
Hurricane Streets (1997)	No	NA	No	No
Squeeze (1997)	No	Middle School	Community Organization	No
City Across the River (1949)	No	High School	Community Organization	No
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	No	No	Priest, Adult Gang Member	Yes
Dead End (1937)	No	No	Adult, Adult Gang Member	No
Public Enemy (1931)	No	NA	No	No

The JD Lifestyle - Children, School Mentors, Church, Drugs (Sheet 2/2)

Film	JDs Use Drugs?	<i>What Drugs Do the JDs Use?</i>
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	JDs	Alcohol, Weed
New Jack City (1991)	JDs	Crack
Colors (1988)	JDs	Crack
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	JDs	Crack, Alcohol
Grand Canyon (1991)	NA	NA
Menace II Society (1993)	JDs	Alcohol, Weed, Base
Do The Right Thing (1989)	NA	NA
Juice (1992)	JDs	Alcohol
Clockers (1995)	NA	Crack, Alcohol
Fresh (1994)	NA	Crack
Kids (1995)	JDs	Alcohol, Weed
187 (1997)	JDs	Weed
New Jersey Drive (1995)	JDs	Crack, Alcohol
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	NA	NA
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	NA	Crack
Original Gangstas (1996)	NA	NA
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	NA	NA
Basketball Diaries (1995)	JDs	Crack
South Central (1992)	NA	NA
Heathers (1988)	NA	NA
Angel Town (1990)	NA	NA
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	JDs	Crack, Alcohol
Hurricane Streets (1997)	NA	NA
Squeeze (1997)	NA	NA
City Across the River (1949)	JDs	Alcohol
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	JDs	Alcohol
Dead End (1937)	NA	NA
Public Enemy (1931)	JDs	Alcohol

4. The JD Economic Lifestyle (Sheet 1/2)

Film	Predominant House Type	JDs' Source of Livelihood	JDs Have Jobs?	Low, Mid., Upper Class?
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	House	Parents	One does, others not	Low/ Middle
New Jack City (1991)	NA	NA	No	Low
Colors (1988)	NA	Drugs	No	Low
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	House	NA	Yes	Low
Grand Canyon (1991)	House	Parents	No	Middle
Menace II Society (1993)	House	Parents, Drug Dealing	No	Low
Do The Right Thing (1989)	NA	NA	Yes	Low
Juice (1992)	Apartment	I Sells Tapes, others NA	No	Low
Clockers (1995)	NA	Drugs	No	Low
Fresh (1994)	House	Drugs	No	Low
Kids (1995)	House	Parents	No	Middle
187 (1997)	NA	NA	No	Low
New Jersey Drive (1995)	House	NA	No	Lower
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	House	NA	No	Low/ Middle
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	House	Boyfriends, Family	No	Low
Original Gangstas (1996)	NA	NA	No	Low
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	Apartment	Parents	No	Low
Basketball Diaries (1995)	NA	NA	No	Middle
South Central (1992)	House	Working for Drug Dealers	No	Low
Heathers (1988)	House	Parents	No	Middle
Angel Town (1990)	NA	NA	No	Low
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	Homeless	Panhandling	No	Low
Hurricane Streets (1997)	House	NA	No	Low
Squeeze (1997)	NA	Parents	No	Low
City Across the River (1949)	House	Parents	No	Low/ Middle
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	Apartment	Adult Gangster	No	Low
Dead End (1937)	Apartment	NA	No	Lower
Public Enemy (1931)	House	NA	No	Low

The JD Economic Lifestyle (Sheet 2/2)

