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“FOR ALL YOU KNOW, I MIGHT BE A BLACK PANTHER”: HOW THE NEWS MEDIA CULTIVATED WHITE ANXIETY IN THE UNITED STATES AND BECAME A MODERN PANOPTICON FOR BLACK POWER

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ABSTRACT

Building upon French philosopher Michel Foucault’s analysis of Jeremy Bentham’s *Panopticon*, I argue that throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, the news media and resulting culture nurtured and reinforced the postcolonial narratives that associated Blackness with criminality. I analyze the national newspaper coverage for their narrative portrayal of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP). The national media and U.S. government targeted the BPP and Black Power politics to discredit them and the overall movement for Black Liberation. I argue that this media-state project only intensified during the 1970s and into the 1980s with the country’s turn to neoliberalism and several presidential administrations’ draconian policies that surveilled and punished Black Americans. The War on Drugs and soaring rates of mass incarceration set the stage for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. The same project evolved to other BLM to maintain the white supremacist hierarchy in the contemporary United States.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Since the sixteenth century, Black lives mattered in Europe, not for their merits or inherent value as human beings, but rather, for their labor that built European empires. Delving deeper past the physical into the metaphysical, Black life served also as a foil for white sensibility and belonging. Historical geographer Caroline Bressey reveals that Black people barely appear in the archival margins, typically as domestic servants chosen for their aesthetic appeal, an indulgence to the white male gaze. One can trace a similar treatment in historical narratives in which Black lives appear as well-known abolitionists or in passing as servile subjects. Their labor satisfied a domestic need those European empires required. Relegating Black people, Black women in particular, to such social roles comforted continental European men and reassured them of their supposed innate superiority (whiteness) that set them apart from the blackness which represented original sin.[1] The gendered racialization of religion and colonialism shaped white European identities. Scholar David Theo Goldberg suggests that race goes beyond ideology and interpretation to encompass, more broadly, "a way (or a set of ways) of being in the world, of living, of meaning-making," and that these lifeways differ across geographies and time.[2] The civilization mission acted as the white male's framework for meaning-making and identity construction throughout the colonial era, namely, the eighteenth and nineteenth

[1] A note on terms: I am using "blackness" to denote the colonial racialized system that correlates Black skin with supposed bad behavior, and not in its reclamatory use, "Blackness," which denotes a celebration of the myriad triumphs and multifaceted uniqueness of Black people.

[2] Caroline Bressey, "Between Europe and the Black Atlantic," Black Perspectives, African American Intellectual History Society, July 27, 2018, accessed January 21, 2021, https://www.aaihs.org/between-europe-and-the-black-atlantic/; Olivette Otele, *African Europeans: An Untold History* (London: Hurst, 2020), 1–2; Fatima El-Tayeb, "Beyond the Black Paradigm? Queer Afro-diasporic Strategies," Black Perspectives, African American Intellectual History Society, October 22, 2018, https://www.aaihs.org/beyond-the-black-paradigm-queer-afro-diasporic-strategies/; David Theo Goldberg, "Racial Europeanization," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29, no. 2 (March 2006): 334.

centuries. European men created power at the expense of African and dual-heritage women especially (though African and dual-heritage men, and white women likewise played their respective unfortunate roles in this imperial theatre).

White European men discursively, politically, and physically used Africans and Africa-descended people (in the colonies and the metropoles) as a site for political power to both understand the self, and as a means of fulfilling a masculine duty to the empire. The colonizer's psyche wrestled with the nationalistic (racist) sensibilities that required a labor force. European colonizers reconciled the abject horror of their actions by dehumanizing, and subsequently, hypersexualizing, controlling, and abusing Black people. Furthermore, European males displaced this conflict with their supposed righteousness when they equated blackness with criminality and sexual wantonness. To simultaneously assert their whiteness and compartmentalize the detrimental effects that inflicting violence causes to an individual's sense of self, they reaffirmed the racialized elements of the European colonial project. Continental European men shaped the white supremacist narratives that ultimately exoticized, criminalized, and othered African-descended people in order to accept their own inhuman behavior.[3]

In order to understand the events of the past century regarding the Black Liberation struggle—and how the white gaze functions today—the European colonial legacy is fundamental. After all, the European imperial project directly caused the postcolonial slaveholding society that flourished in the United States. Beginning in the twelfth century, to prove their own perceived superiority, Europeans began to shape the existing premodern ideas of race into racist narratives about Africans. Historian Olivette Otele argues in her

[3] See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008).

