

**Discrimination Against Women of Color in the United States
of America**

by

Vasilios Xenikakis

Submitted to the Department of Political Science
School of SUNY Purchase
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Purchase College
State University of New York

May 2022

Sponsor: Shemeem Burney Abbas

Second Reader: Elise Lemire

Table Of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction: Research Question: Page 3-4

Review Of the Literature: Page 4-5

Significance of the Study: Page 5-6

Methodology: Page 6

Chapter 2: Challenges to Being a Woman of Color: Page 6-10

Chapter 3: Disadvantage in the Work Force: Page 10-17

Chapter 4: #BLM and Police Officers: Page 17-24

Chapter 5: Change for the Future: Page 24-28

Chapter 6: Conclusion: 28-29

Annotated Bibliography: Page 31-34

Citations: Page 35-37

Appendix: Page 38-49

Chapter 1

Introduction: Research Question

Why are women of color still discriminated against in the United States? Why are these women discriminated against, even in this day, and age? Women of color have been discriminated against since the 1800's to the current day in the United States. Although there has been some change in the system to make women of color equal, it is still not enough. With Kamala Harris as the Vice President things may start to look better for women of color. But not enough.

In 1919-1920 Black women threatened to tip the balance of political power. The “end” result of the fight for women's vote, especially for women of color, is real. One hundred years later, Kamala Harris is the Vice President. Black women are loyal to those democratic votes. There is a clear line that the Black women such as, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells, Mary McLeod Bethune, Shirley Chisholm, and Barbara Jordan back then were laying down the groundwork for the Black women in political history today. Hence, the ratification of the 19th amendment fought by thousands of women and some men.

The Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibits the entirety of the United States from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States based on sex, in effect recognizing the right of women to a vote.

But it is not the end of the story. Voting rights are still threatened, Black women's everyday lives are still threatened, and our democracy is threatened. Women of color are still mistreated compared to the white female or white male. Whether it be in the workplace or even something as simple as walking down the street, women of color are discriminated against. With

minor changes happening in the world with regards to being a woman of color, sadly, the system is still corrupted.

I have conducted two separate interviews to serve as research for this project. Both are women of color and have remained anonymous during the entire interview for the safety of the women. The interviews have served a purpose and will be broken down in documenting the project. The argument will be stated in various sections.

The first woman (who will be labeled “A”), *is a twenty-year-old Black female born in Georgia who moved to New York City at the age of two and has lived there since. She lives in a two-parent household with both parents being African American. She is a student studying at a SUNY college pursuing a degree in Political Science. This interview will be shared through google docs with responses coming directly from the woman.*

The second woman (who will be labeled “B”), *is a twenty-nine-old Black female born in Dominica who moved to the Bronx, New York at the age of seventeen and has lived there since. She lives with her father. She works at Microsoft as a non-profit specialist and an operations manager of a recovery program. She is also a head coach at a gym. This interview will be shared through google docs with responses coming directly from the woman.* Both interviews were completely different in their own sense coming directly from the women. Both the interviews in their consolidated form will be documented in the Appendix.

Review of The Literature

The literature that I have reviewed was only a couple of articles and interviews. They were all very crucial to my research and through this research itself that is why I decided to conduct interviews of my own. All the research that I had found during the preliminary stages of my writing sparked ideas into my mind. Most of the research was linked directly to women of color, specifically Black women. So, I thought to myself, “maybe I should conduct my own

research?” So, I researched a little bit more about discrimination against women of color. I had to witness this discrimination myself with my own two eyes. I received my IRB certification and conducted two interviews myself. The reason behind this was because the literature that I had reviewed, the books that I had read and even all the classes I attended, all gave examples of women of color being discriminated against. So, naturally I had to witness it firsthand. All the research that I had found was linked to one another in some sort of way. The revolving issue was that discrimination still exists in today’s world.

Kimberlee Crenshaw is an American civil rights advocate and a leading scholar of critical race theory. The discussion of intersectionality is spoken about in Crenshaws *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics*. Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine creating vast types of discrimination. Crenshaw discusses three cases: *DeGraffenreid v General Motors*, *Moore v Hughes Helicopters'* and *Payne v Travenol*. In these cases, the revolving issue of intersectionality is not looked upon. Discrimination against a white woman is the standard sex discrimination. Discrimination against Black women are sex AND race discrimination. “...Black females' claims are seen as hybrid; they sometimes cannot represent those who may have "pure" claims of sex discrimination. The effect of this approach is that even though a challenged policy or practice may clearly discriminate against all females, the fact that it has particularly harsh consequences for Black females places Black female plaintiffs at odds with white females.” (Crenshaw, Kimberle) Courts are not able to deal with intersectionality and it is proven. Neither can everyday individuals.

Significance of the Study

I have chosen to conduct a study on discrimination against women of color. The reason I have chosen this specific study is because women of color have been fighting since the beginning of the eighteenth century for freedom. People of color, in this case women of color, want freedom the same way a white individual has freedom in today's world. There should be no reason a white individual has a higher wage than a woman of color. There should be no reason when walking into a hospital to receive aid women of color get treated differently. This problem, this discrimination against women of color, has been going on for centuries. Way too long of a time. Imagine living your everyday life in fear? Imagine waking up and praying you live another day? In hope you will not be the next hashtag trending on social media to free you or to praise you. This is what women of color must deal with on a regular basis. As if they are not human. As if they are aliens and they must be treated differently. Upon researching, I decided to conduct my own research and interview two women of color, specifically Black women. They have added to my research significantly. It was alarming to hear from a real live Black woman that discrimination is in fact still real in 2022. That there are incidents where if it were a white individual they would have been treated differently. White supremacy is a real system and those who believe otherwise, are turning a blind eye. At the end of the day, White supremacy and discrimination go hand in hand.

Methodology

The type of methodology that I decided to pursue was qualitative data. Qualitative data answers questions. It tends to answer questions about how, what, and why. In this case of my research, this methodology fits perfectly. I studied two women of color, Black women specifically. I then asked them questions of scenarios they have been in, how they are treated in today's world, issues involving police officers, their role played in #BLM etc. I chose this route because when I first started my research as I was reading, I knew I wanted to conduct interviews.

With the time given to me I was only able to conduct two due to challenges I faced. If I could have it differently, I would have conducted plenty more interviews to hear about other women's issues. Along with my interviews came my research that backed up my argument even more. The articles I found, interviews I have seen and books I have read correlated directly to the interviews that I conducted. Both women that I interviewed were honorable in doing so, kudos to them for fighting for a change.

Chapter 2

Challenges to Being a Woman of Color

The challenges women of color face in the current day and age are as complex as wage disparities or as simple as being name called in the streets. It is not a coincidence that a woman of color is treated differently than a white woman or a white male. For a Black woman it is worse because of intersectionality. Black women are not protected against rape. Black women are presumed not to be chaste. Unchaste women were placed outside of the protection of the law. Racism restored a white woman who was raped by a Black man but there was no restoration for a Black woman. “When Black women were raped by white males, they were being raped not as women generally, but as Black women specifically: Their femaleness made them sexually vulnerable to racist domination, while their Blackness effectively denied them any protection.” (Crenshaw, Kimberle) In a specific case of *DeGraffenreid v General Motors*, General Motors did not hire Black women. The court noted “General Motors has hired ... female employees for a number of years prior to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964” (Crenshaw, Kimberle) So, because General Motors hired women, the court viewed there was no sex discrimination. But there was race discrimination. A hybrid case that the court could not see. “...Black women are theoretically erased...” (Crenshaw, Kimberle) There have been articles written of wage disparities, there have been articles written of women of color not receiving the same amount of care when entering a hospital and there have been articles of women of color sharing their story of past experiences that are a prime example of discrimination. In the two interviews that I have conducted I asked the two questions to both women, plain and simple. The first question is “What are some challenges for you being a woman of color in the current day and age?” Woman A responded

The easier question is what challenges I do not face being a woman of color because I feel like literally everything is an uphill battle. In school being a woman of color means proving that I am intelligent enough to be in intellectual conversations. Getting ready in the morning is making sure that the clothing I am wearing does not fit too tight or show too much because then I will get called out for trying to catch the attention of men. In my own community being a Black woman means fighting for the rights of Black men while they stay quiet in the fights for my rights.

