




VOL. 42 ISSUE 1





Do You Hear Us Now?

By Julio Taku

1

A Letter to America

By Sarah Beckford

7

The Desecration of Africa

By Jeni Dhodary

13

**If Stony Brook Cares About
Racial Justice, It Should Stop
Utilizing Prison Labor**

By Joe Amendola

19

The Gilded Age

By Jeni Dhodary and Allen

Pierre-Louis

23

**The Blue-Blind Flower-Power
Social-Justice Standoff**

By Nicholas Grasso

33

**Minneapolis Police Officer
Put on Paid Leave for
Accidentally Doing His Job
Correctly**

By Justin Ligasan

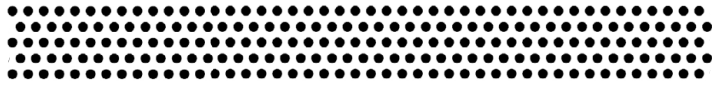
37

**Can There Be Justice?
Remembering Fred
Hampton**

By Sarah Beckford

41

Letter from the Editor



By Deanna Albohn

Breonna Taylor. George Floyd. Sandra Bland. Ahmaud Arbery. Atatiana Jefferson. Tamir Rice. Brayla Stone. Philando Castille. Trayvon Martin. The list goes on and on.

After Breonna Taylor was killed by Louisville police in her home on March 13th, her family got exactly what they wished for — for the world to remember her name. As her story went viral on social media, “Breonna Taylor” became a meme and a punchline. The call to action “Arrest the cops who killed Breonna Taylor” has been turned into a gimmicky catchphrase — used for unrelated Instagram photo captions, Twitter memes and even as a TikTok song to dance to. Small businesses are also using her name and face to make for-profit merchandise, like face masks and graphic t-shirts.

Are these memes bringing attention to her death or just trivializing the murder of an innocent Black woman? There are so many ways to raise awareness without making a commodity of her murder. Call your representatives, donate, take to the streets.

We’re reminded every day of all the injustices, tragedies and pain happening around the world. We’re force-fed gruesome videos in the name of “staying up to date” and have to watch a death toll tracker every time we turn on the TV.

As awful as these things are, I, as a non-BIPOC, have the privilege of staying informed rather than experiencing these injustices firsthand. It is the bare minimum for me to learn and talk to my friends and family because I will never live through it. It is our duty as journalists and storytellers to call attention to the violent acts of racism and white supremacy that plague our country, uplift Black voices and highlight the Black Lives Matter protests and demonstrations by the people dedicated to making change.

On top of activism, we need to remember to take care of ourselves.

I’ve been living the exact same day for five months — wake up, make breakfast, stare at the ceiling for five to nine hours. Every day blurs together. One minute it’s Monday morning and the next it’s Saturday afternoon and I haven’t done a single thing.

I know I’m not the only one who’s been stricken with a lack of motivation and laziness. I thought I would use the time to do everything I’ve been putting off, but most days I can’t even bring myself to get out of bed — let alone open my computer.

It may be hard to put a positive spin on things now — harder than it’s been for many of us in the past. But you’ve survived everything you have ever been through — no matter how big or small — so what’s one more challenging semester?

I’m trying to pass time and ease my brain into a better mindset by painting. It’s something I’ve always loved to do, but stopped for so long because I wasn’t “good” at it. It’s forced me out of my comfort zone and sparked the creativity I thought I had lost. It’s also been difficult to see friends and loved ones in person, so mailing pen pal letters back and forth has given me small things to look forward to — which is what life is all about.

I am so excited to see you all — from a distance — this fall.



THE STONY BROOK PRESS

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The Press is located on the third floor of the SAC and is always looking for artists, writers, graphic designers, critics, photographers and creatives!

Meetings are Wednesdays in SAC 307K at 1PM and 7PM.



GREENWOOD, OKLAHOMA — 1921
PHOTO FROM OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY/GETTY IMAGES

M

ay 31 marked the 99th anniversary of the Greenwood Massacre, commonly referred to as the “Tulsa Race Riots.”

On that day in 1921, the successful Black town of Greenwood, Oklahoma was burnt to the ground by white rioters. Two hundred to three hundred people were murdered, 9,000 residents displaced, 1,200 buildings destroyed and \$50 million to \$100 million in property damage incurred.

The Tulsa Commission later passed land ordinances that blocked the rebuilding of Greenwood.

Between 1911 and 1921, 23 Black Oklahomans were lynched by white mobs. An increase in so-called mob justice, a dominant local KKK chapter and a largely absent police force heightened racial tensions in Greenwood. One tiny spark was enough to ignite the violence.

That spark came on the morning of May 30, when Dick Rowland, a Black shoe shiner, crossed paths with Sarah Page, a white elevator operator. The prevailing story alleges that Rowland

stepped on Page’s foot after the elevators closed. She let out a cry and caught the attention of a nearby clerk. A white woman screaming alone in an elevator with a Black man during the height of the KKK and Jim Crow paints a picture that doesn’t require further elaboration.

The ensuing sequence of events would lead to one of the most egregious acts of violence, racism and hatred in American history. Black Greenwood residents were shot at point-blank range; shot while running for their lives; beaten to death or near-death; hanged from storefronts; dragged behind cars; trapped in burning homes and businesses; had bombs and Molotov cocktails dropped on them; and were forced to flee town and leave family members behind as their homes burned down.

Where do we find ourselves 99 years later? Protesting, rioting, hurting, pleading, crying and demanding to be heard. Black people all over the country are reeling from the trauma of the continued lynching and brutalization of Black bodies by white Americans and law enforcement.

Ahmaud Arbery was shot and killed in broad daylight by George and Travis McMichael, who wrongfully profiled Arbery as the culprit of robberies in the neighborhood that had occurred months before.

Breonna Taylor was shot and killed in the comfort of her own home after plainclothes police officers serving a no-knock warrant for narcotics broke down her front door, looking for two people already in police custody.

Dominique “Rem’mie” Fells’ body was found in a river with trauma and injury to her head and severed legs. Riah Milton was shot and killed during a robbery when a 14-year-old girl and two men “lured” her in an attempt to steal her car. They were both Black transgender women.

Tony McDade was shot by police officers after being profiled as a suspect in a murder. He was a Black transgender man.

George Floyd was suffocated under the knee of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, despite Floyd’s

WHERE DO WE FIND OURSELVES 99 YEARS LATER? PROTESTING, RIOTING, HURTING, PLEADING, CRYING AND DEMANDING TO BE HEARD.

and witnesses' pleas to stop, warning that he couldn't breathe. Floyd was detained for allegedly using a counterfeit \$20 bill, which was later found to have been genuine. Chauvin and three other officers beat him and pinned him to the ground — where Chauvin knelt on his neck for nine minutes until he died of asphyxiation.

Ahmaud Arbery's death was captured on video, but did not get national attention until two months later.

Breonna Taylor's death was not captured on video and did not get national attention until over a month later. Her killers have not been arrested.

Dominique "Rem'mie" Fells' and Riah Milton's deaths were not captured on video. Fells' killer has not been arrested. Milton's killers have been arrested.

Tony McDade's death was captured on video, but is disputed. His killer has not been arrested.

George Floyd's death was captured on video and his killer has been arrested and charged with third, then second-degree murder.

Chris Cooper, a bird-watcher in Central Park, had the police called on him by Amy Cooper, a white woman walking her dog, when he asked her to follow the rules and put a leash on it. The video showed her dragging her dog, falsely accusing Chris of attacking her and fake crying to up the perceived danger for the dispatcher she's speaking to. Not once did Chris touch her — he even told her to back up to prevent an altercation. She weaponized her white tears to intimidate Chris as she attempted to mobilize the police against him.

All of this brutality is happening amid the COVID-19 pandemic — which has disproportionately killed more Black people than other races. Black people also face more aggressive enforcement of social distancing. While police officers hand out face masks to white people having picnics in Central Park and ignoring social distancing, they are beating down and arresting Black people for meeting in groups in their own neighborhoods. Due to stringent social distancing regulations, we find ourselves at home with our screens for longer hours than usual. Embarrassingly enough, my average screen time is about fourteen hours a day. This means an even more intimate relationship with the 24-hour news cycle. Sadly, most of it has been news and footage of the murders of unarmed Black people.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA — 2020
PHOTO BY JOHN MINCILLO/ASSOCIATED PRESS



I CAN'T

Breathe



THE IRONY IS STRIKING — AMERICA IS WARNING BLACK PEOPLE TO BE CAREFUL AS ITS POLICE CONTINUE TO BRUTALIZE BLACK BODIES.

The grotesque, inhumane, evil killing of George Floyd has burst the dam of Black Patience again.

