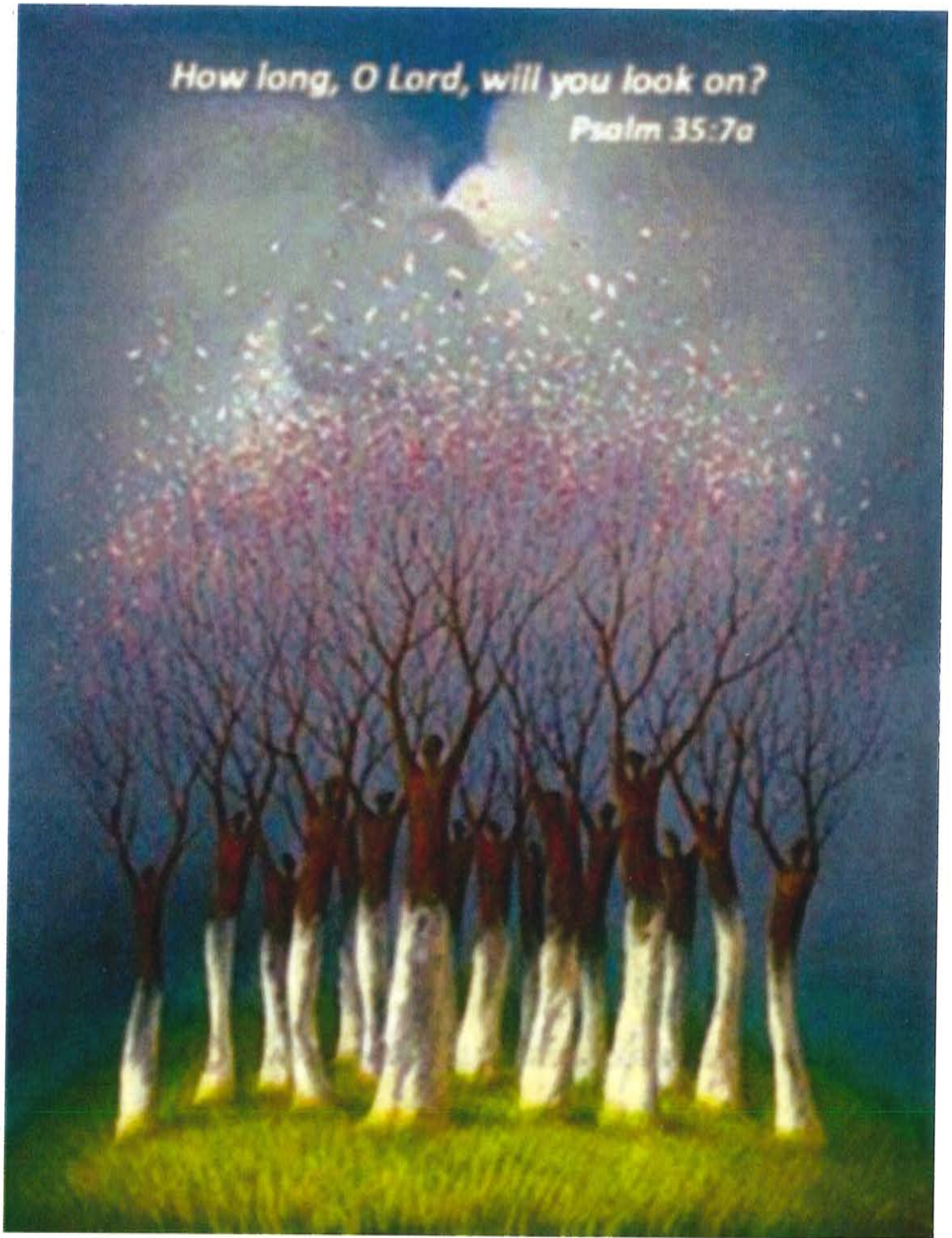


# REMEMBER THEM



AN INTERACTIVE MEMORIAL  
OF VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE OF COLOR  
FOR REFLECTION AND CHANGE

*How long, O Lord, will you look on?  
Psalm 35:7a*



# REMEMBER THEM

AN INTERACTIVE MEMORIAL  
OF VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE OF COLOR  
FOR REFLECTION AND CHANGE

*For Mayor Siver  
with Thanks  
for all you do  
for our city*



M. JANE ROBERTS

FOR  
ST. DAVID'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN

©  
2021





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## PREFACE

*Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.*

*Hebrews 13:3, NRSV*

As a community of faith, St. David's Episcopal Church in Southfield, Michigan, is called to love mercy, do justice, and seek and serve Christ in all people.

As such, we are justifiably grieved when undue violence is perpetrated on any of our brothers and sisters. We are grieved at what many have called America's original sin of slavery and White domination because, above all, this ignores the image of God in the faces of people of color.

There is an undeniable trend for racism and violence to combine in interactions between law enforcement officers and the communities they are called to serve and protect. There is an undeniable injustice baked into American culture that has allowed Blacks to suffer at the hands of Whites.

