

The  
Path

Forward

Project

Collections of voices from the Community

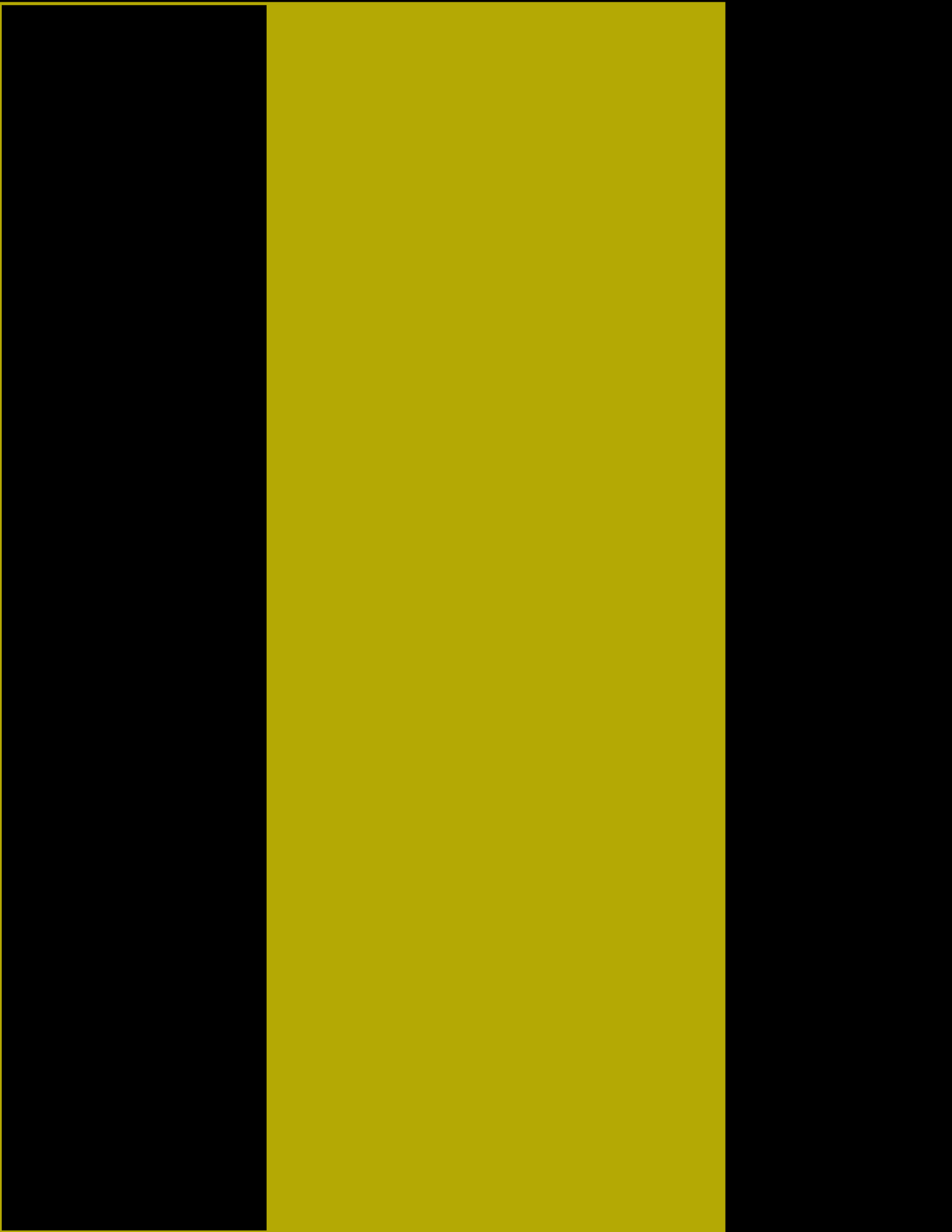


Cortez, Julio. 29 May, 2020. "A Protester in Minneapolis on Thursday Night". NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/racist-president-democrats-accuse-trump-inciting-violence-minneapolis-n1217871>

# The Path Forward Project

Presented by the Global Action Research Center

*All submissions were not altered in any way. They are presented as they were received.*





# Commemorating Black August

By Paul L Watson Jr. MSHS

The Release of The Path Forward Project in August 2021 is in commemoration of Black August. During Black August, we honor Black freedom fighters, many of whom were killed by the state or imprisoned for defending Black lives. This month is a time to reflect and learn about the legacies of Black revolutionaries, while we rededicate ourselves to the protracted struggles against white supremacy, colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism. We study, plan, and pledge to continue the work and fight for Black liberation.

Black August is a tradition that originated in California's prisons in the 1970's after the deaths of brothers Jonathan and George Jackson as well as other incarcerated Black men who sought freedom.

Below is the history of Black August told through excerpts from an article written by CNN reporter, Harmeet Kaur. The article is entitled *Activists are commemorating Black August. Here's the history behind the month-long celebration.*



People gather for the funeral of George Jackson in Oakland, California, in 1971.

(CNN) Activists and social justice organizations are celebrating the history of Black resistance this month in what's known as Black August.

George Jackson, an activist, died at a California prison on August 21, 1971. He had received one year to life in prison in 1960 for allegedly stealing \$70 from a Los Angeles gas station.

During his time behind bars, Jackson began studying the ideas of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, wrote Eric Cummins in "The Rise and Fall of California's Radical Prison Movement." He is considered one of the most outspoken voices on racism in the criminal justice system at the time.

In letters to his parents, his younger brother Jonathan, activist Angela Davis and others, Jackson articulated his frustration and rage over systemic racism and his imprisonment. The letters were ultimately published as a collection titled "Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson."

Then in 1970, Jackson and two other incarcerated Black men were charged with the murder of a White prison guard. That same year, Jackson's brother Jonathan was killed in a shootout with police outside the Marin County Courthouse after taking a judge hostage to try and secure his brother's release.

On August 21, 1971, George Jackson was killed at San Quentin State Prison. The report was that he hid a gun in his afro and used the gun to take a prison guard hostage and force him to open several cells. The report went on to say that Jackson was killed in the ensuing chaos as he and several other inmates attempted to escape from prison. Three guards and two other inmates were also killed.

A group of incarcerated people came together to commemorate the death of Jackson and other prisoners in what became known as Black August.

"So there was an idea that this could be a time that imprisoned people in the California prison system could use for reflection, study, and to think about how to strengthen their struggles," said Rachel Herzing, an activist who advocates for the abolition of prisons, in a 2016 interview with True Leap Press.

"During the month, people wouldn't use radios or television, would fast between sun up and sun down, and practice other measures of self-discipline. Eventually the commemorations during that month were taken up outside of prisons, too."

Social justice organizers also point out that numerous other instances of Black resistance against systemic racism and state-sanctioned violence took place in August, including Nat Turner's Rebellion, the March on Washington and the Watts Rebellion in Los Angeles.

August is also the birth month of Black nationalist leaders Marcus Garvey and Fred Hampton.

"Fifty years later, groups like Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and New Afrikan Independence Movement continue the Black August legacy of celebrations by amplifying our history of resistance and creating spaces for Black people to come together in community to recharge the revolution," the Movement for Black Lives notes on its website.

Black August is distinct from Black History Month

Black August is separate from Black History Month in February, which is a federally recognized celebration that calls on all Americans to reflect on how African-Americans have shaped US history.

Black August, which came about in the 1970's, specifically honors "political prisoners, freedom fighters, and martyrs of the Black freedom struggle," according to the Center for Constitutional Rights, a progressive advocacy group.

"Black August is a call for reflection, study, and action to promote Black liberation," Herzing told True Leap Press.

The singer Noname, who launched a book club last year that highlights works written by authors of color, is among those calling on people to engage with Black August.

She wrote on Twitter, "blk history month is beautiful but unfortunately like all black culture it has been co-opted by neoliberal capitalist and we rarely learn about all the contributions black radicals have made in resistance against this settler colonial nation state."

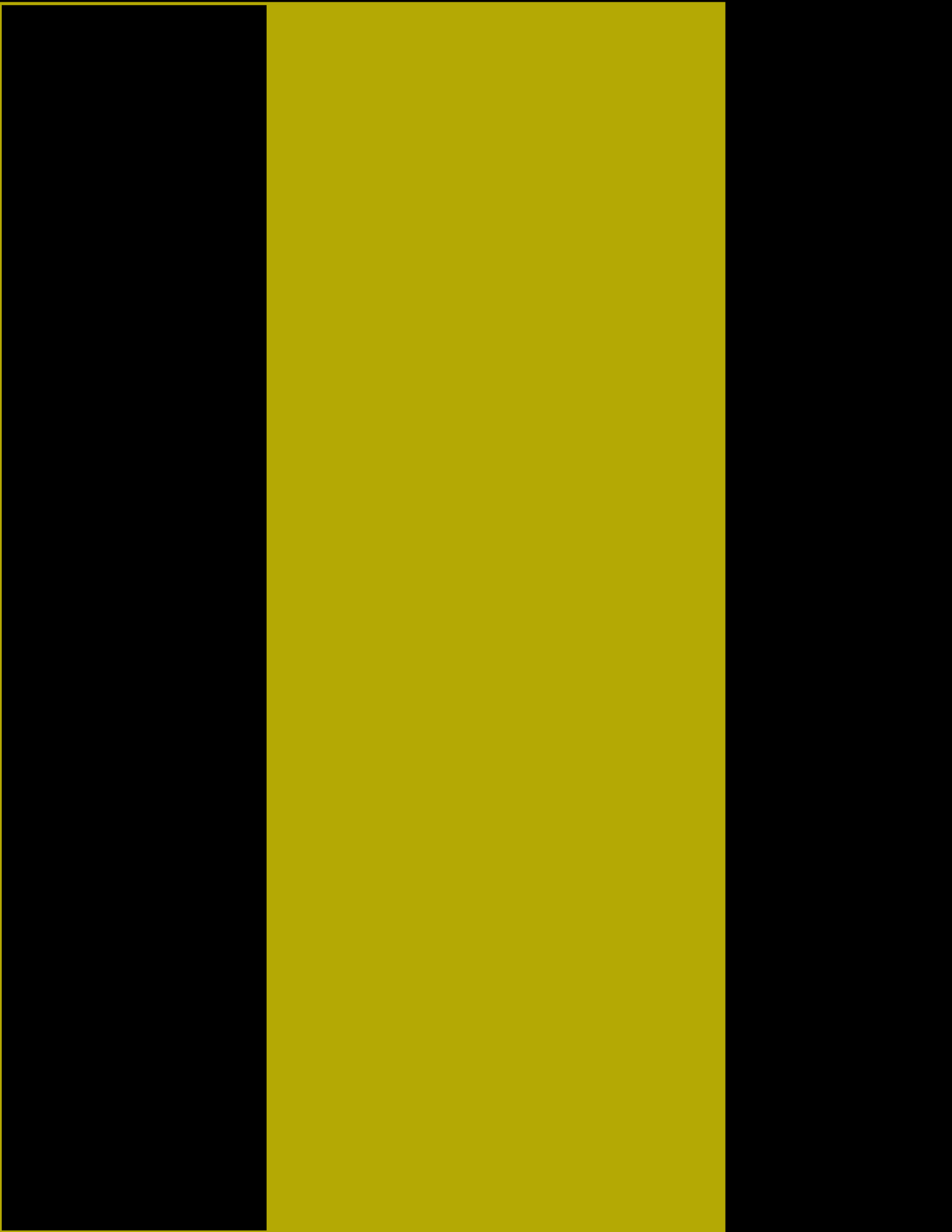
"We don't learn about political prisoners who sacrificed their lives to fight against imperialism/colonialism. Many of our revolutionaries are still incarcerated and are treated with specific repression because of their radical politics."



ROBERT KLEIN/AP

Noname released a list of books on prison reform and Black resistance movements to commemorate the month, including works by George Jackson, Assata Shakur and Octavia Butler.

Some people are taking time in August to learn about to learn about the struggle and so we thought that this would be a good time to release The Path Forward Project.



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# FOREWORD

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Paul L Watson, Jr.,

The Global Action Research Center solicited and organized this collection of responses to the 2020 uprising which was triggered by the murder of George Floyd by the police on national television.

The project entails collecting thoughts, impressions and critiques of the current uprising from a diverse group of people who are Black, White, Asian, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, young, old, poor, middle class, well-to-do, LGBTQ+, straight, female, and male. **All of the submissions are unedited and in the form of their original submission.**

People were invited to share:

Their understanding of what you see going on

Their personal experiences that support their understanding

What they think we can do to transform our country into one that demonstrates what a just, caring, and equitable society looks like.

We asked folks to relate their comments to one or all of the following content areas:

### **Racism**

**Truth and Reconciliation** – The South African model for Racial Healing should be adopted and adapted to the needs of USA. We need to launch a national healing campaign that is enacted at a neighborhood/regional level. The well-designed and tightly facilitated process has to allow all residents to express their feelings, as well as their experiences that defined those feelings. We need to have white people acknowledge their privilege under the current system, even if they feel that they have never said or acted in a racist manner. They should also share how they used that privilege to work for healing or not.

**Reparations** – Our society **must** face how we got to the current situation and what investment are we willing to make to atone for the centuries of this society's misconduct. If reparations are not distributed to individuals, then we need to dedicate economic strategies that address inequities in employment, business development, housing, education, health care, etc.

## Police Misconduct

**Accountability** - We must have an accountability system in place regarding law enforcement that ensures the public of an equal application of justice for all. Particularly, we must establish something that has not been present in the history of this nation, protection for and service to the Black community and all communities of color.

**Use of Force** – There must be a national policy for the use of force that is standard across the nation. That policy should prescribe specific situations that require an escalation of the use of force and what the escalation steps are.

## System Change

In a democratic society you need to have the majority of the people push for change. And if that is true then a key question becomes how we build the coalitions and collaborations necessary that brings people together across racial, class, gender, and age lines to work together to create a new America. There are four basic steps necessary for community change:

**Shared Vision** – We need to establish a community process that facilitates neighborhood people coming together to create a shared vision of what their desired future looks like. I was told many years ago, when discussing community change that *“It is our dreams that call us forth”*. So we must facilitate a process that brings people together in small groups and captures their hopes and dreams for what a new America looks like, how they would like to experience it, and how will ALL people benefit from it. This shared vision must be as concrete as a process like this will allow.

**Contradictions** – We must identify the current obstacles to achieving that shared vision right now. In doing this we must analyze each obstacle to ascertain its root cause. It is only by identifying the root causes that we can craft effective and sustainable strategies that will overcome the obstacle.

**Strategic Directions** – We must craft strategies that are focused on overcoming the obstacles. Since systems change is difficult and sometimes messy, it is important that we develop some short and long term strategies. Short term strategies are important because people need some victories to celebrate collectively that motivate them to continue to work on the long term hopes and dreams for what a new America looks like, how they would like to experience it, and how will ALL people benefit from it. This shared vision must be as concrete as a process like this will allow.



**Implementation Plan** – We must develop an implementation plan that has a role for everyone. It cannot be a plan that we hand off to politicians who are in positions that are time limited. No, it must be a plan that allows every resident to have some “skin in the game”. All of our residents must have a vested interest in the success of the plan and be willing to push to protect it.

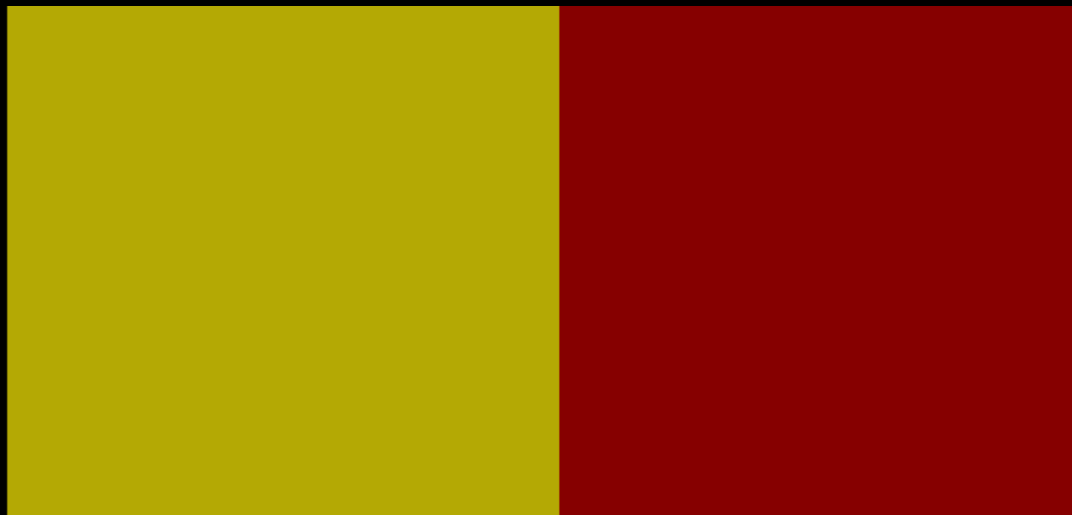
### **Concluding Thoughts**

I truly believe that in the process of creating the change that is necessary to bring our country together in order to transform into a just and equitable society, where our demonstration of love and caring of humanity shines, every resident must find and understand their role and contribution to establishing and protecting that society.

Many people believe that it is not possible within a capitalist system to have a caring, loving, equitable and just society exist. We do have examples worldwide of Democratic Socialism that combines both free enterprise and people’s basic needs guaranteed by the government. I am not interested in debating this thought at this time, however, what is clear to me is the American application of capitalism has **grossly failed** to care for all of its people. The balance has been heavily weighted, from the beginning, to favor property over caring for and having compassion for **all** of its people.

My resolve is – ***This Can Not Continue!!***

**Paul L Watson Jr., MSHS**



# Chapter 1

# Racism

**Nick wrote this on Facebook, a website on the internet where people share pictures and thoughts. Nick wrote this on June 2, 2020:**

**“At the risk of sounding like any of this is about "me", I'm going to be as vulnerable as I can because I feel like this needs to be said, and maybe even related to. I grew up in Milford, Connecticut. I never really had any Black friends, meaning like, I never had Black friends that I hung out with a few times a week. You know? Our high school had maybe 5-7 black people in it. Schools could try to "teach" diversity to you. But growing up in an environment that isn't culturally diverse can be detrimental to one's understanding of this idea that there are other people who have different-colored skin who all want the same things in life. There is no fault or blame to place in all of this. I mean how could we choose where we are born, or choose who we are? But perhaps we can choose how we think! Habitual thinking patterns are nurtured. Teach your children that Black Culture is beautiful, because it is. EDUCATION and COMPASSION both DESTROY FEAR. And I truly believe that FEAR is the root of all EVIL. Lastly and most importantly, I understand that I'll never understand what it's like to be a person of color, but I will try to use my whiteness to provide conversation, listening and compassion.”**

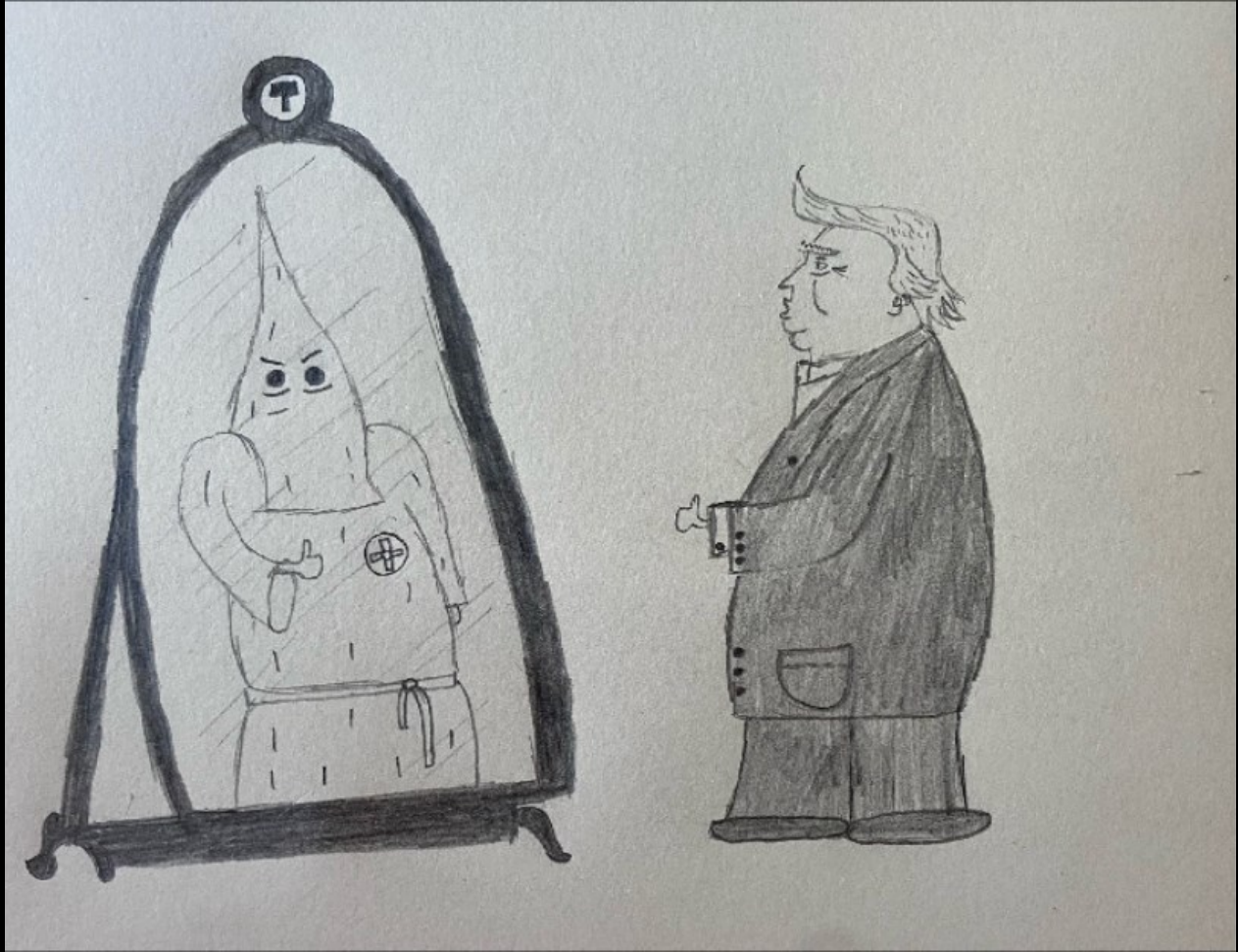


Image submitted by **Veer Shah**

Thank you for taking the time to read and think about my experiences, thoughts, and reflections through this time- I don't need your congratulations, I don't need your prayers or sorrow, I need you to examine the racism that lives in you and take action- any action however big or small- and change something! If your heart is breaking for the destruction of property, but not the destruction of human life- you are not part of the solution. Sanctity and quality of human life and existence has to come first- then we can examine livelihood and property. I am a white lady. I am a white lady who has organized, fought, and stood for rooting out injustice since middle school. I am a white lady who identifies as queer, gay, lesbian, and on the femme side of non-binary. I am a white lady who has a Black Lives Matter sign and rainbow flag in my yard. I am a white lady, who has the privilege of generational opportunities and wealth so that I have a yard and house that is mine. I am a white lady that is deeply trained in how bodies move, function and process their surroundings and stresses. I am a white lady that teaches breathing and meditation techniques. I am a white lady who listens. I am a white lady who pulls to the side of the road when I see a police officer talking to a person of color, to make sure that person of color has a white witness should something go wrong. I am a white lady who goes to Black Lives Matter protests. I am a white lady who tries to hold my tears back, because I know how damaging they can be to communities of color. I am a white lady who knows that grief looks very different for each individual, and sometimes that grief is absolute rage and destruction. I am a white lady who is outraged and exasperated at the treatment of people of color in my community, in my country, and throughout history. I am a white lady who has frozen and not known what to say when a relative uses terms like 'thug,' or says 'those people aren't helping their cause,' or 'why can't they just talk/dress/act/walk normally.' I am a white lady who has lived for 5 days in a state of psychological warfare with police, boogaloo and white supremacists- and who at this moment in time, genuinely can't tell the difference between those groups- terrorizing my community, my neighborhood, my block. I am a white lady who thought I understood the exhaustion of necessary vigilance in communities of color. I am now a white lady who knows I have never understood the exhaustion of vigilance in communities of color. I am now a white lady who helps organize my neighborhood to fight fires that officials might not tend to.

I am now a white lady who used a sharpie to write my allergy to penicillin on my chest- in the event I am possibly injured in helping to fight a fire, or shot through the wall of my house by white supremacists. I am now a white lady who hides my rainbow flags and Black Lives Matter sign from my yard for fear of being targeted by white supremacists. I am now a white lady who barricades her front door, asks a neighbor to escort, me, my mate and our pets to a different house on the block, and who abandons her house for fear of being targeted by white supremacists. I am now a white lady who has felt a different level of fear and vulnerability exist when walking in my neighborhood at night- not afraid of things that go bump in the night, but afraid of police shooting me with rubber bullets (not even real ones) just for existing in my own neighborhood. I am now a white lady who can't form thoughts, or full sentences, out of utter exhaustion. I am now a white lady who knows only the tiniest fraction of how hard it is to speak, physically move, focus on breath, sleep restoratively, find and eat food with nutritional value, and stay hydrated when under that amount of stress and it is an absolute privilege. I am now a white lady who thinks about trauma in a whole new light. I am now a white lady who knows I am racist, because these 5 nights have taught me I didn't even know the half of how it physically and emotionally feels to live under that much strain, and I still don't know the half of it, because it has only been 5 nights... not a lifetime. I am now a white lady who knows I am a racist, because I'm not doing enough to address and change systemic racism with my own self, friends, family and community. I am now a white lady who knows I am a racist because I haven't been using my privilege within our white supremacist system to enforce and demand change – not just hope for it, not just talk/post about- but enforce it.

*Who are you? –*

**Cady Eddy, Minneapolis, MN**





Image submitted by **Emmanuel**



I grew up in an island called Taiwan, and I went to international schools that is based on American education system. As far as I can remember, racism has always been a topic that is emphasized over and over again. To a point, I am someone who came to a belief that the United States of America and other Western countries are the only places where racism is a problem. Until one day, my social studies teacher back in 6<sup>th</sup> grade told me that racism is actually everywhere in Taiwan, I realized that racism actually exist everywhere in the world. In Taiwan, many people looked down to foreign workers from South East Asia, while they believe to be “better” than the indigenous people. I myself, as well as many others, was never aware of this unjust societal norm. I realized that the biggest issue is because people are not aware of the concept of racism in our own society. Raising awareness about racism is important, but I believe raising awareness about racism around our own living community is also important. It’s essential that people don’t think that racism is “other people’s problem” or “problems that exist somewhere else” but rather a problem that everyone should be responsible fighting.

**-Anabelle Chen**

# Stephanie Cuenca

I am at a loss for words.  
My tears fill my eyes.  
I don't understand how people can be so mean.  
Mean.  
That's such a childish word.  
Mom, they're being mean to me.  
But I still call my mom when I am in danger.  
They call their mom when they are in danger.  
But some never come back.

I am angry.  
I am upset.  
How is it that we live in this world?  
I hate it here.  
But do I?  
Or do I take the advantage of not being a target?  
Do I just stand and watch while they get hurt?  
I don't know.  
It's them or me.  
Survival of the fittest right?  
And I'd rather it be them than me.  
What does that make me?  
I am unsure.  
I want to help, truly.

But I don't know that I believe in everything I see.  
And this makes it hard.  
I don't know what to do.  
But this is not a trend.  
I join it all or nothing at all.  
I'm at a loss for words.  
I don't know what to do.  
But neither do they.  
Help  
I don't know what to do.

# A Letter To My White Friends



...White people can't be silent, says **Chris Lambert**, in this call for self-education and shared responsibility



03/06/2020

I see a lot of people – people I respect, love, value – saying they feel uneducated, that they don't know many black people, that they want to be supportive but are afraid of saying the wrong thing, that they don't know how to help, how to effect the change that needs to be made.

I could go into what it means to be black, but now's not the time for that. Now is the time to be clear on the most important, simple fact: you don't need to know black people to understand the change that needs to be made.

Yes, it helps to know a culture if you want to speak on it, but you don't have to speak for black culture; you have to speak about white culture. You don't have to march, to write signs, to revolt; you just need to not be silent, and for this you need to know yourselves.

Being black is not the thing that needs to be understood in order to allow black equality to progress. What you need to understand is why you permit our equality to be prevented.

What you need to understand is why you are silent, why you are not an ally, why you permit our oppression and persecution.

"When our voice reaches you and you ignore it, you become the very definition of the problem"

You need to understand that although those sound like big words, like words you couldn't possibly be a part of – things that come from different states and different times – you are involved and you are implicit. They are big words, and although this conversation is being had today because yet another black man has been executed by them, for most of us these words mean instead we live a life of death by a thousand cuts.

You need to understand that when we tell you, and you don't listen, you do nothing, you become very literally a composite piece of the problem. The decisions that keep minority groups in the minority are made by the majority. We are the minori-

ty. We have to shout louder to be heard. So when our voice reaches you and you ignore it, you become the very definition of the problem.

You need to understand that even right now as you read this, there will be white people who call me a friend, who didn't read this far because it's not their problem – people who have already swiped left, moved on, because this is uncomfortable, inconvenient.

We have been telling you our whole lives. Even if you've never spoken to a black person about it, we have been telling you, and you know.

You know we receive unfair treatment, from the public in the street, the management in the boardroom, the very law that is supposed to be there to protect us and serve us. *Us*. You and me.

You know because we have been telling you. But when we don't get our fair share – our equality – you are silent.

You know we are judged. We are judged for the things we have: the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the cars we drive. We are judged for the things we are: our muscles, our asses, our penises, our hair. We are judged for the things we do: the way we work, the way we speak, the way we walk, the way we protest.

Where these things suit you, please you – where you can palate the performance of our blackness – they are tolerated, celebrated, they are Beyoncé, Ian Wright.

Where they do not, they are Meghan Markle, Raheem Sterling.

And you know these things because they happen in plain sight.

Do you write the papers that vilify these people? That press so hard, that reach so high, that they can drive the grandson of the QUEEN OF ENGLAND to leave the country with his wife and child. No, you don't write them, but do you boycott these papers? Do you ask your friends why they support them? Do you speak against our denigration around your table at Sunday lunch, or with your actions?



No, you don't.

Do you stand in front of a nation and talk about "deport first, appeal later"? Do you refer to black people as "piccaninnies" with "watermelon smiles"? No you don't. But do you boycott these people? Do you stand in solidarity against the transparent racism they wield to put them in power, and EVERYTHING that act means? Do you talk to your friends about the wrongness of it all, the injustice you are witnessing?

No, you don't.

You have no compunction voting for a group that talks about us as worthless bush people, unworthy additions, a crime rate; a group that threatened to deport our mothers and fathers in order to try and win a few more votes from those who think there's probably enough black people here now, as though we are a population problem to be controlled..

You ignore these things because it suits you. You ignore the problem because it inconveniences you.

So, you become the problem, its embodiment, its lifeblood. Inequality persists because the majority permits it.

And maybe you do boycott these things. Maybe you have made those stands. But just as saying "not all men" is not valid until there is equal treatment, it is neither valid here to be just an isolated beacon of equality.

"I could go into what it means to be black, but we are dead done tired fucking dilapidated exhausted of fucking explaining" Because you know someone who's out there talking about us: about "their kind", about how "if they don't like it why don't they leave", about how "this country isn't racist because look at these non-white individuals with big jobs and money".

You don't have to be a racist to be complicit in the lack of progress. You just have to permit the ignorance that breeds racism when you see it. Peer silence is the enabler for all injustices. It has always been and always will be. You don't have to be black to know how to help.

