

## A PHILADELPHIA WAR-ZONE

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In only a matter of months, three words have changed America forever. One is a disease, the coronavirus and the other a name, George Floyd. Two words that have changed the course of American history. A war-zone, a disaster, a battle of life and death. All these words were used to describe the Coronavirus. Yet in my life, it never felt real. I watched the news, looked at papers, saw the daily numbers rise, but it still felt like it was somewhere else and not in my world. I was lucky I never had any immediate family who contracted the virus. I lived in a little bubble; I would spend my days doing relatively the same thing, talking to friends, baking, playing ping pong, going on walks. To me it just felt like a break from a normal school year. This all changed June 1st.

Living in Northern Liberties, a neighborhood that is just north of Center City, is a relatively chill place full of small boutiques and cafes. Everybody knows each other, it's a nice escape from the loud city of Philadelphia. The national guard was deployed.

On the first Monday in June, I was on an afternoon walk with my mom when we stopped at 2nd and Spring Garden in amazement. We saw tanks, army hummers, and hundreds of men in camo with huge guns. We didn't recognize this block that we had walked down a hundred times. I stopped walking and just stared. This place, my neighborhood, that I have always known and has always been my home, seemed unfamiliar. Never once would I believe that a block from my house would stand armed American soldiers not protecting us from a foreign adversary or enemy but from the very people they are sworn to protect. The national guard's motto is "Always ready, always there" but I didn't want them there. They didn't make me feel more safe, they made me feel more scared. My neighborhood, my city, my home felt like a war zone.

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