IN THE WAKE OF VISUAL FAILURE:

BLACK MIRROR, SANDRA BLAND, AND THE ONTOLOGY OF THE GLITCH

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In December 2014, the UK series *Black Mirror* became available in the US through Netflix's video streaming service. A dystopian, Twilight Zone- inspired take on modern technology and its effects, *Black Mirror*'s season 2 episode "White Bear" provided an unintended critique of the deaths of Eric Garner and Walter Scott and the arrest of Sandra Bland, all of which were captured by mobile phone technologies and circulated on social networks. This talk puts into conversation these active crises of spectacular black suffering and the fictive world of *Black Mirror*, wherein the terms of a Black woman's incarceration is to be subjected to racial terror, utilizing the voyeurism of mobile phone spectators as psychological torture. While the visual capture of racial violence by these emerging visual technologies has often been praised as a preventative measure in providing transparency and safety, at the same time it has also been critiqued as voyeuristic consumption of black suffering. Using the footage of the Sandra Bland arrest as a dialogical space, this talk illuminates the failures of the technological rescue narrative, how the neoliberal carceral state is a space where black suffering becomes a literal commodity, and finally, how Twitter users' responses to the Bland arrest call into question the place of visual evidence and modes of witnessing.

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