You don't need to be someone to under-

stand their situation. We are humans: we have the gift of empathy, of an innate sense of justice.

I don't have to be a woman to understand women deserve equal pay. I don't have to be gay to understand gay people deserve to love who they want.

But you need to be black to understand I deserve to not be prejudged and persecuted?

Again, yes, it helps to know a culture if you want to speak on it, but you don't have to speak for black culture, you have to speak about white culture. No one is asking you to march, to write signs. You don't need to become a cultural expert, you just need to not be silent.

Stop pretending there is no problem just because it doesn't affect you. Because doing that is what makes you the problem. So I could go into what it means to be black, but we are dead done tired fucking dilapidated exhausted of fucking explaining.

I will not debate my right to exist without prejudice. I will not soften who I am for fear of you ascribing it to some blackness that you don't understand. I will not be forgiving of your mistakes because you "don't know better".

You don't have to know better because you already know. You either know and don't care enough, or you know and don't think about it, but you know.

And we have been quite patient enough. Our oppression is not something that is invented anew everyday – it is something that we have been inheriting for generation after generation after generation after generation.

We don't inherit our oppression from our parents, we inherit it from your silence.

*Chris Lambert is a Harvard graduate and former Team GB Olympic sprinter. This piece first appeared on his blog, Lamb's English, and is republished with permission. Follow Chris on Twitter @lambseenglish.*



Dear Friends & Family,

I and likely most of you are shocked and upset by what has been going on across our Country. What a mess! A pandemic virus killing mostly older people, cruel lonely painful deaths of people disproportionately of Color & Poverty. The families of those who die are unable to be close and share farewell, such a cruel fate. What must our children think? We have millions unemployed at the beginning of the year still increasing and hunger growing. Isolation of our lives imposed by governments and virus. Now in the midst of an effort to try to revive the economy and try to return our lives to somewhat normal, another senseless murder of an innocent black man by a white police officer is broadcast across the world. Ugly history repeating itself. It is no wonder our cities are burning. I strongly support the protest movement now sweeping our Land. Black Lives Matter. Where is the eloquence of our Leaders from all parties? Why does Media, Left and Right, beg the obvious questions, put spin on news, events, and facts? While watching news footage of the looting I saw a young man using a bolt cutter to clip electronic equipment free for him to steal. In all the years I protested the war in Vietnam I never used or ever saw anyone using a bolt cutter. I draw the line at looting and destruction. When I was a child, I joined neighborhood kids in stealing cantaloupes from Japanese Farmers in Southern California. We would crack the fruit open on curbs and have great feasts. The farmers fought back and began to shoot at us using rock salt shot gun shells. The rock salt, about the size of a pea, tears through clothing and buries itself to a shallow depth in human skin. The pain inflicted is incredible. We stopped stealing fruit. No one died or was maimed. I think those who loot should have a moving experience with rock salt, it might even make them drop their stash. San Diego County and Southern California has had some looting and burnings. There have been Super Markets like I work for destroyed. I am safe. I pray for America and the Protestors. I pray for each of you. I would value your feedback and point of view.

**John L. Eddy, San Diego, CA**



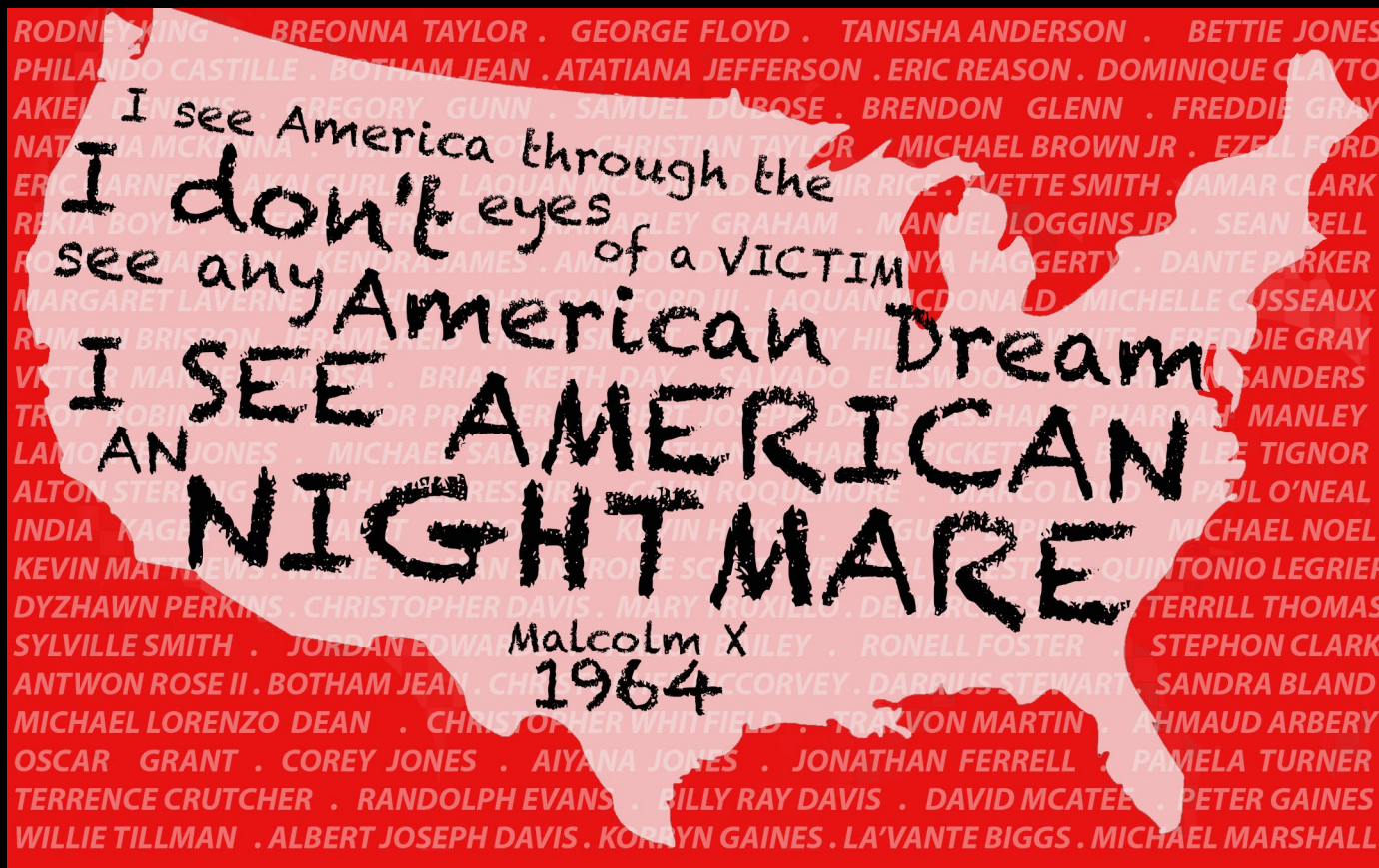


Image submitted by **Anatalie Novelle**

# **Time is up.**

## **Fonna Forman**

In 1970, my dad was drafted into the US military. As a medical student, he was able to delay his service, and avoid immediate assignment to Vietnam, on condition he would move with his young family upon graduation to a Strategic Air Command base in Blytheville, Arkansas, to train as a flight surgeon, which he did – and we did – in 1973.

I grew up in the white, mostly Jewish northern suburbs of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Blytheville Air Force Base was located in rural northeastern Arkansas, surrounded by corn fields and rural black poverty.

One K-12 school called Gosnell served everyone, military kids and local kids alike. I was 5 years old the day I showed up for first grade. As we pulled up to the school in our brown family station-wagon, a long line of kids waited outside the front door. As we approached, I noticed they were all girls, black girls of all sizes, and none were wearing shoes. I soon understood that shoes were required in the building, and that those without needed to borrow them each morning from a large shoe-box at the front door. Every morning the girls would show up early, to find a matching pair.

The sense of dramatic inequality, of my shame walking past these girls in my blue and white saddle shoes, never left me. But it was nothing compared to what I witnessed in the classroom itself. The room was divided, military kids in rows on the left, local predominantly black kids in rows on the right. This was post-Brown vs. Board, but “separate but equal” still lived on in the culture of schools in rural Arkansas. What I remember most was a wooden paddle dangling ominously from a leather cord on the left side of the chalkboard. I remember the first time that my teacher, a large white woman named Mrs. O’Kelly, took a black boy from his desk, by the collar, positioned him in front of the room, and beat the shit out of him with that paddle. I still remember the boy’s name, I remember his striped shirt, I remember his wailing and tears. I had never witnessed anything like it. It shook my 5 year old consciousness to the core.

I witnessed these beatings, over and over again, for two years. Different boys, always black. The

military kids were never beaten, but watched as young black bodies were paraded before us and violated in the normal course of a school day. I remember vividly only the first time it happened, the boy in his striped shirt, but the rest fade into the haze of childhood memory. I imagine my trauma was blunted through the repetition and normalization of this hideous practice.

When the war ended in 1975 we moved back north, and went on with our suburban lives. It wasn’t until years later that my mind returned to Blytheville. As a teenager I began to remember what I’d witnessed in that school, and question why no one since had explained to me WHY I never heard a breath of criticism against the war in Vietnam in two years living on that base, or WHY a public school in 1973-5, under the nose of the US military, was able with impunity to normalize violence against small black bodies, and indoctrinate little racists by forcing them passively to watch.

Children are like little culture sponges. This is why Hitler wanted to get at them before their conscience and reason might become a threat. Immersion in hatred, repetition of even the most shocking things, overwhelms human compassion, dulls the innate sense of injustice. It’s why genocidal regimes slowly inculcate soldiers into the mechanisms of killing rather than try to immerse them all at once.

The events of the last weeks are a shock therapy of collective awakening. We have been numb for too long to the normalization of violence against black people by the US criminal justice machine. We have tolerated a culture of policing and incarceration that denigrates black life, and monetizes the violence against it. Time is up.

# **Am I white, black or human?**

Alexa Osuna Fernandez

I will not. I can but I won't.

I refuse to use it.

This is not just an action.

This is dehumanizing to those we call humans.

I use the power I have to keep others safe, not to dominate.

I will have to leave.

I will have to end the job I grew up dreaming of.

I thought I would be hero. I thought I would help.

I became a symbol of fear. The symbol I tried to avoid.

But I already was.

I was already a symbol of fear.

I grew up with people looking at me, no, looking at my skin.

People saw me and crossed the street. People saw me and made up their minds immediately.

I was the problem, most believed.

I did not mean harm. I did not mean to instill thoughts of danger on my appearance.

I am a cop, but I am also the color of skin that most people deem unwanted.

I am meant to serve. Serve the community, for their well-being, not the government's.

I was given a power that was undeserved. A power that ultimately helped my position.

My skin color has a power over others. A power to instill fright. A power I also did not ask for.

We all have power. Power to make a person feel some way, positive or negative.

We all have power. We are not heard equally, but we all have power.

I have power. A power to choose whether I want to engage or not.

I have the power to choose. I will choose wisely, and I will choose for public well-being.

# Why Don't We Learn About Race?

Jeffrey Keller

In the last month I had a thought: When did I, as a white person, begin to understand race? I don't think there's any moment I can say that my understanding of the world changed. Obviously, I always knew that some people had different skin colors than I did. A lot of my family is not white. But it took me a long time to really recognize and understand racism and how it affects our entire country and all those who live here.

Growing up in Davis, CA, most people I knew as a young child were white. Thinking back now, I'm not sure there was a single person who wasn't white in my immediate neighborhood. Later in middle school I met a lot more people who weren't white, but they were predominantly of Asian heritage. So still not particularly diverse. In my school district, there was even a kind of segregation known as GATE, or "Gifted and Talented Education." The group of students selected for this program (based on a single test score I believe) was typically composed of white and Asian-American students from decently well off families. Therefore, I was surrounded by people with relatively similar experiences to my own in elementary and middle school.

While in elementary school, I'm sure I had no real sense of race or racism. However, in middle school, I was vaguely aware of racism. I'm not sure what triggered this awareness. It was something I knew existed, but I'd never seen it. I didn't understand the forms it took. Therefore it was something very abstract. It wasn't something that seemed to happen to my friends. And, even though many members of my family are black, it still didn't register with me that they could be affected by racism. It was so separate from my personal experience and worldview. It wasn't "real."

There is a great failure in this country when it comes to race education. I didn't really learn about modern race relations in this country until high school, and much of that education came from reading the news. While my school did a better job than many by actually including classes about race and social justice as an option for the American history requirement, not everyone took it, especially in a community where everyone was told they needed to take as many AP courses as possible.

Why don't we learn about race and systemic racism in this country? At least, not as a modern problem. We're told about Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights era and how his nonviolent protests helped lead to an end to segregation. Conveniently, other civil rights leaders such as Malcolm X are left out of the high school narrative of history for the most part. In high school, we barely touch on modern issues, likely due to a view that current events are "too politically charged." It's uncomfortable. People don't like being told that some people are treated differently just because of the color of their skin. This is America, where everyone has the same opportunity to succeed. We revel in this myth that we are taught throughout school. We consign notions of inequality to an ancient past, despite the fact that Civil Rights Movement was relatively recent history. This is a fundamental problem with our teaching of history. We talk about what has happened, but we don't talk about why that history matters today. We pretend that everything was long ago. History has become a recitation of facts rather than an effort to understand who we are as a society.



The faults in our education are a major reason why I believe there is still so much conflict now. People with a college education have had more opportunity to learn about the modern racial inequality. For me, I only really learned the depths of our nation's issues after arriving at college. This is a real problem. Most of our population is not college-educated. Not everyone is able to become college-educated. As a result, most people don't learn about systemic racism in our country without experiencing it themselves or seeing it happen. Middle school and high school students should be educated on race and other social justice issues because everyone should be able to have an understanding of the workings of our modern world, good and bad. The American education system churns out people who are unprepared to be positive global citizens because they were taught incomplete or false narratives of our history.

While part of the path forward is certainly through education, there are many obstacles that are in our way. As education is often controlled at the state level, it will be hard to enact uniform change to teach modern social justice issues. In a nation that disagrees on the fundamental facts of modern discrimination, how do we achieve a consensus that will actually be followed by all? Perhaps trying to create standards at a national level could be helpful. We must ensure a complete teaching of our history, that doesn't alter the facts and make sure we talk about race. In addition, stop history from being an ordered recitation of events. Rather than just teaching students about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., have them read his words. Have them read Malcolm X's words. Learn about history from the perspectives of the people who lived it and fought for change. History class should be about critically understanding why the past occurred the way it did and seeing the perspectives from people at the time. High school course materials are shockingly lacking in primary source material. Students read dry textbooks and don't engage with the material. Then connect this history, these views from MLK and Malcolm X, into the present day. Have students watch or read modern perspectives on current social justice issues to understand how the issues from the past have morphed into the world we see today.

The American school system doesn't do nearly a good enough job at encouraging critical thinking. Yet, critical thinking should be the most important skill that one gains from education. Our education should consist of taking our knowledge and applying it to the world that we live in. We teach in a vacuum. You learn so that you can do well on the test, and if the test is all that matters, then any connection to the material is surface level. It's just what is needed to succeed. If we include more primary literature, not just in terms of history, but in sciences as well, and we work on understanding this literature and making connections to our own lives, we develop creative and critical thinking skills and create a population that is better able to succeed in college or wherever their life may take them after high school.

While there are obviously many steps needed to address the racial inequities today, education is the most important because once a population is better educated, they are more likely to identify problems and work towards finding solutions. They will have more empathy and capacity to internalize opposing world views and make decisions. We make better lives for everyone in our country.





Image submitted by **Anonymous**

## Xianzhen Lu

Recently, the murder of George Floyd brought police brutality to

the center of public opinion. Police misconduct has been a severe issue from a long time ago and it's often associated with racism. As an international student, I spend most of the time with my peers in college and through my discussion with other students, I found out that most students hold strong disapproval towards racism. And that's why I thought racism is no longer a big issue in the society for a long time. However, the liberal environment in college make us be unaware of the realistic situation in the society. Since we spend most of the time with like-minded people and share similar ideas with others, sometimes voices from other groups are excluded. And thus, we would find a huge gap between our expectation and the reality. The murder of George Floyd sets an alarm for me that I should not build my understanding of a social problem based on merely what I could know from school but also things outside the school.

In response to the protests, riots, and looting happening across the country, I am seeing an anger unfold that has been here for centuries but is finally getting its voice heard. Personally I am not one for violence and do not support the riots and looting. I know that we/the groups affected have to use such extreme measures in order to finally be listened to, but I believe that the short term effects of looting and rioting can be harmful to a community (although I do acknowledge that there are anarchists simply taking advantage of the situation). I have seen footage of a black man who came back to his store to see it looted and destroyed and was shaking and crying in anger as a result. In response to people looting chain stores only, I have friends who had their local supermarkets and Target/Walmarts looted so it was more difficult for them to get the supplies they needed. Also seeing the citizens of Oakland steal a tank to destroy the town made NO sense to me.

However I am not ignoring that the riots happened because of the injustice and police brutality that people of color have faced for so long and how it has not gotten better. I believe Trevor Noah said it best and really helped open my perspective: the social construct is broken. When we enter a society, we promise to follow certain rules (not loot for example), but to the black community, they have seen time and time again that the society they are living in is not honoring this contract. Especially how it is police officers, who are supposed to be the ones who enforce this “contract,” don’t care about it, or feel like their actions are just. I cannot ignore that anger and how this has been building up for centuries, even after the 13th amendment was signed but our prison system was built on and influenced by slavery.

Despite the violence and anger that’s happening, one thing is making me hopeful: that these things are finally coming to light, as if the curtain is finally being pulled back. In “Everybody Lies,” by Seth Stephens Davidowitz, the book talks about how our Google searches reveal what kind of society/community we are. Although there was a popular belief at the time that “Racism is dead!” when Obama became elected president, Seth noticed that there was an increase in the search for the word “ni\*\*r.” And that showed that many people were still harboring racist beliefs but were simply hiding it. While right now I feel like many people are being exposed for this behavior and this gives me hope that we are at a turning point.

Thank you and please let me know if you need anything else from me.

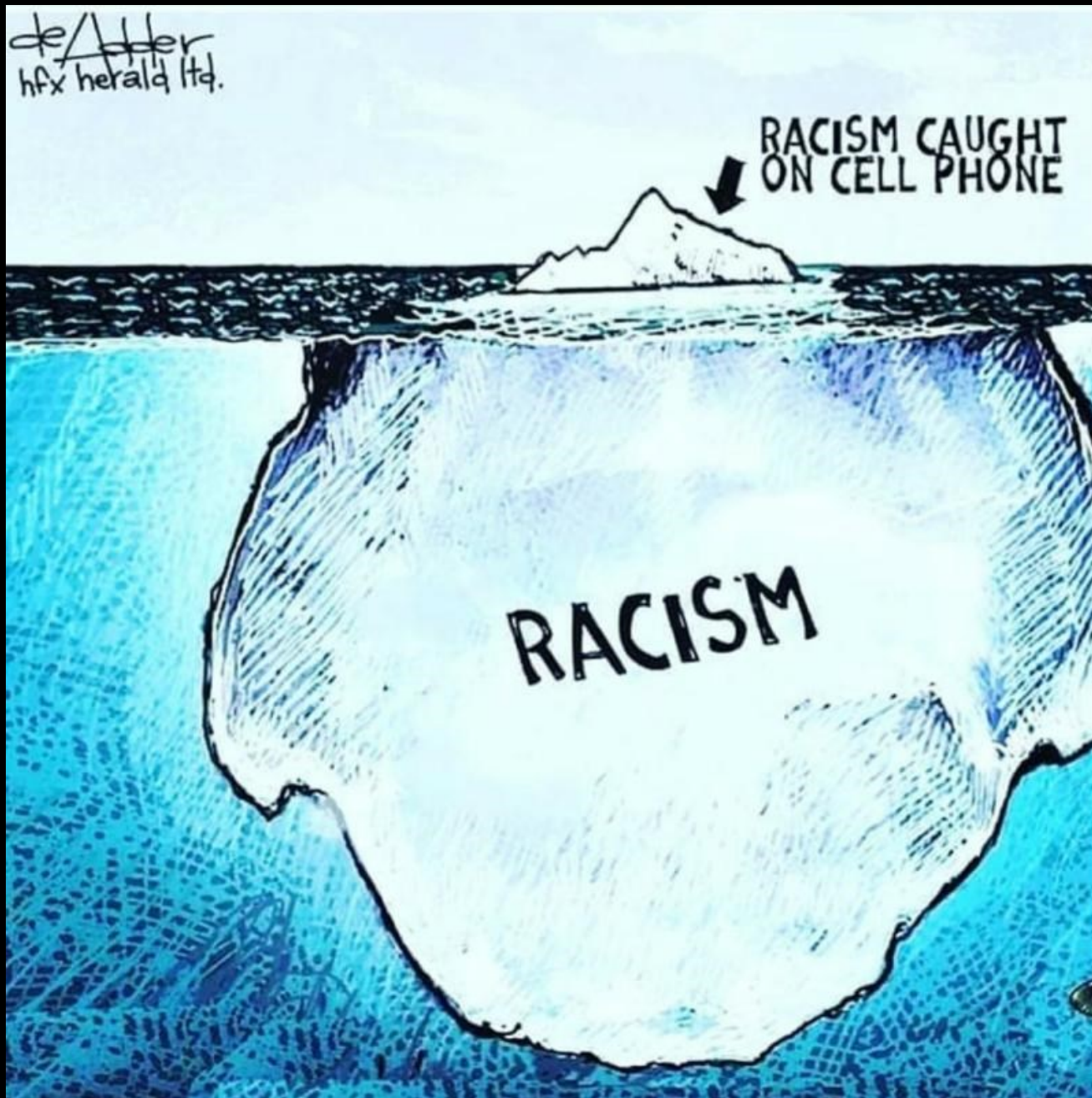
Best,

**Christine Tran**

Image created and submitted by Keith Pezzoli







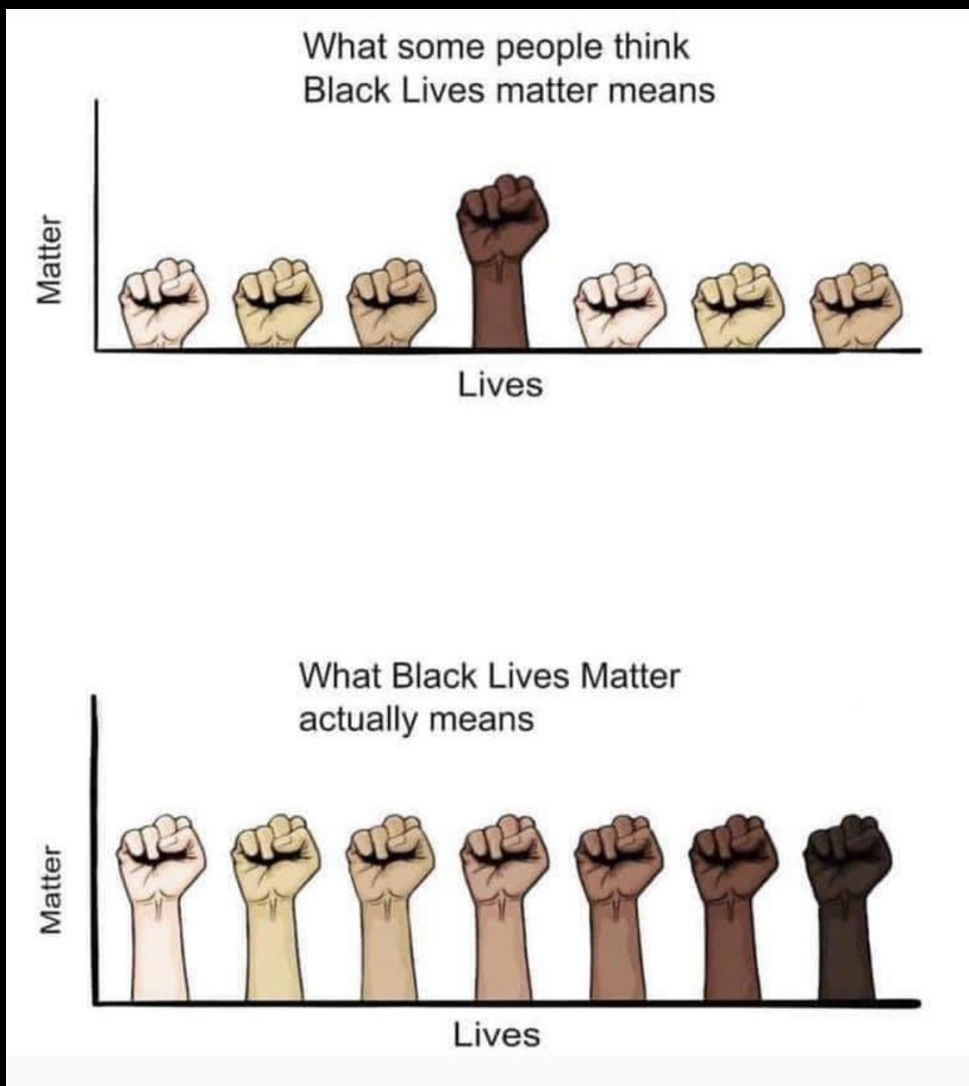
Racism Iceberg. 3 June, 2020. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/FINALLEVEL/status/1267918264350334976>

Image submitted by **Anonymous**

1846-1848	United States at war with Mexico - annexes California
1848	Women's convention in Seneca Falls NY
1849	California Gold Rush begins
1857	Dred Scott Decision (Blacks could not be citizens of the United States)
1861-1865	Civil War
1862	Law passed forbidding American ships to transport Chinese
1863	Emancipation Proclamation
1865	13th Amendment (abolishing slavery) ratified
1869	14th Amendment (giving ex-slaves the right to vote) ratified
1882	Chinese Exclusion Act
1860-1890	Second Wave of Immigrants from Europe (Northwest Europe)
1887	Passage of the Dawes General Allotment Act which splits up Native American land into individual holdings "citizenship is incompatible with kinship society."
1891	Ellis Island opened
1896	<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> allowing "Separate but equal"
1890-1910	Third Wave of Immigrants from Europe (Hungary, Italy, Eastern Europe, Russia)
1890-1920	Industrial Revolution
1892	Chinese Exclusion Act
1906	English becomes requirement for citizenship
1907	Japanese immigration becomes restricted
1914-1918	World War I
1916	Congress passes child labor laws
1918	Anarchist Act
1919	All states adopt compulsory education laws

Images submitted by **Bill Oswald**

1920	19th Amendment - giving women right to vote
1921	Quota system established (no more than 3% of foreign born already within country)
1924	US Border Patrol established
1939-1945	World War II
1943	Chinese Exclusion laws are repealed
1950-1953	Korean War
1954	<i>Brown v Board of Education</i> ending "separate but equal"
1955	Rosa Parks sparks Montgomery Bus Boycott
1957	School integration in Little Rock, Arkansas
1958	National Defense Student Loans initiated
1959-1975	Vietnam War
1961	Sit in Campaign against Jim Crow Laws Freedom Summer - Freedom Riders
1963	March on Washington Publication of the <i>feminine Mystique</i>
1963	President Kennedy assassinated
1964	Voting Rights Act passed
1965	Assassination of Malcolm X March on Selma - Bloody Sunday
1968	Assassination of Martin Luther King
1969	Stonewall Uprising
1972	Watergate
1973	Basic Educational Opportunity Grants initiated
1974	Massachusetts State Supreme Court upholds 1/32nd law.
1978	Harvey Milk's assassination
1986	Amnesty given to illegal residents of US under certain conditions



"Black Lives Matter Bar Graph - For the All Lives Matter folks". Published 4 July, 2020. Reddit. [https://www.reddit.com/r/BlackLivesMatter/comments/hl6yqh/black\\_lives\\_matter\\_bar\\_graph\\_for\\_the\\_all\\_lives/](https://www.reddit.com/r/BlackLivesMatter/comments/hl6yqh/black_lives_matter_bar_graph_for_the_all_lives/)

Image submitted by **Anonymous**



# **“Wait”**

## **Raquel Utnehmer**

**They said to wait.  
To Hesitate,  
*“ Things will get better”*  
They said.**

**A month turned to years,  
And they waited here,  
In the ghetto.**

**People starved and cried,  
People here died.  
But they waited.**

**The cries can be heard from,  
The biggest of the slums.  
But a promise was made,  
That they would be saved.  
So they waited.**

**So long that their hair turned dusty grey,  
Night turned to day.  
To ashes, to soil.  
The change never came.**

**But, the youth now sees they cannot wait.  
The promise was years-too-late.  
For their mothers and grandmothers have died here,**

**Waiting to be American.**

I always wondered (who am I) just like nothing, but lately I thought about it and it hurt a lot

Ask me, Who am I? And I cried ☐

Because watching the news, I felt like I'm nothing

That in my country I am nothing that I do not feel valuable even though I was born here in the United States of America, just because of my color, that it is useless to me to love my country and have my descendants here and my heart cries and shouts at me life shouldn't be like that

My Life is that of my daughters, and my grandchildren, and great-grandchildren that of Nobody that we should, Move and Fight together to live Proud without feeling despised Humiliated, Discriminated, Separated, Murdered for no reason that we, women and men are valuable, and we must have the courage To get ahead and to Fight to know , Answer me with Great Pride in capital letters

**WHO I AM**

No one will do anything for me if I don't do it 

Siempre me pregunte ( quien soy yo ) asi como si nada , pero  
 Ultimamente lo pense y me dolio mucho

Preguntarme, ¿ Quien Soy Yo ? Y llore ☐

Porque al ver las noticias , senti que no soy nada

Que en mi Pais no soy Nada que no me siento Valiosa aunque  
 Naci aqui en los Estados Unidos de America, solo por mi color ,que no me sirve de nada Amar mi Pais y tener a mis decendientes aqui y mi Corazon llora ,y me Grita que no debe de ser asi la vida

Mi Vida la de mis hijas , y mis nietos , y bisnietos la de Nadie que debemos , Movernos y Luchar juntos para vivir Orgullosos sin sentirnos Despreciados Humillados , Discriminados , Asecinados , por ninguna Razon que Nosotras , las Mujeres los Hombres somos Valiosos ,y devemos tener el Coraje Para salir Adelante y para Luchar por saber Contestarme con Gran Orgullo con mayusculas

QUIEN SOY YO

Nadie hara nada por mi si no lo hago yo 

Delia Contreras

Frankly, after I attended one civil protest, I felt unimpressed, tired and meaningless.

True, I was amazed by the diversity and number of the crowds attending the demonstration, and I knew that this was the case for thousands of protests across the country. Some of them stand firmly, facing gases and guns, and I admire their courage, persistence and resilience. I also saw pictures of policemen who, though their duties to the government hold them back, sympathized with the crowds and silently supported the movement. What moves me is not how many people went to the rally, but the final harmony between different races in this movement, when people volunteered to clear up the debris of destroyed shops, or when the owners of the shops showed understanding to the situation. I am moved by the simple, mutual understandings between humans, who consider themselves a larger part of the whole human race, instead of a community. The murder of George Floyd deserves attention,

# Yuntong

However, deep down inside my heart, I did not feel right, despite the scale of the movement. Sometimes, I even wonder whether people have seriously thought about racism in this country. I hear sympathizing remarks all the time, but what we need is not remarks, but actions, investigations, real changes. It's not just about the police departments but everything. I

# Zhou

begin to ask myself, for example, why are African Americans more likely to be pulled over? Why are African American kids more likely to drop out of schools? Why are they more likely to become addicted to drug? What actually happened to

these kids? What has this society done to them, that they resorted to drug? Malcolm X's dream to have a robust black community, one that is free of forced degradations, did not happen. This society did not do justice to George Floyd, and neither is it doing justice to the next generation. The society rejected a community, intentionally debased it, and had in turn claimed that they did this because the community is corrupt.

