

Brutality and inequality in united states



In the United States, 72.4% percent of the population is Caucasian and 12.6% are African American, as found on worldpopulationreview.com. The difference between the two percentages is 59.8%. But why is this information useful, you may ask? Well, because African Americans are often oppressed by their white counterparts. We see news about African Americans being shot by police officers or White citizens in self defense. African Americans are being racially profiled in their daily lives, resulting in the Black Lives Matter movement. The Black Lives Matter is a necessary movement because of the brutality and inequality African Americans endure. The Black Lives Matter, also known as BLM, is an organization that is chapter-based, member-led organization whose mission is to build local power and to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes (blacklivesmatter.com). This movement was formed after the death of Trayvon Martin, a 17-year old African American.

Since the Black Lives Movement, there has been an increase in awareness of racial profiling, resulting in prison and worse, death. According to Google, racial profiling is defined as the use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspecting someone of having committed an offense. Black Lives Matter: A Call to Action for Counseling Psychology Leaders, written by Candice Hargons, talks about the Black Lives Matter movement and racial injustice. She writes in the article that ...in 2015 Black people were killed at more than twice the rate of non-Latino white people, and Black men were nine times more likely to die at the hands of police officers(Hargons 875).

In the same year, statistics also showed that police shot and killed 36 unarmed black males, as in Nationwide, police shot and killed nearly 1, 000 people in 2017 by John Sullivan. In Nikole Hannah-Jones article called, Taking Freedom: Yes, Black American fears the Police. Here's Why, she talks about an incident in her local town involving a mentally ill man and two officers. At the height of the BLM, tensions were high and many African Americans were upset and hurt with all of the killings. The mentally ill man shot two police officers, making matters worse. As Nikole and her husband, both African American, went to the precinct where the two officers worked, and was not greeted by the officers at the front desk, They were only acknowledged after her husband broke the silence. The very next day, she drove by the precinct again and saw metal barricades as well as two helmeted officers [that] stood sentry out front, gripping big black assault rifles, and watching. The officers weren't there to protect the city or the people, they were standing outside to protect themselves (Hannah-Jones). This action goes to show that they believe that African Americans were going to cause another crime. Philip Smith, the president of the National African-American Gun Association, feels the stereotype that African Americans receive. Smith said, When you walk up to a situation as an officer, I think a lot of times there's an assumption that the black guy is the issue or the problem, Smith said. When you have those stereotypes that are ingrained in your mind, it can be a death warrant for a lot of our black men, unfortunately' (Eligon)

BLM was first organized after an African American 17-year old named Trayvon Martin was fatally shot while on the way to the local convenience store to buy a drink and sweets in Sanford, Florida. What happened the night

Trayvon Martin died written by Greg Botelho, goes into further detail about the night of the incident. His shooter, George Zimmerman was assigned to be the head volunteer neighborhood watch after there was an increase in crime in the neighborhood. According to Trayvon Martin Biography, the teenager was staying with his father and his girlfriend after he was given a school suspension for the third time. The night that Martin was shot, he was wearing a black hoodie, with the hoodie over his head. Reports show that Zimmerman called the local police to report about a guy that looks like he's up to no good, or he's on drugs or something. It's raining, and he's just walking around, and was told to stay in the vehicle he was in (Botelho). Instead of staying in the vehicle, Zimmerman decided to take matters into his own hands and confront the young teen. No one truly knows what happened during the confrontation, however, as we know, it lead to the death of Trayvon Martin. Once the public heard about this shooting, tables turned and they weren't happy. Zimmerman was initially not charged with murder as he said it was self-defense, but it wasn't until a public outcry that Zimmerman was charged with second-degree murder and manslaughter (Botelho).