Black people are appalled. Black people are pissed off. Black people are fed up. Black people are heartbroken.

But most of all, Black people are tired.

Tired of pleading for proper treatment.

Tired of asking not to be treated like second-class citizens.

Tired of our deaths being live-streamed, shared and treated as mundane, normal occurrences.

Tired of asking for white and non-Black people of color to recognize the absurdity of our situation.

Tired of asking for solidarity from people too comfortable in their privilege to recognize our struggle, for fear it might disrupt their position in the racial hierarchy.

Peaceful protests devolve into violence when police officers arrive in militant regalia and instigate protesters. They employ the same brutality people are protesting against and in turn

undermine the purpose of said protests.

The irony is striking — America is warning Black people to be careful as its police continue to brutalize Black bodies.

The very country known for the Boston Tea Party — in which millions in property damage was incurred by the Founding Fathers — is asking for Black people to not damage property today. The double standard is laughable. Patriotism is granted to those who advance the agenda of white supremacy. Black people exercising the same form of protest are seen as ungrateful, barbaric thugs. It is easy to police the bodies and reactions of people you used to own. White America is so intimately married to its past of superiority and ownership that any disruptions to that status quo are seen as unpatriotic.

Cities across the U.S. are on fire. Americans are fed up. Black people, people of color and white people are banding together and we are mad as hell. Change is imminent — whether the opposition likes it or not.

BLACK LIVES MATTER.

It is incumbent upon white Americans and non-Black people of color to do the work of unlearning their racism. You need to face your privilege, accept its existence and weaponize it to help in tearing down the systems of white

supremacy.

It is not enough to not be racist, you have to be anti-racist.

There are so many ways you can educate yourself on privilege, institutionalized racism and larger systems of oppression.

Your Black friends are emotionally, mentally and physically exhausted. The last thing we need is to expend our intellectual energy trying to help you understand that we are equal, our lives matter and the system oppresses us.

As protests continue across all fifty states, people are beginning to experience burnout. The influx of news, marching, researching, advocating and studying the intricacies and evils of white supremacy is causing people physical and mental exhaustion. Buckle in allies, this is a movement — not just a moment or hashtag. I find this utterly hilarious as Black people have been doing this for generations. All the while living under the oppression of white supremacy.

Protect us.

Support us.

Listen to us.

Advocate for us.

Uplift us.

Care about us.

Most of all, check in on us because we are not okay. ■

BRENTWOOD, NEW YORK — 2020
PHOTO BY JOEL JOSEPH FOR THE STONY BROOK PRESS

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU BECOME
DISENCHANTED WITH
THE "LAND OF THE FREE?"

TO FIGHT

A person is shown in silhouette, wearing a dark cap and a long-sleeved shirt, with their right arm raised in a fist. The background is a warm, orange-toned scene with trees and what appears to be a fire or explosion in the distance. The image is overlaid with large, bold, red and blue graphic shapes that create a sense of movement and protest. The text "TO FIGHT" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image.



ARTICIA

**BY SARAH
BECKFORD**

AHMAUD ARBERY. BREONNA TAYLOR. GEORGE FLOYD. SEAN REED.

THESE ARE THE NAMES OF FOUR BLACK PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED — AND THEIR DEATHS HAVE CAPTURED OUR ATTENTION, TEARS AND OUTRAGE.

We have each witnessed footage or news reports about their deaths many times through our TV screens, phones, social media feeds — but what happens when these harrowing accounts fade from the news cycle? What can we do? Is there a way to protect every Black life that resides in this country? How do we transform our frustrations into actionable change that has a permanent effect?

I do not have the answers to these questions. I am exhausted and in mourning for those I have never met, and something has shifted within me. I remember sitting in my grandmother's home in Jamaica, in the sweltering heat, confused as to why George Zimmerman was acquitted after killing Trayvon Martin.

I was twelve.

Since then, countless people have died at the hands of police — their killings preserved on dashcam or bystander video, while many others were never filmed.

In 2017, something shifted for me again. At 16, watching the white supremacist rallies in Charlottesville, I saw hate like I had never before. I witnessed a vitriol that seemed to nearly grab me by the throat through my TV screen. Through the violent marches on TV, racism once again became apparent to me — knowing that many people who, despite having never met me, would much rather see me dead.

I grew up in mixed schools, I was privileged to go to a Christian private high school and I'm now pursuing a degree at a state university — yet none of this protects me. Despite the brave face I put on every day, I live in fear. And now, as more and more Black people are being gunned down by murderous police, I feel powerless.

It is not easy to live in a nation whose flag of 50 stars and 13 stripes holds nothing but pain for you. I do not remember the last time I sang the national

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anthem and meant it — or if I ever had. As a child of immigrants, I've always had a strange relationship with America. Whatever childlike pride I once had for my country disappeared a very long time ago. I am ashamed at the lies of equality and progress this nation feeds to me, the continued denial of the validity and humanity of Black life, of Indigenous lives, of immigrant lives — the list goes on. As I reflect upon the aforementioned deaths, I cannot shake a piece of Stokely Carmichael's 1966 speech at UC Berkeley from my mind.

Carmichael argued that civil rights bills were made as reminders to white people to treat Black people correctly. Black people already knew they were free to go about their lives, but have been systematically and violently prevented from doing so. He said that the failure of civil rights bills is because of the failure of white people to deal with the issues in their communities.

"How can white people who are the majority — and who are responsible for making democracy work — make it work? They have miserably failed to this point. They have never made democracy work. Be it inside the United States, Vietnam, South Africa, Philippines, South America, Puerto Rico, wherever America has been, she has not been able to make democracy work; so that in a larger sense, we not only condemn the country for what it's done internally, but we must condemn it for what it does externally. We see this country trying to rule the world, and someone must stand up and start articulating that this country is not God, and cannot rule the world."

Due to this lack of self-correction, we need to condemn America for its internal failures, as well as its failures abroad. Stokely Carmichael's words are realized again today, as people across America experience the collective realization that our country needs to confront its issues with racism — and that permanent change needs to be made.

Generations have come and gone without mass, intense change — and our current failing system is now on trial. We see swaths of outrage that eventually die down until the next Black death. America has failed to sustain, maintain and truthfully keep a democracy that benefits all of its citizens. It has not allowed for equal treatment under the law, and I cannot stay silent. I have been born condemned by a law that has criminalized my mere existence.

So I write this as a supplication to my community, to this nation and my generation. We must move from our comfort zones and demand our government do right by us. Use your civic power, write petitions, call every legislator and leader. Bust down the doors of the old order of silence, of injustice, and fight for your families and future children. Vote and elect officials who will uphold our dignity as Black people in America. And through these things, I hope that change will come. ■

Photos by John Minchillo, Julio Cortez and Dave Killen for the Associated Press

AMERICA

(GOD BLESS YOU IF IT'S GOOD TO YOU)

BY SARAH BECKFORD

America, America, take your hands off me
Let these lungs breathe

America, America, have you not seen what you've done to me
I have watched myself die with my blood still coursing
through me

My mind is marked with the history of
generations killed before their time

America, America, what
have I ever done to
you?

Was I

born
to be murdered by
the law
America, America, must I run from you to live
Or will you take my feet from me
America, America, this Black body is human and not
animal

Open thine eyes to the tyranny

You put me in towns meant to choke me from growing

You imprison me with no hope of better days

You tear down my schools

You insert poison into my streets

You claim you want me, but I am just a trophy to perform for you

You delude me into making a life that can end at an instant
 America, America can you hear me
 Or will you mutilate me further
 so there is no justice
 Will you allow me to breathe in peace
 How many times must I see my family die
 How many more lives until you confront your lies
 You cannot claim to be past something that lives in
 your veins and mind
 Racism is a disease you've normalized
 America, America home of the brave hope that
 refuses to listen to history
 An unfit home to the

immigrant
 that it
 despises
 A matriarch of
 a democracy that
 eats its children
 Where even in death
 and in life expectancy, we
 are unequal
 What more can I write when I
 can hardly form the words
 I can't remember the names
 because the list grows daily
 America, America open
 thine eyes
 Witness the blood on
 your hands and the
 tears all the mothers
 have cried
 I beg you for
 justice this time

THE DESECRATION OF AFRICA

BY JENI
DHODARY



"THE BOURGEOISIE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, WHICH LOOKS COMPLACENTLY UPON THE WHOLESALE MASSACRE AFTER THE BATTLE, IS CONVULSED BY HORROR AT THE DESECRATION OF BRICK AND MORTAR." -KARL MARX

It is not just our history that is written by its victors. The story of the present day, upheld by exploitative enterprises, reflects a far more dangerous narrative: a narrative that erases the brutalities facing individuals today. It is a subtle process — the process of erasure — and it is deeply embedded in our present economic zeitgeist, a zeitgeist that champions the narrative that America is the richest nation in the world; and that Africa, by contrast, is bereft of wealth. You may be surprised, therefore, to discover that such is not the case.