I love to hear "Black Lives Matter", but I also love to see more black scientists, engineers, lawyers and bankers. By that time, nobody needs to say "Black Lives Matter". They see lives. Not black lives.

Image submitted by **Alba Reyes**







# Anna B. Sanchez

29 July 2020

## The Path Forward

I think that we can collectively agree that racism is an issue that goes so much deeper than what some people think. I've found that people who don't think of racism as an issue tend to believe it is just something that existed in the past and that because there is no outward and explicit disdain toward Black people (or other people of color) that they know of or experience, it means that everything that comes as a result of racism happens to be a coincidence or Black people's fault. I don't wish to generalize, but because of personal experience I will, and as I refer to White people do not mean those who don't fit what I am saying, and I think they would probably agree with what I say of those who do. White people tend to think that they can argue everything that Black people experience by saying it happens to White people too. An example being police brutality; yes, the police kill both White and Black people, but just by reading statistics you can tell that Black people are more likely to be unarmed. And not to mention that police should not be acting as executioners. White people will ignore facts and try to make it a general issue, provide no solution, and ignore that the reason Black people face that issue is because of systemic racism.

Police brutality is just one of unfortunately many issues Black people face solely because of the color of their skin. Maybe segregation has ended, but its effects have lasted longer. Black communities are poorer because of systemic racism, predominately Black schools have worse rates because of systemic racism, crime rates are higher in Black communities because of systemic racism. It only makes sense that reparations be paid towards these communities. The United States needs to start investing in these communities, and repair its history. Additionally there needs to be a change in how history is being taught in schools. The stories of BIPOC deserve to be heard, they deserve the acknowledgement of everything that they went through, and people need to know what the US was built on.

I think it is time that the United States government starts addressing these issues in an explicit way. Racists in this country need to know they are not in the right. They have to know their privilege comes from their skin, and that they too come from immigrants

As a straight white male I have never faced and will never face the racism and injustice that minorities in this country face on a daily basis. I cannot begin to understand the struggles that these communities face everyday. Despite this, I can still work to support these

# Gordon Peiker

communities  
and fight for  
meaningful  
change in this

country. I have realized that in order to do this it is not enough to simply not be racist, you need to actively be anti racist and support those who face injustice everyday. One of the things that I have begun to see throughout these last few months is that many white people that I know spend their time passing judgment on various aspects of the movements that have been taking place instead of helping. From the perspective of a white man, I think that in order to get more understanding and support from the white community, it is important that white people understand that they should not pass judgments on something that they will never understand. I have heard people will say things like “this seems like an overreaction” or “aren't there bigger problems to worry about right now?”, despite the fact that as a white person they will never be able to understand the problems facing the black community. Because the white community will never understand, we are not in a position to say something is right or wrong. Instead we should be working to help in whatever way we can. It seems to me that if more white people understood that they will never be able to understand the problems facing African Americans and other minority communities then more people would be able to move beyond passing judgments and be able to help and support the communities facing the struggles of racism every day.

# Are we really indivisible?

Shane Bass

Inequality will be the cause of this world's demise,  
How did the color of our skin get weaponized?  
Hate begot hate, since the beginning of time,  
When did dark skin determine the crime?  
To judge a mans value on simply his race,  
Why when we move forward, do we end in this place?  
I struggle at what I can do to make such a change,  
God created us equal, why must we act like that's strange?  
Our differences are our strengths, we are the sum of one part,  
Who's hand will reach out, when will unity start?  
The nation's awake, the mass took to the streets,  
How can we find healing in the chants "I can't breath"?  
I didn't feel the privilege, my climb has been hard,  
When will we find love, our hearts are so scarred?  
Race is only a concept, one divided in hate,  
Can we find humanity, or is it too late?  
The value of a man's worth is not measured skin deep,  
How long must boys shutter, how long must mom's weep?  
Pursuit of our best, we should all want to strive,  
When will there be justice, no crime for being alive?  
I proudly fought for my country, I find myself faced with the shame,  
Who will give the answers, who will own all the blame?  
If left unanswered, we will again see civil war,  
Who will fight for our brothers and say..." Division no more!"?  
The work won't be easy, but nothing good comes for free,  
It has to start somewhere, there are no more questions, that someone is me.



"Say Her Name". 4 June, 2020. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/BarackObama/status/1268682936221609994>

Image submitted by **Anonymous**

# Spring Forward 2020 – Micro Meets Macro

*By Simone Arias*

While visiting my new granddaughter in February, my daughter and I discussed news stories associated with COVID-19 in faraway Wuhan. We continued our conversations as the crisis penetrated our air and people demanded education and direction from local to global leaders. We were reminded how personal responsibility intersected with civic responsibility. Desire for personal safety and the welfare of others prevailed over freedom of choice. We opted to commune through the Duo app.

We observed how most people wore masks while walking in the neighborhood or going to the grocery store, but more so in California than Arizona. We mused how an unforeseen industry had erupted, two friends had made masks for health care workers and me. Practicality inspired creativity. Mine were decorated with treasured butterflies, comical scenes of “The Wizard of Oz”, and colorful birds reminiscent of San Diego. Social mandates merged with festive friendships.

Family graduations, a wedding, and religious ceremonies were either canceled or reverted to technology for cyber celebrations. Measured human contact with family and friends became ever more endearing. The adage “Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder” comes to mind. Weekly walks with masked friends on designated days became our antidote. On alternate days, since canyon and beach hikes were banned, my leisurely neighborhood walks became more contemplative and exploratory rather than routine ventures to maintain health. Ironically, distant friends and family members who generally checked in only during holidays found additional time just to say hello. Ironically, confinement resulted in greater communication.

Being retired, I did not have to “work from home” or monitor my children’s activities. Therefore, I dedicated myself to discarding clothing from distant

decades as well as lesson plans long retired in my closets. It felt so good to purge possessions. However, when civic-oriented Zoom meetings and Osher classes resumed, my social connections took precedence over personal chores.

Increased leisure time also allowed me to research my ancestral roots. Although labor intensive, solving the mystery of my birth parents could not have come at a better time. My granddaughter will now learn about her roots in greater detail. I discovered I have a half-sister in Canada who had defeated the powerful COVID-19. Together we are exploring our maternal and paternal roots since we were both adopted at birth. Even confined to my home, my world expanded exponentially through technology. I rejoiced that my newly-discovered family member had returned to her job in social work. Now the virus was no longer only news stories.

After two months, extensive daily news briefings on COVID-19 took a radical shift. The murder of George Floyd on May 25 reverted our attention to another illusive insidious epidemic with social, political, and physical manifestations. The invasive nature of racism, just as the COVID virus, would no longer be ignored. False mantras of complacency from civic leaders were no longer tolerated. Yet another massive global response demanded vigilant civic engagement from individuals and leaders at all levels. This pervasive submerged epidemic was seen through fresh perspectives. For centuries, it had been equally destructive to individuals and societies. Since people's actions are the foundation of a thriving democracy, vigilant individuals sought to protect themselves from an invisible virus, while simultaneously attempting to eradicate the manifestations of racial injustice. The physical and emotional pains were unbearable and cures were essential to our collective survival. Just as scientists discerned causes and cures with vaccines for COVID, honorable civic leaders investigated remedies for intrinsic racism. Masks displaying Black Lives Matter illustrate the need for simultaneous solutions which benefit all. May all be empowered.

When we are free to remove the mask, what will it reveal? My granddaughter of Nigerian, Canadian, Mexican heritage must breathe freely in all that she is.

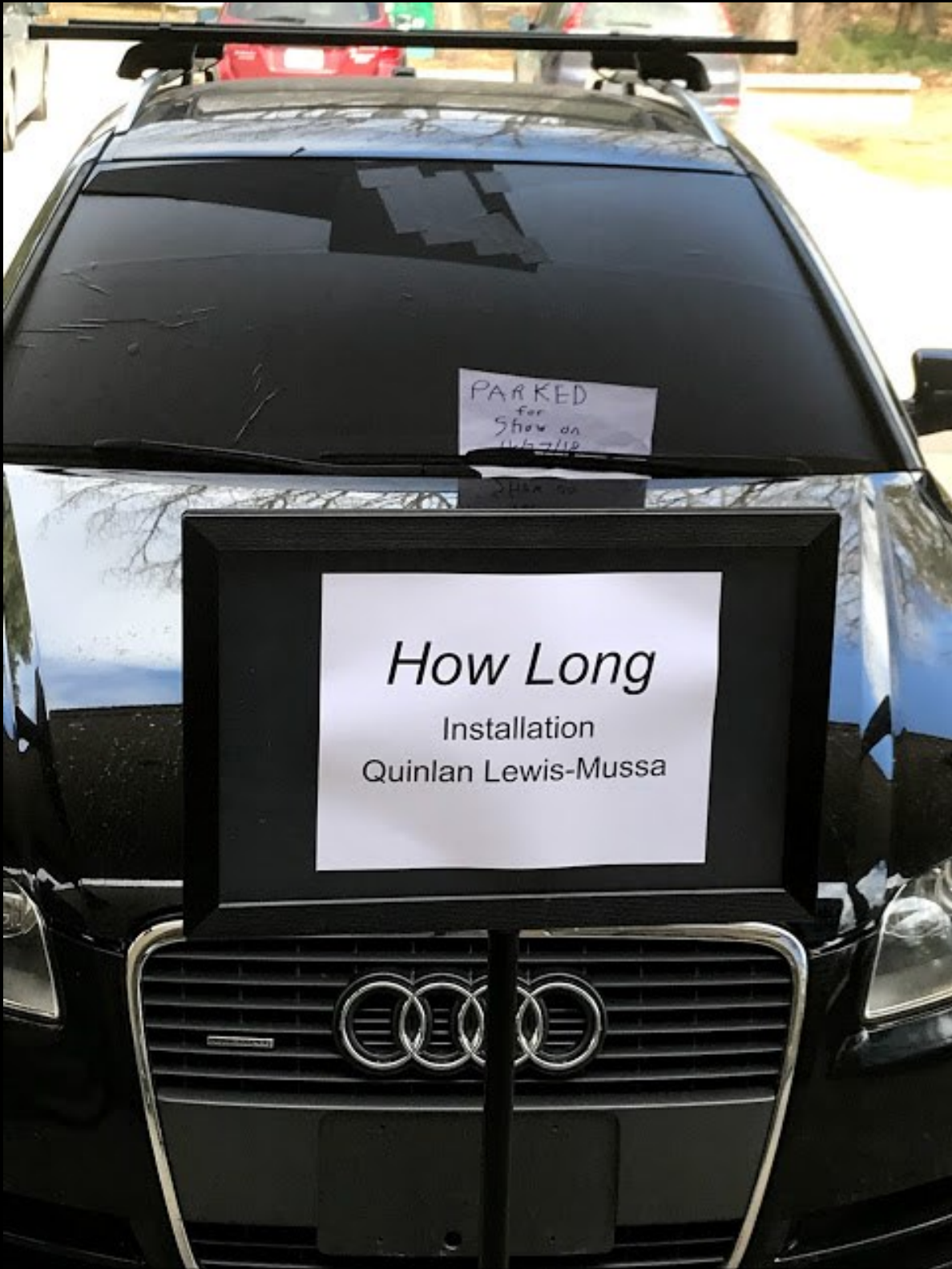


May she trust her own vision and may public leaders in school, churches, law enforcement, media, government, and all of society recognize who she truly is.

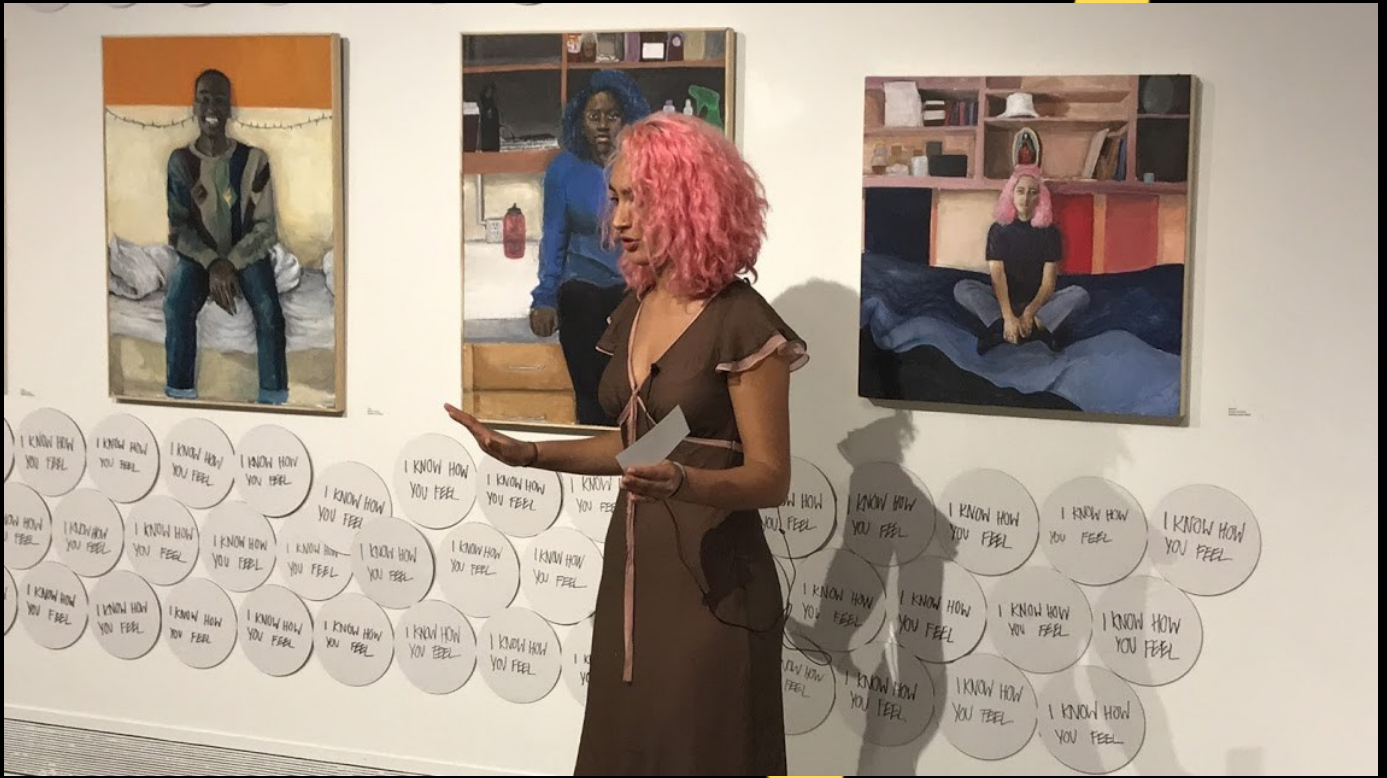


Image submitted by **Anonymous**

# Quinlan Lewis-Mussa













<http://quinlanlewismussa.weebly.com/>

# “Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel: Bryant Gumbel Commentary | Clip (HBO)”

Finally tonight, as we close out this Real Sports edition devoted in great part to racial injustice, a few personal words seem fitting – about what some friends and I often refer to as “The Black Tax”.

It’s not an IRS thing.

It’s the added burden that comes with being Black in America, and it’s routinely paid no matter how much education you have, how much money you make, or how much success you’ve earned.

The Black Tax is about more than just the added stares, whispers, and suspicions when you’re out and about.

It’s about the many instances of disrespect and incivility your color seems to engender, and being expected to somehow always restrain yourself, lest you not be what White Americans are never asked to be: a credit to your race.

It’s about living a life that included your father having to leave home to earn his law degree, even though he was an honor student and a decorated war vet.

It’s about your son getting arrested for doing nothing more than walking while Black.

And it's about having to be more concerned than your White friends and associates for the safety of your grandkids.

It's about the day in and day out fatigue of trying to explain the obvious to the clueless.

It's about being asked to overlook Blue failings and White failings so they can be conveniently viewed as "Black issues".

It's about being asked by so many what they should do or say about race when the easy answer lies in the privacy of each person's heart.

It's the Black Tax.

It's paid daily by me and every person of color in this country and frankly, it is exhausting.

I've been paying the Black Tax in America for almost 72 years now, long enough that I shouldn't have to ask others to simply accept one very basic reality: that our Black Lives Matter.

Thank you for being with us.

Stay safe.

Good night.



## The Path Forward Project

### A Personal Essay on Childhood, Race and Uprising, Diana Ross

*\*Names have been altered to protect the identities of the people I love. I am forever grateful for their friendship and their teachings in building the values I hold dear.*

I remember 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at my Elementary School in National City. It was 1983. Yes, I was an 80s child- Michael Jackson, Beastie Boys, Punk and neon jelly bracelets from the National City swap meet were *la moda*<sup>1</sup>. Every Latina girl in my group of friends at school wanted a haircut with Jheri<sup>2</sup>-curled-bangs up front and straight in back. I didn't speak much English at the time, National City for the most part was a Latino immigrant neighborhood and my family was pretty insular. There were no White, Black or non-Latino families that we interacted with. I thought the world was Mexican. The TV was mostly *telenovelas*<sup>3</sup> *con Carne Molida*<sup>4</sup> (Carmen Molina actually but I couldn't pronounce her name right) and the radio was *Kalimán-man-man El Hombre Increíble*<sup>5</sup>. I even struggled to understand how you could be from a place other than México and still be a Spanish speaker. My friend Anais was from Puerto Rico and said *gafas*<sup>6</sup> opposed to my *lentes*<sup>7</sup>. She ate *frijoles negros y arroz blanco*<sup>8</sup> and I ate your typical *frijoles de la olla (pintos)*<sup>9</sup>. In my mind she was still Mexican. She spoke Spanish and lived in National City after all.

That year, Ronda, the first Black girl in my class came to school. Ronda was fun and shy. We were curious about her. Ronda was new and she was different. We became fast playground friends even though my English wasn't that great. Somehow, we were both always last to be picked for games and had a shared dread of being hit too hard when playing dodgeball (the world's most vicious childhood sport).

One day afterschool on the playground, Ronda was crying hard. I went over to her and asked what was wrong. She couldn't get the words out. In the next minute a group of older Latino kids came over and started calling her "Black" in the meanest way interspersed with Spanish curse words too rude to write here. This confused me and I could see the heart break in her eyes, swollen and red with tears. The yard duty came over and shooed us all away but did nothing else. I didn't understand what happened.

At recess the next day, we were last to be picked for dodge ball, again. In that moment I became painfully aware that I was last because I was a really tiny kid and I genuinely sucked at the game. Ronda was last, last- because of the color of her skin. I was suddenly aware, that skin color had an order in life. I also became aware that I was afraid of being hit hard by the ball because I was so small and so it felt really hard to me and often knocked me down onto my butt. Ronda was scared of being

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<sup>1</sup> Spanish for on-trend

<sup>2</sup> A permanent wave hairstyle popular in the 80s invented by Jheri Redding

<sup>3</sup> Spanish soap operas on television and an addiction for generations of Latinas

<sup>4</sup> Spanish for ground meat, a childhood mispronunciation of the Mexican soap opera star's name Carmen Molina

<sup>5</sup> Kaliman the incredible man, an old school superhero from México in comic books and radio drama's

<sup>6</sup> Spanish for eyeglasses

<sup>7</sup> Another Spanish word for eyeglasses

<sup>8</sup> Spanish for black beans and white rice more typical in Caribbean, Latin American, and some Southern Mexican cooking

<sup>9</sup> Spanish for pinto bean soup cooked in a clay pot more typical in Mexican and Mexican American homes

hit hard by the ball because kids were tormenting her and deliberately throwing it as hard as they could at her face. She was being terrorized at school and no grown-up ever said anything or bothered to tell any of the kids that it was wrong. The grown-ups were silent. The brown Mexican Spanish-speaking grown-ups did nothing.

Ronda and I never talked about what was happening at school. We just kept right on playing together at school and at home. I'm not sure 9 and 10 year olds know how to talk about race without guidance from a grown-up and no grown-up was saying anything. They were silent. Ronda moved after a while, but we stayed friends for a few years after. We talked randomly, I on my mom's olive-green rotary dial phone. We also tried to write letters (which were more like scribbly pictures in crayon) with the help of our parents. Eventually as addresses and phone numbers changed, we lost touch, but I've never forgotten Ronda or how much fun we had together or the things that happened at school. Silence set in.

Fast forward to 1992. I was going to high school outside my neighborhood, to the good school, a White school. I was a 'bussed' kid even though my parents insisted on dropping me off every morning, so I didn't get into trouble. I remember sitting in English class when another teacher scurried in and passed a folded piece of paper to Mr. Norris. He unfolded it, glanced down, looked up and said, "riots have started in LA." "The Riots." That's how all the news stations covered the story. They flashed pictures taken from helicopters of fires erupting from the bowls of hell destroying the neighborhood with dark shadows carrying things like ants marching to the ant hill. This was where my grandma lived and where I had spent so much time playing on the sidewalk. Home was National City but I'd spent my childhood bouncing back and forth between Los Angeles, National City and México with my family.

That night my parents were scared and were spending hours on the phone with my grandma who was narrating the minute by minute account about the nice neighbors-turned-snipers and their automatic rifles pacing her rooftop. She loved her neighbors and they loved her. She wasn't leaving; no matter what. My dad was pleading with her to let him come get her and bring her to safety in San Diego. She'd simply say, "don't worry T. I trust the neighbors on the roof, and they have guns. I'll be fine."

Over the coming days Los Angeles looked like a war zone on TV. Heavily armed police and militaryish troops appearing to decimate everyone around and demolish everything that wasn't already burning. Police didn't seem to be helping. The more police came the more things burned. Going to school was creepy for me at the time. I'd already spent most days having to listen to the other kids constantly talk about how National City (where I lived) was a piece of crap and how only *cholos*<sup>10</sup> live there and how the only reason you need to go to National City is to buy drugs. Now I was listening to kids talk

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<sup>10</sup> A word with complex racial meaning and history; Spanish and Spanglish slang used in Mexican American communities for a Latino gang member or a self-adopted symbol of pride in the Hispanic civil rights movement and among Latino fashionistas, historically a colonial derogatory epithet in the Americas to describe someone of mixed race or indigenous origin which is still used today in some American communities as a racial slur for Latino immigrants with darker

about how ‘they’ are destroying their own neighborhood and why can’t ‘they’ just follow the rules. ‘They’ meaning the rioters, meaning Black people.

The world appeared shocked, but anyone from grandma’s neighborhood wasn’t. We knew the deal. Los Angeles had long been notorious for unchecked police brutality and rampant police corruption dating to the inception of the LAPD. Police weren’t safe. They could kill you. By the time of the Uprisings, I knew the protocol. Always tell police exactly what you are doing out loud and no jerky movements, lest they shoot you. And if you’re a girl, be extra careful because they might ask for favors (wink wink). Make sure you take the ticket or make them take you to the station no matter what; if you’re a girl. Always ask for their badge number, substation and supervisor’s name, and hopefully they’ll give it to you. While the world was in disbelief about LA, I was just numb. None of my teachers really did anything to talk about it or help us understand what was happening or why or to stop anyone from talking about ‘them’. It was kind of like, “yeah there are riots in LA. Here’s today’s homework.” This made no sense to me, especially when my English teacher had bothered to stop the class in the first place to announce that ‘the riots’ had started.

As soon as things settled my dad packed us into the car and we went straight to grandma’s house. Only my grandma’s and one other house on the block survived. She was right to trust the nice neighbors with the guns on her roof. *Chabelita Tacos*<sup>11</sup>, the neighborhood’s multiracial meetup-hookup spot, also made it. Everything else was in ashes with burnt-out silhouettes of buildings for miles. I had never seen the streets so quiet and bare. There was no one anywhere. It was as if the whole city was at home recovering from last night’s *pa-changa*<sup>12</sup> and was feeling the *cruda*.<sup>13</sup>

To this day, politicians, writers, and sociologists, blame it on ethnic tensions not police brutality or racism. It was the Koreans, Latinos, and Blacks that can’t get along. They are criminal. Bill Clinton described the protesters as having "savage behavior" and stated that people "are looting because ...[t]hey do not share our values, and their children are growing up in a culture alien from ours, without family, without neighborhood, without church, without support." What he really meant was not White. If you are not White in America, then you don’t get to have culture or values.

Over 10,000 people of color were arrested and prosecuted in 1992. The courts even extended the filing deadline to make sure “we could get them all.” There had to be accountability you see. Yet very few of the officers were fully prosecuted or found guilty for what they did to Rodney King or the brutalities that took place over those three days. My father briefly became involved in the neighborhood’s healing efforts and picked up some Korean along the way. *Chabelita’s* to this day continues to be the neighborhood meetup-hookup spot at the cross section of love between young Koreans, Latinos, and the Black community. For the rest of the 90s, no one ever talked about race in any revolutionary way. If you did, it was radical and you were probably one of the looters or just angry and ungrateful for what you had or worse yet, militant. At school no one talked about race and

<sup>11</sup> Mexican Spanish nickname for Isabel.

<sup>12</sup> Spanish slang for mischief, wild behavior, or partying

<sup>13</sup> Spanish for raw and Spanish slang for hangover

the closest thing to honesty about race in the in the public discourse was *In Living Color*.<sup>14</sup> Politicians left and right and center enacted policies banning bilingual education, dismantling affirmative action, creating public charge and enacting zero tolerance criminal penalties; all the while inflating police budgets and increasing their role in society. Silence set in.

Silence is deafening. Silence is consent. Silence is to be complicit and it teaches generations to be accessories in accepting a social order based on gradients of skin tone. It divides and dehumanizes us and prevents us from fully and freely loving. So much can go unsaid among friends, family, and lovers across race. If you are dark you learn to take what you can get and grit your teeth to maintain your silence lest you lose everything you've worked hard to achieve or the little you've been given. Or you turn to the streets because its where you can find belonging and make money to pay the bills. If your skin is light you learn that sometimes you can pass by staying silent or play into stereotypes about your race to get ahead, becoming part of the implicit armory of racism that maintains white supremacy.

When no grown-up stopped to condemn what was happening to Ronda in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade they were teaching us all silence as well as enforcing the hierarchy of race-based privilege. When teachers in high school didn't talk about the '92 Uprising they sanctioned the imagery and racist discourse of our public figures and allowed it to go unchallenged. Clinton is easily Trump calling us animals today. The imagery is the same. By saying nothing they placed a silencer on the barrel of the racism gun... and remember only White men get to carry guns in America. It's their second amendment right. Black men and brown men carrying guns sanction state-sponsored murder.

The thing with silence is that there is always something seething underneath. This moment in 2020, this new uprising bursting forth, brings the promise and hope that this time, just maybe, silence won't set in. We Latinos, we need to understand as a community that the same knee of oppression killing Black lives, is the same one taking our lives while crossing the border and keeping our children in cages; starved, raped, and denied medical care, ripped them from the warm arms of *mamá*.<sup>15</sup> Silence is deafening and there has been enough. *Tan Tan*.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> A sketch comedy show produced by the Wayans' brothers featuring people of color which was considered controversial by mainstream media and subjected to content censorship and launched the careers of many a Black/Brown Hollywood A-lister

<sup>15</sup> Spanish for mom

<sup>16</sup> Spanish word used for verbal emphasis and used consecutively to denote a common musical ending in Mexican

## white supremacy culture

By Tema Okun . dRworks . [www.dismantlingracism.org](http://www.dismantlingracism.org)

☞ I dedicate this piece to the late Kenneth Jones, a long-time colleague, mentor, and friend who helped me become wise about many things and kept me honest about everything else. I love you and miss you beyond words.

☞ This piece on white supremacy culture builds on the work of many people, including (but not limited to) Andrea Ayvazian, Bree Carlson, Beverly Daniel Tatum, M.E. Dueker, Nancy Emond, Kenneth Jones, Jonn Lunsford, Sharon Martinas, Joan Olsson, David Rogers, James Williams, Sally Yee, as well as the work of Grassroots Leadership, Equity Institute Inc, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, the Challenging White Supremacy workshop, the Lillie Allen Institute, the Western States Center, and the contributions of hundreds of participants in the DR process.

- These sections are based on the work of Daniel Buford, a lead trainer with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond who has done extensive research on white supremacy culture. This is a list of characteristics of white supremacy culture that show up in our organizations. Culture is powerful precisely because it is so present and at the same time so very difficult to name or identify. The characteristics listed below are damaging because they are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the group. They are damaging because they promote white supremacy thinking. Because we all live in a white supremacy culture, these characteristics show up in the attitudes and behaviors of all of us – people of color and white people. Therefore, these attitudes and behaviors can show up in any group or organization, whether it is white-led or predominantly white or people of color-led or predominantly people of color.

### perfectionism\*

- • little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing; appreciation that is expressed usually directed to those who get most of the credit anyway
- • more common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate • or even more common, to talk to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to them
- • mistakes are seen as personal, i.e. they reflect badly on the person making them as opposed to being seen for what they are – mistakes •
- making a mistake is confused with being a mistake, doing wrong with being wrong • little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned that can improve practice, in other words little or no learning from mistakes

- tendency to identify what's wrong; little ability to identify, name, and appreciate what's right
- often internally felt, in other words the perfectionist fails to appreciate her own good work, more often pointing out his faults or 'failures,' focusing on inadequacies and mistakes rather than learning from them; the person works with a harsh and constant inner critic

**antidotes:** develop a culture of appreciation, where the organization takes time to make sure that people's work and efforts are appreciated; develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes offer opportunities for learning; create an environment where people can recognize that mistakes sometimes lead to positive results; separate the person from the mistake; when offering feedback, always speak to the things that went well before offering criticism; ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently when offering criticism; realize that being your own worst critic does not actually improve the work, often contributes to low morale among the group, and does not help you or the group to realize the benefit of learning from mistakes

### **sense of urgency**

- continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, to consider consequences
- frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, for example sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people (seen as default or norm community)
- reinforced by funding proposals which promise too much work for too little money and by funders who expect too much for too little

**antidotes:** realistic workplans; leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects; discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time; learn from past experience how long things take; write realistic funding proposals with realistic time frames; be clear about how you will make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency; realize that rushing decisions takes more time in the long run because inevitably people who didn't get a chance to voice their thoughts and feelings will at best resent and at worst undermine the decision because they were left unheard

### **defensiveness**

- the organizational structure is set up and much energy spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists rather than to facilitate the best out of each person or to clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it
- because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as



threatening and inappropriate (or rude)

- people respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas
- a lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt or working around defensive people
- white people spend energy defending against charges of racism instead of examining how racism might actually be happening
- the defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture

**antidotes:** understand that structure cannot in and of itself facilitate or prevent abuse; understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege); work on your own defensiveness; name defensiveness as a problem when it is one; give people credit for being able to handle more than you think; discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas gets in the way of the mission

### **quantity over quality\***

- all resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals
- things that can be measured are more highly valued than things that cannot, for example numbers of people attending a meeting, newsletter circulation, money spent are valued more than quality of relationships, democratic decision-making, ability to constructively deal with conflict
- little or no value attached to process; if it can't be measured, it has no value • discomfort with emotion and feelings
- no understanding that when there is a conflict between content (the agenda of the meeting) and process (people's need to be heard or engaged), process will prevail (for example, you may get through the agenda, but if you haven't paid attention to people's need to be heard, the decisions made at the meeting are undermined and/or disregarded )

**antidotes:** include process or quality goals in your planning; make sure your organization has a values statement which expresses the ways in which you want to do your work; make sure this is a living document and that people are using it in their day to day work; look for ways to measure process goals (for example if you have a goal of inclusivity, think about ways you can measure whether or not you have achieved that goal); learn to recognize those times when you need to get off the agenda in order to address people's underlying concerns **worship of the written word**

- if it's not in a memo, it doesn't exist
- the organization does not take into account or value other ways in which information gets shared
- those with strong documentation and writing skills are more highly valued, even in organizations where ability to relate to others is key to the mission

**antidotes:** take the time to analyze how people inside and outside the organization get and share information; figure out which things need to be written down and come up with alternative ways to document what is happening; work to recognize the contributions and skills that every person brings to the organization (for example, the ability to build relationships with those who are important to the organization's mission); make sure anything written can be clearly understood (avoid academic language, 'buzz' words, etc.)