It is not inconceivable that some, even people of good will, are ignorant of the nature and scope of this deadly trend. To quote James Baldwin:

*"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."*

*Remember Them* is designed to help us face truths that are not easy to face, but with the hope that in facing them, change can come. You are invited to use this book in conjunction with the exhibit. You may purchase it and take it home or leave it for the next person. It is written to inspire reflection and action.

As such, the following statistics and cases have been compiled as a step toward realizing the need for change. May we at last face the facts and let them lead us toward healing.

*If physical death is the price that I must pay to free my White brothers and sisters from a permanent death of the spirit, then nothing can be more redemptive.*

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



## FOREWORD

**Looking Back** on the life, death and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., prophet, martyr and icon of the civil rights movement in America ...

*... Because of our love for democracy and our belief that democracy is the greatest form of government that we have on earth ... we must press on for justice. (Yes) If it means going to jail we are willing to fill up the jail houses. [loud applause] We believe that.*

Excerpt from a speech given by Martin Luther King, Jr. ([king.institute.edu](http://king.institute.edu))



Most of the stories in this book illustrate the violence against people of color as perpetrated by agents of law enforcement. There is in this country an overarching structure of systemic racism which allows police to kill Black people disproportionately and with seeming impunity. The same structure has allowed innocent Black people to be killed with relative impunity by civilians as well. Three of these victims are Emmett Till, Medgar Evers, and Trayvon Martin, and their stories are featured here. Each of these murders shocked the conscience of the nation and served to advance the civil rights movement.

But, of all the murders perpetrated by random White supremacists, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. , on April 4, 1968 became a landmark event in American history.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born Michael Luther King in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929. When Young Michael was about six years old, his father, after a visit to Germany, changed both their names to Martin in honor of the protestant leader.

King won awards in high school and gained admission to Atlanta's Morehouse College at the age of 15. While at Morehouse, King became inspired by Henry David Thoreau's essay on Civil Disobedience. <sup>1</sup> He graduated with a B.A. in Sociology and entered Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. There he earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1951. He married Coretta Scott, a singer and civil rights activist, on June 18, 1953 and earned a Doctorate of Systematic Theology from Boston University in 1955. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, the youngest person to receive this honor.

He was ordained a Baptist minister at the age of 19 and served with his father at Ebenezer Baptist Church prior to completing his education. When his education was completed, he returned with his wife to her native Alabama and accepted the call to pastor Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, a highly segregated city where almost half the citizens were African American.

King had grown up witnessing the injustices of radical racial segregation. Southern states were operating under full sway of the so-called "Jim Crow" laws. These laws, regulations and customs had been instituted by White men in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to strip Black people of the progress they'd made during the Reconstruction period<sup>2</sup> and the protections they'd gained with the passage of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments. <sup>3</sup> (Jim Crow laws succeeded the Black Codes<sup>4</sup> which southern states, unhappy at the loss of their slaves, had instituted in 1865-66 following Emancipation.)

To say the Jim Crow laws were unjust does not do that term justice. They were cruel, dehumanizing in their intent. To illustrate:

- 1) **Nurses:** No person or corporation shall require any White female nurse to nurse in wards or rooms in hospitals, either public or private, in which Negro men are placed. *Alabama*
- 2) **Pool and Billiard Rooms:** It shall be unlawful for a Negro and White person to play together or in company with each other at any game of pool or billiards. *Alabama*
- 3) **Marriage:** All marriages between a White person and a Negro, or between a White person and a person of Negro descent to the fourth generation inclusive, are hereby forever prohibited. *Florida*
- 4) **Railroads:** The conductors or managers on all such railroads shall have power, and are hereby required, to assign to each White or colored passenger his or her respective car, coach or compartment. If the passenger fails to disclose his race, the conductor and managers, acting in good faith, shall be the sole judge of his race. *Virginia*
- 5) **Burial:** The officer in charge shall not bury, or allow to be buried, any colored persons upon ground set apart or used for the burial of White persons. *Georgia* And finally,
- 6) **Promotion of Equality:** Any person . . . who shall be guilty of printing, publishing or circulating printed, typewritten or written matter urging or presenting for public acceptance or general information, arguments or suggestions in favor of social equality or of intermarriage between Whites and Negroes, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to fine of not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or imprisonment not exceeding six (6) months or both. *Mississippi<sup>5</sup> (emphasis added)*

There are many more such laws. Any Black person caught violating them could be punished by a White person. Martin Luther King perceived rightly that rectifying this social imbalance was necessary not only for allowing dignity and access to Blacks but also for freeing his "White brothers and sisters from a permanent death of the spirit." He saw what the Whites who promulgated these laws did not: that the empty arrogance of their belief in their own superiority based on nothing but the color of their skin was a sin against the creator who had placed his image inside all people. For King, working toward civil rights for Black people was the all around most redemptive thing he could do.

To that end he got involved in community civil rights activism, including serving on the Executive Committee of the NAACP. With other executive members of the local NAACP chapter he founded the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), an organization designed to improve race relations.