Situated in the heart of the African continent, the Democratic Republic of Congo, with its untapped raw mineral deposits of \$24 trillion, surpasses the United States' \$21.428 trillion GDP. Its richness is not an exception but a rule, illuminating the continent's wealth of resources. Home to Nigeria and Libya, two of the world's largest oil reserves, Africa contains 30% of the world's remaining mineral resources — and after years of enslavement and colonial brutality, the continent is finally growing.

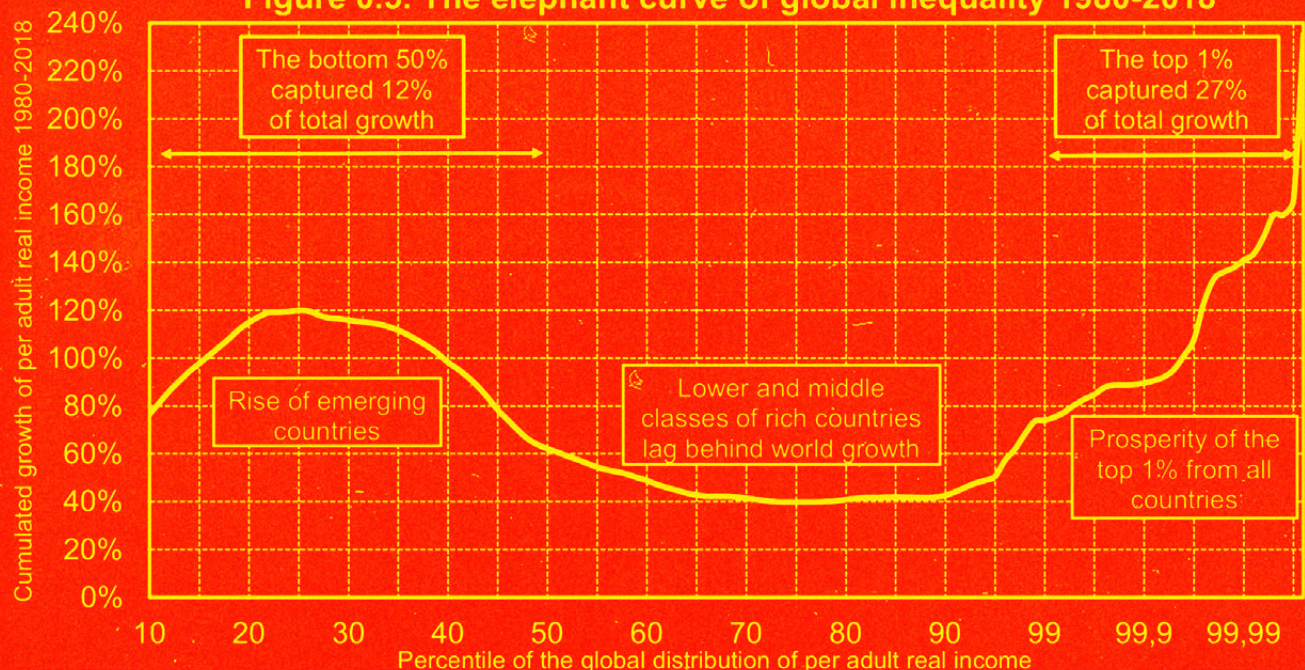
With its bountiful natural resources, Africa is considered one of the most profitable regions in the world. Its industries are among the most attractive to foreign investors, with six of its nations among the world's twelve fastest-growing economies. At a glance, Africa's prospects are alarmingly optimistic. A deeper analysis, however, paints a foreboding picture. With its investment driven by profiteering foreign

agents, the prospect of continental autonomy is significantly diminished. What was formerly the 15th-century transatlantic slave trade has transformed into a contemporary network of opaque, lucrative transactions that no longer rob Africa of its people, but its people of their resources.

The transnational exploitation of Africa is hardly a novel concept. In 2017, researchers found that despite \$161.6 billion entering the continent every year in loans, remittances and aid, African countries lose \$203 billion to tax avoidance, excessive debt payments and resource extraction, trapping its nations in annual debt obligations of over \$40 billion. This breaks down to \$67.6 billion in illicit financial outflows by transnational companies misrepresenting their internal figures to recuse themselves from tax obligations, a figure that has only increased in 2020. A recent report by the Brookings Institute found that capital flight could account for five percent of the continent's annual GDP — and an inability to curb these practices will lead to a loss of \$230 billion to foreign actors over the next decade, the totality of which it would take an individual earning a yearly salary of \$100,000 2.3 million years to acquire.

With profit maximization integral to every nation's economy, the transfer of labor to regions with low financial governance, loosely defined labor laws and high levels of political corruption is universally considered a corporate victory.

Figure 0.5. The elephant curve of global inequality 1980-2018



Interpretation. The bottom 50% incomes of the world saw substantial growth in purchasing power between 1980 and 2018 (between +60% and +120%), the top 1% incomes saw even stronger growth (between +80% and +240%). Intermediate categories grew less. In sum, inequality decreased between the bottom and the middle of the global income distribution, and increased between the middle and the top.
Sources and series: see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology.

Graph from Thomas Piketty, Paris School of Economics

Even with COVID-19 temporarily disrupting Africa's mining industry, the reality remains that for years American companies like Apple, Microsoft, Dell and Tesla have relied on the cheap cobalt mined by child laborers as an essential ingredient in their smartphones and electric cars. Their primary supplier, Umicore, purchases its raw materials from Glencore mines across the Congo known for unmitigated tunnel collapses, wages as little as \$2 a day and oppressive labor practices. Despite testimonies from the parents of dead Congolese children — highlighted in a class action lawsuit this past December — these companies remain unaccountable for the atrocities they covertly depend on. The pillaging of Africa's resources by some of our nation's most revered companies serves as a brutal reminder that even with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, American corporations do not practice this formal equality beyond its borders. With the onset of globalization, they have merely transferred their system of exploitation overseas.

Another class action lawsuit filed in February alleges that Starbucks, Mars and the Quaker Oats Company are responsible for selling chocolate farmed by child laborers in West Africa. The negative externalities of this industry's practices extend beyond its human impact to the environment, accelerating deforestation in the Ivory Coast such that there will be no more forests to farm by 2030, the lawsuit claims. By manufacturing their own standards to designate products as ethically sourced, these companies have exonerated themselves from their roles in heightening global inequality and mass climate calamity.

Ruthless and unmitigated, American companies' reliance on cheap labor reflects modern-day economic brutality. Cheap labor is *human* labor — and in referring to it as *cheap* labor, the corporate leviathan distorts the human element of labor into a mere commodity. As companies embellish their public projections with performative activism at the height of the Black Lives Matter movement, emerging African nations continue to face the brunt of rising global inequality. With the global elite's wealth expanding at a significantly higher rate than that of the poor, individuals at the bottom end of the industrial supply chain remain incarcerated in the stratum of modern-day slavery.

This is brutality.

The narrative that violence is only destructive when it is overt absolves corporations of their complicity in transnational economic brutality. Facing humanitarian abuses and the heightening impact of climate change, Africa's poorest individuals are casualties of social, economic and environmental racism — where we, the consumers, subsidize corporate afflictions by bolstering demand. If we continue basing our economic decisions on our default, collective apathy, we are just as complicit as the oppressors we so vehemently condemn. ■

**RUTHLESS AND UNMITIGATED,
AMERICAN COMPANIES'
RELIANCE ON CHEAP
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CONTINUE TO FACE THE
BRUNT OF RISING GLOBAL
INEQUALITY.**



CARMEL, NEW YORK
Photos by Deanna Albohn



Have Black friends
 Date Black People
 Listen to Black Artists
 consume Black Media
 Immerse in Black Culture
BE SILENT
 WHEN BLACK PPL ARE MURDERED

WHITE PRIVILEGE
 FEAR - BLACKS KILLED

BLACK LIVES MATTER!
 NO JUSTICE
 NO PEACE
 THEIR NAMES

I UNDERSTAND
 THAT I WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND
 HOWEVER, I STAND WITH
 RESPECT
 EXISTENCE
 OR CT