Film	Place Where Film is Set	<i>Type of Community</i>
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	S. Central L.A.	City, Black
New Jack City (1991)	New York City	City, Black
Colors (1988)	East L.A.	City Black
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	S. Central L.A.	City Black
Grand Canyon (1991)	L.A.	Suburb, Black and White
Menace II Society (1993)	Watts, L.A.	City, Black
Do The Right Thing (1989)	Brooklyn, NY	City, Black
Juice (1992)	Harlem, NY	City, Black
Clockers (1995)	Brooklyn, NY	City, Black
Fresh (1994)	NYC	City, Black
Kids (1995)	NYC	City, White
187 (1997)	L.A.	Suburb, Black and White
New Jersey Drive (1995)	Newark, New Jersey	City, Black
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	L.A.	City, Hispanic
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	L.A.	Suburb, Hispanic
Original Gangstas (1996)	Gary, IN	Suburb, Black
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	Brooklyn, NY	City, Black
Basketball Diaries (1995)	New York City	Suburb, White
South Central (1992)	S. Central L.A.	City, Black
Heathers (1988)	Eastern, USA	Rural, White
Angel Town (1990)	L.A.	City, Hispanic
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	Hollywood, CA	City, Black and White
Hurricane Streets (1997)	Western USA	Suburb, White
Squeeze (1997)	Boston, MA	City, Black
City Across the River (1949)	Brooklyn, NY	City, White
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	New York City	City, White
Dead End (1937)	New York City	City, White
Public Enemy (1931)	Chicago, IL	City, White

5. JD Family Structure

Film	Family Structure of JDs	JD Parent Type	JD Parents on Drugs?	JDs Parents Employed?
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	2 Parents; 1 Parent	Responsible; Irresponsible.	No; Yes	Yes, No
New Jack City (1991)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Colors (1988)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	1 Parent	Irresponsible	No	No
Grand Canyon (1991)	2 Parents; 1 Parent	Responsible	No; No	Yes
Menace II Society (1993)	2 Parents; 1 Parent	Irresponsible; Responsible	Yes; No	No
Do The Right Thing (1989)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Juice (1992)	2 Parents; 1 Parent	Responsible	NA	NA
Clockers (1995)	1 Parent, NA	Responsible; NA	No; NA	Yes; NA
Fresh (1994)	1 Parent	NA	Yes	No
Kids (1995)	1 Parent	Irresponsible	No	Yes
187 (1997)	1 Parent	NA	NA	NA
New Jersey Drive (1995)	1 Parent	Responsible	No	NA
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	1 Parent	NA	NA	NA
Original Gangstas (1996)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	2 Parent	Irresponsible	Yes	Yes
Basketball Diaries (1995)	1 Parent	Responsible	Yes	NA
South Central (1992)	2 Parent; 1 Parent	Irresponsible; Responsible	Yes; No	No; No
Heathers (1988)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Angel Town (1990)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	2 Parent; 1 Parent; NA	Irresponsible; Responsible	Yes; No	NA
Hurricane Streets (1997)	1 Parent	Irresponsible	No	NA
Squeeze (1997)	1 Parent	Irresponsible	No	NA
City Across the River (1949)	2 Parents; NA	Responsible; NA	No; NA	Yes.; NA
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dead End (1937)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Public Enemy (1931)	NA	NA	NA	NA