Breaking down this answer from the first female is truly astonishing. She first answered my question with another question but in a simpler way because of the challenges she had been combated against. She had to prove herself in a school environment where everything is supposed to be a learning process amongst peers. She had to go the extra step to prove to everyone that she was intelligent. She also needed to make sure her clothes were appropriate enough for men. She deems that she must fight for the rights of Black men as well, so not only does she have to fight for herself she has to fight for other individuals of color as well. A lot to handle as a twenty-year old female who is just trying to get her education completed, just as much as the next gal or guy. She is focused on her career. And, then she must worry about getting a fair wage. This is her fight and her challenges to try to get out of this never-ending loop of discrimination against women of color.

Woman B responded

As of right now I have not gotten any challenges, growing up in Toronto, yes. I did experience someone saying something interesting to my mother as we were walking down the street, they said to "Go back to Africa." which we are not even from Africa, but we all know how that goes regarding the color of my skin. The way my mother raised me is to

respond with grace because when you respond with hostility you are automatically painted as the angry Black woman on the streets. So, she continued with her day and ignored the man who said this to her.

We must look a little deeper into this woman's conversation. Both women are their own persons. This specific woman did not have any challenges. The only thing she had experienced was someone saying something to her mother when she used to live in Toronto. But that is still a form of discrimination. To walk down the street to get to your destination and have someone say, "Go back to Africa." when you are not even from the continent but because the color of your skin is Black, is discrimination. Her mother responded in the calmest way possible and continued with her day without saying a word. What would have happened if her mother had responded with anger? The outcome would have ended in her fault and not the individual that had said something to her. The point of the matter is, she could not respond. She could not respond because the police officers might have been called out and the charges could have been flipped. Her mother raised this individual woman to always respond with grace because of the color of their skin. Her mother told her that when they respond with hostility they would have been, and they will be painted as the angry Black woman on the streets.

The next question I asked both women is, "Were there any instances where being a woman of color you felt disgraced? If so, would you mind sharing that experience?" Woman A responded

There was a point in my life when I cried at least once a week because I realized that no matter what accomplishments I achieved they would not truly be mine in the eyes of society. Instead, it would be "a Black girl won the award for, or a Black girl led this protest" It was never just me. I soon realized that is how it would be for the rest of my life

no matter what I did. Not only that but my accomplishments would not hold the same weight as any of my counterparts. They would often describe my accomplishments as “the minority win” as if I did not deserve it because of who I am.

The answer that I received, the first sentence that came out of this woman's mouth, was truly heartbreaking. To think that she had believed, and in a sense is true, that any accomplishments she had achieved would truly not be hers. She would have been labeled “...a Black girl...” in society because we, as Americans, tend to outcast people of color if they are not white. She then realized that this is how it would be for her for the rest of her life due to the color of her skin. The description of the accomplishment would be completely different and would get labeled “the minority win” because she is Black. If it were a white man who had accomplished something, the outcome would be different than hers.

Woman B responded

There was one time where I denied conversation with a guy at one point when he tried to speak to me. His immediate clap back to me saying I am not interested in taking the relationship any further was “Okay, do you want a banana?” The irony was he was also Dominican with a darker skin complexion. Other than that, not really.

The response from this woman absolutely disgusted me. With this woman responding I felt a little bit of resistance throughout the entire interview. Her answers were quite simple, yet not. As the reader, you will be able to tell the education levels between both answers. She denied conversation with an individual, then saying she does not want to take the relationship they had any further. His immediate response was “Okay, do you want a banana?” Which is completely unnecessary and out of context with the conversation. She then told me the irony behind this was

he was also Dominican and had a darker complexion than her. The conversation that had taken place was based on color and prejudices.

While I was researching, I found a woman on YouTube who was working in San Francisco, Silicon Valley. Kenya Hayes said she found it challenging being a woman of color in her everyday life. Kenya could not be herself in her career and found that stereotyping was present because of her skin color. There was a difference between Kenya and her white colleagues. They were both viewed differently because of their skin color. She had learned early in her life that she had to have grown a thicker skin because people around her were color prejudiced and treated her differently (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbGq593QbBs>). This made her life more difficult, and no one would be able to understand it, not even me authoring this paper. To understand these situations that all these women of color go through, you must experience it yourself. And I will never experience this. Nor will the average white American. Kenya hoped that she would start seeing other colors other than white on billboards, magazines, advertisements on TV etc.

Chapter 3

Disadvantages in The Work Force

During my research I observed that in present times women of color suffer from a wage disparity compared to women that are white and men that are white. While receiving less pay compared to the white woman and the white male, most women of color are talked about as if they are a completely different person. The women of color are disrespected in their jobs. The question that I have asked to both women that I have interviewed was, “Do you feel at a disadvantage in the workforce being a woman of color?” To “feel” something is defined as an experience (an emotion or sensation). But, when in the workforce and your boss demands you to do something, is that still a feeling? Is feeling uncomfortable as a woman of color not valid enough to say “okay, this is discrimination”? When asking both women, I received hugely different answers. Woman A responded:

Of course, being a woman of color puts me at a disadvantage in the workplace. The first job I had we were required to wear a uniform, which was no big deal at all. I ordered my uniform in the size that I am and began working. About halfway into my first shift my manager calls me into the office and tells me that I was getting written up because my clothes were too distracting. He said I needed to order a bigger size because my uniform was too fitting. Then there was another instance where we had a bad service day, and my manager called a meeting to find the underlying cause of what the problem was and the first thing my manager asked (directed to me) was” what the hell did you mess up today? Little did he know I was not even working in the department that had the issues that day. I was constantly being talked down to and just being bluntly disrespected.

The way this woman responded was shocking and true. She answered plain and simple that yes, there is a disadvantage in the workplace because of the color of her skin. This woman ran into two instances in the same exact workplace from the same manager. Yes, twice. The first instance where the color of her skin was causing her a disadvantage was the clothes on her body. The clothes on her body were too tight. So, the manager decided to write her up because she was too distracting. The manager then said she needed a bigger size because it was “too fitting.” Imagine that? The manager could have gone upon this in several ways rather than writing her up. The woman should not have been written up because of her size, her actual size that she ordered in those clothes, fit her too tight. Multiple questions arise when I was first told this. Why was the manager saying to his employee “Your clothes are too distracting, get bigger clothes.”? Why did the manager write her up because of this? Why did the manager tell her to order bigger clothes? The answer to me seems simple. It is because of her skin color Now; I understand what you are all thinking. This is not because of the color of her skin, it is just a coincidence, and the manager is trying to keep his workplace professional. Fair enough. Then, explain the second instance with the same manager, at the same workplace, calling a meeting and directly pointing fingers at this woman of color? One day during work this woman was in the middle of a bad service day. The manager called a meeting, like any manager would, to find the underlying cause of what the problem was. Everyone came in and sat down. Then, the manager asked, directing himself to the woman of color, “what the hell did you mess up today?” Now, I understand what you are all thinking, he is simply asking questions. The woman of color that I interviewed did not even work in this department that day. He pointed fingers at her because of her skin color. She was constantly disrespected and was constantly talked down. This woman needed to work. She had

bills to pay just like anyone else in this world. She could not just quit her job. And sadly, this world would listen to a white man over a Black woman.