An incident similar to the killing of Trayvon Martin is the shooting of Jordan Davis, also a 17-year old African American boy. According to an article written by Kristal Brent Kook called, The Lessons of Jordan Davis's Murder, Revisited Jordan Davis and 3 of his friends stopped at a gas station to purchase gum and cigarettes before heading to the local mall on November 23, 2012. Davis and his friends were approached by 45-year old Michael Dunn, who was in a vehicle with his fiance. Dunn and his fiance were in the

Jacksonville area to attend his son's wedding. The 45-year old has asked the teenagers to turn down the music in their car as it was loud. Initially, they did turn down the music. However, Davis was ...tired of people telling me what to do,' and turned the music back up. Davis and Dunn exchanged words, cursing and yelling at each other. According to the testimony of Davis' friends Dunn asked, Are you talking to me? again putting his car window down. You're not going to talk to me that way.' Dunn then took matters into his own hands by reaching into his glove compartment for a pistol then fired ten shots into the boys' car. As much as Dunn had been upset about the situation, there was no need to fire 10 shots at a vehicle with 4 young teens. While in court, Dunn's fiance Rouer recalls him telling her that he .. hate[d] that thug music. Dunn then goes on to say that he would've never said thug music, instead, he would've said rap crap. Dunn was later found guilty and sentenced 75 years in prison without parole (Kook).

A recent incident that has caught attention of the public happened on Thanksgiving in a Birmingham, Alabama mall. According to Black Man Killed by Officer in Alabama Mall Shooting Was Not the Gunman, Police Now Say by Mihir Zaveri, shoppers were making their way around the store, enjoying the extended hours and Black Friday deals stores had to offer. It was then around 9: 52 p. m. when there were reports of gunshots. By the time the altercation was done, 21-year old Emantic Fitzgerald Bradford Jr. was fatally shot by the police who responded to the scene. It was first reported by the Hoover Police Department on Twitter that Bradford may have been involved [with the shooting] in some aspect' (Zaveri) However, it was later then found that Bradford was not involved with the shooting. As the incident happened

just recently, not much information has been released about. however, according to an article written by Daniel Victor called Black Man Killed by Police in Alabama Was Shot From Behind, Autopsy Shows his family said, Emantic Fitzgerald Bradford Jr. pulled out a gun and rushed to protect shoppers. Witnesses of the incident later confirmed this and commented that Bradford, ...was directing shoppers to safety (Victor). When autopsy reports came out, it showed that he was running away [from the scene] and posed no threat to the officer who shot him (Victor). This shows the stereotype that police officers have on African Americans. The officers should have questioned Bradford first before firing shots that would ultimately end his life.

Living in the United States, African Americans fear for their lives. The reason why African Americans are fearing for their lives is because young black men are 21 times more likely to be shot and killed by police than young white men as well as face ongoing everyday slights and indignities at the hands of police (Hannah-Jones). The likelihood of a black man being shot is just way too high, higher than it should be. Compared to an African American, the chances of a White person to be shot is 2.9 out of a million, less than 1%. A majority of the White people do not know how privileged they are, something called white privilege. According to Urban Dictionary, white privilege is the perceived societal privilege that benefits people whom society identifies as white. As they unconsciously have this privilege, they do not have to worry about being stopped at a traffic stop or be scared for their lives on the streets of their town. White people, by and large, do not know what it is like

to be occupied by a police force. They don't understand it because it is not the type of policing they experience (Hannah-Jones).

Black Lives Matter started out as a hashtag that was initially used after the death of Trayvon Martin to show anger and injustice. The hashtag was used on many social media sites, but was predominately used on Twitter.

Rashawn Ray wrote an article called, Ferguson and the death of Michael Brown on Twitter: #BlackLivesMatter, #TCOT, and the evolution of Collective identities to talk about the correlation social media has to the BLM. In the article, it states Twitter was an echo chamber to the movement. Echo chambers lead to territorial desegregation, polarization, and isolation and highlight how people obtain and use information to build communities where their majority position is represented (Ray 1799). The movement also refers to an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally target for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' contributions to this society, our humanity, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression'(quoted by Garza, 877). As much as BLM protests and promotes equality, and injustice, they also strive to ...reduce internalized racism and its consequences. They promote self-love, collective efficacy, increased joy, as well as resilience (Hargons).

With all of this information, we can not say that there is no brutality and inequality that African Americans are faced with on a daily basis. As all of these incidents are happening to African Americans, it makes one wonder what would happen if roles were reversed. What would've happened if Trayvon Martin was a white teenager? What if Emantic Fitzgerald Bradford Jr. was a white male carrying a gun, trying to help innocent people escape? If

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Michael Dunn was 45-year old African American man shooting at 4 teenage Caucasian boys listening to pop music (Zook)? Would the events be handled in a different way?