6. Crimes Committed – the Who and Why

6. Crimes Committed – the Who and Why				
Crimes Committed*	Crimes Committed Against Whom?	Reason for Crime		
Film				
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	Drive-by, Robbery, Murder, A & B	JDs, Juvenile, Cops	Revenge, Respect	
New Jack City (1991)	Theft, A&B, Drug Deals	Adults, Cops	Revenge, Respect	
Colors (1988)	Murder, Drive-By Shootings	JDs, Juveniles, Cops	Revenge, Respect	
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	Drive-by, Robbery, Murder	JDs, Adults, Juveniles, Cops	Fun, Revenge, Respect	
Grand Canyon (1991)	Murder, Drive-By Shootings	Adults, Cops	Fun, Respect	
Menace II Society (1993)	Robbery, A&B, Murder	JDs, Store Owners, Adult	Revenge, Respect, Fun	*Abbreviations Explained
Do The Right Thing (1989)	Break and Enter, Theft	Adults, Cops	Revenge	
Juice (1992)	Murder, Robbery	JDs, Adults, Juveniles	Respect, Money	A&B = Assault and Battery
Clockers (1995)	Murder, Drug Dealing	Adults	Money, Respect	Break and Enter = Breaking & Entering
Fresh (1994)	Assault and Battery, Burglary	Gangsters	Money	Carjack = Carjacking
Kids (1995)	Rape, Theft	Girls, Store Owner	Fun	Drive-by = Drive-by shooting
187 (1997)	Animal Brutality, Tagging	JDs, Teacher	Respect, Revenge	
New Jersey Drive (1995)	Carjack, Drive-by, Attempt Murder	JDs, Cops	Fun, Revenge	
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	Murder, Drive-by Shootings	JDs, Gangsters	Respect	
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	Murder, Drive-by Shootings	JDs, Gangsters	Respect	
Original Gangstas (1996)	Murder, Robbery, A&B	JDs, Gangsters	Respect, Revenge	
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	Robbery	JDs, Drug Dealers	Money, Revenge	
Basketball Diaries (1995)	Drug Dealing	None, property crime	Fun	
South Central (1992)	Robbery, Murder, Sell Drugs	Adults, Drug Dealers	Revenge, Respect, Money	
Heathers (1988)	Murder	Adult, Juveniles	Fun	
Angel Town (1990)	A & B, Burglary	Outsiders	Respect	
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	Murder, Burglary, A&B	Police, Store Owner, Criminal	Money, Self-defense	
Hurricane Streets (1997)	A & B, Murder, Robbery	JDs, Juveniles	Revenge	
Squeeze (1997)	Murder, Drug Dealing	JDs	Fun, revenge	
City Across the River (1949)	Murder, A&B	Teacher, Juveniles	Money, Accident	
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	Theft, Assault	Adults, Juveniles, Police	Fun, Gang Business	
Dead End (1937)	Stabbing, A&B, Robbery	JDs, Juveniles	Fun, Gang Business	
Public Enemy (1931)	Assault, Theft	Juveniles, Gangsters	Fun, Gang Business	

7. Crimes Committed – Crime Type, JD Legal Consequences

Film	Personal Crime by JDs?	Property Crime by JDs?	Crimes Charged to JDs	JDs in Jail?
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
New Jack City (1991)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Colors (1988)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Grand Canyon (1991)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Menace II Society (1993)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Do The Right Thing (1989)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Juice (1992)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Clockers (1995)	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Fresh (1994)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Kids (1995)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
187 (1997)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
New Jersey Drive (1995)	Yes	Yes	Armed Robbery, GTA, Assault	Yes
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Original Gangstas (1996)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Basketball Diaries (1995)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
South Central (1992)	Yes	Yes	Soliciting Prostitute, Drug Possess	Yes
Heathers (1988)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Angel Town (1990)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	Yes	Yes	A&B, Drug Possess, Loiter, GTA	Yes
Hurricane Streets (1997)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Squeeze (1997)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
City Across the River (1949)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Dead End (1937)	Yes	Yes	NA	No
Public Enemy (1931)	Yes	Yes	NA	No

8. JD Crime vs. JDs, Adults, Non-Delinquent Juveniles, and Cops

Film	JD vs. JD Crime?	JD vs. Adult Crime?	JD vs. Non-Delinq. Juv. Crime?	JD vs. Cops Crime?
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
New Jack City (1991)	No	No	No	Yes
Colors (1988)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grand Canyon (1991)	No	Yes	No	Yes
Menace II Society (1993)	Yes	Yes	No	No
Do The Right Thing (1989)	No	Yes	No	Yes
Juice (1992)	Yes	Yes	No	No
Clockers (1995)	No	Yes	No	No
Fresh (1994)	No	Yes	No	No
Kids (1995)	No	Yes	Yes	No
187 (1997)	No	Yes	No	No
New Jersey Drive (1995)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	Yes	No	No	No
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	Yes	No	No	No
Original Gangstas (1996)	Yes	Yes	No	No
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	Yes	Yes	No	No
Basketball Diaries (1995)	No	No	No	No
South Central (1992)	No	Yes	No	No
Heathers (1988)	No	No	Yes	No
Angel Town (1990)	No	Yes	No	No
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	No	Yes	No	Yes
Hurricane Streets (1997)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Squeeze (1997)	Yes	No	No	No
City Across the River (1949)	Yes	Yes	No	No
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dead End (1937)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Public Enemy (1931)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