The second interview went completely south from the first interview. This is where it gets interesting. Woman B responded differently to the very same question

No, I do not feel at a disadvantage in the workforce. Every place that I worked at I excelled amazingly fast. I worked for Nike, and I came in as a seasonal athlete then I became an ambassador, where I represented the training section as a woman's ambassador. So, I helped direct those workout classes that they have. I received promotion after promotion. I then went onto Apple; it was easier than Nike, but I just got bored, and I was never held back due to the color of skin. I even received a free Mac-book for Christmas. I made the choice to leave because I wanted something more challenging. So, I went to Microsoft as a part time associate, then got promoted to a visuals team. Which was different from being on a visual team in retail. Yet again, no disadvantage there either and yet again got promoted in Microsoft. Even with the pandemic I was still getting paid, and I was treated fairly and had opportunities to grow. Microsoft had to have been the most diverse company to work for, aside from Nike. Anything to do with my skin complexion has never suffered as a disadvantage to me personally in the workforce.

Now, I was in shock when I received this answer in comparison to how the first woman I interviewed responded. Everything that I listened to that day of the interview, everything that I had written down was just completely different from what the first woman answered. This woman, woman B, had received promotions after promotions in the multiple jobs that she held. I even tried to pry more out of her, I tried to dig deeper and asked, “what about your other jobs?” She just kept giving me the answers I was not looking for. But I thought to myself, this just might be good. This woman had worked in places where the average neighborhood was people

of color. I will not name these places because of the anonymity of this woman. She was not working in areas of white individuals. She was working in an area where the demographic was higher for people of color. Could this have influenced why she was not at a disadvantage in the workplace? Maybe. Or was it something different? It could also have been that she came into the work area and kept her head down. She did not converse with many and just did her job. But again, this is just an assumption that I made. I asked the questions, and the same answer kept being brought up. She excelled in her work area. She said that her work did not suffer because of the color of her skin. I do believe her but a part of me will be left unanswered. She may have been omitting facts, she could have been telling the truth. We do not know. The endgame is that we will never know. I made sure to keep this woman comfortable during the interview, both women of course. So, I did not overstep my boundaries.

Another question I asked of both women was, “Have you worked, or do you currently work, and did you feel a wage disadvantage due to being a woman of color?” Woman A responded

I have worked before, and many of the jobs have been minimum wage jobs so I did not notice any wage disparities then. However, my mother was number three in charge of a corporate business in Manhattan for many years and she made significantly less money than the white males that worked under her.

Which was a very valid response by this woman because she had received minimum wage from most of the jobs she had taken on. But what she said afterwards struck me. This was a turning point in my research because I found research that comptroller, Scott Stringer provided about New York City and the wage disparity on women of color in the city and statewide. This will be in a later section.

Woman B responded

Nope, not once due to the color of my skin. Not a woman of color but being a woman, yes. It never had to do with the employers who had given me the job but the industry itself. But when men see a woman coming to help them, they would feel weird about it. So there definitely was a disparity being a WOMAN not a woman of color so seeing a woman helping others was not what customers wanted to see, especially men.

This was an answer I was expecting to receive from this woman due to her previous answer about disadvantages in the workplace. But she said that it was never to do with the employer but the industry itself. And I do believe both play a role when handing you a check. If, as the employer, you are giving your employees less money, I do not believe it to be in the sense of the industry because you, as the employer, should take a stand amongst it all. Her second part of this answer is also what struck in the latter part of my research that Scott Stringer had found. The wage disparity that this woman had received was not because of the color of her skin but because of her gender. Because she was female, she was encountering a wage disparity. Scott Stringer claims that these two go hand in hand. She asserts that being a woman working is not what customers wanted to see, especially men. I am assuming this is because of the misogyny we have in today's world

By asking these questions I needed more data. I needed evidence that said OKAY women of color are at a disadvantage in the workplace and do indeed have a wage disparity compared to the white women and men. When researching on my own I found two scenarios where the color of skin played a role in the workplace. A comptroller, which is a management-level position responsible for supervising the quality of accounting and financial reporting of an organization, Scott Stringer studied to see if there was a wage difference in full time workers due to the color

of their skin. In 2016, Scott Stringer found that in New York City there was a wage difference due to the color of skin, specifically women of color. Not only was the wage disparity in New York City high but it is higher than anywhere else across the country. Black women are earning \$41,431 compared to a white man who is earning \$74,288. This is translated to a Black woman earning 57 cents to every dollar paid to men, to a white woman it is 82 cents per dollar paid to men. When Scott looked statewide, Black women earned about 66 cents for every dollar received by white men in 2016. (Pereira, Purchase College Library. 2022.) Black women are earning higher degrees than the white man and are getting paid less. There are many factors that contribute to the pay gap but, sexism and racism are a huge problem in the working force. Stringer suggested several ways to tackle this problem, the best way is to strengthen the states and cities discrimination laws.

Another example of discrimination is cited in Chandler, Kurt and Staff Writer. 1986. "Woman Says Struggles Remain for Area Blacks: [METRO Edition]. The authors speak about a woman named Caroline Naylor. Caroline Naylor was a 40-year-old Black woman who lived in Minneapolis. She raised a family of four children, divorced, making \$17,000 a year. Naylor says, "I hate to keep harping on racism, but...as a businesswoman I've got to be four times as good as a white 40-year-old woman." Is this not insane, that a woman who makes \$17,000 a year raised four children? And some people have the audacity to say discrimination is not real. Caroline works three, yes three, jobs. She worked as a dispatcher for a cable company, a secretary for the Minneapolis Urban League and as manager of a liquor store to get some food on the table. She was also passed over a promotion because she was a divorced working mother. A younger white woman got the position. Naylor quit. She said if you were to come back a year from now, the interview would be the same. The struggle would still be the same. Racism does not change. She

graduated high school and put in 2.5 years at Fort Dodge Community College in Fort Dodge, Iowa. So far that is all I have for my name as well, a high school degree and an associate degree. And I receive more than \$17,000 annual salary. Caroline Naylor had to count every penny that she made to ensure she survived to see another day. Caroline is working to live and survive for herself and her family. It should never be like this. This statement becomes repetitive in this writing, but I simply do not care. To understand the situations that all these women of color endure, you must experience it yourself. And I will never experience this. Nor will the average white American.

Chapter 4

#BLM and Police Officers

On March 13th, 2020, a Black woman by the name of Breonna Taylor was shot and killed in her sleep by police officers in a raid. At least seven police officers entered Breonna Taylor and Kenneth Walker's home as part of an investigation on drug dealing operations. Walker gave a warning shot because he thought the officers were intruders, Walker's gun was legally owned. The officers then shot thirty-two shots back and Walker was unhurt. Breonna Taylor, who was behind Walker, was shot six times and died. Breonna Taylor was 26 years old.