In his first speech as the group's president, King declared,

*We have no alternative but to protest. For many years we have shown an amazing patience. We have sometimes given our White brothers the feeling that we liked the way we were being treated. But we come here tonight to be saved from that patience that makes us patient with anything less than freedom and justice.* <sup>6</sup>

King, and his policy of nonviolent protest, was a driving force in the civil rights movement during its decade of greatest achievement, from 1957 to 1968. King's commitment to nonviolent protest was born of his Christian faith and his admiration of Mohandas Ghandi. His incorporation of Ghandi's principles was cemented after he had visited the latter's birth place in India in 1959.



These are the six principles of nonviolence which guided King's work:

- 1) Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people. It is active nonviolent resistance to evil.
- 2) Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding. The end result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation.
- 3) Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people. Nonviolence recognizes that evildoers are also victims.
- 4) Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform. Nonviolence willingly accepts the consequences to its acts.
- 5) Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate. Nonviolence resists violence to the spirit as well as the body. Nonviolence love is active, not passive. Nonviolence love does not sink to the level of the hater. Love restores community and resists injustice. Nonviolence recognizes the fact that all life is interrelated.
- 6) Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice. The nonviolent resister has deep faith that justice will eventually win.<sup>7</sup>

In December of 1955 Rosa Parks committed an act of civil disobedience by refusing to give up her seat in a front row of the colored section of a Montgomery bus to a White man. She was arrested. This was the inciting incident the MIA had been looking for to launch the Montgomery bus boycott. This lasted 3Black1 days (3Black2 days according to some sources) and led ultimately to the Supreme Court decreeing segregation on buses to be illegal.

January 30, 1956, King's house was bombed with his wife and seven-month old daughter inside. This was four days after he had been ticketed, arrested, fingerprinted, photographed and jailed for driving 30 mph in a 25-mph area of Montgomery.

In January 1957, King, Ralph Abernathy and 60 ministers and civil rights activists founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to harness the moral authority and organizing power of Black churches. They would help conduct non-violent protests to promote civil rights reform.<sup>Black</sup>

During the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, the efforts of these activists resulted in significant legal decisions:

- 1) In **1957** President Eisenhower signs into law the **Civil Rights Act. This allows federal prosecution of those who suppress another's right to vote.**
- 2) July 2, President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law, preventing employment discrimination due to race, color, sex, religion or national origin. Title VII of the Act establishes the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to help prevent workplace discrimination.
- 3) August 6, President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the **Voting Rights Act of 1965 to prevent the use of literacy tests as a voting requirement**
- 4) April 11, President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 196Black, also known as the Fair Housing Act, providing equal housing opportunity regardless of race, religion or national origin.

During this period legal gains were hard won by means of sacrificial protests. White people in the south weaponized the police and fought back hard against integration and equal access for Blacks.

On September 15, 1963 a bomb at 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, kills four young girls and injures several others prior to Sunday services. This occurred 18 days after the August 28, 1963, March on Washington for jobs and freedom, where about 250,000 people took part, and thus the bombing may have been a reaction to that march. The Black community in turn reacted to the bombing with protests.



Another example of White supremacist resolve: the events surrounding Bloody Sunday. Selma was the county seat of Dallas County, Alabama. Here Blacks made up half the population but only 2% of registered voters. For months SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) had been trying to get Blacks registered to vote. Their efforts were being thwarted. In January 1965 King came to Selma to give the backing of the SCLC to the cause. Peaceful demonstrations in Selma and surrounding communities resulted in thousands of arrests, including King's. He wrote to the *New York Times*, "This is Selma, Alabama. There are more Negroes in jail with me than there are on the voting rolls." (In his lifetime King was arrested 29 times for acts of civil disobedience and for trumped up charges.)

On February 18, 1965, in the town of Marion, near Selma, state troopers clubbed protesters and fatally shot Jimmy Lee Jackson, an African American protester who was trying to protect his mother, who was being struck by police. In response, civil rights leaders planned to take their cause directly to Alabama Governor George Wallace on a 54-mile march from Selma to the state capital of Montgomery. Although Wallace ordered state troopers "to use whatever measures are necessary to prevent a march," approximately 600 voting rights advocates set out from the Brown Chapel AME Church on Sunday, March 7, 1965.

The march was led by future US congressman and SNCC Chairman, John Lewis and Hosea Williams, representing the SCLC. Marchers had to cross the Edmund Pettus bridge spanning the Alabama River. When they came to the crest of the bridge they were confronted with the sight of a wall of helmeted state troopers slapping billy clubs in their hands. Behind them were sheriff's deputies, some on horseback and dozens of White spectators "giddily" waving confederate flags.

Marchers advanced in a column along the bridge's sidewalk until they were within 50 feet of the authorities. The authorities declared them to be in illegal assembly (1<sup>st</sup> amendment?). Lewis and Williams stood their ground at the front of the line. After a few minutes troopers wearing gas masks and with billy clubs at the ready advanced, pushing Williams and Lewis back. Quickening their pace, they knocked marchers to the ground. When Lewis was on the ground, a trooper clubbed him on the head with a nightstick. He attempted to shield his head and the trooper hit him again as he tried to get up.



Tear gas mixed with screams. Sheriff's deputies on horseback charged in to chase the men, women and children back, using clubs, whips and rubber tubing wrapped in barbed wire. Although forced back, the protesters did not fight back. Seventeen demonstrators were hospitalized, and 50 were treated for lesser injuries. John Lewis suffered a skull fracture.