NO FURTHER
 WE

~~A FEW B~~
 SYSTEMIC
 RACISM

Michael Sabbie - Bryan Keith Day - Christian Taylor - Troy Robinson - Asshans Pharaoh Manley - Felix Kumi - Keith Harrison McLeod - Junior Prosper Lamontez Jones - Paterson Brown - Dominic Hutchinson Anthony Ashford - Alonzo Smith - Tyree Crawford - India Kager - La Vante Biggs - Mo Michael Leo Marshall - Jamar Clark - Richard Perkins - Nathaniel Harris Pickett Benni Lee Tignor - Miguel Espinal Michael Noel - Kevin Matthews Bettie Jones - Quintonio Legrier - Keith Childress JR

SAY THEIR NAMES BLACK LIVES MATTER





IF STONY BROOK
CARES ABOUT
RACIAL JUSTICE,
IT SHOULD
STOP UTILIZING
PRISON LABOR

BY JOE
AMENDOLA

It is easy to mindlessly repeat the aesthetics and vocabulary of social justice; putting your money where your mouth is, on the other hand, proves far less convenient. We've become used to seeing this in action: Financial behemoths like Wells Fargo post surface-level tributes to diversity and inclusion in honor of Black History Month — while their own history has been littered with predatory and racist lending practices, all supplementing their outsized complicity in the 2008 housing crisis, which disproportionately harmed Black communities and wealth. The FBI perform this too by draping their logo in the LGBTQ rainbow flag for Pride month; the Bureau's legacy, however, is one of mass discrimination and surveillance of queer communities, including AIDS activists in the 1990s. Every superficial paean to movements for liberation by a corporate or governmental institution is, in all likelihood, tainted by material legacies which negate the stated tributes — however limited those tributes may be in the first place.

Higher education is not exempt from this. Its hypocrisy can be observed in centuries-old elite institutions like Harvard. In 2017, Harvard's president admitted to the university's complicity in slavery. Less than a year before this, Harvard also happened to be engaged in a labor dispute with the institution's majority-black dining hall staff — who were striking for living wages in a lengthy struggle with its administration.

But the hypocrisy can also be seen, if not more covertly, in public higher education, such as in the SUNY system — including at our own Stony Brook University.

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd, SUNY Stony Brook opted for the easiest public-facing display of solidarity by participating in “#BLACKOUTTUESDAY,” a hashtag intended to show support for victims of police violence. Interim President Michael Bernstein and President-elect Maurie McInnes also sent out a campus-wide email expressing their heartbreak at the recent instances of police brutality and discrimination, including the “senseless murders” of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor.

Towards the end of the email, the two call for the furtherance of social justice:

“We must stand up and speak out against injustice and ignorance. As a public institution of higher learning, we must use our power to address major societal problems. We want to reiterate and reinforce Stony Brook's commitment to inclusion and acceptance of all who seek to work and study on our campus. We must actively work within our own communities to lead the change in our society we all want to see. By practicing inclusivity and celebrating the power and richness of diversity, we can stand together and remain unwavering in our embrace of the Stony Brook Community Pledge by promoting equality, civility, caring, responsibility, accountability, and respect.”

The statement, which restricts the scope of its commitment to the Stony Brook “community,” is telling, for Stony Brook University practices neither justice nor

equality. This is evidenced by its continued business dealings with Corcraft, the brand name for the Division of Correctional Industries — otherwise known as New York State's products of coerced prison labor.

Stony Brook, among other SUNY schools, government buildings and municipal institutions, contracts with Corcraft, which has been granted “preferred source status” by New York State. This status exempts such vendors from competitive bidding laws, which allow them to sell their products to government institutions at an exceedingly low price, so long as they meet certain “form and function” requirements. This provision, as a 2017 Gothamist exposé pointed out, gives Corcraft monopoly-like power over the state's institutions: Such institutions must purchase first from Corcraft if using state funds to procure items, namely furniture.

Most furniture at Stony Brook University, whether it be the couches in the commuter lounge, the beds in Tabler Quad or the desks in our classrooms, is very likely to have been made by prisoners — forced to work for an average of 65 cents an hour — for Corcraft, which makes upwards

MOST FURNITURE AT STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY, WHETHER IT BE THE COUCHES IN THE COMMUTER LOUNGE, THE BEDS IN TABLER QUAD OR THE DESKS IN OUR CLASSROOMS, IS VERY LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN MADE BY PRISONERS — FORCED TO WORK FOR AN AVERAGE OF 65 CENTS AN HOUR — FOR CORCRAFT, WHICH MAKES UPWARDS OF \$50 MILLION A YEAR FOR THE STATE'S GENERAL FUND.

of \$50 million a year for the state's general fund.

If Stony Brook cares about social and racial justice, it should use its institutional power within New York State and refuse to contract with Corcraft — all SUNY schools should do the same.

The prison labor exploited by corporations like Corcraft has been made possible by the much-discussed Thirteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits involuntary servitude “except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.” The clause is deeply implicated in the southern backlash to emancipation — it led to the rise of so-called Black Codes and the convict leasing system, which provided steady streams of forced labor through ludicrous expansions of criminal behavior, such as vagrancy laws. (The system has been explored by Ava DuVernay's documentary “13th,” as well as the PBS documentary “Slavery By Another Name.”) The courts acknowledged this prolongation of slave labor as such at the time. In the 1871 Virginia Supreme Court case *Ruffin v. Commonwealth*, the decision referred to prisoners as “slaves of the state.”

Inmates of the New York State prisons in which Corcraft

STONY BROOK AND ALL SUNY/CUNY SCHOOLS SHOULD PLEDGE TO USE THEIR LEVERAGE TO END SUCH SYSTEMS OF EXPLOITATION. THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO DO SO.

operates, who are disproportionately Black and Latino, are prohibited from the rights usually afforded to workers — such as unionization, minimum wage laws, workers' compensation for injuries and the right to vote. This has led to appalling conditions, which have been called slave labor by activists and those on the assembly lines themselves.

The clear exploitation of prison laborers is often justified — both morally and legally — as necessary rehabilitative work, preparing inmates with discipline and marketable skills for when they are released, and therefore not of a market-character and not “employment.” This, as academic research has shown, is a highly doubtful primary motive for such practices. In reality, prison labor regimes stress cost reduction (reducing the cost of mass-incarceration by generating revenue for a state's general fund, as if mass-incarceration is a force of nature that must merely be dealt with and not a deliberate policy choice) and productivity. They also, as in the case of Corcraft, undercut private companies by their ability to offer goods at low prices due to the highly exploitative nature of their penal-labor dynamic and their procurement status.

As New York State's funding for higher education continues to be less than it was in prior decades, universities such as Stony Brook look to pseudo-firms like Corcraft. Stony Brook, and SUNY as a whole, benefits from a coerced labor regime which pays paltry wages and provides no protection to its workers under the guise of “rehabilitation.” While state schools may be in a legal bind — compelled to buy from such vendors if they are to use state funds — this is hardly an excuse; SUNY Stony Brook is a highly influential institution with much agency.

This could take many forms. Campus administrators have no excuse if they are to be held to their own supposed standard of promoting racial and social justice; purchasing from a vendor that benefits from racist regimes of mass incarceration and convict labor is aiding those very regimes — whether they concede this or not.

SUNY Stony Brook and other schools could use their institutional muscle as clients of Corcraft to compel them to pay their inmates living wages and afford them the same rights as formal employees — they could do this by banding together to demand an amendment to New York State law, as activists have pursued in other states. Designating inmates as formal employees, and removing Corcraft from SUNY's exemption list, would likely put Corcraft in violation of SUNY's Anti-Sweatshop Policy, which requires contractors to adhere to fair labor standards. More tactfully, New York State finance law orders schools to purchase commodities from Corcraft as long as they fit a “form, function and utility” requirement; if this is not met, then schools can look to other preferred-status vendors down the line, such as

the New York State Preferred Source Program for People who are Blind (NYSPSP) or New York State Industries For The Disabled (NYSID). Such “form, function and utility” requirements are determined by the purchasing department, or procurement office, of each institution. If Stony Brook and other SUNY/CUNY campuses band together in refusing to approve Corcraft of meeting this requirement, this could certainly frustrate its near-monopoly status as a furniture vendor. This may be hard, but it's not impossible — if corporate law firms and prison lobbying groups can get cute with their definitions of employment and rehabilitation, so too can schools with their specifications.

Schools can even skirt this altogether by using endowment funds for campus furniture instead of state funds — Stony Brook only receives 18% of its funding from the state anyway; it is increasingly dependent on the revenue streams from its foundations and has an endowment of \$341 million — thereby avoiding the preferred source status. In cases where existing endowment gifts are earmarked for specific purposes, activists can mobilize public pressure in order to get donors to redirect their funds towards furniture, or pressure divestment from other areas such as fossil fuels.