On May 25th, 2020, a Black man by the name of George Floyd was murdered by a police officer handcuffed to the floor with the police officers' knee on his neck. The victim was begging for his life as the officer had his knee to his neck. The words "I can't breathe" were his famous last words as he was suffocated, with a knee to the back of his throat, to death. The killing of George Floyd led to a wave of national and global protests. His death ignited the fire in the #BLM movement. His name, George Floyd, is being looked to enter history books alongside Rosa Parks and Emmet Till. A bronze statue has been made outside of Newark, New Jersey's city hall. A statue of his head was also made in Brooklyn but will be moving to Manhattan after being vandalized. These statutes were made to pursue police reform and show that racism truly does exist in the policing system.

Most individuals that are subject to police brutality are African Americans. I say "most" because not all of them are African Americans because racism exists in other races as well. The vast majority have been African Americans. "...African Americans among victims of police brutality is anti-Black racism among members of mostly white police departments." There are experts that say this direct quote. Most white police departments are anti-Black racism. A prime

example of white supremacy. The definition of white supremacy is “the belief that white people constitute a superior race and should therefore dominate society, typically to the exclusion or detriment of other racial and ethnic groups, in particular Black or Jewish people.” In the interviews I asked two questions. One related to the movement #BLM and the other about police officers. The first question was “How do you feel you play a “role” in the movement #BLM? Woman A responded thus,

When the BLM movement first appeared, I was at a protest like three times a week. I was regularly active in going out, chanting, and even sending letters and emails to our state and government officials. I started a BLM club at my high school and helped to lead, plan, and organize many city-wide BLM protests and school walkouts. But more than that, the role that I play is that I am Black, my mom is Black, my dad is Black, and my brothers and sister are Black. All these lives matter to me, and I know that any day any one of us could be the next hashtag on Instagram, so I need to be a part of the efforts to try and prevent that.

The response I received was truly jaw dropping and this is what reality is like to this current day. I loved seeing that this individual had been actively participating in the movement #BLM. I assumed most Black individuals were attending protests when they were high and active because it was, still is, a fight for their freedom and independence. This individual made it a point to go to a protest three times a week and show her face and chant with others who had the same problem as her. She had sent emails and letters to our state and government officials. She had even made it a point in her high school to start a #BLM club at her high school and even led city wide protests and school walkouts. Which, for an individual at the age of twenty, is an excessively big deal. It takes a certain bravado to be able to do this. I do not even think I would

be able to do this. The end of this interview really made me shed a tear in my eye. To hear her say the words “...any day anyone of us could be the next hashtag...” was just sad. There is no other way to describe that it was simply saddening. Besides trying to graduate and pursue her life she has this on her plate as well. Adding to her plate to prevent further things from happening, to prove to other humans, YES HUMANS, that her life matters just as much as the average Joe on the street is sad. No one should ever have to do this in their life. Everyone should be granted their freedom and independence as soon as they are born in the United States of America.

Woman B had a similar response to woman A. Here is woman B’s response.

I bring a lot of perspective. I used to run a community where it was uplifting women of color, specifically Black women. I created this not only to lift my community but to tutor other people about cultures. I say cultures because there are so many, it is not just Black women it is WOMEN OF COLOR. I will keep the community anonymous due to personal reasons. This was to help women get their voices out in a time of need when #BLM first “began.”

There was a similarity between both responses. Both women had deemed it upon themselves to start and organize a community. This woman ran her own community uplifting women of color, specifically Black women. She created this community to teach others about cultures. This was important for her to say this because the community she had made was not made to just uplift the Black women, it was made to educate others about cultures. In this sense, Black culture. Most people do not understand the Black culture. It is not taught in our everyday lives. She specified when she said “cultures” because it is not just Black women, it is women of color. Racism exists in all races. The time she made this community was to help women get their

voices out at a time of need when she felt as if they were not being heard but others. I thought of this community to vent to others about problems that every one of these women can relate to.

The second question I had asked both women was “Have you ever been stopped by a police officer?” I chose this question because I wanted to hear the experience both women had when been stopped by a police officer. Both experiences were different. Woman A responded

Yes, I have been stopped by the police and my rights were directly threatened. I was 15 and walking with a bunch of friends (they were all white or white passing). We were loud and walking through a park. A police officer stopped us and started asking some questions. One of my friends told the police officer it was illegal to question us without a parent present because we are minors and so we began to walk away. The police officer grabbed my arm and said where do you think you are going? I simply responded that I am a minor too and he asked me to prove it. My friend luckily did not live too far from the park and called his mom to straighten everything out. But the police officer made me stay there until she did and asked me a lot of questions without an adult present.

Her response briefly before I break it down could have led to a bigger problem, another police brutality victim. This situation was when she was fifteen years old. She was a teenager. She was walking with her friends and a police officer had stopped them and randomly just started asking questions. One of them countered by saying it is illegal for the police officer to question them without a parent present as they are minors. Unfortunately, this is not true, and the police officer was allowed to question them without a parent present. But there was nothing to question them about because there was not a crime being presented and they were not victims of anything. So, could the police officer have questioned them? Absolutely. But, what for? They all walked away, and the police officer grabbed her arm. The copped grabbed the arm of the Black

woman. He had then asked her to prove that she was a minor. Which is simply absurd. She had to wait for her friend's mom to straighten everything out with the police officer. But what would have happened if her friend's mom were not present? She was a teenager at the time so what if she had decided to run away from the police officer? Would the officer have tased her? Tackled her? These are all the speculations I had in my head when I heard the officer grabbing her arm. That this situation could have gone completely south in seconds if her reaction to the officer grabbing her arm was any different. It is scary to think about because this woman had given the response to my question earlier that "...anyone of us could be the next hashtag..." which is scary because she could have been the next hashtag. A fifteen-year-old Black female.

Woman B responded in a completely unique way. Very south of the previous woman's response. Or was it? Her response was

Yes, I have. The experience went easy, we were speeding, and the police officer gave a warning and he left. I was very calm, hands on the steering wheel, ignition off, police officer came up to the window "license and registration," gave a warning, I apologized and kept it moving. It was about three-ish years ago. I have not gotten issues when being pulled over. Sometimes I do because I want to give more insight to the experience. But no one in my family has ever been given a challenging time when being pulled over. My experience was very much different from other stories I have heard. Which made me feel wrong in a way? Because I am a woman of color so it was quite confusing to me on why I did not receive this experience but, it would have to be how I handled the situation. There was no camera in the police officers' face, so I treated it calmly.

She said her situation was "pretty easy" which was shocking to me. She was in a vehicle with her friends, and they were speeding. But was it easy? She explained what she did exactly

when she had gotten pulled over. Word for word. "...hands on the steering wheel, ignition off..." This, to me, was a red flag immediately. Why did she feel that she needed to turn her ignition off and put her hands on the steering wheel? As if she must do that. To me it seemed as if she was frightened of the police officer and had to take precaution before the officer approached the window. When I had gotten pulled over, a white male, I just waited for the police officer, ignition running and did absolutely nothing. She had fear instilled in her from hearing the horrible stories of other experiences with police officers. Granted this experience ended fine but she was frightened, and she stated what she did as a reaction to being scared. She might have not said she was scared but it seemed it. Thankfully, the officer gave a warning and she apologized then proceeded to drive away after the officer dismissed her. So, I ask you as the reader. Was the situation the way it was because she did not explode and pulled her phone out and threw it in the officer's face. Was she of the lucky few who had not gotten an anti-Black racist police officer? I will leave it up to you to decide. She states at the end of her response that there was no camera in the officer's face when she had been pulled over before and she treated it calmly. She even stated how she treated the situation is why it did not explode out of proportion. Truly I do not know why it was treated differently but even she felt off and she felt wrong. This was not okay that she felt wrong for not being treated like other Black individuals had been treated. The fact that she felt this way was quite interesting to say the least because why did her mind take her to this dark place where she had to be treated horribly by a police officer?