### **only one right way**

- the belief there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it
- when they do not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them (the other, those not changing), not with us (those who 'know' the right way)
- similar to the missionary who does not see value in the culture of other communities, sees only value in their beliefs about what is good
- **antidotes:** accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal; once the group has made a decision about which way will be taken, honor that decision and see what you and the organization will learn from taking that way, even and especially if it is not the way you would have chosen; work on developing the ability to notice when people do things differently and how those different ways might improve your approach; look for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way and then name it; when working with communities from a different culture than yours or your organization's, be clear that you have some learning to do about the communities' ways of doing; never assume that you or your organization know what's best for the community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community

### **paternalism**

- decision-making is clear to those with power and unclear to those without it

- those with power think they are capable of making decisions for and in the interests of those without power
- those with power often don't think it is important or necessary to understand the view-point or experience of those for whom they are making decisions
- those without power understand they do not have it and understand who does
- • those without power do not really know how decisions get made and who makes what decisions, and yet they are completely familiar with the impact of those decisions on them

**antidotes:** make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions in the organization; make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization; include people who are affected by decisions in the decision-making

### **either/or thinking\***

- things are either/or — good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us
- closely linked to perfectionism in making it difficult to learn from mistakes or accommodate conflict
- no sense that things can be both/and
- results in trying to simplify complex things, for example believing that poverty is simply a result of lack of education
- creates conflict and increases sense of urgency, as people feel they have to make decisions to do either this or that, with no time or encouragement to consider alternatives, particularly those which may require more time or resources
- often used by those with a clear agenda or goal to push those who are still thinking or reflecting to make a choice between 'a' or 'b' without acknowledging a need for time and creativity to come up with more options
- **antidotes:** notice when people use 'either/or' language and push to come up with more than two alternatives; notice when people are simplifying complex issues, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made; slow it down and encourage people to do a deeper analysis; when people are faced with an urgent decision, take a break and give people some breathing room to think creatively; avoid making decisions under extreme pressure

## power hoarding

- little, if any, value around sharing power
- power seen as limited, only so much to go around
- those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done in the organization, feel suggestions for change are a reflection on their leadership
- those with power don't see themselves as hoarding power or as feeling threatened
- those with power assume they have the best interests of the organization at heart and assume those wanting change are ill-informed (stupid), emotional, inexperienced

**antidotes:** include power sharing in your organization's values statement; discuss what good leadership looks like and make sure people understand that a good leader develops the power and skills of others; understand that change is inevitable and challenges to your leadership can be healthy and productive; make sure the organization is focused on the mission

## fear of open conflict

- people in power are scared of expressed conflict and try to ignore it or run from it
- when someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem
- emphasis on being polite • equating the raising of difficult issues with being impolite, rude, or out of line

**antidotes:** role play ways to handle conflict before conflict happens; distinguish between being polite and raising hard issues; don't require those who raise hard issues to raise them in 'acceptable' ways, especially if you are using the ways in which issues are raised as an excuse not to address those issues; once a conflict is resolved, take the opportunity to revisit it and see how it might have been handled differently

## individualism\*

- little experience or comfort working as part of a team
- people in organization believe they are responsible for solving problems alone
- accountability, if any, goes up and down, not sideways to peers or to those the organization is set up to serve

- desire for individual recognition and credit
- leads to isolation • competition more highly valued than cooperation and where cooperation is valued, little time or resources devoted to developing skills in how to cooperate
- creates a lack of accountability, as the organization values those who can get things done on their own without needing supervision or guidance

**antidotes:** include teamwork as an important value in your values statement; make sure the organization is working towards shared goals and people understand how working together will improve performance; evaluate people's ability to work in a team as well as their ability to get the job done; make sure that credit is given to all those who participate in an effort, not just the leaders or most public person; make people accountable as a group rather than as individuals; create a culture where people bring problems to the group; use staff meetings as a place to solve problems, not just a place to report activities

### **I'm the only one**

- connected to individualism, the belief that if something is going to get done right, 'I' have to do it
- little or no ability to delegate work to others

**antidotes:** evaluate people based on their ability to delegate to others; evaluate people based on their ability to work as part of a team to accomplish shared goal

### **progress is bigger, more\***

- observed in how we define success (success is always bigger, more)
- progress is an organization which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)
- gives no value, not even negative value, to its cost, for example, increased accountability to funders as the budget grows, ways in which those we serve may be exploited, excluded, or underserved as we focus on how many we are serving instead of quality of service or values created by the ways in which we serve

**antidotes:** create Seventh Generation thinking by asking how the actions of the group now will affect people seven generations from now; make sure that any cost/benefit analysis includes all the costs, not just the financial ones, for example the cost in morale, the cost in credibility, the cost in the use of resources; include process goals in your planning, for example make sure that your goals speak to how you want to do your work, not just what you want

to do; ask those you work with and for to evaluate your performance

### **objectivity\***

- the belief that there is such a thing as being objective or ‘neutral’
- the belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making or group process
- invalidating people who show emotion • requiring people to think in a linear (logical) fashion and ignoring or invalidating those who think in other ways
- impatience with any thinking that does not appear ‘logical’

**antidotes:** realize that everybody has a world view and that everybody’s world view affects the way they understand things; realize this means you too; push yourself to sit with discomfort when people are expressing themselves in ways which are not familiar to you; assume that everybody has a valid point and your job is to understand what that point is

### **right to comfort**

- the belief that those with power have a right to emotional and psychological comfort (another aspect of valuing ‘logic’ over emotion)
- scapegoating those who cause discomfort
- equating individual acts of unfairness against white people with systemic racism which daily targets people of color

**antidotes:** understand that discomfort is at the root of all growth and learning; welcome it as much as you can; deepen your political analysis of racism and oppression so you have a strong understanding of how your personal experience and feelings fit into a larger picture; don’t take everything personally

One of the purposes of listing characteristics of white supremacy culture is to point out how organizations which unconsciously use these characteristics as their norms and standards make it difficult, if not impossible, to open the door to other cultural norms and standards. As a result, many of our organizations, while saying we want to be multi-cultural, really only allow other people and cultures to come in if they adapt or conform to already existing cultural norms. Being able to identify and name the cultural norms and standards you want is a first step to making room for a truly multi-cultural organization.



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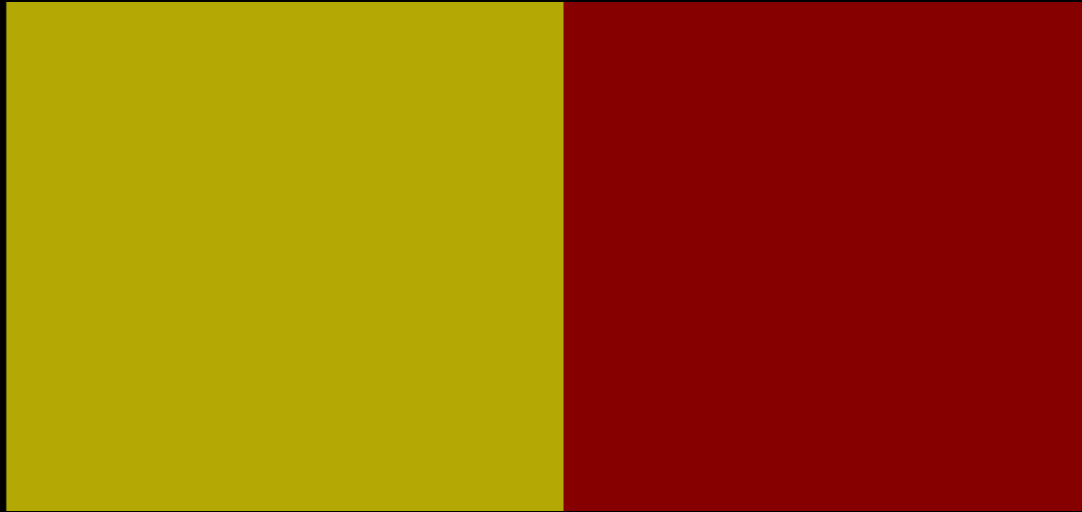
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**dRworks** is a group of trainers, educators and organizers working to build strong progressive anti-racist organizations and institutions. **dRworks** can be reached at [www.dismantlingracism.org](http://www.dismantlingracism.org) .





# Chapter 2

# Police Misconduct

**“I can’t believe what you  
say because I see what  
you do” - James Baldwin**

## THE PATH FORWARD PROJECT

I am so glad you are stepping up to get some community conversation going. I have been following the protests and the recent City Council Meetings on the Budget. The most recent had a very large number of people commenting in favor of defunding the police. The Council voted to give them more. I saw a follow-up Youtube interview with Council Chair Georgette Gomez later in the week by The Voice of San Diego which included her reasons for that decision. Georgette said she and Monica Montgomery, PS&LN Chair, spent the entire weekend trying to figure out how that could work and decided it needed more time and discussion. I hope you are in touch with them about your efforts.

I have been active with Women Occupy San Diego since 2011 and Mid-City CAN on community involvement, and equity issues. Women Occupy has focused most recently on Police Reform, which has included, for me, attending open meetings of the Community Review Board for Police Practices (CRB) and the Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) since it was reconstituted three years ago. Working with City Council members Women Occupy presented a proposed charter amendment in 2016 to make the CRB independent of the Police Department. The Police Association fought hard against it and some City Council members made sure that there was no time scheduled to have the Meet and Confer to pass it through to the ballot. (This is actually documented by news articles.) Instead, a ballot measure changing the name to "Community" instead of "Citizens" Review Board and giving equal responsibility to the Board's functioning to both the City Council and the Mayor went on the ballot. This amendment to the City Charter was passed by 80% of the voters, thinking they were getting real reform. The City Council changed at the election to include Monica Montgomery, who ran on a platform of police reform and was appointed as chair of the PS&LN Committee, to which the Police Department reports.

She has been working with us for the past two years, while Women Occupy has expanded our efforts by forming a coalition of over 40 community groups under the banner of San Diegans for Justice (SDFJ). Our new amendment proposes to make the CRB an independent Commission, free of Police Internal Affairs influence and the Mayor's and City Attorney's offices. It has been moving through all the necessary processes and will be presented to the City Council to vote on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 on whether it goes on to the November ballot. The Police Association hired a lobbyist to fight it, but the recent protests saw the Mayor openly state he was supporting it, and the Police Association said they would not oppose it. We were pretty sure of having a veto-proof majority on the Council, so this is low hanging fruit to accept and politically advantageous at the moment for them to support. However, we do not trust either one. We believe the real battle will be over the implementation ordinance which will have to be written if/when it passes. SDFJ will have to be very vigilant regarding such details as how the members get on the Commission, and the budget allocation for functioning.

I was involved in the Occupy Movement in San Diego in 2011 and the January 20<sup>th</sup> anti-Trump rallies and marches, and the Women's Marches, as well as the 350 climate concerns since. All of the local movements have been intersecting and spreading to include young people from all backgrounds. The various groups have been growing and organizing (Indivisible, SURJ, ) and uniting with the old ones (PILLARS, ACLU, Alliance, NAACP, LWV), Town Councils and Democratic Clubs, Veterans for Peace, Earl B. Gilliam Law Association, Tom Homann LGBT Law Association, National Lawyers Guild, Black American Political Association, Black Men and Women United, etc, etc... The Black Lives Matter Movement has united us all and finally brought people to the streets. I believe it has become a political movement whose time has come. Too many see the oppression and realize it is up to us to change it.

Policing needs to be re-thought. Other systems need to be re-thought. Let's start with the police. We are poised to have a big impact locally. And the pandemic? I worry about those on the streets. If it were not for my self-isolation I would be out there with them, at least part of the time. I do not have that kind of energy any more, but will do what I can from home for now. I want to stay involved.

Thanks for the opportunity.

- Ekosower



June 6, 2020



San Diego BLM Protest





Images submitted by

**Paul L Watson Jr.**

Leah Ulip

11 December 2017

## Society, the Master of Destruction

Social monsters are characters used in many mediums of art such as literature, movies, storytelling, and many other forms. They serve a purpose to show the distinction between what is good and bad, a representation of the things that are not socially acceptable in the American society, holding characteristics that are considered to be unethical and wicked. However, society itself should not have the authority to decide what is good and bad, their own practices and beliefs can be immoral and biased. Society lacks the empathy and open mind towards individuals who appear to be different, and any opposing ideas that do not fit within their world, due to their set of social standards and unrealistic expectations, expecting individuals to comply. There are consequences for individuals who fail to follow the social standards such as being rejected or ridiculed, and being labeled as an outcast. In order for individuals to survive in society, it creates a pressure to conform, to avoid facing the consequences of being condemned. There are repercussions for forcing individuals to become something that they are not and rejecting those who appear to challenge the social norm, such as creating mental illnesses and resulting in many other negative effects. Society will then categorize these people as freaks, criminals, narcissists, anything that is considered to deviate from their meaning of 'ordinary'. However, misfits of society cannot be held responsible for their behaviors and actions when their social environment designed them to be that way. Society is guilty of creating social monsters.

In the American society, people who are in power abuse their authority by enforcing unfair laws and policies within colored communities to keep them oppressed. It creates a system which only favors the wealthy, white, and privileged; and further brings down the communities of color, not allowing them to thrive. This misuse of authority has continued throughout history and is still present today. Ta-Nehisi Coates, the author who wrote, "Between the World and Me", says, "But a society that protects some people through a safety net of schools, government backed home loans, and ancestral wealth but can only protect you with the club of criminal justice has either failed at enforcing its good intentions or it has succeeded at something much darker" (Coates, 18). In this quote, he is writing to his son, explaining that the American society only protects certain groups of people, which is the white and wealthy communities; providing those communities with better

government assistance, high quality education, and ancestral wealth that has been passed on. On the other hand, African-American and colored communities do not have the advantage of passing on wealth, high quality education, and government assistance provided for their areas. Leaving colored communities with only the protection of criminal justice, a system that maintains social control created by the government by punishing those who violate the law. Coates points out that there is something unequal about society's distribution of protection and help among its citizens, questioning if the government made an honest mistake in trying to help all of its people, or if the imbalance of protection was intentional. A community implemented with a bigger police force, rather than a bigger education system and government assistance, will create a community of people with a lower opportunity to receive a good education and a higher paying job. In other words, the result of an imbalanced distribution of help and protection is detrimental to colored communities, because it keeps its inhabitants uneducated and poor, and its crime rates up. A depressed environment causes people to live in fear, Coates explains to his son, "We did not design the streets...The crews, the young men who'd transmuted their fear into rage, were the greatest danger. The crews walked the blocks of their neighborhood, loud, rude, because it was only through their loudness and rudeness they might feel any sense of security and power" (Coates, 22). The elites of the American society impose fear in colored communities, a human emotion that signals the body in response to danger, that puts individuals in a flight or fight response with the willingness to do anything just to feel safe. Coates describes that the young men in the ghetto are loud and rude, but their obnoxious behavior is a way for them to cope with their fear of survival in the streets and lack of control over their life, therefore being loud and rude gives them power, a sense of safety and control. He explains that the streets are socially constructed by the people in power, enforced by the police officers who are dispersed throughout the neighborhoods. For citizens in colored communities to cope with their fear and lack of control in their environment, it leads to behaviors that can be expressed in destructive ways. Some examples of this behavior result in drug-addicts, thugs, prostitutes; people who pose as a threat to society and are punished by the criminal justice system for such behavior. Ironically, the same individuals who are portrayed as a threat to society are the products of their socially regulated environment, also known as the ghettos, all created by the government.

Within these environments, there are social pressures that force individuals to conform and do things that might challenge one's character. Society feels endangered by individuals who resist the social norm.

Melinda Yang, the author who wrote, “The Effects of Society on the Development and Categorization of Mental Illness”, claims that the reason why society feels endangered by people who challenge their social norms is because “it fights the organized structure and conformity in society, so its presence threatens society’s power structure” (Yang, 7). Therefore, society condemns individuals to prevent them from ruining their social structure and gaining power over the group. The idea of being condemned by society creates fear, the same kind of fear that the government uses to control people in the ghetto. And for an individual to feel safe and be accepted by society, they must conform to the social norm to avoid being condemned. Kendrick Lamar, an American rapper who grew up in the neighborhoods of Compton, created a song called, “The Art of Peer Pressure”, from his album *Good Kid M.A.A.D City*. Within the song, Kendrick Lamar analyzes his own behavior within his group of friends and society’s power to influence him, finding himself engaging in activities that he normally would not participate in. For example, in the song, he says, “Really I’m a peacemaker But I’m with the homies right now... I never was a gangbanger...That’s ironic ‘cause I never been violent, until I’m with the homies” (Lamar, 2012). He claims to be a good person who brings peace between people and does not believe in violence, however he feels conflicted when he is with his friends because if he does not comply to behaving grim and ruthless like his friends, his sense of safety and control is at stake, facing the consequences of being condemned. For Lamar to be accepted among his peers, he is pressured into compromising pieces of himself by defying his good judgements. His mother knows that he is not a bad person, but she understands the power of social influences, and that her son’s circle of friends have the power to pressure him into doing things that can get him into trouble. In the song, Kendrick Lamar says, “ I’m with the homies right now And momma used to say One day, it’s gon’ burn you out” (Lamar, 2012), pointing out that his mother is warning him, that if he continues to do what society tells him to do, he will still face consequences that will be detrimental towards himself. His social pressures are so strong that he is more terrified of being rejected by his friends, that he is willing to do things that may be harmful towards himself. Similar to the examples of the young men in the streets provided by Ta-nehisi Coates, Kendrick Lamar is influenced by fear, which forced him to become reckless when he is with his friends. The social pressures within his circle forced him to do things that are against his own moral codes and beliefs, and because of fear, he will do anything to just to feel safe.

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It never is, it never is Outta D'Blue,  
nor is it coming outta left field, outta nowhere.

Men in Blue, they give me the Blues.

I shake my head: watching a White man's grip on a Black man's neck, turn Blue. I can't breathe. Gone. A life, like earth, looks Blue from above; and rises from below.

I can hear BB King's The Thrill is Gone, and John Lee Hooker's Chill Out (cause one of these days things gonna change, change, change) in the foreground. Never, Outta D'Blue.

For George Floyd, Rest in Power

Poem and photograph:

**Andrea Rocha**





Image submitted by **Ximena Gonzalez**

# I Can't

I can't, I can't, I can't  
I can't imagine why  
Someone would be so heartless  
I can't imagine  
Why someone would be so cold  
I can't imagine  
Why someone would take a life  
In broad daylight  
With evil in their eyes  
And yet be so bold  
I can't, I can't, I really can't  
I can't think straight  
I can't eat  
I can't stop replaying in my head  
The image of someone playing God  
And choosing who should live and die  
I take that back  
It's not playing God  
That's playing Satan  
Does Satan wear a blue suit and badge?  
Or maybe not all blue suits are devils  
But it sure feels like Satan hates me  
And people that look like me

So now what am I supposed to do?  
Every time I see the devil  
In my rear view mirror,  
Do I burn this MF down?  
Do I strap up and fight back?  
I can't, I can't, I can't  
I can't help but think oddly  
What if an animal was snuffed out like that?  
Right before your very eyes  
Just imagine your favorite dog,  
Almost an extended family member  
Being choked out for 9 long minutes  
Knee to the throat  
With his hands in his pockets  
To get more leverage  
9 loooooong minutes  
Would PETA be outraged?  
Would conservatives in Lansing Michigan  
Be in the streets rioting?  
Is not the life of a family man  
The life of a husband  
The life of a Black man worth more?  
I can't, I can't, I can't breathe!!!

By **Paul L Watson III**, MSHS

June 2020



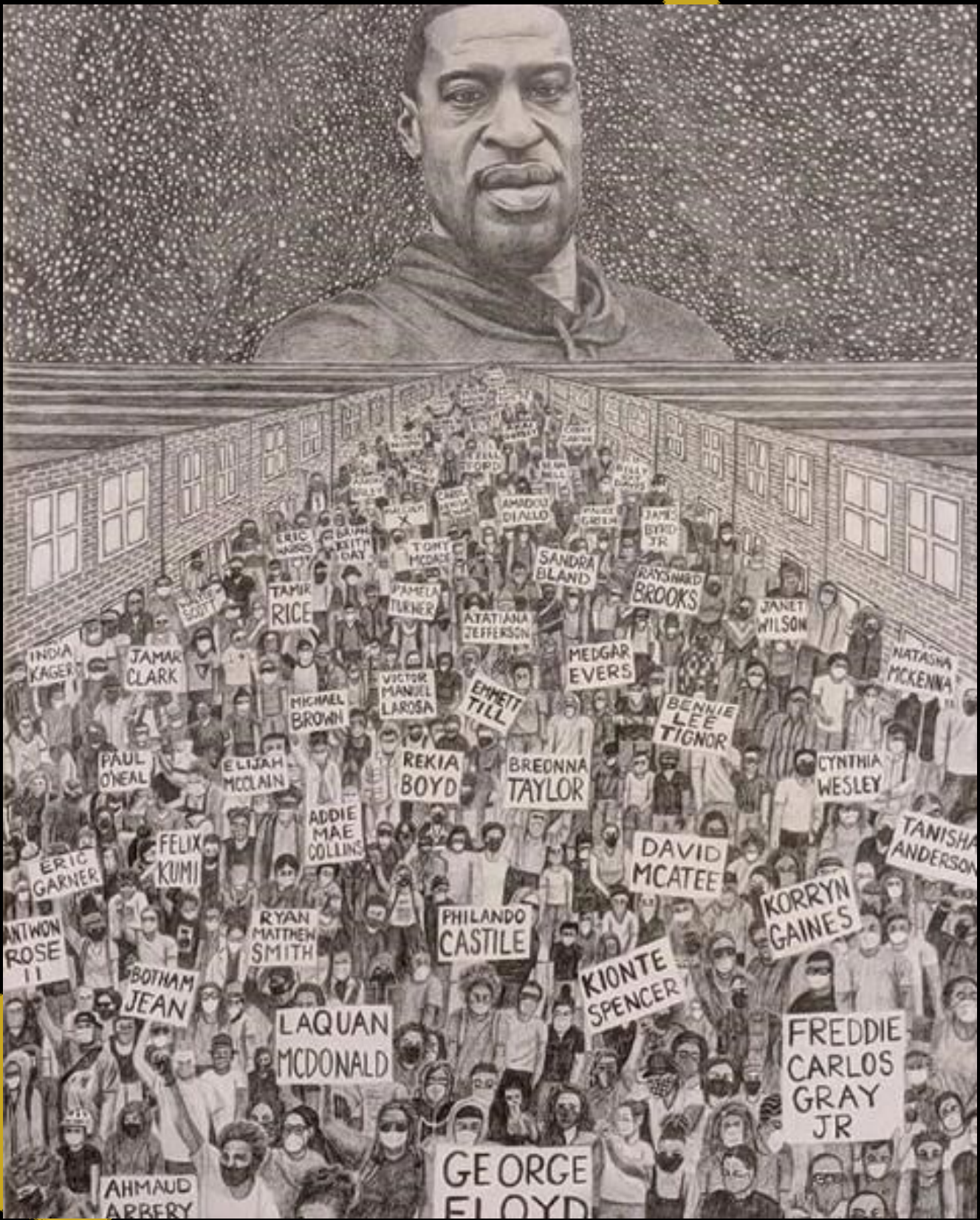


Image submitted by  
**Anonymous**

The most basic requirement to prevent police misconduct should be removing the "blue wall of silence." Seeing the raw footage of police brutality is horrifying, but hearing that those incidents are often just one in a series of violent incidents is more upsetting in my opinion. Not only would that officer have used excessive force against another person, their case likely wouldn't have had a high profile so there wouldn't be public pressure to give them justice. Those problem officers rarely get punished without public pressure because of the blue wall. Officers that would protect other officers that have used excessive force against Black people and other minorities are abetting criminals and need to face punishment. There should also be whistleblower protection laws put in place to protect those that report problem officers. The system is broken if it punishes whistleblowers before officers that would break the law.

## Michael Tamm

We also need to consider reforming courts and the justice system as a whole. Court systems are biased against the accused, often intimidating them into accepting plea deals instead of going to court, even when they aren't guilty. When some don't take plea deals, Cash bail has caused hundreds of thousands of people to wait months or even years in jails for their court date, straining their personal relationships and making them lose their jobs only because they can't afford to pay.

None of these solutions, obviously, can come without unity, I'd like to believe that most people mean to do good, but that they just don't understand the circumstances of Black people and other minorities in America and so find it hard to support policies designed to support equality. However, seeing the federal government's response to the George Floyd protests, I have to question whether people in power actually mean to do justice. These changes will have to be at the local level and because of that, we will see more protests and more murders in areas resistant to change until all police in the country are held accountable to their actions.





Image submitted by Itzel Martinez

## Humanity & Morality

As the events of the past week (honestly past years), have unfolded it has moved all of us to examine two very important constructs, which are at the bedrock of who we are as a people -humanity and morality. These personal internal constructs allow us to go beyond the external labels of race, ethnicity, gender, economic status, or community of birth. Humanity speaks to who we are as a person, family, and community. Humanity speaks to the character of who we are, which allow us the emotions of love, caring, compassion, dignity, and empathy. The quality of moral courage moves us to take a stand, take a risk for justice, rule of law, caring for others, and the expression of values which define our life.

When examining the police brutality witnessed this past week, the glaring questions come to mind, where was the expression of humanity for Mr. Floyd? Where was the moral courage of the other officers to step in and stop this wrong? Is it the “bad apple”, untrained officers the only excuse? I venture to say, all police departments have some form of diversity training and discussion about treatment of people of all races. Therefore, what is the problem? What allows someone to brutalize another? When you see yourself with absolute power and absolute control, you can excuse any act of inhumanity toward another. This lack of moral decency toward others is what we are experiencing today.

When acts of brutality rears its’ ugly head, the only redress a person, group, community has is the pursuit of justice. Eleanor Roosevelt stated, “Justice cannot be for one side alone, but must be for both.” These words, though simple, have such meaning and value today. Some focus on the protest, anger, and looting and dismiss the cause, the “cancer” of police brutality. Can property and belongs be equated to human life?

When we think of Mr. Floyd, family, friends, and community, we can understand the trauma and their quest for justice. What does justice mean? It is the application of laws which applies to everyone. We as a people must ensure justice is provided. We also must begin anew, to commit ourselves to treating people justly, humanly and morally. As Americans, we can not settle for less.

**Daphyne Watson**, MSW

Executive Director – Mental Health America of San Diego County

# **PRIVLEDGE**

**By Kathy Lembo**

At the same time I also grew up on Long Island, New York for me it was a good place. Although sometimes girls made fun of my Italian heritage (grease ball etc.) I was white, which I didn't realize that afforded me privilege. It took time for me to understand this and to realize how much easier it was for a white person to grow up, how the color of my skin did not expose me to persistent trauma – no one clutched their purse when I was near them, no one followed me around in the store. When my brothers got in trouble they were taken home for my parents to deal with them. The police and others treated my parents with respect.

To this day as a white person I continue to benefit from a privilege that I did nothing to earn. My African American counterparts did nothing to earn the devaluing and disdain thrust upon them.

My worry about my son is not exacerbated by the color of his skin.

The concept of privilege captures the unearned benefits and advantages that accrue to members of one group as a result of the ongoing exploitation and oppression of another group.

Marvin Gaye, in his album “What’s Going On”, wrote a song with the lyrics, “mother, mother, mother there are far too many of you crying. Brother, brother, brother there are far too many of you dying. We have gotta find a way, to bring some loving here today.” These words speak to the African American experience in America.

I struggle at this most reflective moment to try and make sense of the senseless, brutal behavior resulting in the death of George Floyd. As a black woman, black mother who has dealt with overt and covert incidents of racism all of my life, even today; the struggle for justice has become harder, the struggle has become more painful. When I was younger growing up in the 1960’s, I knew most white people would judge me based upon my skin color and felt no remorse in name calling, demeaning, and racist behavior. Back in those days, you grew up knowing that you were going to confront racist people and racist behaviors. It did not matter if you were walking down the street, going to the store, leaving your place of worship; you knew you had to be on guard. Back in those days, we marched and fought for justice. We believed that if we could impact laws, they would give us rights and protection as well. Today, it feels like an empty wish because those who are sworn to uphold those laws, to enforce those laws, are people you must fear and teach your children to fear.

Some may say these people brought it upon themselves because they were doing something wrong. I say this is just the excuse, just the practice of blame the blameless. The death of George Floyd exposed the lack of humanity of some have in this country, how could a man or men, hear the cry of a man for air to breathe, for help and ignore or just kill him.

It is clear we need a reimaging of a new America where people of color are enshrined with true justice, fairness, and opportunity, that is provided to all. An America, which embraces you for who you are and not what you look like. An America, which sees the beauty and humanity in others and strives to acknowledge its’ existence. I know the America I live for, embraces the diversity of all, without fear, without harm.

# **Reflections/Reaction**

**Daphyne Watson, MSW**





**Farrah Gray**  
@FarrahGray\_

Dear White People,

No one is asking you to apologize for your ancestors. We are asking you to dismantle the system of oppression that they built that you maintain and benefit from.

Sincerely,  
All Black People!

# Yasriba Hassan

The Path Forward  
*29 July 2020*

"This is America", a song by Black artist Childish Gambino, raises awareness about the ongoing unjust violence in America. The visual of the video is emphasized with the statement, "This is America", while demonstrating a black man being shot with a bag over his head. The important message also intends to show attention to the historically unjustified racial discrimination and an oppressive system, as they constantly dehumanized and lynched innocent Black Americans. Gambino's words "Police be trippin now... This is America, guns in my area, I got the strap, I gotta carry 'em", describe a horrifying reality Black Americans face since the birth of this nation. Historically, the initial form of policing was intended to purposely criminalize innocent Black Americans. Childish Gambino expresses the pain and frustration Black folks continuously face. In relation to police brutality, Gambino's lyrics reminds us "This is America ", the unarmed and innocent Black Americans being victims of an oppressive system purposely designed to operate against Blacks. Childish Gambino ends the song on a remarkable and eye-opening statement, "You just a black man in this world, you just a barcode...", to remind us why Black Americans strive to rise against a corrupt legal system that is repeatedly ignoring black lives that are destroyed at the hands of America's oppressive system. "This is America" by Childish Gambino demonstrates the imbalance of power structure that needs to be changed because of innocent folks being affected by systematic oppression.



Image submitted by **Connor Foreman**

# Lindsey Choo

29 July 2020

## The Path Forward Project: Thoughts on Police Misconduct

It has been extremely disheartening to finally see the extent to which police brutality has reached in the United States. It is even more disheartening that many people are only seeing it now, when it has been the reality and daily lives of our Black and brown communities. When the President's response to the question, "Why are African Americans still dying at the hands of law enforcement in this country?" is "so are white people", it has never been more obvious that police brutality is a huge problem in the United States that needs to be fixed. In my opinion, there are a few steps that need to be taken to hold law enforcement accountable, as well as reforms for police departments.