Television cameras captured the event, and it was aired nationwide. Footage arrived in New York in time for ABC newscaster Frank Reynolds to interrupt the evening's showing of the film *Judgment at Nuremberg* to air it. The connection between Selma and Nazi Germany was not lost on anyone.

People were outraged. Sympathizers staged demonstrations, sit-ins and traffic blockades in solidarity with the voting rights marchers. One shopkeeper in Selma confided to *Washington Starr*



reporter Haynes Johnson about the city's institutional racism, "Everybody knows it's going on, but they try to pretend they don't see it. I saw *Judgment at Nuremberg* on the Late Show the other night, and I thought it fits right in; it's just like Selma."

The events in Selma galvanized public opinion and mobilized Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1965. On March 15, President Lyndon B. Johnson addressed a joint session of Congress, saying, "There is no issue of states' rights or national rights. There is only the struggle for human rights. We have already waited 100 years and more, and the time for waiting is gone."

Hate filled the air in that time and space. It made martyrs. On August 20, 1965, Episcopal seminarian Jonathan Myrick Daniels was murdered by shotgun-wielding state highway employee and volunteer county deputy Tom Coleman in Hayneville, Alabama. Daniels pushed activist Ruby Sales out of the way and took the shot meant for her, dying instantly. Despite death threats against her and her family, Sales testified at Coleman's trial. He was acquitted by a jury of 12 White men. In a CBS interview a year after the killing, Coleman had no regrets, saying, "I would shoot them both tomorrow."



Viola Liuzzo (April 11, 1925 to March 25, 1965) an activist and member of the NAACP from Detroit, was shot by a Ku Klux Klan member in Selma, Alabama, leaving behind five children.

James Joseph Reeb, a Unitarian-Universalist minister and member of the SCLC from Boston, was in Selma on March 9, 1965, to accompany Martin Luther King on a second attempt at a Selma to Montgomery march. He was clubbed to death by White men who objected to his support of African American rights. The nearby Black hospital was not equipped to treat him, and the White hospital refused. He had to be taken to a hospital in Birmingham, although Montgomery was closer. He died from his brain injuries on March 11, leaving behind four children.



The above incidents are cited as instances of the protracted, bloody struggle waged by Black and White activists to bring social justice, civil rights to African Americans in face of brutal White supremacist resistance. The August 28, 1963, March on Washington for jobs and freedom preceded Bloody Sunday and was another turning point in the battle for civil rights as well as a high point of King's career.

Approximately 250,000 people assembled at the Lincoln Memorial. King was the final speaker. As he was nearing the end of his remarks, Gospel singer Mahalia Jackson called out, "Tell them about the dream." King delivered his now famous speech:

*I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. . . . I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today. . . .*

<https://www.npr.org/2010/01/18/12270126Black/i-have-a-dream-speech-in-its-entirety>

*Time Magazine* designated King its person of the year for 1963.



King's first speech at the Lincoln Memorial, *Give us the Ballot*, took place in 1957. His topic was voting rights.

King narrowly escaped death in 1956 when he was stabbed by Izola Ware Curry, a deranged Black woman. His assassination was effected on April 4, 1968, when he was shot by career criminal, escaped convict and supporter of segregationist George Wallace, James Earl Ray, while he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis Tennessee. He was in Memphis to support striking Black sanitation workers.

Ray confessed on March 10, 1969, and was sentenced to 99 years (bumped up to 100 after he briefly escaped). Within a few days of confessing, he started claiming he'd been set up by an individual named "Raoul." Mrs. King believed the FBI was behind the assassination because of the way they'd consistently harassed King. J. Edgar Hoover was convinced King represented a threat to the fabric of society. If American society is inherently racist, then he did.

King's legacy has lived on. In 1969, his widow, Coretta Scott King, organized the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change. Today it stands next to Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. His birthday, January 15, is a national holiday. The Lorraine Hotel where he was shot is now the National Civil Rights Museum.<sup>9</sup>

Fifty-three years after King's death, have the people yet reached the Promised Land? Has his dream been realized? Do people of color have free and equal access to voting? Do they have equal protection under the law; are they free from unreasonable search and seizure? As we shall see in these pages, Blacks are disproportionately harassed, arrested and killed by police. Further, Black people are much more likely to be arrested for drugs, even though they're not more likely to use or sell them. And Black inmates make up a disproportionate amount of the prison population.<sup>10</sup>

Currently protests against police murders such as those of George Floyd are met by police with tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets and beatings. (In the '50s and '60s they used dogs and fire hoses.) Peaceful protest such as that of Colin Kaepernick has been met with disapproval and even job loss. So no, Blacks don't yet enjoy equal protection under the law.

Commenting on the death of Byron Williams, attorney Antonio Romanucci points out the connection between police brutality and elected officials: "... This is actual institutional racism. And the only way there's going to be meaningful change overall, not only on a case by case basis, is that people are going to be required to VOTE if they want real change."