Both women on where they stand with the #BLM movement and how they played a role in each of their lives are quite similar. They both started and participated in important roles in their communities to shed light on others and educate others on what they are not educated on. This was important to hear by both women because I would assume that multiple women of

color are feeling the same way, and this might have been one of the largest protests held in the world. The number recorded for the George Floyd protest, racial unrest, was 15,000,000 - 26,000,000. That is a heavy number of protestors.

In response to their situations regarding being pulled over by a police officer is quite interesting. I have my own thoughts upon both responses. Comparing and contrasting both of their responses, neither officer took the situation to the extreme. But there was an abuse of power being presented in the first situation. I understand that a police officer can question a minor at any given time if there was a crime and the minor was a victim or if they were a witness to a crime. Neither of those were present in this situation when she was stopped by a police officer walking down the streets with her friends. The officer then grabbed her and insisted on proving that she was a minor. Which is blasphemy. It almost seems too good to be true. So, why did the police officer start questioning these kids walking down the street doing absolutely nothing? Because the officer thought they could do this. Most think they can do whatever they want and have no repercussions about it. In the second situation where woman B was pulled over for speeding, nothing happened in the situation where the officer went “rogue.” But the way the woman reacted to being pulled over was a red flag entirely. She had made sure to turn off her car and have her hands visible to the officer. She was most definitely scared of the outcome of this situation. The officer had let her go with just a warning. She had said, “There was no camera in the cops face, I treated it calmly.” which was true. So, it made me wonder, did the officer just treat her with respect as she treated them with respect? There was nothing in the situation that had gotten the police officer mad or made him start doing things out of question. Sometimes, I do think that having a camera in an officer's face does get a rise out of them. Sometimes, I do think that this trend where everyone is recording an officer when they get pulled over is making

the situation worse, but it is for their own safety. They record the officer as well because they are being recorded on a police camera. The endless situations on why it did not explode could go on and on. Thankfully, she was okay, and it did not escalate. It was strange and even she said she felt off and she felt “wrong” that everything went smoothly. We will never know. Chawne Kimber began designing quilts in 2005 to fit a cozy bed. The quilts had phrases sewn in dedicated to the injustice of Black lives. Some of these phrases said, “I can’t breathe” “I miss hope” and so on. Kimber designs these quilts to express her emotions and is her way of projecting propaganda. She is a professor and a math department chair with a doctorate, and yet, Kimber states, “it makes no difference to the world when I'm a Black woman walking down the street.” Chawne Kimber has slowed down creating quilts intertwined with the Black Lives Movement and has now focused on what it means to be a Black woman in America. (Landau, Purchase College Library. 2022.)

Chapter 5

Change For the Future

At the end of the interview, I had asked two broad questions to gain the perspective of both women on what they want to see changed for the future. Both questions asked talked about women of color and specifically Black women. The first question I asked was “Do you feel there needs to be a change to further protect women of color?” Woman A responded

Of course, there needs to be a change to further protect women of color. As it stands right now women of color are at the bottom of the social food chain and we get treated like it every day. As Malcom X says “The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman”

There really is nothing to break down here besides the truth of the matter. Everything she had said was true. Women of color are at the bottom of the social food chain, and they get treated like it every day. Whether it be women of color walking down the street continuing their everyday lives or going into work and getting a wage disparity, women of color are treated wrongly one hundred percent of the time. She inputted a quote by Malcom X which was a very fitting quote “The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman.”

Woman B responded to the same question and spoke

Yes. There needs to be some form of security so that they do not have to fear calling 911. I was told that I would never get support from the police but, on the very second, I filled out a police report for an order of protection. I never felt so much support in my life. The sergeant even came out and made sure I was okay the next day. They made sure that wherever I would go I would be safe. So, everything I was told would be difficult, it really was not. The way I carry myself could have played a role. When I had to get a protection

order, I was afraid. The outcome was incredibly positive. I have learned where to remove my emotions, so I am calm. I answered questions, provided everything needed, again, I was always calm. I did not escalate the experience. And sometimes I fear these experiences I have had with these police officers might end soon and I will have a horrific experience with a police officer. But, I simply have not yet. It could be luck, or it could be because people on social media always tend to escalate the situation or throw a camera in the police officer's face.

She states that there needs to be a form of security that they do not have to fear when calling 911. But society and the police themselves have done it this way. Most people of color would rather deal with the situation themselves rather than calling the police because the result might end in the person who had called the police, a person of color, being wrongfully accused. This woman had received the utmost perfect care when calling a police officer and I am happy for her for that, but the police officers right now are in a bad place. There were even talks of abolishment of the police at one point during the quarantine period. She states that her experience with police officers had been nothing, but a positive outcome and she fears that eventually her luck will run out, which is scary to think about. She said “...people on social media always tend to escalate the situation or throw a camera in the police officer's face.” Which I had found interesting because I had thought the same thing about social media and people recording police officers but having a camera in your face should make you want to do the opposite and not escalate the situation. A camera is always on a police officer, a police camera, so why can the normal individual not record them the same way? It truly does not make sense, but it is good that there are videos of police abusing their power because it needs to end. The next question I asked was specific to Black women. The question was “What would you like to

see changed moving forward to protect Black lives, more specifically Black women's lives?"

Woman A responded

As far as moving forward I feel like society should realize that doctors are to Black women what police are to Black men. There are millions of medical studies that promote the mistreatment of Black women by claiming we simply just do not experience pain like any other race. Not only is that completely ludicrous but it puts us at a higher rate of infant mortality and for death while giving birth. Simply because health care professionals believe we are lying about our pain to get drugs. The healthcare industry is just a start, but there is so much that needs to be done to protect Black women's lives.

I loved her response. "As far as moving forward I feel like society should realize that doctors are to Black women what police are to Black men" She compared doctors to Black women. Why has she done this? She stated this because there are studies out there that state that women of color are mistreated when entering hospitals because of the color of their skin. There are significant differences to Black women and white women when entering a medical field. But women of color are disrespected from the color of their skin and racism to a hospital. She said the healthcare industry is just a start and there is much more that needs to be done to protect their lives. It is scary to think when you are going to seek professional help, you could get turned down or treated differently. A Dallas organization has focused on the inequities in healthcare for Black women. The center was founded in 2005. The mission was to educate and bring resources to Black women living with HIV/AIDS. Marsha Jones is the Center's executive director. Jones has no "staff" but has used this idea which then became a social justice movement and a human rights approach to improve the lives of Black women. Along the way the team further focused on educating maternity care and reproductive rights. In 2019 "State of Black Women Report" notes

that pregnancy related deaths for Black women are three times more likely than white women. Furthermore, Black women are more likely to visit a hospital with lower quality care and a higher rate of life-threatening complications. (Frizzel, Purchase College Library. 2022.) There are people fighting for this same exact problem that woman A had stated would like to see change for. Woman B responded with this.