There is no excuse for Stony Brook to aid and abet a system of unfair carceral labor that depends on the exploitation of people of color. If President Bernstein and President-elect McInnes really care about ending racial injustice, the burden of proof is on them to show they mean it. This means, among other things, refusing to engage with Corcraft as it currently operates. If Stony Brook expects us to sign a “community pledge” full of nonbinding bromides to inclusivity, we should return the favor tenfold: Stony Brook and all SUNY/CUNY schools should pledge to use their leverage to end such systems of exploitation. There has never been a better time to do so.

Throughout this article, there have been many references to instances of “hypocrisy.” But perhaps this is misguided. In reality, there is no such thing as belief without action. If there exists a contradiction between an administration's stated commitments to ending racial injustice and its continued participation in a program and company that thrives off of said injustice, then it is not hypocrisy — it just means that they never actually believed it, at least not meaningfully so. This is a subtle distinction, but it is also crucial. Calling things “hypocritical” just muddies the waters. In calling for Stony Brook and other SUNY schools to challenge companies like Corcraft, we are not calling on them to not be hypocrites.

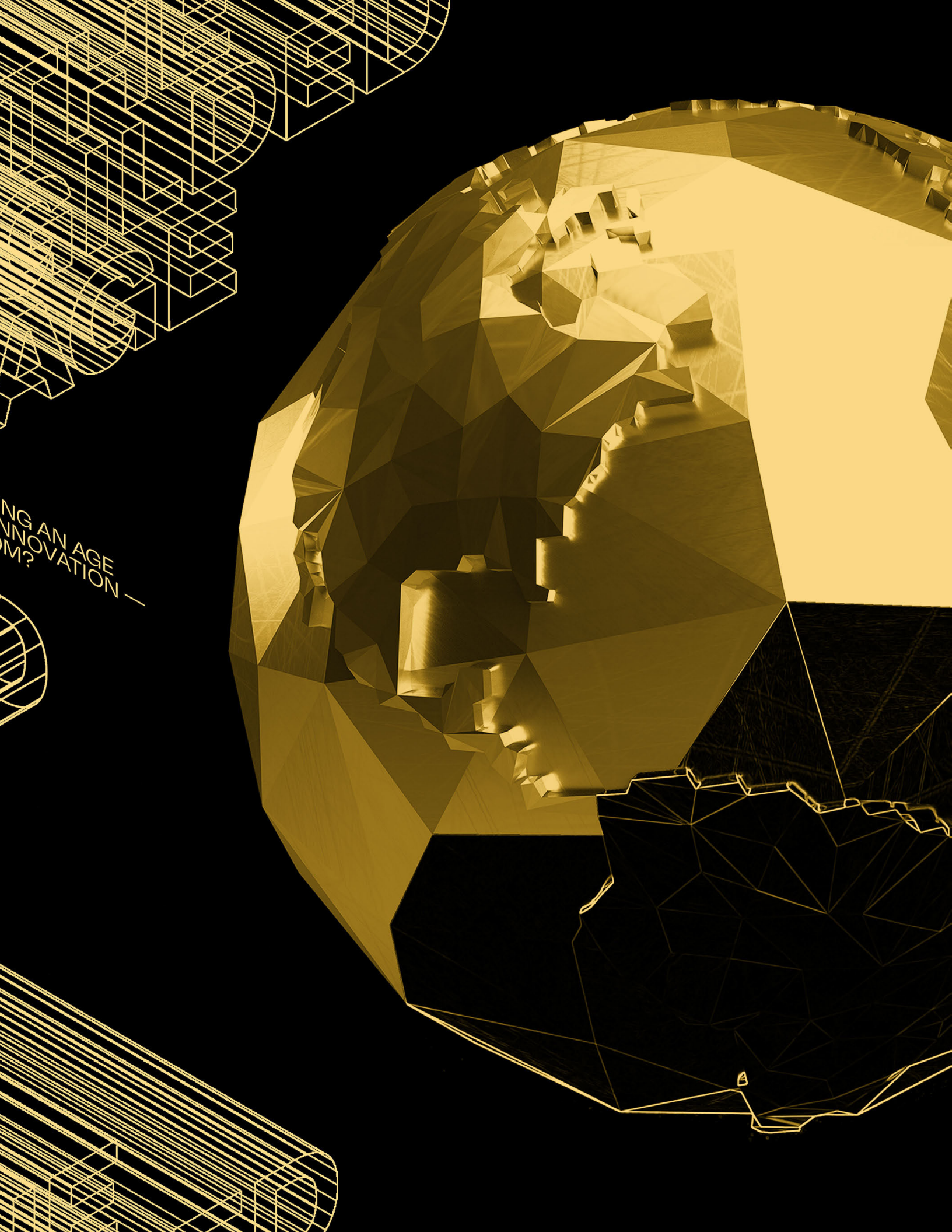
We are calling on them to believe in something. ■



BY JENI DHODARY
AND ALLEN PIERRE-LOUIS

WE'RE ENTERING
OF ENDLESS
BUT FOR WHO

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M? —



"It is a time when one's spirit is subdued and sad, one knows not why; when the past seems a storm-swept desolation, life a vanity and a burden, and the future but a way to death. It is a time when one is filled with vague longings; when one dreams of flight to peaceful islands in the remote solitudes of the sea, or folds his hands and says, What is the use of struggling, and toiling and worrying anymore? Let us give it all up."
 — Mark Twain, *The Gilded Age*, 1873



Photo from Karthikeyan K./Unsplash

In this age of abundance, what is progress but a veneer for the decay sweeping society? Across all forms of governance, the adverse conditions brought on by COVID-19 have shown how vulnerable our systems are. In threatening the livelihood of individuals across all facets of the human experience, this microscopic menace has revealed the underbelly of societal operations to those previously unaware: Our way of life is entirely dependent on grossly inequitable economic transactions, environmental degradation and misleading indicators obscuring the true extent of social discontent. Standing in the way of progress are systemic perpetrators too tied to the antiquities of these inept institutions to enact necessary reforms. We now have a significant portion of the population lacking critical resources, with the ramifications of climate change further diminishing their quality of life. It is now brought to public memory that perhaps we are reentering *The Gilded Age* — an era marked by rapid prosperity, technological advancements and economic growth, its golden exterior of prosperity disguising the destitution within.

With sea levels rising and exacerbating global inequality, the world, despite being better than ever before, seems more vulnerable than it ever was. Although our communities are quietly healing — with world hunger on the decline and literacy rates slowly rising — our lack of distributional agency has starved the world of its potential to eradicate these injustices at a significantly faster pace.

If we wanted to, we could end world hunger today — and we could do it with cereal. With the world producing an upward trajectory of 2.98 billion metric tons of cereal every year, we could supply every one of our 7.79 billion people with approximately 843 pounds of cereal annually, the totality of which would translate to 281 boxes of the three-pound Honey Bunches of Oats we see in supermarkets. That is a little over three-quarters of a box per day. Yet it remains that even with production surpassing demand, human beings consume only 46% of this cereal, with the remaining 54% entering the digestive tracts of animals that are eventually harvested for our diets or wasted in translation.

It is not just cereal that is prone to wastage. As much as one-third of the world's food is wasted every year, averaging \$1 trillion annually. This amount could feed the entire world

twice, with excess. Contrary to popular belief, food production has kept up with population growth, meaning the concern of overpopulation is not a well-founded reason for food scarcity. Yet without proper distributional mechanisms to efficiently allocate our food supply, children across the world are condemned to continue eating leaves off of local vines to alleviate their hunger — and women continue to starve despite the fact that their unpaid household labor constitutes a \$10.8 trillion industry, two times the size of our global tech industry. This lack of institutional initiative is our collective failure, for the only thing preventing us from remedying the crisis of starvation is initiative. What else does it mean when even in the age of abundance, nearly half of humanity is living on \$5.50 a day? We have failed as a species.

Our indifference comes not just at the cost of human lives, but of the planet's health as well. The carbon footprint of food waste alone devastates the climate so viciously that it is more catastrophic than the carbon footprint of any country, after China and the United States. The interconnectivity introduced by globalization has intertwined formerly isolated issues such that injustices no longer occur in a vacuum, segregated by their face or form. They are interlinked in such a way that economic injustice is simultaneously worsening environmental injustice, which, in turn, is a form of moral injustice.

In the global initiative to increase workers' rights and protect the environment, many individuals have rejected the pleas of experts and given into their deep-seated prejudices. Rejecting progressive reforms on the grounds that they ought to be limited to non-immigrants or those already dwelling within developed countries, rising movements continue to alienate the most vulnerable subset of the global population. This weaponized nativism mixed with a sudden concern for the environment — or eco-fascism — has inevitably resulted in violence. Such is evidenced by the brutal Christchurch massacre, where New Zealand's Muslim immigrants were scapegoated for an issue spearheaded by the industrialized world.