From the Reconstruction period onward the federal government took measures to ensure eligible African Americans had the right to vote. Southern Whites found ways to circumvent or ignore each one as it came along. They were very effective. During Reconstruction, the percentage of eligible African American men registered to vote in the South was 90%. By 1940 the percentage of eligible African Americans registered to vote in the South was 3%.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. King spoke of this at the end of the Selma to Montgomery march in 1965. [He said] that every time there is a possibility for poor Blacks and poor Whites to come together and vote to transition this society, we see this push back against it ... [this] gives us an impoverished democracy ... it is nothing more than Jim Crow [in modern guise].<sup>12</sup>

Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 provided that states with a history of discrimination must get approval from the Department of Justice or a federal judge before making any changes in their voting laws. In 2013 the Supreme Court, in a five to four decision, rendered this provision null in the *Shelby vs. Holder* case. Immediately, southern states, led by Texas and Georgia, started closing polling places in predominantly Black and Latino districts and purging voter rolls.

- According to the Brennan Center for Justice, as of July, 2021 18 states have already passed 30 laws that will negatively impact voters in Black and Latino districts. Legislation is pending in other states. Voting rights advocates are pushing back against such measures. The legislators promoting them are saying, with straight faces, that these measures are designed to limit voting fraud, although there is no discernible fraud. Perhaps they are so intent on not being “replaced” by minorities that they feel justified in ignoring the fact they may be disenfranchising people; perhaps they feel Black and Brown people aren’t worthy of an equal share in the American promise.

The murder of George Floyd, coming as it did on the heels of so many other murders, has cast a glaring light on police treatment of Black people and caused a new awakening among some segments of the public. Other segments seem to think the status quo is worth upholding and defending — Blacks are inherently criminal, and the police are just doing what they should. If this country is ever to come into the Promised Land, it seems more people are going to have to join the march.





## **ENDNOTES/SOURCES:**

- 1) <http://drmartinlutherking.net/martin-luther-king-education>
- 2) Reconstruction Period: 1865 to 1877; a period that saw Black men voting and serving in Congress with rights granted by the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment <https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/reconstruction>  
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Reconstruction-United-States-history>
- 3) Amendment XIII, Section 1. *Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.* (1865) (emphasis added — Loophole)  
Amendment XIV, Section 1. *All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.* (1868)  
Amendment XV, Section 1. *The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.*  
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- 4) <https://www.history.com/topics/Black-history/Black-codes>  
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## INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT

Although half the people shot and killed by police are white, Black people are killed by police at more than twice the rate of white Americans. According to a report compiled by the FBI in 2012, Blacks made up less than 13% of the U.S. population, but they accounted for 31% of police killings.<sup>1</sup> According to the same report, Hispanics made up 17% of the population and 12% of those killed by police.

The FBI and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention log fatal shootings by police, but their data is incomplete since it's based on voluntary reports from police. But available data does highlight disparities in how police use force. The database considered the most complete is maintained by *The Washington Post*. In 2015 the newspaper began collecting information on fatal shootings from local news reports, public records and social media. Since 2015 *The Washington Post* has documented more than twice as many fatal shootings by police as recorded on average annually.<sup>2</sup>

Black teens were 21 times as likely as white teens to be shot and killed by police between 2010 and 2012, according to a *Pro Publica* analysis of the FBI data.

The disparities appear to be even starker for unarmed suspects, according to an analysis of 2015 police killings by *The Guardian*. Racial minorities made up about 37.4% of the general population and 46.6% of armed and unarmed victims, but they made up 62.7% of unarmed people killed by police. (*emphasis added*)<sup>3</sup>

Sam Sinyangwe, a researcher and activist, started the *Mapping Police Violence Project* in an attempt to provide answers in the wake of the shooting of Michael Brown. Finding little data on civilians killed by police, he looked at two crowd-sourcing databases and media reports. He counted 1,149 people of all ethnic groups killed by police in 2014. The youngest recorded was 12, the oldest 65. More than 100 were unarmed. He found that Black people were three times more likely than white people to be killed in the United States, taking into account that Black people constitute 14% of the population here. More unarmed Black people were killed by police than unarmed white people. Sinyangwe says, "It goes back to the question of how do they perceive young Black men?" (*emphasis added*)<sup>4</sup>

Subconscious biases play into perception. Studies show that officers are quicker to shoot Black suspects in video game simulations. Josh Correll, a University of Colorado Boulder psychology professor who conducted the research, said it's possible the bias could lead to even more skewed outcomes in the field.<sup>5</sup>

A Department of Justice study released in March of 2015 supports the idea that police are susceptible to implicit bias. One of the things considered was threat perception failure, i.e., officers believing a person was armed when he was not. These failures were more likely to occur when the subject was Black even if the officers were themselves Black or Latino.

Lori Fridell, Associate Professor of Criminology at the University of South Florida states, "Officers, like the rest of us, have an implicit bias linking Blacks to crime. So the Black crime implicit bias might be implicated in some of the use of deadly force against African-Americans in our community."<sup>6</sup>



An element factoring into implicit bias is misperception of size, strength and age across races. A study presented in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* indicates that people consistently perceive Black men to be bigger and more muscular than they actually are — and as more of a threat — than they do white men of the same size. Such misperceptions might play a role in police shootings of unarmed Black men. In a subsequent experiment, participants judged the use of force as more appropriate against a Black man than against a white one.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, Black boys are viewed as older and less innocent than Whites. In a study conducted among undergraduate students, children up to nine years of age were regarded as equally innocent, but Black children were considered significantly less innocent than other children in every age group beginning at age 10. Students also overestimated the age of Blacks by an average of 4.5 years and found them more culpable than Whites.