Reassurance and it cannot just be talked about. It really must have some action. We have heard all these things before from our mayor and even our president but there must be an action. Form a course of action so people can start seeing this rather than just hearing it. It will make things better; it will not fix the years of BS. But it will give people security and right now we do not have that. Who knows, I was lucky with the police officers that helped me. But everything that I was told about police officers did not happen to me. The order of protection from that I filed for the individual went perfect. With the arrest of this individual, I even got a text. Even after he was released, I even had step by step on what to do to further protect myself. Every experience I have had with a police officer, even when younger I was acting like a fool with a group of friends, I still complied with them and they let me go but kept my friends to talk to them, it never went south for me personally.

This woman wants to see some action behind all this talk that the politicians talk about before getting elected. She is tired of all the false promises. Hearing all these promises about change from mayors and even some presidents and not seeing change is baffling. It will not erase the past, but it can make the future better for the generations to come. Some sense of security in these times will go a long way. She stated her situations with police officers and how none of them went south for her personally. But this is not the case for other people of color. Some of the

situations end in burying a body as morbid as that sounds, it is the truth. Change needs to happen and hearing about it is nothing compared to doing something about it.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In the year 2021 there was an uprise of discrimination on Black lives. Women of color have been fighting for freedom since the 1920's and have yet to be free compared to the white woman. There needs to be a change in the way America treats women of color to make these women feel more equal. Whether it is a woman walking into a hospital to seek help or a woman working to maintain a healthy lifestyle for herself and her family, there should be no difference if that woman is Black or white. All women should be equal. Both interviews were asked the same questions, and both provided different unique answers. This is only two women out of the million in the world who are experiencing day to day discrimination. To understand these situations that all these women of color go through, you must experience it yourself. And I will never experience this. Nor will the average white American. White people have it good in this country, yet they take advantage of it and continue to challenge the laws placed to keep everyone safe. If a white individual did something compared to a colored individual, the outcome is different.

Annotated Bibliography

2022. *Youtube.com*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbGq593QbBs> (March 2, 2021).

Working in Silicon Valley, Kenya Hayes states the most difficult part in her career is stereotyping and not being able to be herself. The difference between Kenya and a white colleague is going to be interpreted differently because of the color of her skin. The color of her skin makes Hayes' life more difficult but she has learned and grown thicker skin. Kenya hopes that people realize #BLM movement is not just one month that Black people have been fighting for. They have been fighting for years. Hoping for different organizations to help the Black struggle, to empower people of color. Kenya Hayes wants to start seeing other colors other than white on billboards, magazines and in the media.

2022. *Youtube.com*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SttOgH8XsW0> (March 2, 2021).

This video explains the “end” result of the fight for women's vote. Especially for women of color. In 1919-1920 Black women threatened to tip the balance of political power. The outcome is real, 100 years later, as Kamala Harris is the Vice President. The video explains that the Black women are loyal to those democratic votes. There is a clear line that the Black women such as, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells, Mary Mcleod Bethune, Shirley Chisholm, and Barbara Jordan back then were laying down the groundwork for the Black women in political history today and they understand. Hence, the ratification of the 19th amendment

fought by thousands of women and some men. But it is not the end of the story. Voting rights are still threatened and our democracy is threatened.

Purchase College Library. 2022. *Www-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu*.

Chandler, Kurt <https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu/docview/417735951>

(March 1, 2021).

As a woman who was divorced, Caroline Naylor raised a family of FOUR on a salary of \$17,000 a year. Naylor is a 40-year-old Black woman who lives in Minneapolis and says, “I hate to keep harping on racism, but . . . as a businesswoman I've got to be four times as good as a white 40-year-old woman”. Caroline Naylor supports her children with little assistance and must work three jobs, a dispatcher for a cable company, a secretary for the Minneapolis Urban League and as manager of a liquor store to get some food on the table. Caroline’s end quote of the interview “There really hasn't been that much change. You hear the same tune - racism. I'm sure if you came back a year from now and had the same interview, it'd be the same thing. The struggle is still the same. Change doesn't come.” is important.

Purchase College Library. 2022. *Www-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu*.

Frizzel, Atheena

<https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu/usnews/docview/2417167576/citation/655B3AD7809B4A9DPQ/1> (February 20, 2021)

The Dallas organization has focused on the inequities in healthcare for Black women. This center was founded in 2005. In 2005 the mission was to educate and bring resources to Black women living with HIV/AIDS. Marsha Jones is the Center's executive director. Jones has no “staff” but has used this idea which then became a social justice movement and a human

rights approach to improve the lives of women. Along the way the team further focused on educating maternity care and reproductive rights. “State of Black Women Report” in 2019, notes that pregnancy related deaths for Black women are three times more likely than white women. Furthermore, Black women are more likely to visit a hospital with lower quality care and a higher rate of life-threatening complications. The Afiya Center supports a training program for Black women, which has been successful in improving care for Black women. The Afiya center plans on releasing another “State of Black Women Report” in 2021 partnering with the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute. The report will talk about Black maternity as well as COVID-19 and the physical effect it had on Black women. The center is also going to be supporting a bail fund on the Black Lives Matter protesters in Dallas.

Purchase College Library. 2022. *Www-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu*.

Landau, Elizabeth

<https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu/usnews/docview/2472232506/44EFB1F043204945PQ/4> (February 20, 2021).

Chawne Kimber is head of the mathematics department at Lafayette College. She keeps her quilting and math world separate. Chawne began designing quilts in 2005 to fit a cozy bed. But the quilt had phrases sewn in dedicated to the injustice of Black lives. Some of these phrases said, “I can’t breathe,” “I miss hope” and so on. Kimber designs these quilts to express her emotions and is her way of projecting propaganda. She is a professor and a math department chair with a doctorate, and yet, Kimber states, “it makes no difference to the world when I’m a Black woman walking down the street.” Chawne Kimber has slowed down creating quilts intertwined with the Black Lives Movement and has now focused on what it means to be a Black woman in America.

Purchase College Library. 2022. *Www-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu*.

Pereira, Ivan

<https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu/docview/2083597617?accountid=1417> (March 1, 2021).

In this article Scott Stringer's studies show that Black women, in New York City, earn the least out of everyone who has a job including white women. As a comparison, Black women are earning \$41,431 to a white man who is earning \$74,288. A Black woman is earning 57 cents to every dollar paid to men. White women receive 82 cents per dollar paid to men. This problem is huge in New York City because it is denying Black women education, a place to live and overall security. Black women would need to work an additional eight months to make that of what a white man would. The clear message here is discrimination.

Citations

2022. *Youtube.com*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SttQgH8XsW0> (25 April 2022).

2022. *Youtube.com*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbGq593QbBs> (25 April 2022).

AP NEWS, "EXPLAINER: Use-Of-Force Experts Evaluate Floyd Arrest." 2022.

<https://apnews.com/article/arrests-minneapolis-death-of-george-floyd-racial-injustice-da5e8060b2c023558e91564b0d82c75d> (25 April 2022).

CNN, Lila Watts and Laura Ly, *CNN*. 2022. "George Floyd Statue In Brooklyn To Move To Manhattan After Refurbishment."

Crenshaw, Kimberle (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140:139-167.

En.wikipedia.org, "2020–2022 United States Racial Unrest - Wikipedia." 2022.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020%E2%80%932022_United_States_racial_unrest (25 April 2022).

En.wikipedia.org, "List Of Protests And Demonstrations In The United States By Size - Wikipedia." 2022.

Encyclopedia Britannica, "Police Brutality In The United States | Definition, History, Causes, & Examples." 2022.

Ezproxy.purchase.edu, "Purchase College Library." 2022.