From a legal standpoint, the main reason why police officers are not held accountable and get away with police brutality is because it is almost impossible to sue them. Police unions protect police officers, and have thus weaponized their privilege of having qualified immunity against civilians. Qualified immunity has created a vicious cycle, as a plaintiff will not win the lawsuit unless a precedent has been clearly established, where the exact situation has happened before and the police officer was found guilty. However, the police officer will not be found guilty unless there was a precedent. This has created a legal loophole for police officers to continue committing crimes for which they would definitely be charged without the occupation they have. I strongly believe that the issue of qualified immunity for police officers

should be revisited by courts, and should be either reformed to fix the loophole or rescinded completely.

There needs to be many reforms in police departments, starting with stricter background checks for people seeking to join the force. Research has shown that rates of domestic violence in law enforcement communities are two to four times higher than the general population, which is a huge problem if those are the same people who have sworn to serve and protect. Once hired, there also needs to be more training allocated to de-escalation. A 2015 survey showed that police officers typically only get 8 hours of de-escalation training. Instead of treating every civilian they encounter as hostile, police officers should aim to only use violence as a last resort. There also needs to be more accountability within police departments when complaints are filed against police officers. For example, Derek Chauvin, the officer who murdered George Floyd, already had 17 complaints on file before the murder. Why was he still an officer on active duty? Police officers must be held accountable by their superiors. There should also be explicit and implicit bias training for police officers. Black and brown communities are disproportionately targeted and racially profiled by the police, and there needs to be more background checks and training to combat the problematic idea that Black and brown people inherently commit more crimes.

# Nicholas Christensen

## The Path Forward on Police Misconduct

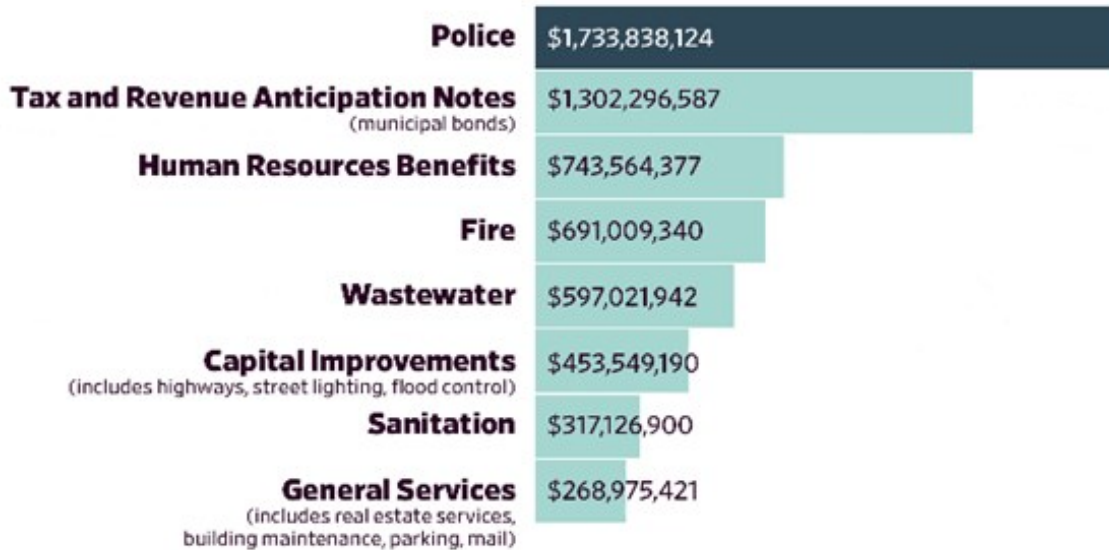
I am writing this page to explore potential reforms towards our current justice system, which as we know, has not equally served that justice. What baffles me is that lawyers, spokespeople of the law itself, must endure years and years of rigorous studies and tests in order to represent others, while police officers are able to carry weapons within less than 6 months of training, in the name of law. In every other country, there are some form of educational requirement for being a police officer. Not in America. Here in America, police academies prefer the impressionable (and often uneducated) in order to mold them into their oppressive pawns because those people have not been taught independent thought. For this very reason, we should include educational requirements, through university or training programs, that specialize in community involvement, psychology, sociology, and a deeper requirement for history evaluations. This would force officers to have a complex understanding of societal outcomes, history, and human behavior. It is evident through their own personal accounts, that these officers deal with high-stress situations and are unable to handle them properly. To combat this, officers should be routinely evaluated with stress test evaluations and comprehension of social issues, and a de-escalation officer must be present in order to try to shift police training to more non-lethal approaches. In order to uproot the system of oppression we have in-

stalled currently, we must make drastic changes such as this.

Since police have behaved in an oppressive, abusive manner, they should not be rewarded through the extensive funding they receive. A common misconception understood by many is that “defunding the police” equates to eliminating police departments entirely, which would lead to the desecration of our very nation through crime. This is simply a slippery slope fallacy that many unfortunately fall to. Defunding the police is more so means of reallocation, not removal. LAPD, NYPD, SDPD, etc. all have extensive militarized budgets that are unnecessary and take away from real issues. As we know, poverty breeds crime, and if we try to limit poverty, we will see less crime. Why does LAPD need to spend almost *\$2 billion dollars* on their police force annually? It is often comical, as these police forces have military-grade equipment, transportation, weaponry, etc. but when do those things really EVER get utilized? According to this chart, shrinking the police budget by 50% would STILL give it the highest budget allocation in the city. A part of the path forward is reallocation of money to institutions that alleviate poverty and crime, rather than instigate and breed more of it.



## What Los Angeles Spends on Policing, Compared to Everything Else



Note: Total city budget is \$10.71 billion. This chart focuses on the larger buckets of spending; other items include cultural affairs and transportation. Importantly, education spending in Los Angeles largely falls to the state.

Source: LA City Open Budget

Mak, Arron. "What Three Cities are Spending on the Police Compared with Everything Else". 19, June 2020. *The Slate*. [https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/06/what-los-angeles-minneapolis-dallas-police-spend.html?via=recirc\\_recent](https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/06/what-los-angeles-minneapolis-dallas-police-spend.html?via=recirc_recent)

Image submitted by **Anonymous**

Protests erupted in the United States and in some countries around the world in the wake of the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police officer, Derek Chauvin. People are protesting the murder of tons of innocent and unarmed Black people by police in the United States. They are fighting to change the system in this country that is built upon racism. Black people are still fighting to truly be considered equal in this country.

My dad has a friend who works in the police academy. He said that he can spot trainees who will make bad officers, he can even predict if a trainee will shoot someone and it's usually quite a few of them. But the academy has no way of flagging these prospective officers, so they get hired anyways. He even told my dad a story about an officer in training who when asked what he would do if he saw a Black man walking in a wealthy, predominantly white neighborhood, said he would stop him because he did not belong there. There was, and still isn't, a way to prevent a trainee like that from becoming an officer.

In California, an officer in training needs to log 620 hours of training before they can become a police officer. To put that number in perspective, a hairdresser needs 1500 hours of training before they can get a job in a salon. So, why is it that police officers, who are put in life or death situations, need 880 less hours of training than a person who cuts hair? Your local Great Clips employee had to spend more time in training than Derek Chauvin, the officer who murdered George Floyd.

So, what should we do about the racism that runs rampant in the police force and this country? A good first, but certainly not final, step is to defund the police. Some people hear that phrase and are alarmed, but defunding the police does not mean to get rid of it. Defunding the police means reallocating some of the funding going to the police and putting it into programs that will help the community. The funding going to the police should be used to improve the training for police officers because 620 hours is not enough. Use the funding to bring in mental health professionals who can handle situations dealing with mental health much better than police officers with no training in the matter. Use the funding to fervently explain that a Black man with a hood on, a Black man who tried to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill, a Black man who committed a traffic violation, a Black man who went for a run, or a Black woman who was sleeping do not deserve to die. The list could go on, but what matters is that a system that kills innocent Black people must change or America cannot call itself the land of the free in good conscience

# Katie Capelli

The Path Forward Project

# The Intersection of Belief Systems and Privilege

Stella Bush

When reflecting on the ways in which many of my peers and members of my community have reacted to the current Black Lives Matter protests and the ongoing police brutality that sparked them, I have gained a greater understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of white privilege. Growing up as an Asian American in a politically liberal family and community, human rights and equality have always been important to me. I know that, in American society, people are afforded more or less privilege based on their skin color, among other attributes, and that we must continue to work to dismantle white supremacy in order to improve the well being and way minorities in America are treated. I never doubted that the people in my life felt the same way.

However, the current movement has exposed the ugly truth that although many white and non-Black people of color in my community are liberal and stand against racism, they still engage in behavior and speech that works against the Black Lives Matter movement because, as non-Black American's, they cannot understand the extent of the anger and pain that comes along with oppression Black Americans in this country face every single day. Most often, I see the condemnation of the Black Lives Matter protests, from white, middle-aged liberals, over the destruction of property. While property damage is not a good thing, focusing more anger on this instead of police brutality is a symptom of privilege and ultimately undermines the fight for justice and equality. Such sentiments are a result of the inability of individuals, who are not part of the Black community, to understand that the murder of Black brethren is a continued, and much worse, reality for the Black Community in America

than property damage. As the dominant group in America does not face the same fear in their everyday lives, they are more concerned with looting because it feels more real to them and something that has a larger potential to affect them.

Additionally, I am aware of many people in my life who are unwilling to change their daily habits to support Black Americans and businesses despite claiming allyship. They have decided that they value various aspects of their daily life more than the necessity of dismantling white supremacy and the oppressive American system. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Black communities. Moreover, members of the Black community do not receive the same quality of medical treatment in the United States as their white counterparts. Ironically, posting their support for the Black Lives Matter movement on social media, many of my peers from college cannot be bothered to wear a mask and social distance. Furthermore, I continue to see my peers, who claim to be allies, purchasing from and supporting brands that have remained silent on police brutality and Black Lives Matter or who donate to political candidates and/or organizations that uphold white supremacy and oppression in America. The “allies” lack of concern with which companies to support with their money undermines their words of equality and justice and allows hateful beliefs and practices to continue. To me, such actions and commentary have exposed the engagement in performative activism and lack of accountability as powerful enemies to the creation of an American society that actually upholds its ideals and promises to its people.

While I had never been so naive as to think white and non-Black people of color allies conduct their allyship perfectly, I now have a greater understanding as to how the same people who want to end white supremacy, will use their privilege to detract from the fight for justice.

**June 29, 2020**



Image submitted by **Anonymous**



# Liberty's Dilemma

Poem By **Leah Ulip**

10 October 2017

I say education is key  
Yet, conflicted because we all know it has flaws  
NFL Players kneeling on one knee  
Ain't nothing fair about these American laws

The constitution stated "Liberty and Justice for All"  
A rhetoric so clever  
Prisoners of color counting down days on their cell wall  
Dirty cops go to jail? Never.

Inequality in our system is nothing new.  
Our president deports immigrants  
Along with his lame political crew  
Exuding acts of belligerence

The year, 2020 was a special year, my grandson was graduating from high school looking forward to what his future may be. What college would he go to, some in our family was advocating for one university over another because he had worked hard in school and followed all of the rules at home and has such a bright future. My grandson is a handsome, fun loving, caring soul, his smile warms your heart. In high school he took up track and then participated in dance team in school, which won first place in the County. He has a high GPA and his family has high expectations for his future.

The other day he was going to meet up with his friend and his mother said to him make sure he wore his mask and make sure he paid attention, there is a lot going on out there. What she was referring to was the killing of George Floyd, a black man killed by the police. When I thought about her statement, I wondered how many mothers, fathers were having this same conversation with their son? Or should I ask, how many black mothers and fathers were having that same conversation with their black son. I stood there and wondered to myself, why do we have to say these words to a good kid, who has never been in trouble or caused his parents a moment of trouble. The only reason was because he is black. Not only does this young 18 year old boy have to contend with killer viruses, he has the burden of, "living while black".

Mr. George Floyd in his last moments, cried out to and for his momma. His only last thoughts of solace, is last thoughts of protection, his last thoughts of strength. For many young black men, like Mr. Floyd killed by police, was their last thoughts of protection, their last thought of solace. Crying out to their mother!

A news reporter from MSNBC, Ali Velshi, asked a very salient question, "what will justice look like for African Americans?" As an African American woman, I ask when will African Americans receive true justice in this Country?

**Daphyne Watson, MSW**

Man, if this doesn't rip your heart out I don't know what will.



Emmons, Nick. 2, June 2020. "8 year old Khalil James of Boston". Twitter. <https://twitter.com/NickEmmonsTV/status/1266496305406377990>

Image submitted by **Anonymous**

## Submitted Ivy Che

*Video Text Transcript for Back Ground Music for Video Submission*

# **“A Change Is Gonna Come” by Sam Cooke**

“I was born by the river in a little tent  
Oh, and just like the river  
I've been running ever since

It's been a long  
a long time coming  
But I know a change gon' come  
oh yes, it will

It's been too hard living  
but I'm afraid to die  
'Cause I don't know what's up there  
beyond the sky

It's been a long  
a long time coming  
But I know a change gon' come  
oh yes, it will

I go to the movie  
and I go downtown  
Somebody keep telling me  
don't hang around

It's been a long  
a long time coming  
But I know a change gon' come  
oh yes, it will

Then I go to my brother  
And I say, "Brother, help me please"  
But he winds up knockin' me  
Back down on my knees

There've been times that I thought  
I couldn't last for long  
But now I think I'm able to carry on

It's been a long  
a long time coming  
But I know a change gon' come  
oh yes, it will “



# Florence (Flo) Kolbjornsen

The Path Forward

June 15th, 2020

The United States of America, was stolen from the First Nations, the indigenous people, incorrectly referred to as the American Indian. I say incorrect because it was not America when Columbus dropped anchor here. "We" dubbed this land "America" and "American Indian" is the identity we gave the people already established here.

The U.S.A. was stolen from the First Nations people, and then built by the kidnapped victims from Africa, the ancestors of Black people now here; built through forced slavery, using the harsh strategies of beating, raping, humiliation, murder, and other dehumanizing tactics. People were 'thingafied' through slavery and other unjust abuses in order to oppress and control. The U.S. constitution gave their kidnapping victims the value of 3/5ths of a person. Black people have been systematically devalued from the beginning of this nation.

This historical backdrop needs to be spoken about before I address my view on the happenings of this time I call the 3rd wave of Civil Rights.

First there was the Emancipation Proclamation, then the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's, now there is 2020.

From the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "It is a cruel injustice when you expect a man without boots to pull themselves up by their bootstraps."

The playing field is still not level. You cannot expect people to live in the same freedom and prosperity supposedly available, when it is not. The United States does not truly offer equity, because these aforementioned historical injustices are still not accurately and wholly acknowledged.

An acknowledgment must be made.

In order to fix a problem, biologically, or mechanically, you must first properly diagnose. The diagnosis is in, and it has been for decades. It has not been tended to and has now erupted; its infection oozing from every direction. The diagnosis is systemic injustice. Systemic racism.

People will not allow themselves to continually be abused. There will always be a portion that survives and rises up and says no more. All the pre-decessing movements, resistance and work has come to now, 2020, and we can no longer expect to move forward until this very apparent system malaise is remedied.

It has been identified and diagnosed. People across the world of all races have put in their vote and it is agreed upon. The treatment of black people in the justice system, and all systems: education, medical, legal, and in the forefront now, the treatment towards the black man by law enforcement, is unjust and must stop.

There is systemic injustice that can and will be resolved through policy development and implementation. You cannot legislate the human heart, but you can impact the human heart by what you teach it; governmentally this equates to setting policy that standardizes equity.

In order to justly offer equity to all, you cannot treat each group 'equally', because not every group is starting on the same footing. There is a difference between being treated equitably and equally African American population has come great lengths and made incredible strides as a group of persons and continue to. I believe the evident fortitude of Black people is strong reason our White privileged system is tremendously threatened by the Black population. And, it is why the continued attempt of subjugation insidiously and systemically pervades the underpinnings of this society.

A new foundation must be built, upon truth. There is much about the U.S. Constitution that is honorable and should continue, however, it cannot be built upon lies and the hiding of truth and secrets. An admission of the inhuman and ungodly tactics of how the U.S.A. was acquisitioned and built must be made before God will truly bless this nation, and subsequently this world.

It is not a matter of turning the tables. The oppressor may indeed fear the oppressed turning the tables, but that neither will fix the issue. The issue at hand is a leveling out that needs to happen.

We cannot overlook our color. You are black, I am brown, you are Asian, you are white. I am mixed race, you are Latino and so on and so forth. We must acknowledge and appreciate our differences, without quantifying and attaching value to color

Our commonality is we are all valuable, we are all full of worth, one not greater than the other. There is not a life worth more than the other.

Value has been attached to life based on the color of the skin through which that life is wrapped with and it has infected the police departments and every institution in America. It is only because we are seeing

it through video live and in color that we are able to now show and tell the world what is going on with law enforcement. Make no mistake about it, this systemic racism and injustice towards Black and Brown lives, particularly and other non-White persons has been happening for quite some time. It is happening in every area of society. This is why there are protests of this magnitude.

These atrocities have been continuing to happen for decades and years, it is only recently with the advancement of technology and the boldness of the millennials, particularly who are tired of the racist attitudes of the older generation continuing to thwart their desire for equity and peace, that phone videos are being captured of the police brutality and injustices, and everyone is now privy to it. Additionally there is no way of sweeping it under the carpet and hiding it.

We must mention also that we are seeing the footage via body cams now mandated by police departments. These unjust killings, murders and abuses are at the hand of incompetent ill properly placed law enforcement officers, who shame those officers truly committed to serve and protect our citizens and inhabitants of this nation. Body cams are a successful example of policy implementation that will rid our communities of this hate.

These atrocious abuses are currently disproportionately against the black man and a reeducation of life and the value of life must occur starting with the educational system and persisting into every realm of society; policy implementation must be enacted legislating common decency.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to voice some of my views and concern.

Sincerely,

**Flo Kolbjornsen-Norris, M.S.**

*Community Counseling Psychology*

*Professor of Psychology and Leadership*

## THE PATH FORWARD

### *How Did I Get Here?*

I grew up in Long Island, New York in an all-white community. I was 6 years old when the Brown vs Board of Education decision ended segregation in education.

I was 7 years old when Rosa Parks sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott. At home, I remember going to a local park near my house, along with my three brothers and sisters to play on the swings. When we arrived at the park, there was no one there, but after a while we found ourselves surrounded by a group of older white boys. Those boys held us down and took turns burning us with lit cigarettes.

I was 9 years old when I started following the news casts covering the desegregation demonstrations in the south.

I was 15 years old when I watched the March on Washington on TV.

I was 16 years old when the Voting Rights Act was passed.

I was 17 years old when Malcolm X was assassinated.

I was 19 years old when I was drafted into the Vietnam War and refused to die for a country that still did not treat me as a full citizen. I was willing to go to jail if necessary. So, as an alternative I committed to become a soldier for the liberation of my people. That was a cause that I was willing to give my life for.

I was 20 years old when Martin Luther King was assassinated. At that age I began my training as a community organizer, as part of the “War on Poverty” national effort. I also began my self-defense training and attended The Poor People’s Campaign March on Washington. It also began my path on the road to what is called “Good Trouble” when I was arrested on a false charge of conspiracy to commit arson. My trial garnered tremendous community support before the case was dismissed. Also, at that age I attended a Long Island version of a KKK rally. In the town I was living in at that time, there was a small Black Community within the predominantly White town. There were a number of racial conflicts in the town as young Black people became organized and pushed for equal rights. A White ally from high school allowed me to lie down in the back of his pick-up truck and covered me with a blanket. He drove me to the fringe of a rally held by a group called WIN (Whites in Numbers). We only stayed there long enough for me to listen to some of the rally speech.

At that same age I became one of the youngest leaders of a chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) on Long Island. But as I started organizing young black youth throughout Long Island, I ran into conflicts with the police. I had not realized prior to that, the role that police play in protecting and maintaining the current system. We are told that police are here to “Protect and Serve”, thinking that refers to this country’s residents. However, what we are not told is that they also have the role of “Maintaining Order”. My experience revealed that it means people exercising their rights to protest will be controlled by the police and if that protest negatively impacts the economic interests, that protest will be crushed and/or in President Trump words “dominated”. So we are taught to funnel our concerns into the political process, where our pleas for justice fall on deaf ears and the economic gaps continue to widen so much that, we who are not part of the one percent will never be able gain the resources necessary to enjoy a life quality beyond basic survival. This method of maintaining the current system by having the police “dominate” the avenues of protest, while directing us

to the “do nothing” congress for redress has been effective for decades.

As I became more vocal at the local level, harassment by the police intensified. I was constantly subject to traffic stops, searched, and arrested. Once I was arrested for having a legal gun in my car and because it was legal, I was charged with a violation of the Conservation Ordinance due to the ammunition that was also in the car. Of course, that case was eventually thrown out as well. Providing full disclosure, No one had ever given me “The Talk” so I would challenge the police every time they engaged me. In fact, when I was the President of a local youth council, our community experienced so many cases of police brutality that the youth council organized our own police force, fashioned after the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, even though at that time I had never met a Panther. Our ‘youth police force’ came together to protect our community, so every time the official police came into our community we would respond and if their behavior became inappropriate, we would intercede.

Personally, this situation culminated when a dear friend and mentor, the only Black person on the county human rights commission, told me that he overheard some cops talk about a bounty that was put on my life and the police benevolent association had chipped in \$2,500. After much serious discussion, my mentor convinced me to leave my community and accept a full scholarship to college. He felt that leaving the community and living on campus would save my life.

When I went to college my focus shifted away from racism in general or police brutality and moved into trying to figure out how do we end this inhumanity. I now had time to research root causes of the black situation in America. As one of the leaders of the Black Student Union on campus, I spent time with other student group on campus. I studied the Native American struggle, which impacted me since my grandfather on my mother’s side of the family was a full blooded Shinnecock. I do remember going to Powwows as a child. I also met some Young Lords in New York City and learned about the Puerto Rican struggle. When I finally did meet some Black Panthers, I learned about systemic racism and oppression. From the white students within *Students for Democratic Society (SDS/Weatherman)* I learned about the One percent who controlled the majority of this country’s wealth. I also learned the names and addresses of the families represented within the one percent. I learned about the differences between capitalism and socialism. That led to considering the age old question for this country – What is the proper role of government? To care for the needs of the people or to nurture and support the economic interests within the country? And I also learned and studied deeply revolution. The more I learned I became convinced that the only way forward was to radically change this system by any means necessary.

Much to the chagrin of my mentor, while I was in college I still got involved in issues within the surrounding communities. I began to spend more time in discussion with the Panthers and the Black Liberation Army. This led to one day leaving campus and being stopped and detained by the police. I was taken to the precinct and was beaten and tortured for eight hours. When I went to court the next day, I learned that I was charged with possession of stolen property, which actually was a phony identification I presented when I first engaged them. I had not realized that they already knew who I was when they stopped me. That case was also dismissed. I sued the two police officers in civil court and won, but for the safety of my self and my family, I had to leave the state.

I was 71 years old when I watched George Floyd being slowly murdered in broad daylight on national TV. Do we call this progress? **-Paul L Watson Jr, MSHS**





Blanchard, Nicole & Brown, Ruth. "Police: No, antifa not sending 'a plane load of their people' to Idaho to incite riots". 3 June, 2020. *Idaho States Man*. <https://www.idahostatesman.com/news/local/article243180241.html>

Image submitted by **Anonymous**



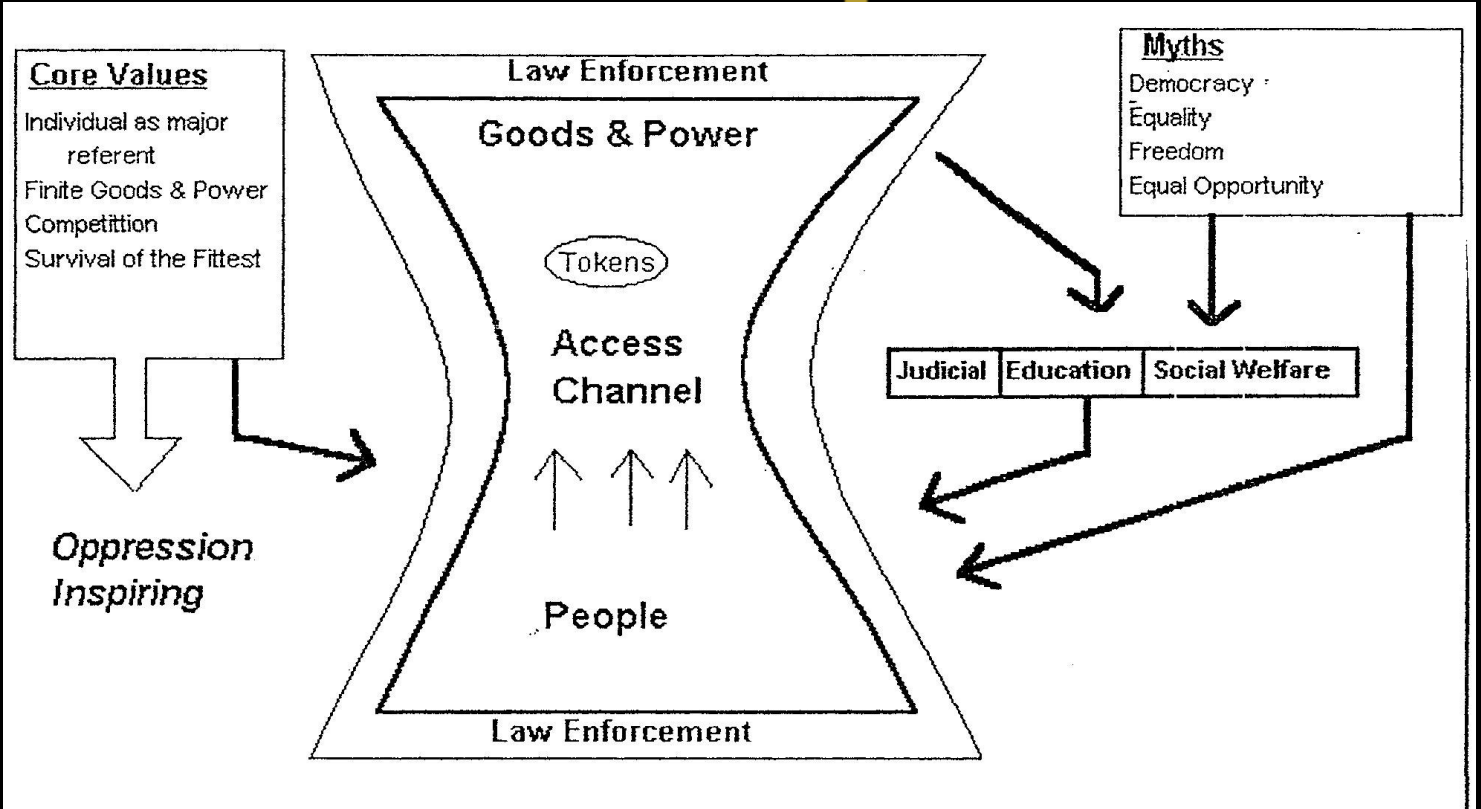


Image submitted by **Bill Oswald**

# Chattel

They say Americas a wasteful place but I don't think its true

Who uses all parts of animals as fully as you do?

Hair first, though you ridicule it, calling it wild

You douse yourself in chemicals to emulate our style

Then comes skin, you mock and deride

But if we're the livestock, why are you the one's that tanning your hide?

Bones pay for rent in all your burial plots

Lain but not rest, it seems with justice, you forgot.

Mouths for words and poems you could never create

Like all the foods we make, flavors you never knew you could taste

And don't forget dry tongues restrained behind teeth clenched

Still parched from thirst equal rights, its never been quenched

Brown eyes find new perspectives that you don't wanna hear

Save to distort them for their use in stoking anger and fear

Muscles in hot sun always have toiled

# Nicholas Towns

To make sweet sunripened berries, while you wilt, burn or spoil  
Guts wrenched each day in fear then filled with bullets from a cop  
Somehow always have a gun at those “routine traffic stops”  
With no due credit you all profit from the offspring of our minds  
But this country stole and sold our kids since the dawn of time  
You say I’m not livestock, but I know we are the same  
In lieu of my own, the farmers’ branded me with their names  
Each day the weight of this injustice is slung like a yoke over our necks  
Though given what they used to do, we’re better off in that respect  
We still laugh and love and stand strong though, despite all our neglect,  
Yet somehow showing that humanity’s a sign of disrespect  
You seek to break us from within, destroy our peace, trust and cohesion  
Somehow that’s fine but peaceful protesting is basically treason  
Maybe American has too much waste or greed though, maybe that’s the reason  
Though you waste not, you still want more, that’s why is always hunting season

## Twitter Thread June 15, 2020

This is a white woman talking honestly about her experiences and its one of the best threads on the criminalization of Black people that I've read lately.—Twitter Thread submitted by Anonymous



**Krista Vernoff**  
@KristaVernoff

Jun 15

*The cop pulled me aside and said, "You don't punch people in front of cops," then laughed and said that if I ever joined the police force he'd like to have me as a partner. I was sent into my apartment and told to stay there.*

Jun 15

*Between the ages of 11 and 22, my friends and I were chased and/or admonished by police on several occasions for drinking or doing illegal drugs on private property or in public. I have no criminal record.*

Jun 15

*If I had been shot in the back by police after the shoplifting incident - in which I knowingly and willfully and soberly and in broad daylight RAN FROM THE COPS – would you say I deserved it?*

Jun 15

*I'm asking the white people reading this to think about the crimes you've committed. (Note: You don't call them crimes. You and your parents call them mistakes.) Think of all the mistakes you've made that you were allowed to survive.*

Jun 15

*Defunding the police is not about "living in a lawless society." It's about the fact that in this country, we're not supposed to get shot by police for getting drunk.*

Jun 15

*The system that lets me live and murders Rayshard Brooks is a broken system that must change. Stop defending it. Demand the change. #BlackLivesMatter*



**#WhitePrivilege #DefundPolice**



**Anand Raghunath**

@RaghunathAnand

Jun 15

Replying to

@KristaVernoff

*This is a great thread. It just shows how much mediocre and unaccomplished white people can make amazing lives for themselves (and become president, like Bush and Trump), while mediocre and unaccomplished black people end up dead, in jail, or in the projects with no future. Nice.*



**Mark Munkittrick**

@oprman

Replying to

@KristaVernoff

*Here we are discussing petty crime again when the real thieves, the Wall Street financial fat-cats are fleecing us on a daily basis & no-one cares. It's not just coincidence that we've been conditioned, brainwashed to accept the deaths of the poor & people of color. Capitalism...*



**TOM**

@tstandlickwl\_20

Jun 15

Replying to

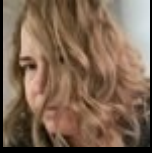
@KristaVernoff

*At age 19 I was pulled over around 4:30 am with a car full of friends coming home from the strip club. I was clocked at 93 mph in a 70. When I was looking for my registration in my glove box I had an air soft pistol that looked very similar to a real gun. I pulled it out while*

Jun 15

*Trying to explain what it was. Cops yelled "GUN" and "let me see everyone's hands!" so we all put our hands up. Both cops put their hands near their guns but never unclipped their holsters. If I were black I don't believe I'd be here today.*





**Anne Reid**

@reidspr

Jun 15

Replying to

@KristaVernoff

*I asked my 15 yr old to define white privilege. He said mom you know like when you yell at the cops for pulling you over.*

Jun 15

And I said yup that really says it all.