9. JDs and Guns

Film	Guns used by JDs?	JDs Use Guns Against Whom?	Why Are Guns Used by JDs?
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	Yes	JDs	Revenge, Safety
New Jack City (1991)	Yes	Cops	Revenge, Respect
Colors (1988)	Yes	Cops, JDs, Juveniles	Revenge, Respect
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	Yes	JDs	Respect, Revenge, Fun
Grand Canyon (1991)	Yes	Adults	Respect, Fun, Safety
Menace II Society (1993)	Yes	JDs, Adults, Juveniles	Respect, Revenge, Money
Do The Right Thing (1989)	No	NA	NA
Juice (1992)	Yes	JDs, Adults	Respect, Money
Clockers (1995)	Yes	Adults	Respect
Fresh (1994)	No	NA	NA
Kids (1995)	No	NA	NA
187 (1997)	No	NA	NA
New Jersey Drive (1995)	Yes	Cops, JDs	Fun, Respect, Stealing Cars
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	Yes	JDs	Gang Meetings
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	Yes	JDs	Respect
Original Gangstas (1996)	Yes	JDs, Adults	Respect, Revenge, Safety
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	Yes	Adults	Robbery, Revenge
Basketball Diaries (1995)	No	NA	NA
South Central (1992)	Yes	JDs, Adults	Revenge, Respect, Safety
Heathers (1988)	Yes	Juveniles	Revenge, Fun
Angel Town (1990)	Yes	JDs	Firefight
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	Yes	Adults, Cops	Self-defense, Safety
Hurricane Streets (1997)	Yes	Cops	To Get Away
Squeeze (1997)	Yes	JDs	Revenge
City Across the River (1949)	Yes	Teacher	Accident
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	No	NA	NA
Dead End (1937)	No	NA	NA
Public Enemy (1931)	No	NA	NA

10. JDs and Gangs, Group Process, and Super-predators

Film	Relation to Other JDs	<i>Size of JD Groups</i>	Group Process?	Super-predator?
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	Friends	3 -- 7	Yes	NA
New Jack City (1991)	Alone	1	No	NA
Colors (1988)	Street Gang	15 -- 20	Yes	NA
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	Friends	2 -- 4	Yes	NA
Grand Canyon (1991)	Friends	2 -- 5	Yes	NA
Menace II Society (1993)	Friends	2 -- 5	Yes	SP
Do The Right Thing (1989)	Friends	NA	Yes	NA
Juice (1992)	Friends	4	Yes	SP
Clockers (1995)	Friends	2 -- 6	Yes	NA
Fresh (1994)	Alone	NA	No	NA
Kids (1995)	Friends	NA	Yes	NA
187 (1997)	Street Gang	10 -- 15	Yes	NA
New Jersey Drive (1995)	Friends	5 -- 10	Yes	NA
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	Street Gang	50+	Yes	NA
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	Street Gang	20+	Yes	NA
Original Gangstas (1996)	Street Gang	30+	Yes	SP
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	Friends	4	Yes	SP
Basketball Diaries (1995)	Alone	NA	No	NA
South Central (1992)	Street Gang	50	Yes	SP
Heathers (1988)	Alone	NA	No	SP
Angel Town (1990)	Friends	10	Yes	NA
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	Friends	6	Yes	NA
Hurricane Streets (1997)	Friends	5 -- 10	Yes	NA
Squeeze (1997)	Friends	5 -- 10	Yes	NA
City Across the River (1949)	Street Gang	6 -- 8	Yes	NA
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	Street Gang	6 -- 8	Yes	NA
Dead End (1937)	Street Gang	6 -- 8	Yes	NA
Public Enemy (1931)	Friends	NA	No	NA