<https://ezproxy.purchase.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fnewspapers>

%2FBlack-womens-pay-gap-struggle-equal-fight%2Fdocview%2F2083597617%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D1417 (25 April 2022).

Ezproxy.purchase.edu, "Purchase College Library." 2022.

<https://ezproxy.purchase.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fnewspapers%2Fwoman-says-struggles-remain-area-Blacks%2Fdocview%2F417735951%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D14171>. (25 April 2022).

HISTORY.COM, "Breonna Taylor Is Killed By Police In Botched Raid." 2022.

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/breonna-taylor-is-killed-by-police> (25 April 2022).

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html> (25 April 2022).

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/23/us/nyc-george-floyd-statue-move/index.html> (25 April 2022).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_protests_and_demonstrations_in_the_United_States_by_size (25 April 2022).

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Police-Brutality-in-the-United-States-2064580> (25 April 2022).

<https://www.criminaldefenselawyer.com/resources/can-police-question-a-child-who-has-witnessed-or-been> (25 April 2022).

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/07/10/from-the-george-floyd-moment-to-a-Black-lives-matter-movement-in-tweets/> (25 April 2022).

Nytimes.com, "How George Floyd Was Killed In Police Custody (Published 2020)." 2022.

Reeves, Mary. 2022. "From The George Floyd Moment To A Black Lives Matter Movement, In Tweets." *Brookings*.

Search-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu, "Purchase College Library." 2022.

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu/usnews/docview/2472232506/44EFB1F043204945PQ/4?accountid=14171> (25 April 2022).

Search-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu, "Purchase College Library." 2022.

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.purchase.edu/usnews/docview/2417167576/citation/655B3AD7809B4A9DPQ/1?accountid=14171> (25 April 2022).

www.criminaldefenselawyer.com, "Can Police Question A Child Who Has Witnessed Or Been A Victim Of A Crime?." 2022.

Appendix

The complete text of the interviews with the two informants is discussed below:

Woman A:

The woman is a twenty-year-old Black female born in Georgia who moved to New York City at the age of two and has lived there since. She lives in a two-parent household with both parents being African American. She is a student studying at a SUNY college pursuing a degree in Political Science. This interview will be shared through google docs with responses coming directly from the woman.

- 1) **Vasilios: What are some challenges for you being a woman of color in the current day and age?**

Interviewee: The easier question is what challenges I do not face being a woman of color because I feel like literally everything is an uphill battle. In school being a woman of color means proving that I am intelligent enough to be in intellectual conversations. Getting ready in the morning is making sure that the clothing I am wearing does not fit too tight or show too much because then I will get called out for trying to catch the attention of men. In my own community being a Black woman means fighting for the rights of Black men while they stay quiet in the fights for my rights.

- 2) **Vasilios: Were there any instances where being a woman of color you felt disgraced?**

- **If so, would you mind sharing that experience?**

Interviewee: There was a point in my life when I cried at least once a week because I realized that no matter what accomplishments I achieved it would not truly be mine in the eyes of

society. Instead, it would be “a Black girl won the award for, or a Black girl led this protest” It was never just me. I soon realized that is how it would be for the rest of my life no matter what I did. Not only that but my accomplishments would not hold the same weight as any of my counterparts. They would often describe my accomplishments as “the minority win” as if I did not deserve it because of who I am.

3) Vasilios: Do you feel at a disadvantage in the workforce being a woman of color?

Interviewee: Interviewee: Of course, being a woman of color puts me at a disadvantage in the workplace. The first job I had we were required to wear a uniform, which was no big deal at all. I ordered my uniform in the size that I am and began working. About halfway into my first shift my manager calls me into the office and tells me that I was getting written up because my clothes were too distracting. He said I needed to order a bigger size because my uniform was too fitting. Then there was another instance where we had a bad service day, and my manager called a meeting to find the underlying cause of what the problem was and the first thing my manager asked (directed to me) was” what the hell did you mess up today? Little did he know I was not even working in the department that had the issues that day. I was constantly being talked down to and just being bluntly disrespected.

4) Vasilios: How do you feel you play a “role” in the movement #BLM?

Interviewee: When the BLM movement first appeared, I was at a protest like three times a week. I was regularly active in going out, chanting, and even sending letters and emails to our state and government officials. I started a BLM club at my high school and helped to lead, plan, and organize many city-wide BLM protests and school walkouts. But more than that, the role that I play is that I am Black, my mom is Black, my dad is Black, and my brothers and sister are

Black. All these lives matter to me, and I know that any day any one of us could be the next hashtag on Instagram, so I need to be a part of the efforts to try and prevent that.

5) Vasilios: Have you ever been stopped by a police officer?

Interviewee: Yes, I have been stopped by the police and my rights were directly threatened. I was 15 and walking with a bunch of friends (they were all white or white passing). We were loud and walking through a park. A police officer stopped us and started asking some questions. One of my friends told the police officer it was illegal to question us without a parent present because we are minors and so we began to walk away. The police officer grabbed my arm and said where do you think you are going. I simply responded that I am a minor too and he asked me to prove it. My friend luckily did not live too far from the park and called his mom to straighten everything out. But the police officer made me stay there until she did and asked me a lot of questions without an adult present.

6) Vasilios: Have you worked, or do you currently work, and did you feel a wage disadvantage due to being a woman of color?

Interviewee: I have worked before, and many of the jobs have been minimum wage jobs so I did not notice any wage disparities then. However, my mother was number three in charge of a corporate business in Manhattan for many years and she made significantly less money than the white males that worked under her.

(New York City has the worst example of wage disparities against women of color. In this article Scott Stringer's studies show that Black women, in New York City, earn the least out of everyone who has a job including white women. As a comparison, Black women are earning \$41,431 to a white man who is earning \$74,288. A Black woman is earning 57 cents to every dollar paid to men. White women receive 82 cents per dollar paid to men. This problem is huge in New York

City because it is denying Black women education, a place to live and overall security. Black women would need to work an additional eight months to make that of what a white man would. The clear message here is discrimination.)

7) Vasilios: How do you feel in today's world with everything happening surrounding people of color, especially women?

Interviewee: If I am being honest, I am numb to it. Every headline I have become desensitized to because it happens so much. Of course, I am frustrated and mad but more than anything else I am tired of it all. I am tired of people of color being killed by police officers. I am tired of the mass shootings. I want it all to stop.

8) Vasilios: How do you feel discrimination is in today's world?

Interviewee: I think that it is hard to measure the progression of discrimination. Things obviously are not of the same caliber as during the civil rights era or even the Jim Crow era. So, on the surface it is easy to say that discrimination decreased because we do not go outside and see people color being visible segregated or hanging on trees. But those things just evolved into things that are acceptable today. The visible segregation turned into redlining and only allowing school aged kids to go to school in their district. The lynching's turned into the world watching Black men get murdered on video. It has not gotten better. I would say it is neutral but the excuses that we give to the white people that kill us are far more detrimental. Back then they would own up to it and get away with it just because they are white. Now we give them "mental issues" to try to say that this is not a race issue. It is insulting really.

9) Vasilios: Do you feel there needs to be a change to further protect women of color?

Interviewee: Of course, there needs to be a change to further protect women of color. As it stands right now women of color are at the bottom of the social food chain and we get treated like it every day. As Malcom X says “The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman”

10) Vasilios: What would you like to see changed moving forward to protect Black lives, more specifically Black women's lives?