In general, U.S. police kill far more people than other similarly wealthy countries; on average, about three people per day, or close to the yearly totals for other wealthy nations. The *Prison Policy Initiative Report* for 2020 lists the following figures for number of civilians killed by police per 10 million people: U.S., 33.5. This is almost three times the number killed by the country with the next largest number, or Canada, with nine. Numbers for other countries are as follows: Australia, 5; Netherlands, 2.3; New Zealand, two; Germany 1.3; England and Wales 0.5; Japan, 0.2; Norway, 0; Iceland, 0. Country data is for most recent year available.<sup>9</sup>

Explanations for these disparities may be seen in part by how American police are trained and how policies and procedures are drawn up. According to a 2013 report (the most recent available in 2020) from the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, police academies on average spend the most time — 71 hours — on firearm skills, compared with 21 hours on de-escalation training and crisis intervention. Subjects covered in basic US police training, by average number of hours: firearm skills, 71; defensive tactics, 60; criminal/constitutional law, 53; patrol procedures, 52; health and fitness, 49; investigations, 42; emergency vehicle operation, 38; report writing, 25; basic first aid/CPR, 24; traffic law, 23; traffic accident investigations, 23; use of force, 21; non-lethal weapons, 16; communications, 15; professionalism, 11; juvenile justice law/procedures, 10; computers/information systems, 9; ethics and integrity, 8; stress prevention/management, 6.

Some police experts are emphasizing an approach they say could reduce police killings: training officers better, longer, and on different subjects. “We have one of the worst police-training academies in comparison to other democratic countries,” said Maria Haberfeld, a police-science professor at John Jay College. On average, police in the United States receive about five months training in a classroom and another three or so in the field. Many European countries, in contrast, have programs which can take three or four years to complete. European countries also have national standards for various elements of a police officer’s job, such as how to search a car and when to use a baton. The U.S. does not. The 18,000 police departments in the U.S. each have their own rules and requirements.<sup>11</sup> “There is relative consensus among police officers, police chiefs and other experts that we do not get enough training in a myriad of fields,” said Dennis Slocumb, the Legislative Director of the International Union of Police Associations.<sup>12</sup>

New officers are often paired with field training officers, many of whom learned the wrong techniques themselves. A survey of 10 big-city police departments found that most allow officers who have faced allegations of aggressive behavior to become trainers. Another study found that officers whose trainers had a history of citizen complaints were more likely to draw complaints themselves in their first two years on the job.<sup>13</sup>

Seth Stoughton, former policeman and now Law Professor at the University of South Carolina, has an additional perspective on how police officers’ training mitigates against civilian safety. He states, “*The first rule of law enforcement is to go home at the end of your shift. The key principle is officer survival. That is what all training is designed to promote. (emphasis added)*” The warrior culture — the belief that police officers are soldiers engaged in battle with the criminal element — that has contributed to some shootings that were most likely avoidable.



"It starts in police recruitment videos that show officers shooting rifles, strapping on hard body armor, using force. That attracts a particular type of candidate, and the Police Academy further entrenches this. It teaches officers to be afraid by telling them that policing is an incredibly dangerous profession. *Officers are trained to view every encounter as a potential deadly force incident.*" (emphasis added) <sup>14</sup>

The following pages chronicle many encounters between law enforcement officers and people suffering from mental health issues. According to Kirk Burkhalter, New York Law School professor and 20-year veteran of the NYPD, to respond to someone in mental distress "requires extensive medical training" not typically covered by most police departments.<sup>15</sup> Hence the rationale for one idea behind the catch-all "defund the police" slogan. Advocates advise diverting some of the funds customarily spent on police budgets and using them to hire more community health and social workers who could then be deployed instead of or in conjunction with police to deal with people in crisis.

When police officers kill civilians, they are very seldom charged. If charged, they are usually not convicted.<sup>16</sup> Use of force is usually found to be justified according to department policy, precisely because the judgment of when deadly force is justified is inherently subjective. Two Supreme Court decisions reached in the 1980s — *Tennessee v. Garner* and *Graham v. Connor* established a framework for determining when deadly force by officers is reasonable. Constitutionally, police officers are allowed to shoot under two circumstances: 1) to protect their life or the life of another innocent party (the "defense of life" standard); 2) to prevent a suspect from escaping, but only if the officer has probable cause to think the suspect poses a dangerous threat to others. <sup>17</sup>

The logic behind the second circumstance comes from the *Tennessee vs. Garner* decision, which basically said, "If you've got a violent person who's fleeing, you can shoot them to stop their flight." *The key to both of the legal standards is that it doesn't matter whether there is an actual threat when force is used. What matters is the officer's "objectively reasonable belief that there is a threat."* (emphasis added) <sup>18</sup>

Statistics demonstrate that, for whatever reason, police in the United States kill more people of color than Whites. Having examined subconscious biases and tendencies in training that predispose American officers to kill more people in general than police in other wealthy countries, the question remains, does overt racism, White supremacy in the ranks of law enforcement contribute to the disproportionate number of Black and Brown persons slain by law enforcement officials?