magnum opus, *African Europeans: An Untold History* (2020), that just as the notion of exceptionalism can serve to humanize, it can likewise be used to demonize. Exceptional beauty notwithstanding, the colonial project placed Africans (and later, dual-heritage Europeans) beneath white Europeans, irrespective of which country, in a paternalistic structure that infantilized African and Africa-descended individuals. European white males imposed their gaze upon African and Africa-descended people. They literally placed Black bodies beneath a watchful eye, and, in essence, beneath their own personhood, in a twisted attempt to elevate the self. Within such a white supremacist hierarchy, a fascination with Black and Brown bodies germinated which then bred exoticization and fetishization of African and dual-heritage people. At the time, to reaffirm the imperialistic ideology was essential both to the project itself, and to what would, otherwise, become a fragmented psyche. To deny that their roles as enslavers was anything other than pure evil, Europeans necessitated a divinely inspired reality in which they were the Africans' saviors. Europeans forged a cognitive dissonance that elevated dutiful ideas of nationalism as godly, and to do otherwise, was antithetical to the colonial project. To civilize with an iron hand was also to shepherd—an entire race of people—with a guiding staff. Due to this schism, continental European males essentialized African and Africa-descended peoples—a diverse group to be sure—into a single amalgamated figure of blackness, savagery, and, ultimately, criminality.[4]

Colonizers foregrounded the African and Africa-descended people's supposed abnormalities in order to assert their own superiority. European narratives of race conflated culture and the body with behavior, situating Christian Europeans as necessary benefactors

[4] Otele, *African Europeans*, 4–5, 80.

to the supposedly inferior, sinful races of the world.[5] Europeans violently imposed their religious beliefs on West African people and excused this oppression as a God-ordained civilization mission for the Africans' ultimate salvation. Historian Jennifer L. Morgan demonstrates how early modern English literature and men's published travel diaries helped shape ideas of sexualized racial inferiority in continental Europe. Such publications contained these travelers' depictions of West African women's Black skin and nude breasts that simultaneously hypersexualized their reproductive labor and othered them as un-womanly. Exoticized tales of West Africans' spiritual practices and inflated reports of "cannibalism" scandalized English and European readers, who had no other basis by which to measure West African people. These same readers brought their ideas to the New World, contouring how early settlers and conquerors considered both Native American and African women. Early modern notions of gendered difference and civilization and savagery carried over into American travel narratives. These men juxtaposed an amalgamated Africa with England, ultimately blessing English expansion as reasonable, noble, profitable, and their God-given duty.[6]

The contradictions and paradoxes abound in the colonial situation, and they would have to collide—the European psyche had to invent all manners of false social constructs in order to justify the unjustifiable. Pseudoscientific racism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is a graphic example of the lengths to which the white mind would go to fabricate a false sense of superiority and control in the name of science. Control eases anxiety and to exert dominion over these gendered, racialized African or dual-heritage

[5] David Theo Goldberg, "Racial Europeanization," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29, no. 2 (March 2006): 349.
[6] See Jennifer L. Morgan, "'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500–1770," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (January 1997): 167–92.

people meant that Europeans could obtain the ultimate authority in society and allay their existential fears and concerns. In order to reject what the colonial project demanded and to sooth their subconscious (or conscious) guilt, white men hypersexualized and criminalized Black people. Because the imperial project allowed them to exert the control they already wielded from their whiteness, they satisfied their need for meaning and belonging within the context of their role as the "benevolent" colonizer. In doing so, they gladly enforced cruelty and dehumanization.

After achieving independence from Great Britain, the United States continued the tradition of enslavement. How else was the the United States to build its empire, if not on Indigenous lands and the backs of Africa-descended people? Prior to emancipation in the United States, Colonial America utilized Slave Patrols to surveil and punish enslaved African Americans. The U.S. South called upon its residents to watch and police Black people, and to divest them of any held weapons. Historian Sally Hadden describes Southerners' duty: "The history of police work in the South grows out of this early fascination, by white patrollers, with what African American slaves were doing. Most law enforcement was, by definition, white patrolmen watching, catching, or beating black slaves." The early beginnings of contemporary law enforcement agencies stem directly from these Colonial-era patrols. Slavery's end in the United States collapsed the old social order, necessitating new rhetoric in defense of white supremacy. The *Miriam-Webster Dictionary* defines white supremacy as "the belief that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that white people should have control over people of other races" and "the social, economic, and political systems that collectively enable white people to maintain power over people of other races." White supremacy, then, is not only a personal

belief system to which individuals ascribe, but a socio-political and -economic process of exclusion that pervades the country at the institutional level. White supremacist elites in the South looked to carry forward the slave patrol practice into Reconstruction, essentially reconstituting the same policing tactics under a new name.[7]

Because of the innate cruelty of enslavement, Americans sought justifications for their economic dependency while simultaneously vilifying African and Africa-descended people. Abolitionists' challenges to the institution of slavery brought forth new and recycled rationalizations for the dehumanizing project. Leading up the American Civil War, many southern whites defended the ideology of slavery in the abstract—that slavery was the best possible labor system in place, regardless of race. Several slaveholders used this philosophy to distinguish their support for slavery in principle, from black enslavement specifically. To them, slavery was the normal and ideal condition of labor abstracted from race.[8]

Like socialists, proslavery theorists in the United States believed that class warfare throughout industrialized Europe and Britain signaled the collapse of the free-labor system, with the labor classes reduced to personal servitude. The idea of enslaving fellow white people was ludicrous, and unnecessary, since their view held that slavery was a civilizing mission for Africans in need of white Christian influence. A milder version of personal

