

YOUTHING IN PANDEMIC WHILE BLACK

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My experience of being a Black male high school student during a pandemic and quarantine during times of civil unrest makes me feel uncomfortable in my own skin. And as a result this feeling I can't shake has made me think harder about what the future holds for America as well as for African Americans. This feeling stems from being a young Black male approaching a time in my life where I will also be a grown Black man and I, subconsciously, can't help but think I could be next, or someone I love could be next, easily. Imagine what this feels like for me, can you? It sits in my body like a threat, because it is a threat--a threat to me, everyone I love, my future, their futures, all of it is a lot to take in while I try to build a future for myself that keeps me safe.

I realized during quarantine that people of color are almost numb because we are even used to the fact that Black people die everyday due to civil unrest and police brutality. The relationship between the Criminal Justice Force and African Americans is a relationship that not only needs to be strengthened, but tended to immediately by whomever can help mend the two parties together. We need people who can help stop this terrorism of Black people, to stop police from treating us like animals, killing us in the streets, stopping and frisking us for no reason. It is all too much and Black young men like me already see we have to be careful in so many extra ways and even then that we are still not guaranteed safety, not even compassion.

Growing up watching police brutality events on the news more times than I can count, I started feeling an uneasy sense of insecurity, with myself, and with the world around me. The current events surrounding civil unrest caught my attention and often distracted me from any online classes that I had throughout the day. It seems like the world has become way more intertwined with the media and with social media since this is the best way to communicate and share information because everyone is stuck in their houses attached to their devices, so we saw it all, all the murders, one after another after another, and we were still home without distractions to take our mind off of the racism society we live in and how it kills Black people. Seeing people, fellow Black students and Black adults too, post on social media to voice their true opinions and stances on race and politics so boldly and relentlessly, I started to wonder, if there is still hope for an America with people of all races and cultures able to live together peacefully, and without hate, and with justice for everyone, including me.

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