**Boxing Trainer**

@BoxingTrainer1

Jun 15

Replying to

@KristaVernoff

*I'm black & have never committed any type of crime or mistake that could be called a crime & twice I was pulled over by cops in my 40 years. Both times The cops drew their guns & only put them away when they saw I was in the military. I think even that would get me killed today.*



**C. A. Lewis**

@Rellygirl21

*Same. No crimes or "mistakes" to speak of. Pulled over for traffic violation & cop was aggressive with hand on gun. Once pulled over w/ son (13yo at time but 6ft tall) 2 cops. 1 on his side to the rear w/ gun out while one talked to me aggressively. Cried I was so mad & scared.*



**Beverly Poncia**

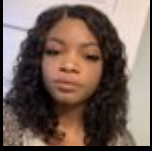
@Sugarbear710

Jun 15

Replying to

@KristaVernoff

*I'm beginning to think that I didn't live my "growing up years" properly. I must have missed the manual. Sigh. My only interaction with police was a few speeding tickets and their assistance when my house was robbed. I must not have hung with the right crowd!*



**Virgil "\$50" Ablah**

@queend236

Replying to

@KristaVernoff

*My sister was in the bathroom at a store and her friend shoplifted a \$10 lip gloss and my sister got arrested, charged with theft, and is banned from the store. She had a job that withdrew their offer and she now has to check that she's convicted of a crime on applications.*

Jun 15

*My white friend got drunk and stole a construction cone off the road, and the cops asked her what she was doing. She said she was using it to workout with. Cops told her to bring the cone back when she was done. Took the cone in her apartment and it's still there years later.*



**Dr. Ro**

@everythingro

Replying to

@KristaVernoff

*When I was 16 I was stopped by 6 police in 3 cars who pulled me over & boxed me in - in front of the White House, guns drawn, I nearly soiled myself- had never seen 6 guns let alone experience having them pointed at my face & head. 1/2*



**Toni Simpson**

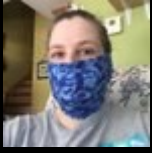
@AmericanLotus29

Replying to

@everythingro

*How deeply disturbing and troubling for anyone, let alone at such a tender age, to experience what you have shared with us. The stark difference in treatment of Black people at the hands of our entire legal system is 'ing, CHANGE*

*this is the Century of Life!*



**Becky McG.**

@bmmcgar

Replying to

@KristaVernoff and @AndrewWBloom

*I've never had these kinds of run-ins with the law, I've actually behaved my entire life, but I still get called out for white privilege and I get called racist. I can't help my skin color, my last name is Hispanic and I'm not racist. Pls don't judge.*



**abdul-abdul**

@alayaabdul1

*But you believe all other skin colors have issues with the law for them to be shot over non-issues ?*



@sweets419

Replying to

@KristaVernoff

*As a poc, I've been pulled over while out on a walk with my son (lights and all), pulled over to prove ownership of my car and my dog in the backseat. (Separate occasions) I've been wrongfully arrested, verbally abused and threatened with deportation. I am Native American. Fuck12*



**Kelly**

*My dad is part Native and he was visiting his completely white dad in a small town while on leave from the army. He got bored and went for a walk. The cops stopped him and wouldn't let him go until they got ahold of my grandpa and he said yeah that's my son.*



## Commentary: I am proposing an Office on Race & Equity to heal race relations in San Diego

San Diego Council member Monica Montgomery speaks to San Diegans in this file photo.  
(Hayne Palmour IV / San Diego Union-Tribune)

By MONICA MONTGOMERY

JUNE 6, 2020

3:08 PM

We have reached a defining moment in American history. A history where we have often seen bloodshed precipitate and force real changes to occur. My heart and prayers are with all the victims and families of police violence. Too many names. Too many hashtags. Too many lives ended before they could really begin. What we are seeing across this nation is what my grandmother would characterize as “the straw that broke the camel’s back.”

Yes, this is about the unnecessary and excruciating death of George Floyd. But this movement is larger than George Floyd. People are tired. People are hurting. Hearts and spirits are broken. For the past two weeks, I have experienced the gamut of emotions, including waves of horror, anger, hurt, sadness and pain only to arrive at what initially motivated me to run for political office — resolve. A resolve to continue to advocate for police reform through accountability and transparency measures.

We are at the proverbial crossroads, with a soul-level pain that is reverberating across our region and across our nation. We simply cannot afford to be disingenuous in our response. In good faith, we must call for calm from the community, but we must also address the root causes of the unrest — the inequity in enforcement and the systemic racism that is prevalent in our nation.

From day one, I have listened to my community, partnered with organizers and activists, on the crusade to champion a holistic approach to police reform. An approach that includes changes in use of force policies, along with economic investment in communities of color.

In a stunning move last week, we have seen the region’s law enforcement agencies collectively ban the use of the carotid restraint. For years, the Racial Justice Coalition, the Coalition for Police Accountability and Transparency, Black Men and Women United, and the historic NAACP have called for a ban on the use of this chokehold. But make no mistake — another loss of black life had to precipitate real change.



A 2016 study by San Diego State University documented that racial profiling and disparities occur in traffic stops by the San Diego Police Department within communities of color. We know this. Additionally, a more recent ACLU Campaign Zero Report found that San Diego Police stop black people at a rate 219% higher than white people.

We must genuinely and honestly address this data. The time is now. Our region can no longer marginalize whole segments of society. We must be willing to deal with our personal discomfort around inconvenient truths, most importantly, the truth of structural racism at the root of this country's existence.

From the beginning of my administration, we have been steadfast and immovable in advocating for a partnership between law enforcement, grassroots organizations, faith-based leaders and community members to rebuild trust in community policing.

As traumatic, difficult and unpredictable as this year has been, we have an incredible opportunity to tackle the hard work that effectuates meaningful changes.

This is why I plan to introduce an Office on Race & Equity with the mission of healing race relations in our city. We need healing and help.

As a black woman, a native San Diegan, a sister to two black men and aunt to two black nephews, I know all too well the impact of racial injustices on the black community. As a politician, I feel a calling to flatten the curve on inequity in enforcement. Just as the novel coronavirus pandemic is a public health crisis, racism should also be deemed a public health emergency. As Christian Cooper, the New York birdwatcher who recorded a video of a woman calling the police on him on Memorial Day, said, "We refuse to participate in our own dehumanization."

It is my hope that every person will be able to live with dignity in a safe community and free from all forms of violence, racial profiling and economic injustice.

*Montgomery is an attorney and represents the Fourth Council District on the San Diego City Council.*



Judy Belk: President & CEO

Judy Belk leads The California Wellness Foundation in pursuing its mission to improve the health of the people of California. In her role, she uses her vision and her voice to help Cal Wellness “level the playing field” so that everyone has access to good-paying jobs, safe neighborhoods and quality health care services.

*Originally published in the Los Angeles Times on November 3, 2019.*

## **As a Black Parent, I Need to Update ‘The Talk’ I Have with My Kids about Police**

**By Judy Belk**

Well, I guess black parents across America will be updating “the talk.”

You know, the one where we remind our young men and women that when they leave the safety of their homes, they have to keep their guard up, mouths shut, and hands on the wheel in even the most casual encounters with law enforcement. It’s an unfair but necessary burden we carry in the black community, one we reluctantly pass down to our children if we want to keep them alive and safe.

The talk was a painful ritual I went through with my own two kids, especially my towering 6-foot-5 son who reassured me at an early age that his way of coping with white people who seemed nervous around him was to start reading a book. He carried one with him everywhere, and that worked for me.

The “talk” in our family has always been given through a clear-eyed lens of the difficult role law enforcement plays in our communities. My brother is a retired fireman, and my sister is a retired cop, and they both had long, distinguished careers putting their lives on the line as courageous first responders. But guess what? They, too, have given the “talk” to their children, because they know firsthand that whether you’re the child of a policeman, fireman or doctor, the color of a person’s skin can make the difference between life or death.

I was relieved that my husband was in the car the first time a cop pulled my son over to inquire where he was heading. They were in an unfamiliar Southern town, where my son was moving into his first apartment to begin graduate school. Long experience — and the talk he had been given by his own father — meant my husband knew what to say and not to. Stay calm and remember the talk.

Now, however, the talk needs a reboot. In recent weeks, in separate incidents, two young, law-abiding African Americans were gunned down in their homes by white police officers. I realize now it was an illusion, but I always felt that once my kids were in their homes, drapes drawn and doors locked, they would be safe.

The history of African Americans should have taught me otherwise. We are a people who have never had the luxury of feeling safe in our homes. Our ancestors were pulled from their beds and hung on trees all over America, some for just making eye contact with white folks. Bombs were thrown in our living room windows, crosses were burned on our neatly manicured lawns, and our land and homes were taken from us time and time again by intimidation and force, with little or no compensation. We have never been safe in our homes.

But, even with this violent history, we still want to believe and hope that, while our lives don't seem to matter much these days on our neighborhood streets, in our schools, or even in our churches, surely in 2019 we can be safe within the four walls of our homes. And we want that even more for our children.

I'm sure 26-year-old Botham Jean felt safe watching television in his living room before a white off-duty police officer burst into his apartment in Dallas and fatally shot him. Afterward, she said she thought she had entered her own apartment and that Jean was an intruder. Twenty-eight-year-old Atatiana Jefferson, playing a video game with her nephew late at night in her Fort Worth home, probably thought she was safe, too; until she heard noises in her backyard and was killed in her own bedroom by a policeman, who had been asked by a concerned neighbor to make a "wellness" check after seeing an open door.

Thinking we are safe in our homes is an illusion, even in Hollywood, where I live. Earlier this year, a well-intentioned neighbor called the police to respond to someone she thought was an intruder with a flashlight wandering in a park across the street from our house and then entering our darkened home.

The police responded, but to the wrong address. When a startled white neighbor opened the door with her terrified daughter behind her, she saw two policemen, one with his gun drawn. She quickly assured them she was safe. But, when she realized they were actually looking for our address, seeing the pointed gun, and knowing all too well the dangerous racial assumptions which are made every day by law enforcement, she quickly said: "The address you are looking for is next door. But, please, you need to know that my neighbor is black, and he's a doctor."

By the time the police approached our front door, the gun had been put away, but my husband was still taken aback to see two cops at his front door. He quickly explained that it had been him walking in the neighborhood park and entering our house with a flashlight. He had come home, grabbed the dog for his nightly walk and a flashlight for safety and poop retrieval; then returned home and moved through the house with the flashlight without turning on the lights as quickly as he normally would have. The well-intentioned neighbor apologized for thinking my husband was a cat burglar, and my next-door neighbor apologized for having to remind the police not to shoot the first black man they saw. For that, I was extremely grateful.

The incident unnerved me. Although I was out of town when the drama unfolded, and my husband joked he almost got shot for walking the dog, it was just another reminder that safety for my family and me is always going to be an illusion.

Recently, the L.A. Police Department offered to park an empty police car as a decoy in our neighborhood to deter crime. While having a black-and-white parked outside might make my white neighbors feel safe, it would have the opposite effect on me. These days, police cars in the neighborhood serve as one more reminder of the lost lives of Atatiana

# Where Do We Go from Here?

**Paul L Watson Jr.**

Over the years, I have traveled around the world spending time with people of color who are fighting their own oppression. I have spent time with white folks who are resisting oppression and discrimination. My studies and my experiences, as I watch the current wave of uprising, lead me to both hope and caution. It reminds me of the night that Barack Obama was elected President. I was in Michigan conducting a youth development training. So that night I picked up some takeout food and went back to my hotel room to settle in for what I thought would be a long night. In all honesty, I was expecting to hear that there were some voting irregularities and he had lost the race. Or worse, remembering my experiences during the sixties, expecting to hear that he was assassinated. So, I was completely shocked to learn that he won. For some time, I was ecstatic thinking about the historic moment this was in this country's history. I never thought I would live to see such a thing happen in this country (I am sure Mitch McConnell and many others never thought they would see such a thing either). But then I had to check myself. I realized that no matter how significant this moment was it would not change my life or the lives of my people. I realized that one person, even if he were the President, could not change this system from within. I mention Mitch McConnell because he voiced this sentiment very clearly when he announced that they would make sure that Obama was a one term president who did not accomplish anything. And following MC Connell's miscalculation of being a one term president, Trump followed up to work on dismantling everything and everything that Obama put in place. And we must understand that this stance goes way beyond partisan politics. Obviously that fact that he was Black is something that some of the country has still not recovered from. But on top of that, there was an effort policy wise to take some baby steps toward a redistribution of wealth. Obama was not trying to expropriate some of the one percent's wealth. He was simply trying to reallocate some of your tax dollars to provide affordable health care for all people. He was trying to refocus police away from an oppressive militarized approach to policing into true community policing. Are these radical ideas? I don't think so. If we are able to "fix" the policing in USA, that does not solve the problems facing people of color. Without access to good paying jobs, decent affordable housing, affordable health care, quality education, etc., we are still oppressed.

We go back to that question – What is the proper role of government? Should we invest our tax dollars on creating a 'space force' or invest that money on protecting the environment in behalf of the people? Should we invest more money in the police or invest in solving our housing problem? Should we continue to increase police budgets or invest in mental health services? Again, these are not radical thoughts, however in order to make this happen, we will have to take radical action.

On April 12, 1964 Malcolm X gave a speech in Detroit. The speech was addressed to America and was entitled: "The Ballot or The Bullet." In that speech he stated that America was at a crossroads. We all had a choice to make. He stated that the cries for freedom, justice and equality were growing and would not be deterred. So, the real question is – How would we respond to these cries. There were two choices that he posed. We could either respond to those cries and make the changes through the current political process or be forced to make the changes due to uprisings and violence. This choice is still valid today, but the question is—Which pathway will we choose?



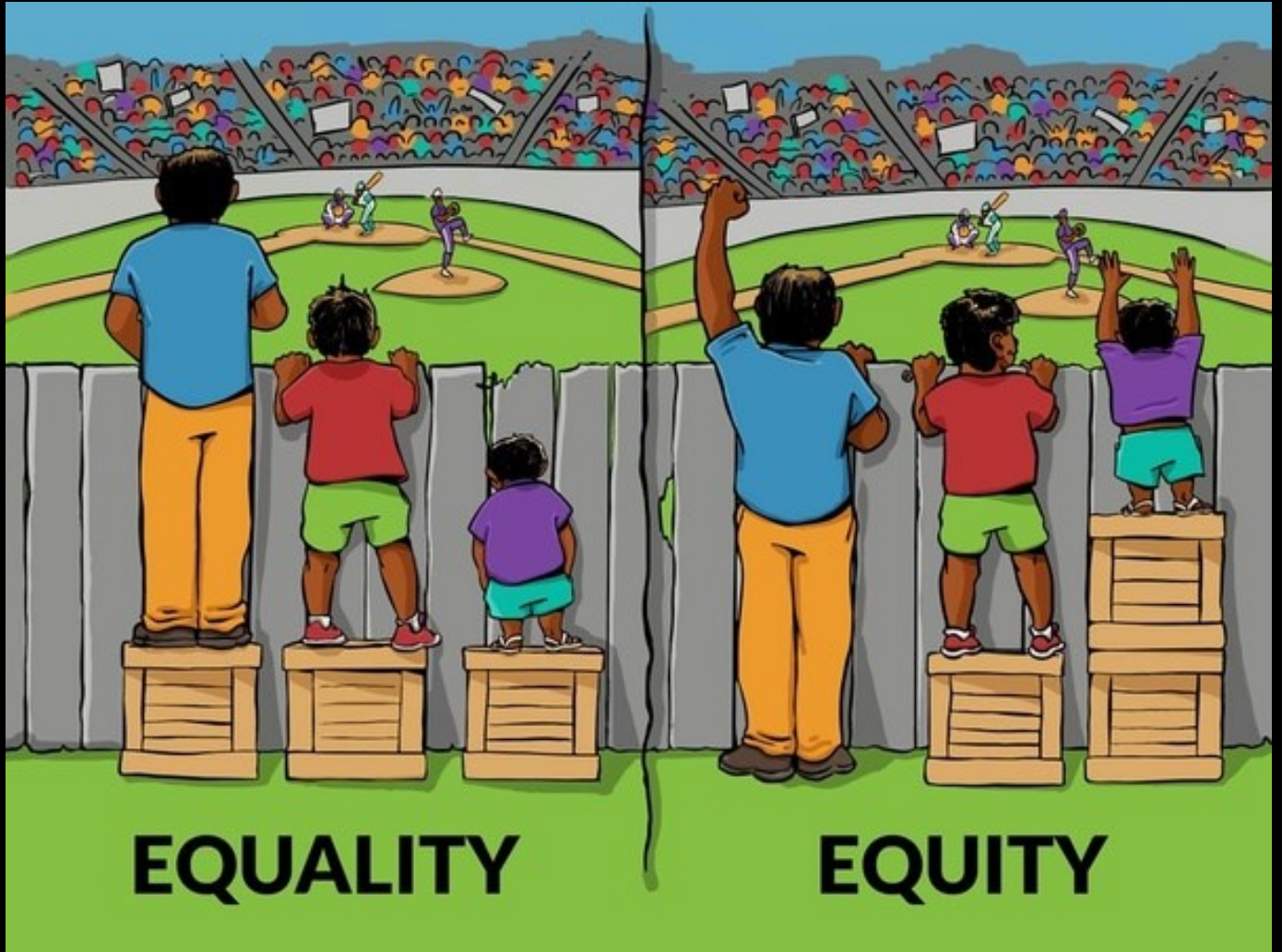


# Chapter 3

## The Path Forward

"It takes no compromise to give people their rights...it takes no money to respect the individual. It takes no political deal to give people freedom. It takes no survey to remove repression."

-Harvey Milk



“Equality vs. Equity”. 6 March, 2017. *Reddit*. [https://www.reddit.com/r/dataisbeautiful/comments/4bhg7h/hello\\_reddit\\_my\\_organization\\_just\\_launched\\_the/?ref=readnext](https://www.reddit.com/r/dataisbeautiful/comments/4bhg7h/hello_reddit_my_organization_just_launched_the/?ref=readnext)

Image submitted by **Anonymous**



When picture speaks a thousand words.....

Image submitted by **Anonymous**

Eva Desai

Professor Forman

POLI 13

29 July 2020

### **The Path Forward Project**

The pressing issue of racial injustice is one that has continued to consume social life in America for decades as while we have seen a number of individual efforts taken to eliminate racism, the issue has never been properly embraced and addressed by the masses. Above all, the true “path forward” concerning racial justice begins with an increase in overall awareness through education in spheres such as healthcare, business development, as well as other services associated with systematic racism. True change can only begin after we come together as a nationwide community to develop our understanding on the issue at hand and work towards altering our preconceived mindset by accepting responsibility for the social state of the nation. Only once the harmful narratives and bias among all American citizens is removed can permanent political change occur as now all members of society would have a shared vision and goal, thus facilitating genuine progress.

# The Path Forward

We are born mindless  
Like the rise of dawn  
From the grace of birth  
But the path doesn't move on

We are taught what to think  
As we walk upon the lawn  
We hear of the strange fruit  
But still it stays on.



We are not learning  
How to think of what goes on  
Instead children are forced  
To carry this tradition on

We must work from the ground  
In our communities of fawn  
To cure our roots of this poison  
So the path can move on.

**-WK.**

# Princess Samano

In order to address the problem of racial injustice, we must first acknowledge the deep roots from where this injustice comes from. Slavery has transitioned from being chattel physically metally, legally to being a slave of systems. By this I mean that the idea of slavery is fluid and ever changing, although its purpose to keep black people and other minorities oppressed remains the same. Slavery has many forms such as Jim Crow, mass incarceration, the school to prison pipeline. How do we address all of these forms of slavery without disturbing capitalism, the most important aspect of this country? You don't. You resist capitalism, you fight against capitalism. Chattel means to be property of. Sit here and think how black people have transitioned from being personal property of a white man, a commodity to being property of the state through mass incarceration, property and poverty through capitalism. What does the black life mean beyond being property to those very things that oppress them? How do Black people move beyond feeling, and being treated like property?

Moving out of that void, embracing oneself is the first step, as mentioned by Paul Watson. We must love the skin we are in, our brown, black, and white skin in order to appreciate and love the other race without fear. Exposing the changes and deepening of slavery into American capitalism is an important step to dismantling systemic racism. How does this information become unmasked, uncovered to society? The best way possible, in my humble opinion, is through the media, social media. Social media can be very detrimental to an individual's sense of individuality because social media heavily influences what people are supposed to wear, supposed to look like, supposed to do by a certain age and time. Social Media shapes society in a way that it hasn't ever before in history. Technology allows us to reach people globally, and to influence. For example, making a twitter thread explaining slavery and its many parts, creating a Youtube channel for this purpose or even creating a Facebook page. There are so many ways to influence and most importantly educate the general public through social media. Social media allows for us to connect with all kinds of people, rich or poor, gay or straight or non-binary, black, white or brown. Social media plays a significant role in capitalism, and I believe it's the perfect place to start because it's what shapes people's livelihood, whether we like it or not. This is only one step, maybe a sub-step towards our path forward.

# “Protest & Pandemic”

June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Raphael Lagoc

I was speaking with my boss earlier today about our next steps in the movement and something we are planning and building out, and we got on the topic of Drew Brees. For those who aren't aware, like myself before this talk, Drew Brees is an NFL player who recently made some comments about protests disrespecting the American flag, after which, he was absolutely dragged by his teammates, other NFL players, and even the larger sports community across different sports, teams, hell LeBron James got in on it. This isn't about the comments he made, their validity, etc. This is about a thought that this brought up, about quarantine, about the unprecedented scale and nature of what is going on right now, and the unique relationship these two have.

Make no mistake, it is not “All of this is happening coincidentally on top of a pandemic,” I firmly believe it is exactly because we are in a pandemic, and have been cooped up in our house quarantining, that is why a lot of this change is happening. In this piece, even more so than my previous post, I am just trying to make sense of it and share my own observations and reflections. I have even less answers on this topic, which, I think, makes this even more ripe a topic to write about and post for people to share their own thoughts and ideas.

The reason that I bring up the Drew Brees' example is because I had a revelation mid-way through learning about what happened. The question I asked myself was this: “If his teammates knew for a fact that they had to share a locker room with Brees the next day, if other teams knew they were going to be hosting Brees on the field the next day or the next week, would they have spoken up as boldly as they did now?” This is not a total condemnation of them. For allies in successful places, as much as I'd love for them to use their voice as fully as possible (Shout out John Boyega), I accept and try to understand that they may feel they are in a precarious position, and maintaining it can ultimately result in more good.

The answer I reached is that I firmly don't believe people would be this vocal if it weren't for the fact that they had this strong reassurance that there was no status

quo to return to the following day. There is no illusion of politeness that we are beholden to when we step into public spaces anymore. For some, there never was, and I admire you for your boldness and courage. But again, this is not a condemnation of those for whom that pressure was real. It is not vindication either. Many are finally feeling a freedom to share in ways that they never felt they could before. Call it pandering, call it performative if you wish, but I truly believe that for some of the celebrities and figures chiming in right now, these are genuine thoughts that they have had to repress for years to get where they are.

To my friends and peers: Many are choosing now to more publicly condemn and call out the problematic relationship dancers have had with black culture for years. Would that have been harder to do if you knew that you had rehearsal with those people this weekend? If, after watching the videos or seeing the information shared, you also had to get to class which required an hour of bussing, a 20 minute walk because your class is in ERC and you get off at Gilman, etc. would this have held the same consistent attention and emotional energy in you? I knew people who had full, airtight schedules planned literally to the minute, doing a lot of exciting and important things. I was one of those people at times. Your work, your plans, they can be valid while admitting that they were also a reason, an obstacle, that went against solidarity like this happening earlier.

This status quo, or lack thereof in the pandemic, is not just present in our physical plans and actions. Before this eruption, we were still listening to reports that the economy would take years to fully recover. We watched jobs, businesses, entire companies, even entire industries, passing in COVID's wake. "The New Normal" was a favorite buzzword, and even when you're not hearing about the people hurt by the pandemic, the businesses that were thriving were just as indicative of the enormous changes that will happen in the aftermath of quarantine. Shifts to digital shopping, shifts to more WFH access, etc. There was this constant feeling that there is a lot about the world, about society, that we will be rebuilding from the ground up. That sounds quite a bit like the perfect opening for a revolution to occur.

A good amount of the conversation before has also been on this absolutely visceral look at the vulnerability that is tied to socioeconomic status. I kept seeing reports of minority groups and neighborhoods being by far the worst affected by infection. Even San Diego, shining star of containment as we are, just take a look at where the hot spots are. Celebrities were absolutely dragged for being completely tone deaf and performative in a way I have never seen before, with Gal Gadot's "Imagine" video just being the first in a line of many stupid blunders. This is a point that I have seen already covered more, but bears repeating. Tensions were building far before George Floyd, not just the lifetime tensions that police brutality has caused, but new socioeconomic tensions started to grasp even more people for whom it was just not as tangible before.

Understanding the different ways that the current conditions feed the movement right now is important, because when these conditions are gone, when NFL players return to the field and we return to work, what else will give the movement life? When you can see your friends, go out with them, etc. I absolutely invite you to do so. A joyous existence celebrating the diverse and wonderful people in your life for the sake of love is inherently protesting capitalist society's demands that you monetize and optimize every second of your time.

But after you have given all the hugs you can give, remember that this work is thriving right now specifically because you and many others weren't able to go out. This work is thriving right now because of a lack of a "normal." Let's not get seduced then with the prospect of "returning" to normal.

Ask yourself what your future holds. I do see a lot of people saying "The work does not stop here," and that is great, but I want to help people try to think critically about why that needs to be said. Why people struggle and tend to drop off and end up getting caught up in their daily lives and forgetting the energy. Because I try to believe in the best in people, I do try to believe that all of you posting, sharing right now, genuinely care. Those who seek to silence you are counting on people dropping off, and more importantly, the system was specifically made to facilitate that. To facilitate a false peace based on complacency. It is okay to admit that you, the beautiful person that you are, are still a single individual, and are vulnerable to the trappings of oppressive structures that have been used for centuries.

So I invite you to reflect on this. Ask these questions, and as you pinpoint the things in your daily life that might block or distract you from staying engaged when things start opening up, see if you can develop your own specific strategies for how you intend to combat them. It is a struggle, it is a fight, against oppressive structures, against natural impulses, against things many others have fought and continue to fight.



“Never forget that Justice  
is what Love looks like in  
public.”

-Dr. Cornell West

# June 15, 2020

You asked us to share our understanding of what we see going on. What do I see going on? Well, what I see varies considerably based on how far I'm willing to look. As an educated white woman living in the suburbs in San Diego, I don't see anything different in my neighborhood. I could assume that nothing has changed. I could even deny that protests were taking place because I can't see or hear them outside my house. What do I see when I drive south to Southeastern San Diego? I see hurt, fear, anger and resilience. I see the geography of racism. As an urban planner, I have been taught to look at, to understand and to critique socioeconomic and political systems through a spatial lens - by looking at place. To say that place matters would be a profound understatement. Systematic inequality and racism is enabled by and codified by policies that apply to place. We know that land use policies create access as well as barriers to opportunity and determine where we work, where we live, where we go to school, where we buy our food, where we get medical care, and how long we will live. No apartments permitted in my neighborhood? We know that this is code for "no people of color." NIMBY, not-in-my-back-yard, is code for I don't want people of color in my backyard.

How can we transform our country into a just, caring and equitable society? Whew, I don't have the answers, but I know that I want to be part of the conversation. I want to listen to and learn from the voices that haven't been heard in the past. I want to hear from the voices that have been prevented by the geography of racism from having a literal seat at the table. I want to hear from those voices that didn't make it to the planning commission meeting at 9:00 a.m. on a Thursday morning because there wasn't any public transportation in their neighborhood and they didn't have access to a car. I want to hear from the voices that didn't make it to the city council meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Friday morning because they are essential workers and can't miss work because they need the paycheck

and can't risk getting fired.

How do I want to contribute to this transformation that urgently needs to happen? I want to contribute in ways that add value and support those voices leading the movement. I want to take my direction from them. I also want to amplify the voices of those who should be heard. This *is* something I can do. As a college professor, I can rethink my ways of teaching. I can rethink the voices that are heard in my curriculum. Even if they can't be physically present in the classroom, I want my students to hear W.E.B. Du Bois, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor and Sarah Broom. I want my students to learn how to read city ordinances, identify and critique the ways in which they promote systematic racism, offer new suggestions, and create new policies when they are in professional practice. I want my students to understand the reasons why redlining was codified as national policy in 1933 and to understand the profound legacy of this policy so that they can become advocates for just and equitable housing policies. Knowledge is power. But for knowledge to be powerful, we have to act on it. Action is imperative. I'm ready to act and I stand in solidarity with Black communities all across the U.S.

With great affection,  
~Mirle Rabinowitz Bussell

“WE need Intentional Acts of  
Connective Caring to fight  
poverty and racism.”

-Pastor Mac McCarter from Shreveport, LA



“Smart Boy Getty Images”. 8 May, 2020. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/08/851629409/students-call-college-that-got-millions-in->

Image submitted by **Anonymous**

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**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF  
THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT**  
*on*  
**RACE & RACISM**  
*Using Pain for Transformation*

Pain. Grief. Rage. Outrage. Frustration. Hurt.

Ironically, at around the time that George Floyd pleaded for air while a police officer's knee was lodged into his neck, our Board of Directors was scheduled to have visited the Equal Justice Museum and the Lynching Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama – a trip postponed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Lynching exhibit was thoughtfully constructed as a powerful reminder of America's terrible past and history of racism; George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and Ahmaud Arbery represent fresh, painful reminders that anti-black racism and white supremacy are with us still.

And the pain is searing, cutting, and deep.

How is it possible – roughly 150 years after the Dred Scott decision, the Emancipation Proclamation, 55 years after Selma, the March on Washington and the Voting Rights Act – that African-Americans specifically, and people of color generally, are still viewed as less than fully human in our nation? How much longer must we wait?

The spontaneous eruption of protest and activism tell us that we are witnessing the most significant and transformative moment in social change across our nation in the past 50 years. At the California Endowment, we will and are taking this as a moment of deep, purposeful, and serious reflection about who we are and the work we must do. But simply put, we stand with our community partners, and recognize that as a foundation we can and must do more to advance racial justice. Racism and white supremacy generally – and anti-Black racism in particular, are the root cause of the myriad of challenges faced by the communities we serve through our mission as a foundation. We stand in solidarity with the millions of freedom fighters across the nation and



We stand united as we commit our resources to combat racism and its considerable array of malicious and deleterious impacts. We hold ourselves accountable as an organization to advance racial equity and emerge as fully anti-racist in our work. Specifically, we commit to the following:

- Use our voice more explicitly in calling out racism in all its forms with prioritized attention to anti-Black racism.
- A decade-long investment in community “power-building”, and strengthening the capacity of grassroots, activist, and advocacy organizations and their leaders to drive systemic changes resulting in health and racial equity – supporting alliances, coalitions, and partnerships along the way.
- Through our ten-year strategic plan, substantially increase our investments in Black-led organizing, advocacy, and movement-building organizations and institutions. We commit to working with partners in philanthropy to co-invest in partnership strategies – designed by organizers and activists themselves – to support the shared vision and work of these organizations. We specifically acknowledge the need to fund and partner with Black-led queer and trans organizations in this work.
- Improved tracking, reporting, and transparency of our funding to community of color-led and Black-led organizations, with a complete public reporting by October 1, 2020.
- A significant increase within two years in black-led grantee, consultant, contractor and investment manager relationships.
- An explicit strategy to utilize impact investing tools – such as mission-related and program-related investments – to contribute to Black economic development and entrepreneurship to advance health and wellness in communities.

Create a new Director of Advancing Racial Equity at our foundation, reporting directly to the President & CEO.