Racial violence persists across the world even without the aforementioned motivation. It has occurred time and time again in the United States, from El Paso to Charlottesville, with white supremacists targeting identity groups instead of the institutional roots of

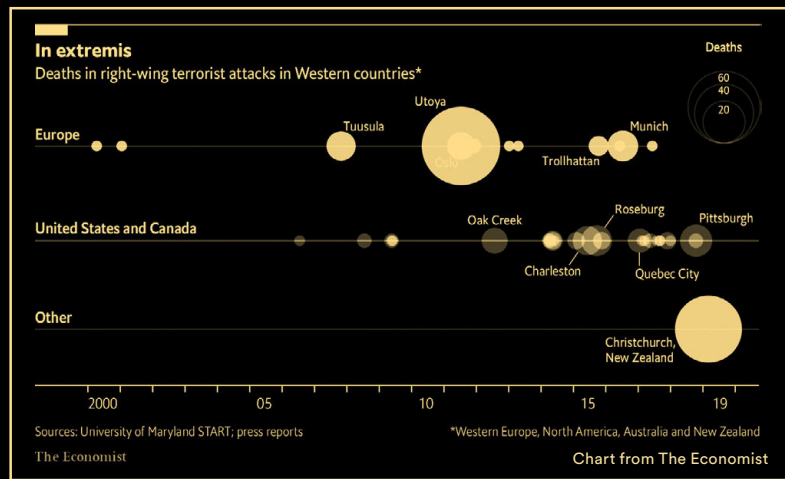


social injustices. With the onset of globalization, human beings are increasingly connected across the planet. Our pollutants are also global travelers, leaving a wake of environmental harm in their path. A meaningful approach to sustainable development must therefore consider all contributors to environmental degradation, not just those of particular classes or races.

The insatiability of our current institutions disregards people on the fringes of society — those struggling for a means of political participation, those without the leisure for social organization and those lacking the resources to demand justice. It erases their identity to the aggressive *other*. And who do we have to blame but ourselves? The Gilded Age, upheld by our silent consent, is an age that we have given birth to. It is an age marked by increased isolation and diminished ethical identity, where moral questions are no longer tried in an individual's mind but forsaken to the complacency of time. It is a culture of polarization and filter bubbles, one in which people feel lonely in their pursuits to purpose, where they do not feel a universality to human suffering because it does not seem to exist. It is a grim culture, a culture in which we are more connected than ever before but couldn't be farther apart — a culture that shrouds its economic, environmental and emotional deficiencies with the intoxicating illusion of growth. We can no longer rely on growth to ensure well-being. We did once — to this disastrous effect.

Maybe history will forever repeat itself because human beings are condemned to apathy across generations — or maybe there comes a time when we create a fork in our own paths, when we keep our past transgressions confined to our historical consciousness. After all, the current state of affairs need not be permanent blots on the human experience. Measures such as the Genuine Progress Indicator lend quantifiable tools to improve upon signals of wellbeing like economic health, environmental conservation and social investment. While it is not ideal, it is certainly a step in the right direction. Taking into account social, economic and environmental indicators, the GPI's symbiotic variables present a far more thorough mechanism for analyzing the health of our society than the current dominating indicator: GDP. Although it will require infrastructural overhauls within our government agencies, calling for our representatives to establish institutions devoted to tracking our individual and collective wellbeing is necessary for genuine growth.

With a revived trust in the collective, we can say farewell to The Gilded Age — and it is indeed a bright time ahead. It is a time when one's spirit is awakened and impassioned; when the past was a storm-swept desolation, but life no longer a vanity and a burden, and the future but a way to peace. It is a time when one is filled with sincere longings; when one no longer dreams of flight to peaceful islands in the remote solitudes of the sea but manifests that visceral serenity in their lives and in that of the collective — when one allows a smile and says, there is purpose in our insatiable calls for justice. We cannot give up. ■



MAYBE THERE COMES A TIME WHEN WE CREATE A FORK IN OUR OWN PATHS.





BRENTWOOD, NEW YORK
Photos by Josh Joseph



BLACK
LIVES
MATTER



ALL
WOMEN
IS J



WE
NOT
JUSTICE

IF YOU THINK YOU MAKE MATTER
WARD TO BREATHE IMAGINE
BEING BLACK IN AMERICA
REMEMBER HOW GEORGE FLOYD
#JusticeForGeorgeFloyd

BREAST
STARK
Field

TRD

**THE BLUE-
BLIND**

**FLOWER-
POWER**

**SOCIAL-
JUSTICE**

STAND OFF

BY NICHOLAS GRASSO

As the shadows began to grow on the green and gray, Myrna Gordon beamed at the crowd of young people chanting on the corner.

"We would have been gone by now," she said, "but this is their protest."

At 11 a.m. every Saturday for 17 years, Gordon and her North Country Peace Group have championed equality and denounced war and violence on the well-kept corner of a busy East Setauket street. Across from them stand the North Country and Setauket Patriots, who challenge calls for equality and applaud military and police forces, as well as the Trump administration. A dozen people on either side chant, wave flags and hoist banners for about an hour as cars zip past with honks and gestures of reverence or rebuke.

On June 6, the baby-boomer battles between left and right at this hallowed Long Island intersection collided with an outpour of younger people calling to end police brutality and systemic inequality. Over 250 peaceful protesters co-opted this battleground for a three-hour Black Lives Matter protest and unknowingly threw tradition by the wayside when nearly 100 of them crossed North Country Road — No Man's Land — infiltrating the land held by the Patriots for nearly two decades.

The Patriot groups and others who oppose the Black Lives Matter movement decry the protesters across the nation as kids with nothing better to do than raise havoc after a three-month quarantine. But on Saturday, a union was forged between the Peace Group and the millennials and zoomers. This Long Island street corner represents the multi-generational support for the Black Lives Matter movement across the country. While millennials and zoomers take to the streets to protest, a modest band of baby boomers fight alongside them, encouraging them to engage with community leaders and cast their ballots.

Gordon and others in the Peace Group admired the young protesters that surrounded them that day. From either side of the street, this new generation roared "this is what democracy looks like," which Gordon remembers chanting herself when she opposed the Vietnam War.

"They're very mindful of what's going on," she said. "They're not naive teenagers."

Some older people discount the youth taking to the streets. David Zere, host of *Breaking Point* for America's Voice, a satellite network, who has formerly acted as a spokesperson for the Setauket Patriots on News 12, does not see the

young Black Lives Matter protesters as mindful citizens.

"Half these kids are just suburban white kids who go home to \$700,000 homes," Zere said. "They're part-time social justice warriors."

Zere claims these protesters are being used, or "hijacked," as a Setauket Patriots Facebook post asserts, to promote a cloaked liberal agenda.

The Black Lives Matter movement is just the newest talk of the town for the Peace Group and the Patriots. The two groups have lambasted one another for nearly two decades. One Patriot who chose to remain anonymous due to her distrust of the media called the Peace Group "the old flower children," relics from the decade of psychedelia and assassination preaching *love is all you need*.

John Fitzsimmons, a new protester on the block who came down from Albany to visit family, shares the Peace Group's view of the Patriots.

"Are you that out of touch with reality?" he asked of the Patriots. "Are you blind? Are you racist? How could you counter protest [Black Lives Matter]?"

Fitzsimmons, 57, hopes younger allies are willing to take more action once they go back home.

"ARE YOU OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY?"
"THEY'RE PART-TIME SOCIAL JUSTICE WARRIORS!"



Photos by Jamaira Destini



**TRUMP
FOR PRESIDENT**

**“PEOPLE HERE ON LONG ISLAND —
— OPEN YOUR EYES.”**

“Hopefully kids step up,” he said. “Take the next steps to move the needle.”

He did not have to look far to spot young people taking the energy from the streets and directing it at those in power. A few feet away from him stood Michael Robley, who shuddered after watching footage of NYPD Officer Vincent D’Andrea, a fellow 2010 Ward Melville graduate, shove peaceful protester Dounya Zayer down into the Brooklyn concrete on May 29. Zayer, 20, was hospitalized with a concussion, and D’Andrea, 28, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault.

Robley and other 2010 Ward Melville graduates demand their predominantly

white community be anti-racist. They sent an open letter with over 700 signatures to the Three Village Central School District’s superintendent, asking him to denounce Officer D’Andrea’s conduct and take active anti-racist measures. They are waiting to hear a reply.

Like Robley, Codie Mason, a 5th grade literacy teacher at Frank P. Long Intermediate School, contacted his superintendent, asking the South Country Central School District to support Black Lives Matter. Mason, 29, felt “disgusted” when he never received a response.