11. JDs and Cops

Film	Cops Significant in Film?	How are Cops Portrayed?	JDs Interact with Cops?	<i>Juvenile Court?</i>
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	Yes	Negative	Yes	No
New Jack City (1991)	Yes	Positive	Yes	No
Colors (1988)	Yes	Positive	Yes	No
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	Yes	Negative	Yes	No
Grand Canyon (1991)	Yes	Negative	Yes	No
Menace II Society (1993)	Yes	Negative	Yes	No
Do The Right Thing (1989)	Yes	Negative	Yes	No
Juice (1992)	Yes	Positive	Yes	No
Clockers (1995)	Yes	Negative	Yes	No
Fresh (1994)	Yes	Positive	Yes	No
Kids (1995)	No	NA	No	No
187 (1997)	No	NA	No	No
New Jersey Drive (1995)	Yes	Negative	Yes	Yes
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	Yes	Negative	Yes	No
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	No	NA	No	No
Original Gangstas (1996)	No	Negative	No	No
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	No	NA	No	No
Basketball Diaries (1995)	No	NA	No	No
South Central (1992)	Yes	Positive	Yes	No
Heathers (1988)	No	NA	No	No
Angel Town (1990)	No	NA	No	No
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	Yes	Positive	Yes	No
Hurricane Streets (1997)	Yes	NA	No	No
Squeeze (1997)	Yes	NA	No	No
City Across the River (1949)	Yes	Positive	Yes	No
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	Yes	Positive	Yes	No
Dead End (1937)	Yes	Positive	Yes	No
Public Enemy (1931)	Yes	Positive	Yes	No

12. Male JDs and Females

Film	JD Significant Relationship w/ F?		How Are Females Treated by JDs? How Are Teenage Females Portrayed?	
		<i>JD Love Relationship?</i>		
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	Yes	Yes	Disrespected	Independent
New Jack City (1991)	No	No	Disrespected	Dependent
Colors (1988)	No	No	NA	NA
Don't Be a Menace (1996)	Yes	Yes	Disrespected	Dependent
Grand Canyon (1991)	No	No	NA	NA
Menace II Society (1993)	Yes	Yes	Disrespected	Independent
Do The Right Thing (1989)	Yes	No	Respected	Independent
Juice (1992)	Yes	No	Disrespected	Independent
Clockers (1995)	No	No	NA	NA
Fresh (1994)	No	No	NA	NA
Kids (1995)	No	No	Disrespected	Independent
187 (1997)	No	No	Disrespected	Independent
New Jersey Drive (1995)	Yes	No	Respected	Independent
Blood in, Blood Out (1993)	Yes	Yes	Disrespected	Dependent
Mi Vida Loca (1993)	Yes	Yes	Disrespected	Dependent
Original Gangstas (1996)	No	No	NA	NA
Straight Out of Brooklyn (1991)	Yes	Yes	Respected	Independent
Basketball Diaries (1995)	No	No	NA	NA
South Central (1992)	No	No	Disrespected	Dependent
Heathers (1988)	Yes	No	Disrespected	Independent
Angel Town (1990)	No	No	NA	NA
Where the Day Takes You (1992)	Yes	Yes	Respected	Independent
Hurricane Streets (1997)	No	No	NA	NA
Squeeze (1997)	No	No	NA	NA
City Across the River (1949)	No	No	Respected	Independent
Angels With Dirty Faces (1938)	No	No	NA	NA
Dead End (1937)	No	No	NA	NA
Public Enemy (1931)	No	No	NA	NA