Finally, we will heed and follow the vision and voices of our grantee-partners to lead, cajole, and push our great state of California to soaring new heights on the matters of race, full inclusion, and healing. The time is now: California must demonstrate national leadership on solving the centuries-long crisis of racism, and through a structural and systemic lens. From you, our civic and grantee-partners, we have long heard you call for a full and robust reimagining of our criminal justice system; reimagining community safety and policing; a new system of Health For All; and full and complete economic inclusion – in short, a new social contract for our state and our nation. We understand the matters of race and racism serve as the root cause of inequality across all these systems. Humbly, we admit to not having all the answers. We pledge to continue to strive to be the best listening, learning, and strategic partner that we can be in the decade ahead.

In closing, we end with a note of inspiration, drawn from the recent protests and activism that have swept across the nation. We have witnessed an unprecedented level of multi-racial solidarity, as communities of color and whites have displayed a recognition that taking on anti-black racism makes us a greater and stronger nation. As the philosopher Rumi notes, the wounds of oppression have allowed for enlightenment to take place. We are proud of, and will continue to invest in, transformative solidarity – we will not allow the pain of the wounds we share to go unheeded.

Nathaniel Harris Pickett, Benni Lee Tignor, Miguel Espinal, Michael Noel, Kevin Matthews, Quantonio Legrier, Keith Childress Jr., Janet Wilson, Randy Nelson, Antronie Scott, Wendell Celestine, David Joseph, Calin Roquemore, Dyzhawn Perkins, Christopher Davis, Marco Loud, Peter Gaines, Torrey Robinson, Darius Robinson, Kevin Hicks, Mary Truxillo, Demarcus Semer, Willie Tillman, Terrill Thomas, Sylville Smith, Alton Sterling, Terence Crutcher, Paul O'neal, Alteria Woods, Jordan Edwards, Aaron Bailey, Ronell Foster, Antwon Rose II, Pamela Turner, Christopher Whitehead, Christopher McCorvey, Michael Lorenzo Dean... #BlackLivesMatter

# SAY THEIR NAMES

## #BlackLivesMatter

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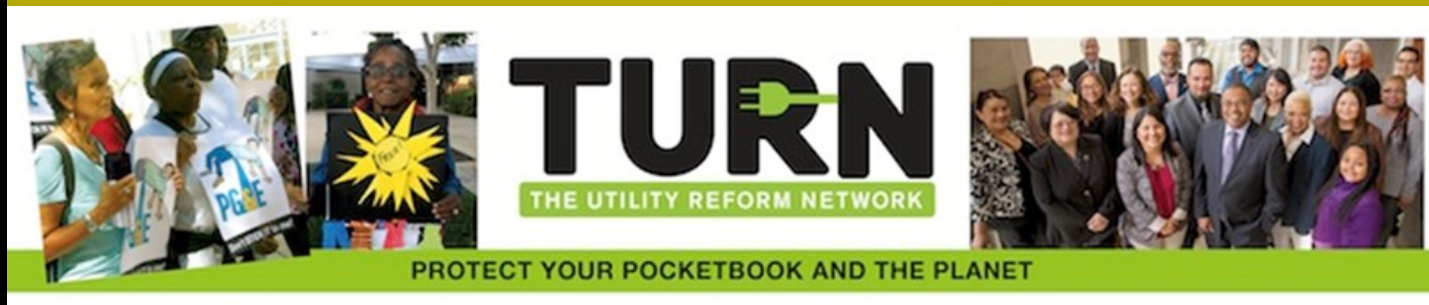
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1000 N. Alameda St  
Los Angeles, CA 90012*

- submitted by **Anonymous**



Since the global surge of protests to demand police accountability and racial justice, triggered by the brutal killing of George Floyd, I have been reflecting on the meaning of the Black Lives Matter movement to myself, and to my leadership of TURN. Since I was hired as Executive Director in 2008, TURN has intentionally reached out to Black communities to ensure that their voices are part of the policy debates in the legislature and at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). The inclusion of Black voices through storytelling of their aspirations to live rich, full lives and make meaningful contributions to their children, families and community brings lived experience to the center of the policy debates. These powerful narratives have set the stage and helped TURN win policies to reduce rates, increase corporate accountability and stop shutoffs. And yet, there is so much more that TURN must do to rise to the challenge issued by current protests for all organizations to do more to advance racial justice in our work externally, as well as in our practice internally.

I started leading social justice organizations and campaigns in high school and college, fighting for student rights, police accountability, South African Solidarity, and sustainable energy. My first job after graduating from Brown University in 1982, was as a community organizer for WAGE—Workers Association for Guaranteed Employment, an organization of predominantly Black women united in their fight to secure basic income, food stamps, utility service, and most importantly dignity. I stumbled upon this job after discovering to my everlasting delight that I could actually get paid to be a troublemaker. Fighting utility shutoffs was a bread and butter issue for us because so many WAGE

members, subsisting on public assistance to support their families, were not able to keep up with high winter heating bills, often running hundreds of dollars a month due to living in homes with poor insulation and drafty windows. Once a week we would gather all of the people who had called the office to let us know they were shut off to a protest at the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission in downtown Providence. We chanted and hollered and refused to leave until we won payment arrangements to get each person's utility service restored.

During one of the Friday protests, I came face-to-face with racism in the persona of John A. Notte, III, who served as General Counsel of the Rhode Island PUC. Notte was pretty unhappy that about a dozen people were protesting inside the PUC offices and demanding that people get their lights and heat turned back on. He and I got into a heated argument when he towered over me and started sticking his finger in my face yelling at me to get out of his office. Me, all of 22 years old, told him in no uncertain terms, "If you don't get your finger out of my face it's gonna get broke." He responded by pulling back, taking the glasses off of his face, and stating, "Take your best shot," he paused a moment and punctuated, "boy." Full of anger at the racist taunt, I came so very close to taking him up on his offer to avenge my honor. Yet, at that very instant I had an epiphany that I was being set up for failure. Something inside from years of my upbringing had taught me that if I, as a young Black man, had taken that swing at a middle-aged white attorney whose father had served as Governor of Rhode Island, no matter how seemingly justified, they would have sent me to prison and thrown away the key, or worse. It was with the realization that I literally held my future in my hands that I took a step back, and reminded Notte that I was here to help the families here today get their electricity and gas service restored. I told him that nobody was leaving until that happened. I felt a sense of victory upon leaving his office, not only because we achieved our objective that day, but because I resisted the temptation to come to blows with a racist individual and instead continued to organize to change the power structures that perpetuate patterns of racism.



The recent murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks and far too many others have brought one aspect of the brutal reality of racism and inequity that persist in law enforcement to the forefront. The reality is that these inequities exist throughout all societal sectors and they are implemented by old racist systems and institutions. At TURN, part of our work now and moving forward is to acknowledge and fight the systems and institutions that create inequity and perpetuate racism within our sector. These systems that have disproportionately impacted the access of Black communities to basic and necessary electric and communication services, impeding their ability to reach their full potential. You can count on me to provide leadership to bring the lessons of the Black Lives Matter movement into TURN in the policy work that we do at the CPUC and State Legislature, and into our internal staffing practices.

Moving forward I will support deeper dialogue within TURN on issues of race and create an environment in which our staff and consultants can and will have the necessary support and mandates to apply a racial justice analysis when developing our policy positions – one that is every bit as rigorous as the analysis we currently conduct on the economic impact of policy proposals. One place to start is working with staff leadership to develop recruitment and support protocols that prioritize the inclusion of Black attorneys that have been virtually absent from TURN for 50 years. It will not be easy for TURN to meet the challenges ahead of us, and we cannot do it alone. However, I am confident that with the support of our Board of Directors, our Grassroots Community Partners, our Public Health Partners, and our members and donors, TURN will make a stronger contribution to racial justice than ever before.

Sincerely,




P.S. If you would like me to see your comments, please email me at [mtoney@turn.org](mailto:mtoney@turn.org).



# “Urban Acupuncture” – focused strategies for dealing with racism

submitted by **Anonymous**

## “Where you stand depends on where you sit”

It's time for “diversity” to move beyond simply having a seat at the white man's table

June 2020

Our world is demanding a new level of diversity. We have moved beyond rooms filled with white males and an occasional woman and/or person of color, all assumed to be cisgender and straight, to ones that represent a much broader swath of society. Because inclusion has become valued, it is common for groups to look around the room to see who is not represented and work to have them represented. This change is critical, but it is not enough. In the three decades that I have done workshops, trainings, interventions, etc. related to cultural diversity in the workplace, the unacknowledged and unspoken goal always seemed to be to create a workplace where everyone looks different from each other, yet all act the same. That everyone follows the same *rules of engagement*. This subtle yet palpable push for conformity has implications for all, especially those who do not live in a space where the dominant culture shapes the rules of engagement. The new diversity requires creating new rules of engagement. Rules that provide equal access to the conversation for all participants.

What are “rules of engagement?” While originating as a military term “specifying the circumstances and limitations under which forces will engage in combat with the enemy,” the meaning has changed to include the rules that guide our behavior. A widely accepted, non-military definition of the Rules of Engagement is:

*Practices followed or behavior displayed by the participants (players) in situations of opposing interests (conflicts) such as negotiations. Unwritten rules of engagement determine what information is given, at what time, to whom, and in what manner; and what concession is granted and what is demanded in return.* <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/rules-of-engagement.html>

In this case, we are not just talking about “situations of opposing interests (conflicts)” but about all *negotiated spaces* as all negotiations are not a response to conflict or opposing interests. For our purposes, **negotiated spaces** are those public spaces where people come together for the purpose of reaching some agreement and/or taking some kind of action, e.g., place of employment, public meetings, coalition meetings, a community meetings, etc. As actors in our world, we spend most of working time in negotiated spaces.

Perhaps the most salient component of this definition of the rules of engagement is the attention given to the “unwritten rules” and their power to “determine what information is given, at what time, to whom, and in what manner; and what concession is granted and what is demanded in return.” What is important here is acknowledging that the most obvious rules are not the most important. They are easily seen and easily adapted by those for whom the rules are new or foreign. However, they are the tip of the iceberg. It is the unwritten rules that shape the dialogue and its outcomes. These rules are not readily accessible to all participants and give advantage to those fluent in the unwritten rules.

There are five things I have learned about negotiated spaces, i.e.:

1. All negotiated spaces have *rules of engagement* written and unwritten.
2. Rules of engagement are culturally rooted.
3. Whoever (whatever) controls the rules of engagement, controls the discourse and therefore, the outcome of the interaction.
4. The default rules of engagement are those of the dominant culture
5. Changing the rules of engagement requires intentionality.

The unwritten rules are also often unconscious rules. They are the rules we grew up with and were surrounded by as we developed. We absorbed them and they are part of us. For us members of the dominant culture (European-American/white), we are recognizable worldwide by the way we walk, the way we talk, the way we present ourselves, etc. I once saw advice to Americans going to Ireland on a travel site that suggested they not speak for their first hour in Ireland so they can adjust the volume of their voices to match the volume of the much quieter voices around them.

Negotiated spaces need rules of engagement and the default is those of the dominant culture. When those rules are used, people who are not members of the dominant culture must go through a mental process much like hearing a second language. If English is my second language it is very likely that, when in a negotiated space, I am constantly translating the English into my native language, processing things and formulating a response in that language that I then translate into English in order to share my thoughts with my colleagues. An exhausting process. The new diversity calls for paying attention to the rules of engagement within our negotiated spaces and designing ones that are accessible to all. That don't require some members to go through that exhausting process. Creating accessible rules of engagement unleashes creativity as the voices of those outside the dominant culture begin to shape the conversation in ways not thought of by those within the dominant culture. If we don't create accessible rules, those voices are muffled at best and silenced at worst. When that happens, we all lose.

I work in a community that is extraordinary in its diversity. Three-quarters of the residents do not speak English in their homes and nearly half were born outside the United States. In a survey of 300 youth (by youth), 24 languages were identified. While 55% of the youth identified English as the language they were most comfortable speaking, only 25% identified it as their first language. Approximately 20% of the youth are refugees from Africa, the Middle East, Indochina, Southeast Asia, etc. Each of these cultural/linguistic communities within this larger community, including European-American, have their own rules of engagement. However, it is the rules of the later that are dominant. Bringing these communities together as equal partners requires developing a common set of rules of engagement, rules that reflect the cultures of those participating in the negotiated space and are equally accessible to all.

As with most important social issues, naming it is one thing and doing something about it is another. As far as I know, there are no single pathway, no magical process that brings about the change we hope for. To steal the title of a book recording a conversation between Myles Horton and Paulo Freire, we *make the road by walking*. In other words, our task is to develop new ways to challenge and change how we work together. The means are the ends in the making. If we continue to replicate the existing process using the existing dominant rules of engagement, we will replicate the world we are in and not create a new one. We have to not just ask the question "who is at the table" but, more importantly, we must ask, "whose table is it?" The table belongs to those who construct the rules of engagement.

Making change at the level we seek must start with self-examination. While, as noted above, there is no single pathway to conducting this examination or what to do with the results, one suggestion is that we start by asking ourselves three questions: What, So What, and Now What?

- What? What is the present status of the group/organization? Who are the leaders and how representative are they of their constituency?

We can think of any group/organization as having three types of membership (formal or informal). There is the community, i.e., those the group claims as their constituents – those they represent and/or those they serve. Next, there are the activists and/or workers. These are the people who contribute time and energy to the organization's goals. In social service agencies, these are the frontline workers. In community groups, they are the people who reach out, spread the word, talk with others, bring new people in, etc. Lastly, there are the leaders. In formal agencies they are people in directorships. In a community group, coalition, etc., these are the decision-makers (e.g., Executive Committee, Steering Committee), the ones that set the direction and tone of the organization. These people are often elected.

How alike or different are the people at each level? If you examine the demographics of each level of the organization (e.g., ethnicity, gender/gender identity, social-economic status, language, life experiences, etc.), are there differences? If yes, what are they?

- So What? This question focuses on the impact of the diversity (or lack of diversity) on the group/organization's process and activities. How does it shape the way the members talk about the issue, do people feel safe talking about the issue, how does the group/organization's process affect their connection to the group, does everyone feel equally heard and understood, etc. This conversation is critical as it allows those who may have felt invisible, silenced and/or unheard speak to the process and what would need to happen for them to feel included as an equal.
- Now What? This question is about moving from "talking-the-talk" to "walking-the-walk." Ideally, the above conversation provides some direction to the group/organization as to how it might change its process to be more inclusive. Given what those who have felt invisible, silenced and/or unheard have said, what changes can the group make in its rules of engagement to be more inclusive. What specific changes in process and decision-making would need to be made and how would the group/organization change the way it recruits and welcomes new members.

Going through this process is neither quick nor easy. There are several challenges, primary among them is that this work takes time. Time that is taken away from the group/organization's work on its mission. Not all members will see the value in reducing time spent on the group/organization's goal to address process. Another important challenge relates to the issue of trust within the group. Do those who have felt invisible, silenced, and/or unheard believe it is now a safe environment to speak up? The cost of speaking truth to power is not the same for everyone. The price of challenging the rules for people outside the dominant, Eurocentric culture is higher than for members of the dominant culture and trust can't exist when the cost of speaking up is not the same for all participants. Trust cannot be manufactured; it must be developed and nurtured over time.

As stated earlier, there is no single pathway or magical process. Making a change as deep as the unspoken, unwritten rules of engagement will require time, patience and, most importantly active listening. As my mother would say, "There is a reason God gave us two ears and only one mouth."

Bill Oswald

The Global Action Research Center

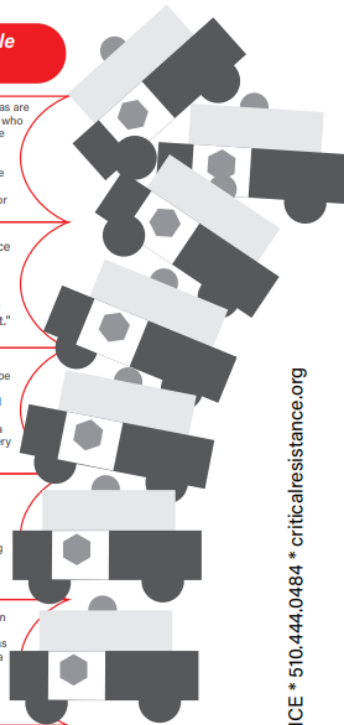


**SYSTEMIC CHANGE**

# Reformist reforms vs. abolitionist steps in policing

These charts break down the difference between reformist reforms which continue or expand the reach of policing, and abolitionist steps that work to chip away and reduce its overall impact. As we struggle to decrease the power of policing there are also positive and pro-active investments we can make in community health and well-being.

DOES THIS...	reduce funding to police?	challenge the notion that police increase safety?	reduce tools / tactics / technology police have at their disposal?	reduce the scale of policing?
<b>BODY CAMERAS</b>	<b>INCREASES.</b> Equipping police officers with body cameras will require more money going toward police budgets.	<b>NO.</b> Body cameras are pitched as making police more accountable, increasing the idea that policing, done "right," makes people safe.	<b>INCREASES.</b> Body cameras provide the police with another tool, increasing surveillance and increasing police budgets to acquire more gadgets.	<b>INCREASES.</b> Body cameras are based on the idea that police who do not use "excessive force" are less threatening. But police can turn off body cameras and, when used, footage often doesn't have the impact that community members want, or is used for surveillance.
<b>COMMUNITY POLICING</b>	<b>NO.</b> Advocates of community policing argue that departments will have to hire more cops to be in neighborhoods and in the community.	<b>NO.</b> This is based on the belief that policing is focused on keeping people safe, and the violence of policing is caused by a "breakdown of trust" with the community.	<b>INCREASES.</b> Cops are trained in additional tactics and approaches.	<b>NO.</b> More community police means that the scale of policing will increase, particularly in Black, Brown, poor neighborhoods, where there is perceived "mistrust."
<b>MORE TRAINING</b>	<b>NO.</b> More training will require more funding and resources going to police to develop and run trainings.	<b>NO.</b> This furthers the belief that better training would ensure that we can rely on police for safety, and that instances of police harm and violence occur because of lack of training.	<b>INCREASES</b> all of these.	<b>NO.</b> This will increase the scope of policing, given the type of training. For instance, some advocate for police to be trained on how to respond to mental health crises, furthering the idea that police are the go to for every kind of problem.
<b>CIVILIAN REVIEW / OVERSIGHT BOARDS</b>	<b>NO.</b> In some cases, there would be an increase in funding, whereas in other cases, there would be no change.	<b>NO.</b> Overseeing the police through a board presumes that cases of excessive force, killing, lying, planting false information, etc. are exceptional occurrences rather than part of the daily violence of policing.	<b>NO.</b> Some argue for Civilian Review Boards "with teeth," the power to make decisions and take away policing tools and tactics. However, a board with that level of power has never existed despite 50+ years of organizing for them.	<b>NO.</b> This further entrenches policing as a legitimate, reformable system, with a "community" mandate. Some boards, tasked with overseeing them, become structurally invested in their existence.
<b>"JAIL KILLER COPS": PROSECUTE POLICE WHO HAVE KILLED AND ABUSED CIVILIANS.</b>	<b>NO.</b> Prosecuting police does not lead to changes in funding or resourcing police.	<b>NO.</b> Individualizing police violence creates a false distinction between "good police" (who keep us safe), and "bad police" (who are unusual cases), rather than challenging the assumption that policing creates safety or examining policing as systemic violence.	<b>NO.</b> Often, media attention in high profile cases leads to more resources and technology, including body cameras and "training."	<b>NO.</b> This reinforces the prison industrial complex by portraying killer/ corrupt cops as "bad apples" rather than part of a regular system of violence, and reinforces the idea that prosecution and prison serve real justice.



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Critical Resistance. 1 September, 2019. "Abolitionist Reforms Chart". Pg. 1. [http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CR\\_NoCops\\_reform\\_vs\\_abolition\\_REV2020.pdf](http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CR_NoCops_reform_vs_abolition_REV2020.pdf)



DOES THIS...	reduce funding to police?	challenge the notion that police increase safety?	reduce tools / tactics / technology police have at their disposal?	reduce the scale of policing?
<b>SUSPEND THE USE OF PAID ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR COPS UNDER INVESTIGATION</b>	YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets as municipalities no longer pay for policing's harm against community members.	YES. It challenges the notion that policing violence, and the administrative costs it incurs, are essential risks of creating "safety."	YES. Access to paid administrative leave lessens the consequences of use of force, and presumes the right of police to use violence at all.	YES. The less financial support for police undergoing investigation for killing and excessive use of force, the less support for policing.
<b>WITHHOLD PENSIONS AND DON'T REHIRE COPS INVOLVED IN EXCESSIVE FORCE</b>	YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets as municipalities no longer pay for policing's harm against community members.	YES. It challenges the notion that killings and excessive force are exceptions, rather than the rule.	YES. It reduces the ability of police forces to move around or re-engage cops known for their use of violence.	YES.
<b>REQUIRE COPS TO BE LIABLE FOR MISCONDUCT SETTLEMENTS</b>	YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets as municipalities no longer pay for policing's harm against community members.	YES. It challenges the notion that policing and all its costs are essential components of safety. Community members should not pay for its inevitable violence.	YES. It creates pressure for police to account for their actions, at least financially, and limits legitimacy of policing violence as inevitable.	YES.
<b>CAP OVERTIME ACCRUAL + OT PAY FOR MILITARY EXERCISES</b>	YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets since we won't have to pay for cops learning how to better make war on our communities.	YES. It challenges the notion that we need police to be trained for "counterterrorism" and other military-style action and surveillance in the guise of increasing "safety."	YES. Weapons trainings and expos are used to scale up policing infrastructure and shape goals for future tools, tactics, technology.	YES. This stops police from increasing their legitimacy, capacity, and skills as "the blue line" in order to expand their reach over our daily lives and community spaces.
<b>WITHDRAW PARTICIPATION IN POLICE MILITARIZATION PROGRAMS</b>	YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets since we won't have to pay for cops learning how to better make war on our communities.	YES. It challenges the notion that we need police to be trained for "counterterrorism" and other military-style action and surveillance in the guise of increasing "safety."	YES. Weapons trainings and expos are used to scale up policing infrastructure and shape goals for future tools, tactics, technology.	YES. This stops police from increasing their legitimacy, capacity, and skills as "the blue line" in order to expand their reach over our daily lives and community spaces.
<b>PRIORITIZE SPENDING ON COMMUNITY HEALTH, EDUCATION, AFFORDABLE HOUSING</b>	YES. If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease its resources.	YES. Prioritizing funding resources also creates space to imagine, learn about, and make resources that actually create well-being.	YES. If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease the expansion of tools and technology.	YES. If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease the size, scope and capacity of systems of policing.
<b>REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE POLICE FORCE</b>	YES.	YES.	YES.	YES.

CRITICAL RESISTANCE



Critical Resistance. 1 September, 2019. "Abolitionist Reforms Chart". Pg. 2. [http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CR\\_NoCops\\_reform\\_vs\\_abolition\\_REV2020.pdf](http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CR_NoCops_reform_vs_abolition_REV2020.pdf)

- Images submitted by **Anonymous**

Aaron Wohlmuth

The Path Forward Project

June 14, 2020

Disclaimer: This submission provides a surface level perceptive of race from a White cis male in his late 20s, who works in the social work sector. My ideas and thought do not represent other people that share my identity. The intersectionality of my identity has brought the desire to submit and join *The Path Forward Project*

Introduction We live in a society of people that strongly believe racism is an action by an individual that absurdly displays their hatred towards People Of Color (POC), which are examples from Figure One (see page 6) in the “Overt White Supremacy” section. Although these groups still exist today, they are a small fraction of fuel to the overall racism in the United States. The “socially acceptable” actions are the driving force of the subtle marginalization of POC. We have these microaggressions engraved into our status quo. The United States of America’s moto is “pull yourself up by your bootstraps.” “If you put in the work, you will have results,” so you are in “total” control of your own future and destiny. This is completely false, and we use this moto to reinforce individualist ideologies while ignoring Black communities’ possession of high numbers in low-performing schools, low-income communities, incarceration rates, unemployment rates, and the list goes on<sup>1</sup>. All these facts do not mean White people do not struggle and Black people do not thrive, yet these numbers represent the disproportionate amount of Blacks on the wrong side of data. Each abovementioned topic has enough subject matter to create its own encyclopedia, yet this submission will emphasis on addressing the truth to racism, and how we can develop a strategic plan of reparation to the system of the United States of America.

### The Truth to Racism

The truth of why racism is thriving today is the “socially acceptable” actions that invalidate, insult, and psychologically effect POC, which are called microaggressions (Goldenberg, 2014; Kohli et al., 2017; Razer et al., 2013; Yosso, 2005). Due to the overconcentration of microaggressions in common areas, like classrooms and workplaces, racism is an everyday basis for POC. Microaggressions is a term that many students of my generation were not taught in the classroom. Although POC experience microaggressions on a daily basis, they have not needed the terminology to

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.harpersbazaar.com.au/culture/how-talk-about-race-20371>

validate their experience of marginalization. There are numerous of reasons to “racial microaggression awareness.” Sue et al. identify the four dilemmas of addressing microaggressions: (1) people’s racial perspective (2) unconscious bias (3) minuscule harm if any, (4) and Catch-22 (p. 275-279). Since George Floyd’s death on May 25th, 2020, I have engaged in numerous racial conversations, which have microaggression statements said in them, with people on all different areas of the racial literacy spectrum. I feel my role in the conversation is navigating and challenging the existence of microaggressions within the conversation.

I would like to focus on my roommate Donald<sup>2</sup>. Donald is a white male and feels strongly about the death of George Floyd is injustice, but “there are good police and white people are killed all the time by police too.” The conversation dialogue is not important nor concise to stay within four pages, so I will continue to dissect this statement based on the dilemmas of addressing microaggressions. It is clear Donald believes POC are not overpoliced disproportionately than their White counterparts. His only bias of his own experience does not comprehend the amount of scrutiny that POC receive from authority figures. Also, he is unaware of the harm of his statement. This statement invalidates POC’s experience with authority. Where do we go from here to create a more inclusive and equitable society to genuinely embrace diversity? Another loaded question that has books and many published information to share, but in simpler form, I think conversations, like with Donald, need to be properly navigated and taught from the start of compulsory education. In addition to education, it is necessary to engrained racial literacy in professional developments within organizations from variety of sectors, even if they are indirectly working with people.

#### Strategic Plan of Reparation

The education system and organizational structure should incorporate microaggression training in their curriculum and policies. The structure model of the plan should consist of the Social Cognitive Theory

<sup>2</sup>Changed name

(SCT) and Critical Race Theory (CRT). SCT examines an individual's ability to influence another individual's self-efficacy (Kessler, 2013; Siwatu, 2007; Razer et al., 2013). While CRT provides a lens to evaluate systems' influence with race (Yosso, 2005). Critical race theory grounds social cognitive theory with a lens to investigate and analyze the engraved institutionalized racism and institutional pressures that marginalize POC (Pyles, 2014, p.37, Yosso, 2005). Nevertheless, Sue et al. explain mindfulness to identify microaggressions, understanding the impact of microaggressions, and accepting responsibility of microaggression contribute to addressing the dilemmas abovementioned (p. 283). There needs to be a continuation of conversations and constructive feedback to build on someone's racial literacy related to microaggressions beyond the training and classroom. Once someone's mindfulness of their own racial bias and perceptiveness comes to the surface, we, as a society, are able to address policies and practices within our local and federal government. We can use the same strategies to examine the different variables and factors that contribute to disproportionate numbers of POC on the negative side of data.

### Conclusion

The strategic plan barely touched the surface level of microaggressions. It is going to be a lifetime journey to alter one's thinking while there is the status quo reinforcing their ideologies and invalidating anything against it. I am not radical enough to say dismantle the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution, but I am mindful enough to realize those documents were created by White male slave owners, who perceived Blacks as Second Class citizens. For this reason, we are over 200 years since the birth of the nation, and there is still not one section of power owned by Blacks. Whites overpopulated United States government, TV shows, movies, full-time professors, CEOs, richest Americans, and majority of other "positive" accolades. Again, it does not mean there are not Black people in those position of power, but there are systemic reasons why Whites are overpopulated in those areas.

Please be mindful on the next statement said, because I have heard, “well we value education more,” “they have the same opportunities as us,” “what about Oprah, she is a billionaire,” and many more microaggressions to reinforce the idea that racism does not exist today and “all people” are in control of their own destiny.

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Image submitted by **Anonymous**

# Regan Jung

29 July 2020

## Path Forward

The only way to fight racial injustice is to change how the United States votes, both in the way voters choose political leaders and political parties. In the US, it is a two party system and has been since 1852 but other successful countries have relied on a multiparty system and continue to thrive. As voters we need to begin to look into third parties and force the system that we know to change and reform. It will allow more progressives in and represent more of the political ideologies.

This change will bring about education of race in America and how a growing number of black Americans are targeted by the police, the system, and the laws. Currently, with Covid-19 happening, I believe this is the best time to ignite change in the country. With the ability to be home and create a strong desire to be on social media, along with having the time to sign petitions, attend protests and marches, and donate to the causes, we have been able to fight against the injustices.

In the terms of what we can do as individuals, I believe checking yourself, and your friends and family for racist behavior is important. We should be connecting with the communities to see how to educate others, help, and find ways to spread the words about the racism in America. We need to create initiatives that connect all university campuses across the country to band together for change and use the numbers to persuade lawmakers into creating a just and right America.

# Raphael Lagoc

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

## “Imperfect Activism”

Hi friends. Some of my close friends know that I actually really enjoy writing, and I have been privately practicing writing for a while. I've always been hesitant to make my writing more public, but today I really wanted to share some thoughts about what's going on, and more specifically, how I see some of my friends treating one another. I would appreciate if you took the time to read.

One of my mentors at the nonprofit I work at, a lifelong community organizer of over 50 years, once told me, “It’s not a question of whether the ends justify the means. The means are the ends in the making.”

I didn’t get into this work because I hate things. I do hate injustice, I do hate the conditions that people must suffer through. But I got into this because I love people. Because I empathize with people grieving, because I believe in the potential and existing power of those that our system has failed, has given up on, and more importantly, has actively brought down.

Tearing down the system and the structures that prop up oppression is not the endgame, though. It is a step. I want to see these barriers addressed and removed, I want to see change, but I want to see these things not out of indulgence in of themselves. I want to see these things happen so we can get to the actual goal. My actual endgame is a better world. A healthier world. A happier world.

I understand that this might come across as naive. These are frustrating times, and for many it has been a frustrating time for a long time. For many, this incident is just another in a lifetime of incidents, incidents that “love everyone” rhetoric won’t magically fix. That’s not my point right now. Yes, we should be angry and be frustrated, and I **refuse** to condemn the ways that people choose to express that anger and frustration right now.

But when I see my friends climbing over each other, trying to get on top of some ladder of morality, I *don’t* see that as expression of anger and frustration. This has happened all throughout quarantine, and it is happening again now. People comparing one another, who is doing what? Who is doing the most? Who is doing things imperfectly? Who is being performative and who is the “real” activist?

I respect and agree with the desire and need to call out hypocrisy, particularly in the Asian-American community. I have been especially unhappy with how my fellow dancers have interacted with black culture for years, an unhappiness stemming from *my own* admitted problematic relationship with black culture in my youth. It's important to call things out and it does sometimes take a sharp edge to open someone up to growing. But, and maybe it's just the company I keep, more often than not I see people who are genuinely dipping their foot in, genuinely trying to understand, only to be ripped apart because they're not doing enough.