“There wasn’t even a conversation

about it,” he said. He plans to leave his job at the end of this school year.

Robley and Mason hope to disrupt the inequalities present in Long Island’s public education, but their outcries may be falling on deaf ears. Long Island’s 125 school districts are representative of the island’s history of segregation, and the situation is worsening with each passing year. A 2018 study conducted by the Long Island Education Coalition found “a resource and achievement gap between Long Island’s wealthiest and least-wealthy school districts which continues to widen.”

This gap suggests Black students have less access to resources than their

white counterparts. The Southampton Union Free School District, with a 4% Black and 49% white student body, is the wealthiest district on the island, while the Hempstead Union Free School District, with a 24.9% Black and 2% white student body, is the poorest.

Education is just one sector recognized as a function of systemic inequality on Long Island. Some homeowners and commuters use racist construction projects engineered by William Levitt and Robert Moses. Levitt ensured identical white faces sat in the living rooms of his identical Levittown houses. Moses designed overpasses on his parkway just low enough to keep buses, and Black people, out of Jones Beach.

Long Island's tradition of barring Black people from white areas continues to thrive through the practices of Long Island's real estate agents, who color inside the lines. A three-year Newsday investigation published in 2019 indicates Long Island's communities — and school districts — are actively segregated by real estate agents. Undercover Black home buyers were treated unfairly

49% of the time through steering, unequal access to house listings and unnecessary requests for financial and identifying information. Agents steer people of color away from areas like East Setauket, where Black people make up less than 2% of the population.

"People here on Long Island — open your eyes," Kevin Reilly, a 66-year-old protestor from the Peace side of the Setauket street, said. "This is a very segregated place."

For the Patriots, however, history is in the past. Zere believes the notion that Long Island's schools are segregated today is a "nonsense claim."

Long Island's public education system may resist reform, so young activists are fighting in other arenas. Mason learned that emails to superintendents can prove unfruitful, but he believes ballots can still create change. Hundreds of people of all ages routinely flock to his protests in Coram, where he has a designated area to help people register to vote.

At one protest, Mason's mother, Michelle Mason, stood under a shaded

tent, eager to talk to potential voters. "I'm so proud of this generation," she said. "After the '60s, we sort of fell back. They picked it up."

Voting booths are foreign destinations for many millennials and zoomers. In the 2016 presidential election, nearly 90% of people aged 18 to 29 intended to vote, but only 46.1% voted. These voters attending college face legislation inhibiting on-campus registration and voting.

While they wait to cast their ballots, Long Islanders can continue to air their grievances on the streets. On the East Setauket corner, members of the North Country Peace Group feared retaliation from the Patriots after so many young people occupied their side of the road to voice their concerns. But on the following Saturday, no one claimed "all lives matter," no one wore a blue stripe and there was not one "Trump 2020" flag in sight. The Patriots never showed. ■

"AFTER THE '60S, WE SORT OF FELL BACK.

THEY PICKED IT UP."





MINNEAPOLIS POLICE OFFICER PUT ON PAID LEAVE FOR ACCIDENTALLY DOING HIS JOB PROPERLY

BY JUSTIN LIGASAN

An officer on the front lines of the Minneapolis protests has been put on two weeks paid leave after he failed to fire pepper balls at a local news crew. The Internal Affairs Committee for the Minneapolis Police Department confirmed that Percy Cutor had decided not to fire on reporters even though they had identified themselves as press and were wearing safety vests.

Cutor has since claimed that his pepper ball gun jammed — and that he “absolutely” meant to fire on reporters and violate their First Amendment rights.

“Look, I understand why they benched me,” he said. “Clearly I was out of line by not making sure my equipment was ready to harass and suppress those who would threaten our unchecked authority. Not a second goes by where I don’t think about how many fundamental human rights I could’ve stolen from them. I can only hope that one day I can successfully do so with something as simple as my knee.”

Although reporters were still shot by five other officers, beaten to the ground and taken into custody, this was evidently not enough. Taking to Twitter to condemn Cutor’s actions, MPD commissioner Ray Cist had this to say:

“CLEARLY
I WAS OUT
OF LINE BY
NOT MAKING
SURE MY
EQUIPMENT WAS
READY TO HARASS
AND SUPPRESS THOSE
WHO WOULD THREATEN
OUR UNCHECKED
AUTHORITY.”

 **Ray Cist** ✓
@MPDCommissioner

What I saw today was without a doubt the most shameful act I have ever seen an officer perform in recent history. The fact that an officer could blatantly misuse the power they are given when called upon to help defeats the entire purpose of the police as an institution. (1/2)

3:57 PM

 **Ray Cist** ✓
@MPDCommissioner

As officers, we need to stand together united and speak out when one of our own does wrong by trying to hold his fellow officer accountable. The one black officer we have tells me all the time that his kind like spicy food, and now they can't handle a few pepper balls?

3:59 PM · May 05, 2020 · [Twitter for Body Cam](#)

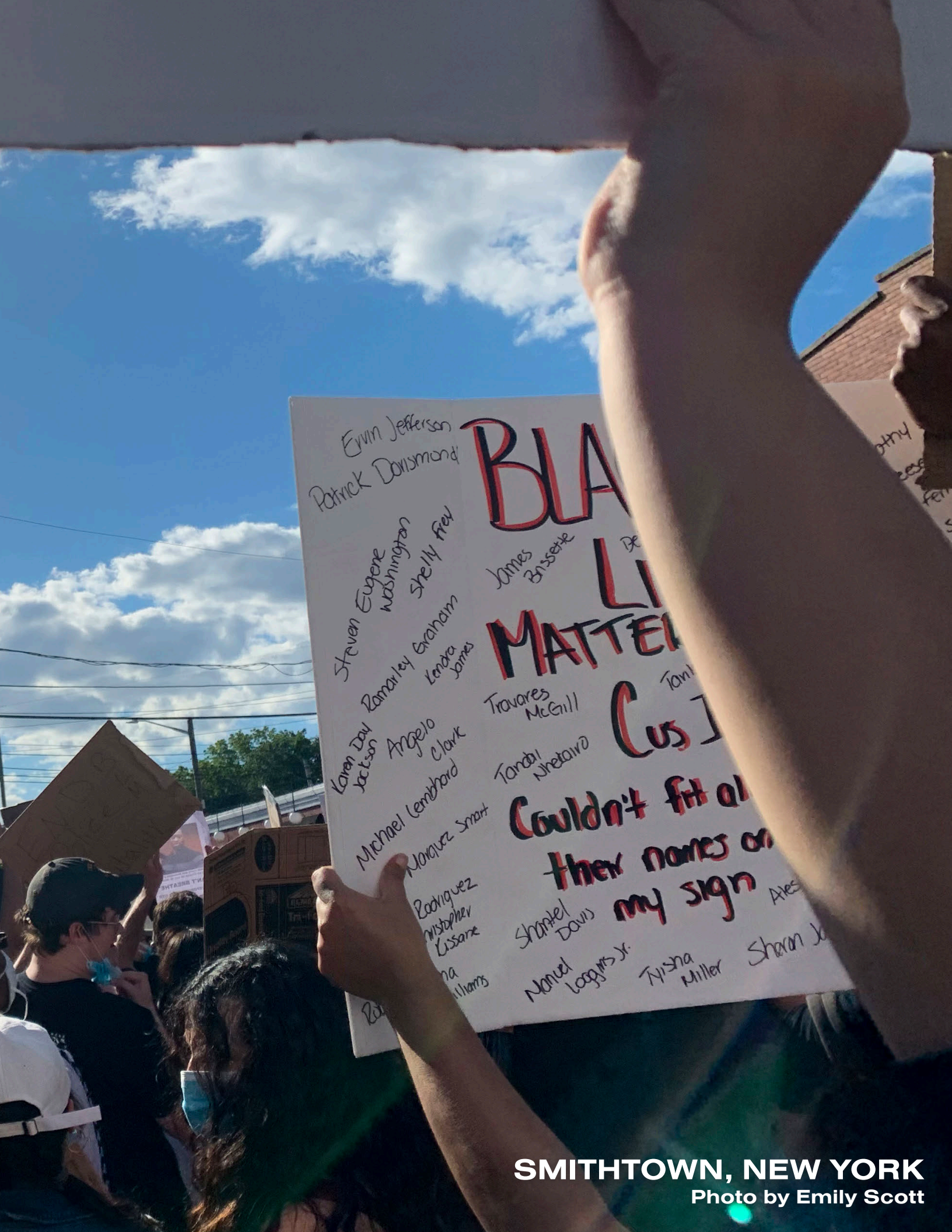
Reactions from these comments have been mixed, with supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement calling Ray “the fattest pig on the farm” to Blue Lives Matter supporters calling him “a true beacon of American ideals.”