According to four blue-ribbon commission reports generated since 1922, the answer is "Yes." In 1919 a Black teenager was stoned to death by white people for swimming in the wrong part of Lake Michigan. Outraged, Black people want justice. White people take offense and begin to attack Black people in their communities. Out of this incident comes the first blue-ribbon commission to study the causes of riots.

The Chicago commission concludes that there was systemic participation in mob violence by the police, and that when police officers had the choice to protect Black people from White mob violence, they chose to either aid and abet White mobs or to disarm Black people or to arrest them. And a number of white criminal justice officials testify that the police are systematically engaging in racial bias when they're targeting Black suspects, and more likely to arrest them and book them on charges that they wouldn't do for a white man.<sup>19</sup>

In 1935 the Harlem riot report comes to the same conclusion and notes there needs to be accountability for police officers that need to be charged and booked as criminals when they engage in criminal activity. The report calls for citizen review boards and an end to stop and frisk. New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia shelves the report, takes no action on it and doesn't share it with the public. Similar reports are produced in 1943 and 1968, essentially repeating the same problem.



We've seen similar scenarios played out in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, notably in the police violence against protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, in the wake of Michael Brown's 2014 killing, as well as police restraint in protecting counter-protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017.

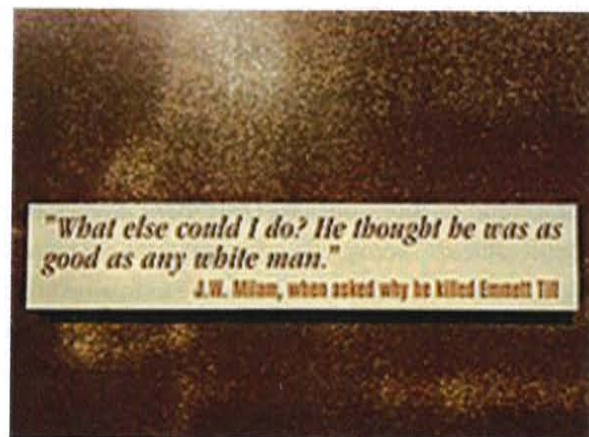
The pattern of ignoring the obvious continues. In 2006 the FBI produced a report concluding that racially motivated violent extremism is a national threat priority. In subsequent testimony, FBI director Wray specified that racially motivated violent extremism is the largest component of domestic terrorism. He stated further, "A large chunk of those domestic terrorism investigations involve racially motivated, violent extremist-motivated terrorist attacks . . . and the majority of those . . . are fueled by some kind of White supremacy."<sup>20</sup>

In September 2020 Rep. Jamie Raskin, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, released an unredacted version of a 2006 Intelligence Assessment by the FBI entitled, *White Supremacist Infiltration of Law Enforcement*. The report detailed the threat of white nationalists and skinheads infiltrating local law enforcement agencies with supremacist ideas, agendas and personnel in order to disrupt investigations against fellow members and recruit other supremacists.<sup>21</sup>

Neither the FBI nor state and local law enforcement agencies have established systems for vetting personnel for potential supremacist links. The First Amendment right of free association makes it legal for law enforcement agents to belong to white supremacist groups, provided such membership doesn't cause them to commit illegal acts.

Samuel Jones, Professor of Law at the John Marshall School of Law in Chicago, remarks on this complacency: "I cannot imagine that the FBI today could issue a report concerning any kind of threat without people being alarmed and wanting immediate action. But in this case there seems to be almost an acceptance of it. The thought is, 'it's just ideology and they have a right to believe this.'"<sup>22</sup>

According to the Mapping Police Violence database, officers across the country have killed at least 229 Black people since George Floyd's death in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020. The vast majority are male and range in age from three months to 88 years.<sup>23</sup> It appears the sentencing of Derek Chauvin has done nothing to alter a prevailing pattern of police conduct.



While it may be business as usual in the United States, America's pattern and history of police conduct toward people of color has attracted international attention. As part of the aftermath of the George Floyd murder, a commission of human rights experts from 11 countries has produced a 188 page report accusing the US of "police murders" and torture that amount to "systematic attacks on the Black community that meet the definition of *crimes against humanity*." (emphasis added) The commission has called on the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in the Hague to open an immediate investigation.<sup>24</sup>

The report investigated 43 cases of police murders and identified 11 themes common among many of these cases that signified a systemic pattern of racism, such as the use of pretextual stops that lead to excessive force, excessive use of lethal restraints, targeting of Black immigrants and complicity of legal actors in racist police killings through qualified immunity.<sup>25</sup> The ICC has no enforcement power over the US. But the commission hopes President Biden will give consideration to the suggestions it presents.