Incase you were born perfect, unlearning things is hard. It is a long and difficult process for some. I am not ashamed to say that I had a very hard time unlearning a lot. About race, about women, about language. And I am not ashamed to say I still have a lot to unlearn, and a lot of room to grow. I am not ashamed because when I first started asking the questions that allowed me to grow, the people I turned to were patient with me. I am thankful every day for the mentors I've had for not giving up on me when I said the things I did, when I expressed the views I had.

You don't get to wish away racists. A "cancelled" person still exists after they have been cancelled. That Trump-supporting high school classmate still gets a vote this year. Are you advocating we kill them? Hopefully not. But that's what it can feel like when people always want to push so hard with moral absolutes. I want justice, but I want justice not because I want to see revenge take place. I don't want revenge. I don't (or at least, I aspire not to) enjoy violence on anyone. This is what I mean when I say the actions that we need to take to fix this system are not the endgame. Breaking down the system is not the endgame, taking revenge is not the endgame, and cancelling, shaming, and discouraging your friends is not the endgame.

Maybe I'm rambling at this point. I *am* writing this all in one go, to get some built-up feelings and thoughts out. I guess I need to end this soon, and with some sort of call to action, huh? That's what I was taught in writing class.

I'm not saying you need to devote all your time and energy to building up that problematic friend. That is an unfair ask, especially in these emotionally trying times. What I am saying, is that we need to stop fixating on what others are doing imperfectly, because in the end, those imperfect people will still be here. Someone doing something imperfectly is taking the first step in a crossroad, and I'd hate to see them turned away by the very people who are already enjoying the fruits at the end of the path.



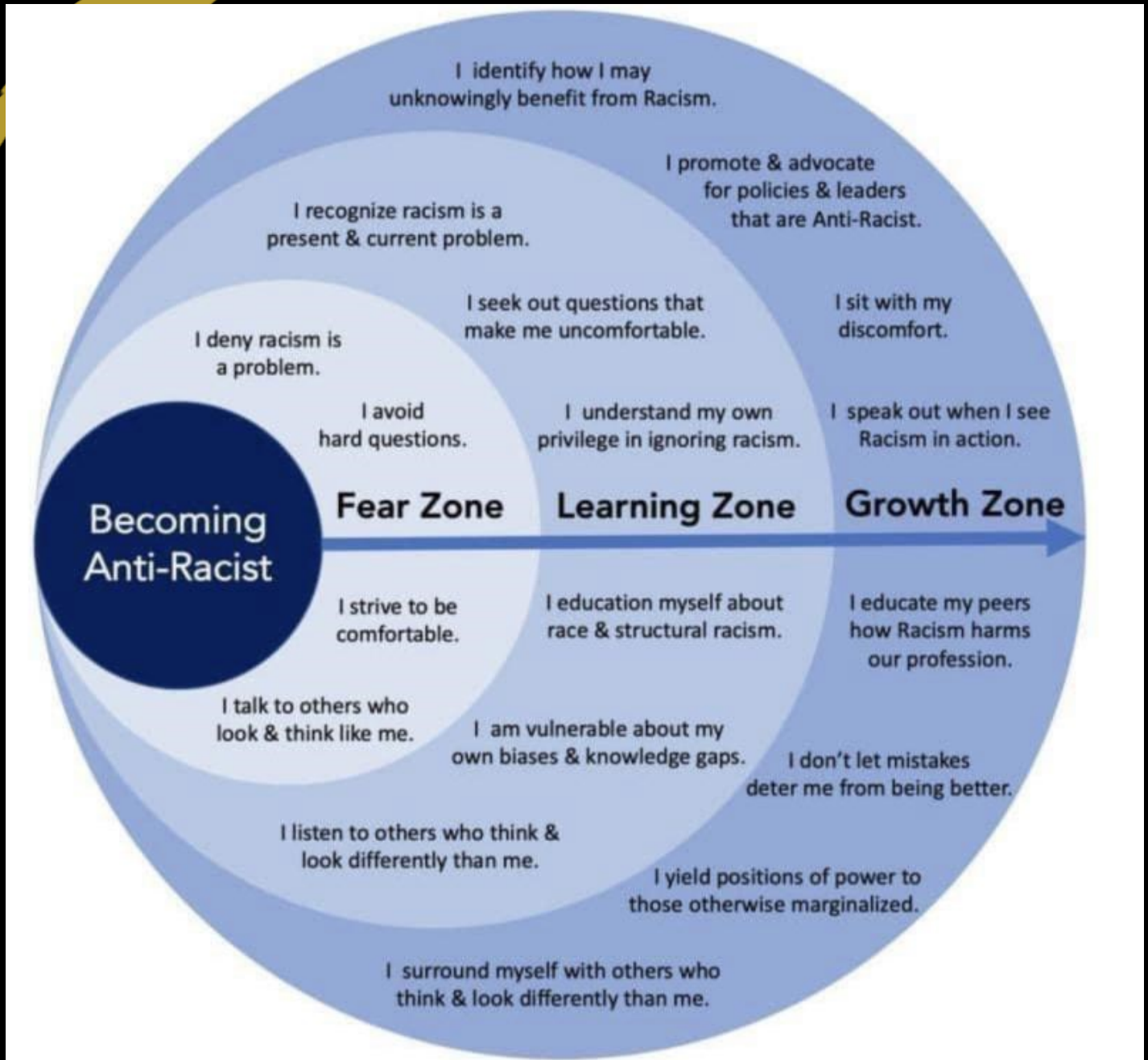
Inclusion: "A more inclusive society captures talent and ideas that reside at the margins. Simply having an attitude of inclusiveness and open-mindedness seems conducive to creativity."

- Richard Florida, Heinz Professor of Regional Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University

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Image submitted by **Anonymous**





Alicewrites. 22, October 2020. "From the bottom up: Cycling's lack of diversity and what clubs can do about it". Wordpress. <https://alicewritesaboutbikes.wordpress.com/2020/07/03/race-and-cycling/>

Image submitted by **Anonymous**

## This is from my friend John Milbauer's Facebook post on June 3, 2020:

Cornel West's four questions—with his responses, here abbreviated—to the Harvard Kennedy School Mason Fellows last December 2019, now timelier than ever:

1. How shall intellectual INTEGRITY face oppression?

—Sing your song in your voice; voices not heard are subject to oppression.

2. What does HONESTY do in the face of deception?

—Be morally consistent while asking, "What kind of fire is in you?"

3. What does DECENCY do in the face of insult and assault? —Guarantee that integrity, honesty, and decency inform justice.

—Make sure that the quest for "justice" doesn't lead to the will to power.

—Counter barbarism; don't overlook it.

4. What does COURAGE do in the face of brute force?

—Courage only stays alive through example.

—Empty yourself (kenosis) in the fight against pervasive nihilism.

—Rid yourself of the culture of groomed professionalism adjusted to injustice.

"Don't let despair have the last word. Hang around others who deal with integrity, honesty, decency, and courage."

This is John and Cornel in December 2019 at Harvard. We met John in Chico 20+ years ago.

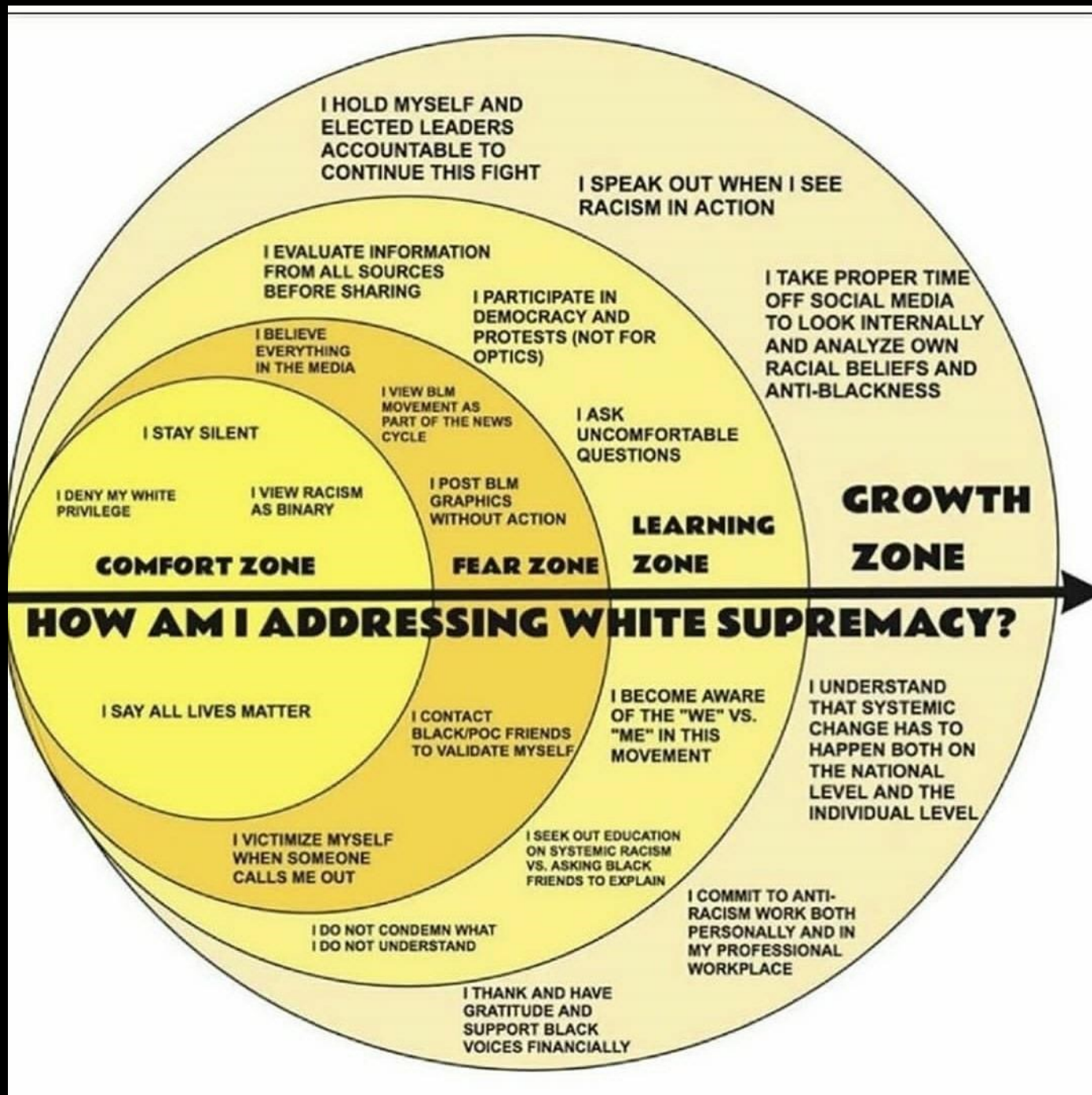
He was a professor of music at Chico State and was Mike's tennis partner. He attended Julliard (piano), has a PhD from Harvard, and went back to Harvard last year for an MPA. He teaches at the University of Arizona. He is an amazing pianist, lovely human, intelligent with a dry sense of humor and we miss having him in town!



Yau, Kaissy. 12, October 2020. "Milbauer broadens horizons at Harvard's Kennedy Schools".  
<https://cfa.arizona.edu/milbauer-broadens-horizons-at-harvards-kennedy-school/>

-submitted by **Anonymous**





Sophei. 11 June, 2020. "How am I addressing White Supremacy?". Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CBTcjAXJ-SV/>

Image submitted by **Anonymous**

# Juneteenth Celebration San Diego County Administrative Building 2020



Image submitted by **Anonymous**

# Shirin Ehyaei

“Hi my name is Shirin and I just wanted to come on here and share my thoughts about what's going on in the world. And my personal experiences and things that we can do to basically transform our society into one is that is more accepting of each other, accepting of different cultures, races, basically just accepting of humanity in general. And I wanted to just come on here and speak about the topic of racism. Because this is a really close and sensitive topic for me since I am Middle Eastern. I just think it's really unfortunate personally and for the people in my community, how we are the target of a lot of hatred and racism. And I think a lot of this stems from how the media portrays the Middle East and Middle Eastern people. You know, I go back to the Middle East every summer. It's just like the whole year. I'm just looking forward to go there and spend time with

(Text Transcript for Video Submission 6:48 minutes)

7/29/2020



my family and friends. It's just like a whole different world there and it's just a whole different perspective and view how they show it in the media. I think that's really unfair because the Middle East is not the place that you would imagine that they show on the news. I think this also goes for African-American people, the way they are portrayed in the media is not representative of all of the African-American community. Obviously, there are bad people everywhere. There's bad people in the Middle East, There's bad people in America. There's bad people in almost every race and culture, but that doesn't give us the right to portray all of them like that, which is what I feel is going on in the world, especially in America. And especially with closed-minded people. Some people just see what's going on in the media and they make a generalization the whole community of those people. And I think that needs to be changed in our society. And I think it's a source of a lot of hatred. And the Path Forward Project, I think it aims to basically, break those stereotypes and create a world like the Global ARC's vision, create a world where people are more accepting of each other. And I think that's really beautiful. And there are some concepts on here which I want to

comment on, which are ways that I think we can alleviate the pain that comes from racism in our country. So basically I just wanted to speak on the truth and reconciliation process. So seeking truth is basically finding ways. You know, like finding the truth, the official truth of what's going on in a situation. Again, like providing proof against historical things that have been going on and human rights abuses. So these are like seeking truth, just bringing these facts to surface. And then reconciliation basically seeks to reconcile differences and like leaning towards restoring relationships and reconciling divided societies and conflicts, providing reparations to victims. And this was practiced in South Africa after apartheid . And I think it's just like it also relates to our readings from Gandhi, how he was saying that we should basically seek a reconciliation process where we educate and tried to convert the wrongdoers instead of using violence and force, which I really value because I feel like using violence and force basically just undermines the whole purpose. Let's say in the Black Lives Matter Movement, I think it's more beautiful and more effective to try to get your message across with peace rather than using violence and weapons, because that basi-

cally just undermines your message and gives your opponents the right to say, look, well, they're using force and all these things. But yeah, the Global ARC talks about providing education to people in order to broaden their perspective of different cultures and races. You know, like researching and making developments in societies and building networks. And I think that's just a great way to try to basically spread peace and love in our societies. And I think that reparations are necessary to people that we've hurt not just to African-Americans, but all people of color we've experienced a lot in this country. And we've been a target, a lot of hatred. And I think that reparations are necessary in order to build the bridges back. I feel like people of color and minorities in this country are really scared to speak out and they feel little in our society. For a time I did too, honestly. Whenever a terrorist attack or something happens, when the teacher is going over it in class, people would look at me and it just feels wrong because not all people are bad. There are bad people in some societies, but those are just a small percentage and you cannot generalize. And I think that's why it's important to educate our society and try to get rid of these stereotypes and prejudices and this is

why I think the Global ARC's approach is an effective way of doing this. So I just wanted to share my thoughts and I really hope that our society can move in a direction where we all are accepting of each other. And we learn to know, be there for each other instead of hating each other. That's all I have to say, thank you."



**Chida Rebecca** 1st

Rebecca & Company

5d 5 days ago

*"My non-Black friends have been texting me asking what they can do to support. The question has brought tears to my eyes. Solidarity is definitely needed. I'm grateful that so many are standing with us and adding their voices to ours.*

*That simple gesture does more than you can imagine.*

*But if you're unsure of what to do ... this is what I say:*

*Write.*

*Speak.*

*ORGANIZE.*

*Donate.*

*Unite.*

*Understand.*

*Vote.*

*Not all the work is done on the frontline.*

*Say something!*

*Your voice matters."*



**NAACP**

17,395 followers

*"The entire country has reached its limit and we cannot allow one more Black person to die at the hands of government..." @DerrickNAACP*

***#WeAreDoneDying #ITakeResponsibility***





## Corinna Henry

Executive Assistant | Meditation Facilitator |  
Energy Healer | Coach

London, United Kingdom

*This is a photo of my husband and me.*

*I grew up in a small town in Torbay, Devon and I can honestly but sadly say that we were often judged and criticized, having inappropriate comments thrown at us for being together. This man is the love of my life, we've been together for 16 years and it's our 9th wedding anniversary in August*



*I am so pleased we didn't listen to the people who tried to tell us that our relationship wasn't right. We chose instead to follow our hearts*

*Some day I hope all of us can live in a world where we won't be judged by the colour of our skin, but for our ability to be kind, responsible human beings.*

*We are one **#weareone #bekind #together #kindnessmatters #togetherwecan***

## **White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack**

*by Peggy McIntosh*

Through the work to bring materials from Women's Studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are over-privileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to improve women's status, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's. Denials which amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages which men gain from women's disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege which was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless backpack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in Women's Studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, "Having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?"

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are justly seen as oppressive, even when we don't see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as a morally neutral, normative, and average, also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow "them" to be more like "us."

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions which I think in my case *attack some what more to skin-color privilege* that to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographical location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can see, my African American co-worker, friends and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place, and line of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
6. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
8. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
9. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
10. Whether I checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
12. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
13. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.



15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
16. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
17. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
18. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.
19. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
20. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazine featuring people of my race.
21. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
22. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.
23. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
24. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
25. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.
26. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.

I repeatedly forgot each of the realization on this list until I wrote it down. For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.

In unpacking this invisible backpack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience which I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these perquisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for

everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant, oblivious, arrogant and destructive.

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a pattern of assumptions which were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turf, and I was among those who could control the turf. *My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make.* I could think of myself as belonging in major ways, and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly free.

In proportion as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made confident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress, and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit in turn upon people of color.

For this reason, the word "privilege" now seems to me misleading. We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work to systematically overempower certain groups. Such privilege simply *confers dominance* because of one's race or sex.

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systematically. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantages which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as privilege of a few. Ideally it is an *unearned advantage* and *conferred dominance*.

I have met very few men who are truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like is whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance and if so, what we will do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the US think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and dangers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantaging associated



with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage which rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the Combahee River Collective Statement of 1977 continues to remind us eloquently.

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms which we can see and embedded forms which as a member of the dominant group one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the systems won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitudes. [But] a "white" skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate, but cannot end, these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power, and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Though systematic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for me and I imagine for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light-skinned. What well we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching me, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage to weaken hidden systems of advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily-awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

[1989]





-Submitted by **Bill Oswald**



# Take Action

**“The Path Forward: In order to  
move forward we must look back”**

**Paul L. Watson Jr. MSHS**

## The Path Forward: In order to move forward we must look back

by Paul L. Watson, Jr., MSHS

The video recording of George Floyd's murder was seen across the country and around the world. We didn't hear reports about what happened, rather we watched the recording on television for over eight minutes, as his life was choked out of him. For Black folks, we were tired of being tired of this continuous onslaught against our lives and well-being. For many non-Blacks, there was a sense of shock and outrage because of witnessing this heinous crime. We all were forced face the fact that this type of crime is happening everyday across America. Activists who have been working on police killings and brutalization of people of color began to once again remind us of the long lists of others who had the same fate as Mr. Floyd, far too many to list here.

I often hear white people say, referring to slavery, that they should not be held responsible for the sins of their ancestors. However, I wish to remind folks that in order to maintain slavery and protect the wealth that slave owners accumulated, racism was institutionalized throughout every aspect of the American systems – health, employment, education, housing, and justice. The institutionalization began with the US Constitution's justification of slavery, which was deemed necessary to protect the wealth accumulation, stating that Blacks were considered 3/5 human and not subject to any of the liberties outlined in the document. Systemic racism has never been abolished, rather it has been maintained by American People, individuals and collectively. So, let's look at our more recent history. Let's put slavery aside for a moment and look at systemic racism and ask yourself: "What did my grandfather and grandmother do to end systemic racism? What did my father and mother do? What am I doing?" We can ask ourselves how we can stop systemic racism solely as an individual and conclude that there is nothing that we can do. But that's not true. What we all can do is stop perpetuating systemic racism. Let's take the justice system for example. Every cop that complies with the Blue Wall of Silence is perpetuating systemic racism. Every person who supports the police union's position that police can not be held accountable for their treatment of our citizens and residents is perpetuating systemic racism. Every district attorney who refuses to charge a cop for crimes against a resident of color is perpetuating systemic racism. Every resident who serves on a jury and chooses to give more credibility to the police's "story/testimony" than to a number of resident witnesses is perpetuating systemic racism. Every time we elect someone to any office who has not demonstrated a commitment to justice for all, and rebuffs efforts to dismantle systemic racism is perpetuating systemic racism.

"You are either part of the problem or part of the solution." – Black Panther Party for Self Defense

Systemic racism is not a conservative issue or a liberal issue, it is a moral issue. I was trained in conflict resolution and some of the key steps in resolving conflict is to: 1) admit your wrongdoing, 2) apologize to the people you wronged, and 3) make restitution for your actions. Ancestors may have established institutional racism, but every generation thereafter perpetuated it. Today's generation must resolve this conflict. People sometimes, when describing relationships, will do so by stating that "It's complicated." Well, the same can be said about ending racism in America - it's complicated. But the complication is not that we don't know what

to do. We have known what needs to be done to solve this problem for decades, we simply have not had the collective desire or political will to do it.

The path forward was articulated fairly specific in the 1967 Kerner Commission Report. The following is a review of that report using excerpts from a book written by Jelani Cobb and Matthew Guariglia entitled: *The Essential Kerner Commission Report: The Landmark Study on Race, Inequality, and Police Violence* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York, NY, 2021).

The Kerner Commission Report, more formally known as **The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders**, was commissioned in July 1967 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The commission was created to understand what had happened up to that point across the country related to race. Nearly two dozen uprisings had occurred between 1964 and 1967, with the largest and most destructive taking place in the Los Angeles Watts neighborhood over the course of five days in August 1965. The commission findings were released in March 1968, one month before Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, which led to over 100 American cities exploding into just the type of violence that the Kerner Commission was trying to understand.

“Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it” – George Santayana

Jelani Cobb’s book on the Kerner Commission points out that there were insights within the Kerner Report that remain most applicable today:

“Police are not merely the spark,” the report tells us. They are part of the broader set of institutional relationships that enforce and re-create racial inequality. The problem is never simply the incident but the facts and factors that made such an incident possible, even predictable. Minneapolis, for instance, ranked in 2019 among the best places to live according to *US News & World Report*. But it was also among the cities with the worse socioeconomic disparities between Black residents and white residents, with a shocking, even for the United States, \$47,000 gap separating the median household income of the two groups. Seventy-six percent of whites in the area owned their homes, only a quarter of Black residents did. The disparity is part of a long legacy of restrictive housing covenants – contracts prohibiting home sales to specific racial groups. In Minneapolis the practice began as early as 1910. In an op-ed published in the wake of the eruption in the streets, Betsy Hodges, the former mayor of Minneapolis, pointed to racial hypocrisy as a cause of the crisis. She said:

“White liberals, despite believing we are saying and doing the right things, have resisted the systemic changes our cities have needed for decades. We have mostly settled for illusions of change, like testing pilot programs and funding volunteer opportunities. These efforts make us feel better about racism, but fundamentally change little for the communities of color whose disadvantages often come from the hoarding of advantage by mostly white neighborhoods”.

Implicit within the US News ranking was the caveat that the Twin Cities area was among the best places for white people to live. Here again, Kerner is instructive. “Our Nation,” it warned in 1968, “is moving toward two societies, one Black, one white – separate and unequal.” There were two realities in the Twin Cities, neatly calibrated by race.

The Commission was chaired by Illinois Governor Otto Kerner and was comprised of a bi-partisan group including California Congressman James Corman, Oklahoma Senator Fred R. Harris, New York Mayor John Lindsay, Ohio Representative William M. McCulloch, Massachusetts lawmaker Edward Brook (sole African American serving in the United States Senate at the time), NAACP Executive Director Roy Wilkins, President of the United Steelworkers of America I.W. Abel, Police Chief of Atlanta Herbert Jenkins, CEO of Litton Industries Charles Thornton, and Commerce Secretary of Kentucky Karen Peden. Nine of the eleven commission members were white and two were Black. Ten of the eleven were male and only one was female.

In his book, Jelani Cobb states that:

...the Commission recommended new community-based guidelines covering how police needed to interact with citizens of “the ghetto,” as Black communities were dubiously classified in the report. It devoted an entire chapter to the ways in which justice should be administered in the course of uprisings, it suggested a national network of neighborhood task forces, local institutions that could bypass the bureaucracy and red tape of city administration and head off problems before they erupted into crises. It suggested “neighborhood service centers” to connect residents of these communities with job placement and other forms of assistance and proposed expanded municipal employment as a means of diminishing chronically high unemployment in these areas. Perceptively, its members suggested that the monochromatically white news media that reported on these uprisings was also a symptom of the bigger problem. That social upheaval that had been created by overwhelmingly white institutions and maintained by said white institutions was then investigated and reported upon by yet another overwhelmingly white institution constituted, in their assessment, a racial conflict of interest. They closed with a raft of specific recommendations for housing, employment, welfare, education and policing.

Cobb goes on to say that:

...other portions of the report, particularly the chapter on “The Future of American Cities,” were eerily prescient. This is not a good thing and becomes an important factor in why this work, written at a seemingly distant time in 1968, requires a close reading by twenty-first century generations. In many ways American society did *exactly what the report warned against*



and as the serial disturbances of recent years, reaped the consequences it predicted. The Kerner Report, coming out at the zenith of liberalism's influence in the twentieth century, becomes nothing less than a time capsule of the era, reflecting the intellectual thinking of a bygone generation. It makes a case for a decidedly liberal course of action regarding a national crisis with the presumption that this political mode, which has been more or less ascendant since the end of World War Two, would remain regnant. The warnings issued in the report then meant to alert the public to what would happen if the nation did not adopt a deeper, more committed, and truer form of liberalism that would enfranchise Black people as stakeholders. Yet it could not discern that so much of the American public had not the slightest appetite for such a form of liberalism. As would become quickly clear, they, the growing ranks of the "silent majority" wanted, in fact, much less liberalism in their lives and their government. This wave was just coming into view as the Kerner Report hit bookshelves in March 1968 but would come crashing ashore with a tidal force in the presidential election held only eight months later. In eight short but crucial months, the American political scene had changed ineradicably. Even then, there were signs that labor unions, a dominant force in American life, were weakening. A feeling was now coursing through white America that liberalism was no longer the creed of the future.

...The only genuine, long-range solution for what has happened lies in an attack – mounted at every level – upon the conditions that breed despair and violence. All of us know what those conditions are: ignorance, discrimination, slums, poverty, disease, not enough jobs. We should attack these conditions – not because we are frightened by conflict, but because we are fired by conscience. We should attack them because there is simply no other way to achieve a decent and orderly society in America...

Lyndon Baines Johnson  
Address to the Nation

In the summary the report states:

This is our basic conclusion: Our Nation is moving toward two societies, one black and one white – separate and unequal.

Reaction to last summer's disorders has quickened the movement and deepened the division. Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life: they now threaten the future of every American.

This deepening racial division is not inevitable. The movement apart can be reversed. Choice is still possible. Our principal task is to define that choice and to press for a **national resolution**.

To pursue our present course will involve the continuing polarization of the American community and, ultimately, the destruction of basic democratic values.

The alternative is not blind repression or capitulation to lawlessness. It is the realization of common opportunities for all within a single society.

This alternative **will require a commitment to national action** – compassionate, massive, and sustained, backed by the resources of the most powerful and richest nation on this earth.

From every American it will require new attitudes, new understanding, and, **above all, new will.**

**The vital needs of the Nation must be met; hard choices must be made, and, if necessary, new taxes enacted.**

Violence cannot build a better society. Disruption and disorder nourish repression, not justice. They strike at the freedom of every citizen. The community cannot – it will not – tolerate coercion and mob rule.

Violence and destruction must be ended – in the streets of the black community and in the lives of people.

Segregation and poverty have created, in the racial communities, a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans.

What white Americans have never fully understood – but what Black Americans can never forget – is that **white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.**

It is time now to turn with all the purpose at our command to the major unfinished business of this nation. It is time to adopt strategies for action that will produce quick and visible progress. It is time to make good the promises of American democracy to all citizens – urban and rural, white and black, Spanish-surname, American Indian, and every minority group.

Our recommendations embrace these basic principles:

- To mount programs on a scale equal to the dimension of the problems;
- To aim these programs for high impact in the immediate future in order to close the gap between promise and performance;
- To undertake new initiatives and experiments that can change the system of failure and frustration that now dominates the black community and weakens our society.
- These programs will require unprecedented levels of funding and performance, but they neither probe deeper nor demand more than the problems which called them forth. There can be no higher priority for national action and no higher claim on the Nation's conscience.
- We issue this report now, 5 months before the date called for by the President. Much remains that can be learned. Continued study is essential.
- As Commissioners we have worked together with a sense of the greatest urgency and have sought to compose whatever differences exist among us. Some differences remain. But the gravity of the problem and the pressing need for action are too clear to allow further delay in the issuance of this report

In an effort to seriously address America's problem of race, the Commission Report makes specific recommendations in the areas of employment, education, welfare, housing, media,

While I personally do not agree with all aspects of the report, for example the language used to describe the Black community or the descriptions of the uprisings, some of which I personally experienced, the substance of the analysis and recommendations still rings true today. African American activists, freedom fighters, scholars, and intellectuals have been screaming these very points for centuries. However, this report represents the first time that the nation was forced to conduct a comprehensive analysis on the status of race at that time. From the release of the report until now, we cannot say that we don't know how to resolve this problem. The question is – do we want to resolve this problem? Do we even care? Have we gotten to a point in this country when doing the right thing or expecting justice have become passé? Some might say that since we haven't, as the report suggests, had the national will to emphatically move toward justice for over 400 years, why start now?

The uprisings that have occurred from George Floyd's murder until now have demonstrated a new factor that we all must face. The uprisings over the last year have not solely been Black people taking to the streets. Rather it has been young people and older folks, White, Black, Latinx, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islanders, immigrants, and refugees. The protests over George Floyd's murder were held beyond American borders. They were held around the world. This indicates to me that the backlash to institutional racism is growing stronger, that the current generation is not comfortable with continuing to do nothing to dismantle institutional racism. It indicates that growing numbers of people are no longer willing to do nothing while murder, brutality, suffering and injustice are clearly within their view. On the other hand, I hear reports of white supremacists arming themselves for a race war and I wonder if it will take a second Civil War in America to find the will to finally resolve this centuries-long problem. Malcom X challenged America in his speech entitled *The Ballot or The Bullet*. In part, he said:

*America has a choice to either resolve the race issue through the ballot  
or allow it to be resolved by the bullet.*

It is my hope that the **Path Forward** that we choose is a peaceful one. One that dismisses lip service and takes definitive action to dismantle institutional racism in America. That we take the blueprint that was laid out in the Kerner Commission Report, update it to our current situation, and then take swift, definitive action to make the changes that the future of this nation requires of us.

I believe the conclusion of the Kerner Commission Report is a fitting conclusion to this Path Forward Project, so I will end with the report's own words:

“One of the first witnesses to be invited to appear before this Commission was Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, a distinguished and perceptive scholar. Referring to the reports of earlier riot commissions, he said:

“I read that report... of the 1919 riot in Chicago, and it is as if I were reading the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of 1935, the report of the investigating committee on Harlem riot of 1943, the report of the McCone Commission on the Watts riot.

I must again in candor say to you members of this Commission – it is a kind of Alice in Wonderland with the same moving picture reshown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations, and the same inaction”. “

These words come to our minds as we conclude this report. We have provided an honest beginning. We have learned much. But we have uncovered no startling truths, no unique insights, no simple solutions. The destruction and the bitterness of racial disorder, the harsh polemics of black revolt and white repression have been seen and heard before in this country.

It is time now to end the destruction and the violence, not only in the streets of the communities of color (ghetto) but in the lives of people.