Somehow, both groups managed to hit the nail right on the head. ■



NO JUSTICE
NO PEACE
BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER



Erwin Jefferson
Patrick Davismond

BLA

Steven Eugene Washington
Shelly Friel

James Brissette

Romarey Graham
Kenora James

LI MATTER

Karen Day Jackson
Angelio Clark

Travares McGill

Michael Lemmond
Monique Smart

Tonah Nhetaird

Cus I Couldn't fit all their names on my sign

Rodriguez
Christopher
Lissane

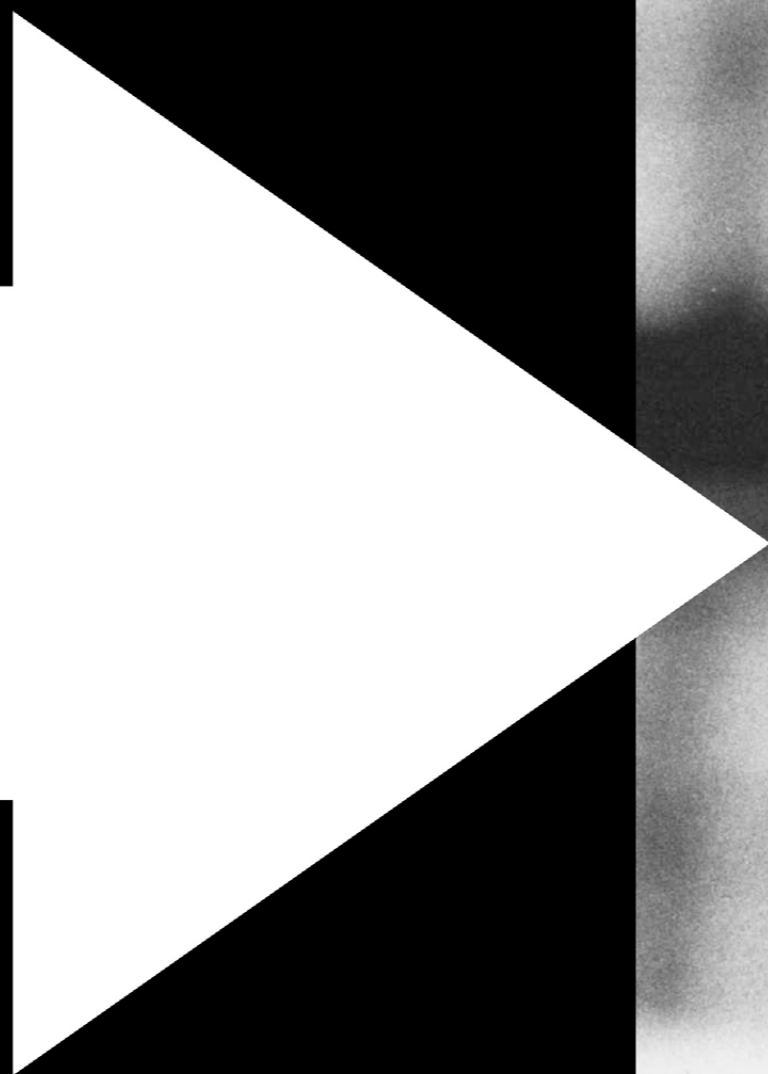
Shantel Davis

Monuel Loggins Jr.

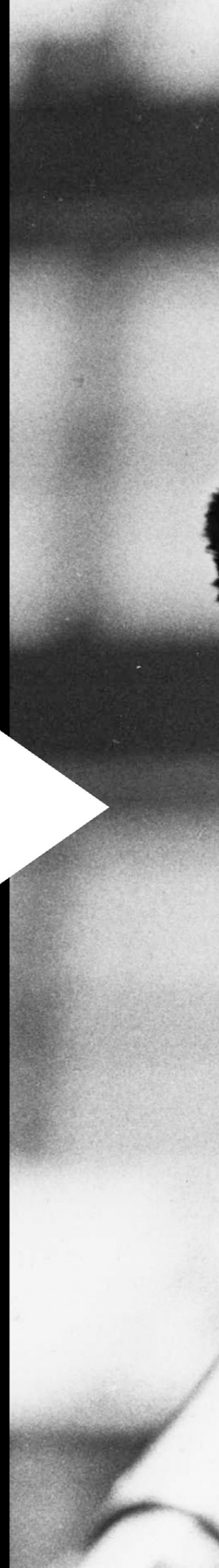
Nysha Miller

Sharon J.

C A N T H E R E
B E J U S T I C E ?



REMEMBERING FRED HAMPTON
BY SARAH BECKFORD







Photos by Paul Sequeira and Don Casper

In the early morning hours of Dec. 4, 1969, Chicago police fired multiple shots into the home of a young Black activist and his fellow activists. Out of the 100 shots fired by police, only one was returned by the Black Panthers. By the end of the raid, a young man, Fred Hampton, was dead. Hampton was the young chairman of the Panthers' Illinois chapter. This violent police raid was directed by the FBI, and in the fifty years after Hampton's assassination, the strategies used in that time are still being used today.

Hampton's assassination shocked the community, but it was not random. The story is a repeating theme in the larger tapestry of Black civil rights activists. Their lives are endangered by a government that has systematically labeled their pursuit of civil rights as extremist and dangerous.

Since the 1960s and even in 2020, they have utilized their resources to track, distract and harass the members, associates and leaders of peaceful groups like the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Student Nonviolent

intense harassment he faced before his arrest not long after Garner's death sparked outrage — and also while he was in prison. Orta was released early from prison in late May of this year due to the pandemic.

In 2017, a leaked FBI memo revealed that the agency had been surveilling several Black activists they believed to be threats to the police. The memo argued that sentiments regarding police-involved shootings would spur people, whom they termed "Black Identity Extremists," to retaliate against law enforcement. This type of categorizing and targeted surveillance is a modern version of COINTELPRO — meant to confuse and misrepresent the work of activists.

But Black narratives are being reclaimed through film and extended media presence. Through the rise of directors and screenwriters like Ryan Coogler, Lena Waithe and Ava DuVernay, there is now space for stories of activism to be told authentically. And now, fifty years since Fred Hampton's assassination, there is currently a film set for release this year centered on his life, directed by Shaka King, set to star Daniel Kaluuya and Lakeith

HAMPTON'S ASSASSINATION SHOCKED THE COMMUNITY, BUT IT WAS NOT RANDOM. THE STORY IS A REPEATING THEME IN THE LARGER TAPESTRY OF BLACK CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS. THEIR LIVES ARE ENDANGERED BY A GOVERNMENT THAT HAS SYSTEMATICALLY LABELED THEIR PURSUIT OF CIVIL RIGHTS AS EXTREMIST AND DANGEROUS.

Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Nation of Islam and Black Lives Matter. Most, if not all, of these groups were peaceful and existed to demand civil rights.

Before his assassination, Fred Hampton was the chairman of the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. He was regarded as a peaceful, community-oriented leader who strived for unity and extended community outreach. His rise in the Party's ranks came at a time when the Party was being torn apart by the FBI's COINTELPRO initiative. Seen by many as the next national leader of the Party through this critical time, he networked with other activist groups often — sharing that COINTELPRO was and still is an FBI program, motivated by a memo by then-director J. Edgar Hoover to stalk, mislead and surveil Black power and civil rights groups.

Now, in the age of groups like Black Lives Matter, the legacy of COINTELPRO still lives on. In the six years since protests in Ferguson in response to Michael Brown's death, six activists associated with the protests have died under questionable causes. Ramsey Orta, who filmed the death of Eric Garner, spoke of the

Stanfield.

These stories are dismal, grisly and hard to stomach. But nevertheless, Fred Hampton's story, as well as the stories of Martin Luther King, Ramsey Orta and Amber Evans, are important. The work that activists do should not go unnoticed, because as history has shown, it is work that involves putting one's life on the line. As Fred Hampton said, "You can kill the revolutionary, but you can't kill the revolution."

The revolution cannot be stifled — it's imperative that these stories and people are protected. It is by people continually daring to speak up for the downtrodden, and for those who have no voice, that this revolution continues. In today's era, it is vital to the sanctity of future generations for people to stand up and fight for their rights. It is imperative to teach and educate ourselves on these heroes of struggles past, as society looks to write the future. It's also just as important to remember these heroes as today's activists. A revolution is not encapsulated in the work of one, but rather it is the tide of an entire people who strive to keep moving forward. ■

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

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