Interviewee: As far as moving forward I feel like society should realize that doctors are to Black women what police are to Black men. There are millions of medical studies that promote the mistreatment of Black women by claiming we simply just do not experience pain like any other race. Not only is that completely ludicrous but it puts us at a higher rate of infant mortality and for death while giving birth. Simply because health care professionals believe we are lying about our pain to get drugs. The healthcare industry is just a start, but there is so much that needs to be done to protect Black women's lives.

Woman B:

The woman is a twenty-nine old Black female born in Dominica who moved to the Bronx, New York at the age of seventeen and has lived there since. She lives with her father. She works at Microsoft as a non-profit specialist and an operations manager of a recovery program. She is also a head coach at a gym. This interview will be shared through google docs with responses coming directly from the woman.

- 1) **Vasilios: What are some challenges for you being a woman of color in the current day and age?**

Interviewee: As of right now I have not gotten any challenges, growing up in Toronto, yes. I did experience someone saying something interesting to my mother as we were walking down the street, they said to “Go back to Africa.” which we are not even from Africa but, we all know how that goes regarding the color of my skin. The way my mother raised me is to respond with grace because when you respond with hostility you are automatically painted as the angry Black woman on the streets. So, she continued with her day and ignored the man who said this to her.

- 2) **Vasilios: Were there any instances where being a woman of color you felt disgraced?**
- **If so, would you mind sharing that experience?**

Interviewee: There was one time where I denied conversation with a guy at one point when he tried to speak to me. His immediate clap back to me saying I am not interested in taking the relationship any further was “Okay, do you want a banana?” The irony was he was also Dominican with a darker skin complexion. Other than that, not really.

3) Vasilios: Do you feel at a disadvantage in the workforce being a woman of color?

Interviewee: No, I do not feel at a disadvantage in the workforce. Every place that I worked at I excelled amazingly fast. I worked for Nike, and I came in as a seasonal athlete then I became an ambassador; where I represented the training section as a woman's ambassador. So, I helped direct those workout classes that they have. I received promotion after promotion. I then went onto Apple; it was easier than Nike, but I just got bored, and I was never held back due to the color of skin. I even received a free Mac-book for Christmas. I made the choice to leave because I wanted something more challenging. So, I went to Microsoft as a part time associate, then got promoted to a visuals team. Which was different from being on a visual team in retail. Yet again, no disadvantage there either and yet again got promoted in Microsoft. Even with the pandemic I was still getting paid, and I was treated fairly and had opportunities to grow. Microsoft had to have been the most diverse company to work for, aside from Nike. Anything to do with my skin complexion has never suffered as a disadvantage to me personally in the workforce.

4) Vasilios: How do you feel you play a “role” in the movement #BLM?

Interviewee: I bring a lot of perspective. I used to run a community where it was uplifting women of color, specifically Black women. I created this not only to lift my community but to instruct other people about cultures. I say cultures because there are so many, it is not just Black women it is WOMEN OF COLOR. I will keep the community anonymous due to personal reasons. This was to help women get their voices out in a time of need when #BLM first “began.”

5) Vasilios: Have you ever been stopped by a police officer?

Interviewee: Yes, I have. The experience went easy, we were speeding, and the police officer gave a warning and he left. I was very calm, hands on the steering wheel, ignition off, a police officer came up to the window "license and registration," gave a warning, I apologized and kept it moving. It was about three-ish years ago. I have not gotten issues when being pulled over. Sometimes I do because I want to give more insight to the experience. But no one in my family has ever been given a challenging time when being pulled over. My experience was very much different from other stories I have heard. Which made me feel wrong in a way? Because I am a woman of color so it was quite confusing to me on why I did not receive this experience but, it would have to be how I handled the situation. There was no camera in the police's face, so I treated it calmly.

6) Vasilios: Have you worked, or do you currently work, and did you feel a wage disadvantage due to being a woman of color?

Interviewee: Nope, not once due to the color of my skin. Not a woman of color but being a woman, yes. It never had to do with the employers who had given me the job but the industry itself. But when men see a woman coming to help them, they would feel weird about it. So there definitely was a disparity being a WOMAN not a woman of color so seeing a woman helping others was not what customers wanted to see, especially men.

7) Vasilios: How do you feel in today's world with everything happening surrounding people of color, especially women?

Interviewee: The only thing that I have seen recently that bothers me is the number of Black women being targeted on dating apps then going missing. Or stuff like that, that starts becoming questionable to me. The dating app instance has been happening quite often. But she was also looking for someone to pay her bills. Regardless, the women of color that go missing

are not taken seriously in the real world and therefore social media plays a big part in missing women of color. Which is why you see constant reposting's on Instagram about the women of color that go missing. Another example, this girl, who was a woman of color, was an exchange student and she was found hanging from a rope in her garage. There is no answer as of right now that is leading to it being suicide, but it is still being investigated. The answer has been changing and it was about a year ago. So, the case is restless as well as the family and that makes me raise an eyebrow.

8) Vasilios: How do you feel discrimination is in today's world?

Interviewee: It is causing a lot of separation and there is no trust anymore. Yes, people must end up calling 911 for their safety. So, the police are going to come but with everything going on a lot of people are afraid of the people that are supposed to protect them. Everything is on eggshells right now. There are people who deserve to get arrested and what not but then you have people that are innocent that are being profiled because of the color of their skin. When my dad used to go off to work, I was always afraid, and I would always check up on him. I still do to this day. Because society puts people on edge. Just because you have a pleasant experience with a police officer one day it will not always be like that because there are some racist cops out there and it is scary/sad.

9) Vasilios: Do you feel there needs to be a change to further protect women of color?

Interviewee: Yes. There needs to be some form of security so that they do not have to fear calling 911. I was told that I would never get support from the police but, on the very second, I filled out a police report for an order of protection. I never felt so much support in my life. The sergeant even came out and made sure I was okay the next day. They made sure that wherever I would go I would be safe. So, everything I was told would be difficult, it really was not. The way

I carry myself could have played a role. When I had to get a protection order, I was afraid. The outcome was positive. I have learned where to remove my emotions, so I am calm. I answered questions, provided everything needed, again, I was always calm. I did not escalate the experience. And sometimes I fear these experiences I have had with these police officers might end soon and I will have a terrible experience with a police officer. But, I simply have not yet. It could be luck, or it could be because people on social media always tend to escalate the situation or throw a camera in the police officer's face.

10) Vasilios: What would you like to see changed moving forward to protect Black lives, more specifically Black women's lives?

Interviewee: Reassurance and it cannot just be talk. It really must have some action. We have heard all these things before from our mayor and even our president but there must be an action. Form a course of action so people can start seeing this rather than just hearing it. It will make things better; it will not fix the years of BS. But it will give people security and right now we do not have that. Who knows, I was lucky with the police officers that helped me. But everything that I was told about police officers did not happen to me. The order of protection from that I filed for the individual went perfect. With the arrest of this individual, I even got a text. Even after he was released, I even had step by step on what to do to further protect myself. Every experience I have had with a police officer, even when younger I was acting like a fool with a group of friends, I still complied with them and they let me go but kept my friends to talk to them, it never went south for me personally.

11) Vasilios: Your experience regarding other interviews has been quite different. Why is that?

Interviewee: You are not the first person to tell me that my experience is different from others, sometimes I feel like I am different, and I do not represent a woman of color. But I feel like with police officers for instance, you comply with them, everything should go smoothly. I never once escalated the situation and I have never had problems. From being pulled over for speeding to filing an order of protection, it was always smooth sailing.