

To Be a Black Man in Trump's America



For Antonio Woods, a 30-year old black father of two from Tennessee, this year's election heightened America's issues with race, police, and security.

"They (the government) put in office who they wanted to. His business skills got him elected, and they will determine how he runs this country," he said. "He's only been in office a month, and we haven't seen much change in the Black community, at least not enough to judge good or bad. Racism ran at the forefront of this election. There's no real way to prepare for what's to come; we just have to address it."

The election of the 45th President, who shall remain nameless until 2020, left the black community having more conversations about racism, politics and next steps – leaving many like Woods not so optimistic about their future.

Since the inauguration, thousands have taken to the streets to protest the president's win and the numerous executive orders he has signed—the Women's March, #NoMuslimBan, the recent #NotMyPresident Protest, the

up-coming resistance day, and several other on-going protests.

Black men, in particular, are feeling nervous of what is to come. A heightened sense of vigilance is placed upon every interaction with the police considering our president praises their efforts despite the apparent murders that have not been addressed fairly in our justice system.

Division

America is fearful of what this administration will do next considering these last few weeks have been anything but "great" and his plans for the next four years mainly affect minorities.

Haltson Canty, a Family Case Studies Manager in New York, grew up in the 80's during the end of the Ronald Regan era. The 34-year-old wondered how could he trust a man who, according to him, has done nothing but show America his true evil, narcissistic ways.

"Everything he says is meant to cause some type of division among African-Americans, among anybody of an ethnocentric background," Canty said.

Some believe Trump's sole intent is to create a separation in this country to the Willie Lynch ideology, keep the body, take the mind. Canty believes this type of separation is what our forefathers wanted to happen all along.

Allegedly in 1712, black slave owner Willie Lynch delivered a speech turned into a letter instructing whites on how to deliberately destroy the identity and character of African slaves by creating a division based on skin color, age, and sex. Many have called it the blueprint for self-hate within the Black community.

"This is exactly what slave masters wanted to happen, and it's up to us gain some ground, move forward, come together and realize this is some bullshit," he explained.

Hundreds of years later, that same separation was recreated, however, now the Mexicans are the Africans.

Listen as Melvin Tolson played by Denzel Washington in "The Great Debaters" (2007) explains the purpose of the letter.

Race

For Canty and many others, the mere existence of a businessman with no political experience as president was a shock itself. He tapped into a generation of people who were once quiet and felt marginalized but silently shared his same views on immigration and more importantly, race.

Canadian born Julian McKenzie received the culture shock of his life after moving to America last summer to work as an aspiring sportscaster. He feels less safe here as a black man than in Montreal. He's watched television screens, read social media hashtags, and heard encounters of friends about their interaction with the police.

Knowing such, he wasn't surprised to learn that black men are almost three times as likely to be killed by police use of force than white men, according to a new study published in the American Journal of Public Health. The study showed that Black men are racially profiled and treated more harshly and more aggressively than any other race. The study also confirms the need for police reform and to end discriminatory policing.

"When we come across law enforcement no matter how you are dressed, how eloquent your speech is or how well you comply, you're still going to feel nervous in the back of your mind," McKenzie said.

One night McKenzie was walking home in Montreal when he noticed a cop car coming towards him. He saw the car stop in front of a house he passed by, and nervously stopped. The cop got out, looked at him and smiled saying, "Dude, it's not you, it's not you."

They both laughed it off until McKenzie heard him say, "It's always a black guy right?" McKenzie could not believe the discrimination he was experiencing for the color of his skin.

"The police need to stop painting people with this broad stroke of saying, 'This person looks like trouble, so we need to keep an eye on him because of his race.' Just like, all cops are not bad people, all black people are not criminals," he said.

Heavily scrutinized over the last few years, police have now entered a world where they are less respected and feel at war with everyone in their communities. Still, there is no commitment by our elected officials to change this storyline, instead, police officers can hide behind this new administration.

Society is concerned about their safety and the overall role the police play in the community. The 45th president continuously dismisses the heinous acts of police brutality, commending officers for their service through his election.

Many activists and community members believe he will reinforce the idea that the justice system does not need to be altered. A well-known member of the Black Lives Matter (BLM), DeRay McKesson told NPR, "I think people are trying to figure out what to do next, what it means to organize—in a Trump era, and in a post-truth era." He also said that Trump continues to act as if racism does not exist.

Next Steps

It very much so feels like a mean, scary world out there. One where those with cultural last names can be stopped and asked for proof of their citizenship. One where black men fall at the hands of their justice system for walking home with their hood up. One where our president tweets malicious things to the masses without proofreading his statement.

If this election had any positive it would be that now, more than ever, the call to rally and organize is being fervently met with a sense of urgency.

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