Historian Khalil Muhammad concludes, "What this moment leads us to is a crossroads ... to define justice beyond an individual case or even cases, but to define justice as a form of limiting what police officers have been able to do, which is to protect White privileges in America. Some people call that defunding the police. Some people call it abolition. But what it all means is that there should be less policing of Black America and more investment in the (socioeconomic) infrastructure of Black communities. And police officers are not the people to do that work."<sup>26</sup>

*This is the continued marginalization of Black people by white police officers. We have to confront this issue. We have to just say it.*

*Are you telling me that a white man on a bicycle would have been hunted and chased down and forced down and handcuffed and subdued because his light wasn't on? Uh, uh. It would not have happened. It would not have happened.*

*And we've seen this over and over again. You look at the events of just the past 12 months. This is not a coincidence anymore. This is actual institutional racism. And the only way there's going to be meaningful change overall, not only on a case by case basis, is that people are going to be required to VOTE if they want real change.*

Attorney Antonio Romanucci, referring to the death of Byron Williams



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**REMEMBER THEM**  
**ONE HUNDRED STORIES**







## CARLOS ALCIS

(1970 to August 15, 2013)

### *Procedure?*

Carlos Alcis was a father of eight who emigrated from Haiti to the United States in 2000 in search of a better life for his family. He worked as a stockman at Bobby's Department Store in Brooklyn and was known as a hard worker.

At approximately 5:30 a.m. on August 15, 2013 police broke into the Alcis home shining flashlights. They didn't answer Alcis when he repeatedly asked, "What happened? Why are you here?" They said they knocked. None of the neighbors heard them, nor did the family members who later showed the pry marks on the door.

Police were looking for a teenager in red pants who had grabbed a woman's iPhone. When they arrived at Alcis's home, everyone was in bed asleep. They immediately began questioning Alcis's 15-year-old son Emmanuel. They led him outside and the theft victim confirmed, even without benefit of a lineup, that he was not the suspect.

Carlos Alcis had dropped to the ground and begun shaking. All that notwithstanding, police continued to search the home, without a warrant, even as blood began coming out of Alcis's mouth. Emmanuel said an officer eventually checked Carlos for a pulse and asked him to blow air into his father's mouth as they started chest compressions. An ambulance was dispatched from a nearby hospital at 6:06 a.m. But it was accidentally sent to the wrong address and didn't arrive until 6:29 a.m. By the time it arrived, Alcis had died. He apparently suffered a heart attack, brought on, as his family claimed, by fright.



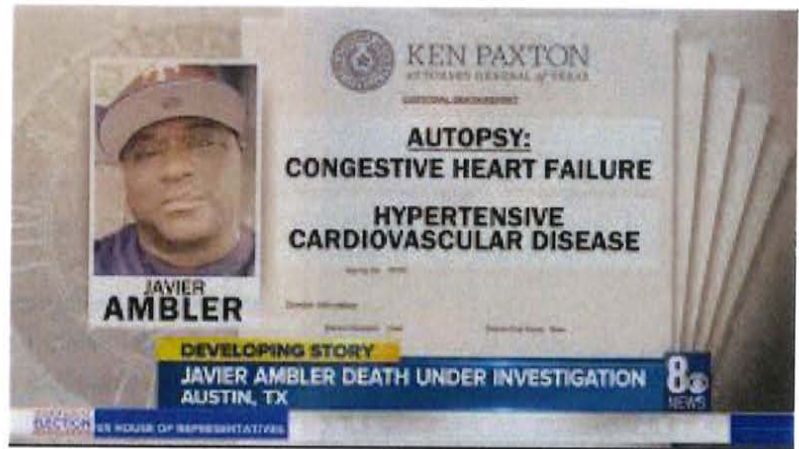
*Family of Carlos Alcis*



## JAVIER AMBLER

(October 7, 1978 to March 28, 2019)

*Fatal Failure to Dim Headlights*



Travis County, Texas, sheriff's deputies attempted to stop Ambler after they said he did not dim his SUV headlights to oncoming traffic. There was a 22-minute pursuit, ending when Ambler crashed into a tree on a north Austin street. According to CBS Austin reporting, Ambler may have been en route to hospital during the chase, quoting Ambler's former partner that "per police, it was never a high speed chase. It was just, he couldn't stop in distress."

He was unarmed and exited the car with his hands up. Deputy Jason James ordered him to "get down" five or six times and then tased him. Johnson had had accusations of excessive use of force before that incident.

Ambler got down partially, tried to rise and was tased in the upper back by Deputy Zach Camden. According to news organizations, deputies pinned Ambler down and tased him three to four times. Video evidence released in 2020 shows that Ambler pleaded with officers that he could not breathe and suffered from congestive heart failure. During the arrest Ambler said, "I am not resisting," and, "I have congestive heart failure." He called out "please save me" before deputies tased him a final time. Ambler's death was ruled a homicide, caused by congestive heart failure and hypertensive cardiovascular disease "in combination with excessive forcible restraint."

An internal affairs investigation found that Williamson County stated that its deputies "did nothing wrong in Ambler's death."

On March 30, 2021, a grand jury in Travis County, Texas indicted both James Johnson and Zachary Camden on manslaughter charges.

Javier Ambler II was a postal worker and the father of two sons. His mother described him as a "gentle giant and a great father." Ambler had attended Prairie View A & M University and had played football in high school and college.