[7] Sally E. Hadden, *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* (Boston, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 4. See also Alden T. Vaughan, "The Origins Debate" in *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Oxford University Press, 1995), 136–74, Thomas C. Holt, "Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (February 1995): 1–20, David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), Gary Potter, "The History of Policing in the United States, Pt. 1–6," *EKU Online* (blog), *Eastern Kentucky University*, June 25–July 30, 2013, https://ekuonline.eku.edu/blog/police-studies/the-history-of-policing-in-the-united-states-part-1/.
[8] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *Slavery in White and Black: Class and Race in the Southern Slaveholders' New World Order* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1, 4.

servitude would suffice for whites. The availability of printed materials proliferated with a technological boom from 1840 to 1860, and wide circulation of propaganda spread proslavery ideology across the U.S. South. Slavery in the abstract was a distinctly southern ideation, and supporters held three common beliefs: most peasants and wageworkers in free-labor societies fared worse than Southern slaves; slavery was a more humane and morally responsible labor system than that practiced in free societies; and Christians had the responsibility to support less fortunate people. Slaveholders, the bourgeoise of the South, needed new arguments for their hierarchical values in the midst of contesting ideas about the nineteenth-century global-social order and racial reorganization. U.S. Southerners sought to separate themselves (and the United States) from the British empire and its labor system, arguing that American slavery was more humane and followed the supposedly natural social order.[9]

Southern white supremacists emphasized that African Americans would resort to barbarism without enslavement's regimen and occupation. Racist narratives warning that freedpeople would "Africanize" and destroy the civilized South proliferated. The United States' hegemonic control framework required the implementation of a surveillance power schema to ensure the external functions of the colony; and to reassure the collective self that feared the Other. Once the world began the slow process of decolonization, the white psyche made it imperative to find other, more-covert means of racialized (and gendered) control. Immediately following the end of the Civil War, the white planter class in the South erected their "Black Codes," laws and restrictions imposed on African Americans only. To justify the surveillance and control of Black workers, in particular, the planting

[9] Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Slavery in White and Black*, 9, 11, 75, 78, 196, 222–23.

class criminalized poverty, movement, and leisure, effectively recreating slavery. All white citizens were expected to police African Americans. Law enforcement could arrest Black people for just about anything and would "hire out" African Americans to work off their fines or sentences. Cloaked in the rhetoric of law-and-order, Southerners sought to replace the work force they had lost with Emancipation. The Black Codes conflated blackness with criminality and served as the roots for modern policing and surveillance following Reconstruction in the United States. By the 1870s, the white supremacist Redeemers sought to disenfranchise African American men and return the U.S. South to a status quo of white supremacy. To further their political agenda, the Redeemers instilled a sense of anxiety and fear of Black political empowerment among white Southerners. Enslavement might have ended, but Southerners continued to undermine African Americans' civil rights with impunity.[10]

The European imperial project directed onto Black people a punitive gaze that extends around the globe. In the United States, throughout the long 1960s (1955–1975), written and televised news reports of supposed Black criminality focused the white supremacist gaze on African Americans. When Black Power received national (and then global) attention and scrutiny, the news media fostered white paranoia that, in turn, collectively demanded that government entities constantly surveil Black Liberation

[10] David Prior, *Between Freedom and Progress: The Lost World of Reconstruction Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2019), 51; Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Chicago, Ill.: Haymarket Books, 2016), 108–10; Travis D. Boyce and Winsome M. Chunnu, "Toward a Postracial Society, or a 'Rebirth' of a Nation?" in *Historicizing Fear: Ignorance, Vilification, and Othering*, eds. Boyce and Chunnu (Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2019), 123–24. See also David Prior, *Reconstruction in a Globalizing World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (New York: Vintage Press, 2006), Andrew Karhl, "'The Slightest Semblance of Unruliness': Steamboat Excursions, Pleasure Resorts, and the Emergence of Segregation Culture on the Potomac River, 1890–1920," *Journal of American History* 94 (2008): 1108–36, Sidney Harring, *Policing in a Class Society: The Experience of American Cities, 1865–1915* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1983).

movements. Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) occupy an involuntary discursive realm in postcolonial societies, wherein they are both hyper-visible and hyper-invisible, constantly watched but never truly seen as individuals, nor even human.[11] The news media and mass-media culture in the United States have coopted and strengthened the state's monopoly on citizen surveillance, to provide a means for the white supremacist society to both watch and punish people of African descent. In my thesis, I argue that the national news media, and the culture it helped to create, exacerbated already existing white anxiety toward supposed Black criminality. In doing so, news media and mass media culture aided a state-sponsored project of exclusion of Black citizens, whereby a visibility-invisibility dyad worked to other nonwhite individuals via a collective gaze that news reports created. In many ways, the U.S. news media and resultant culture acted in tandem with government officials and policymakers—including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and several U.S. presidential administrations—to construct and foster this collective gaze that protected white hegemony.

Building upon French philosopher Michel Foucault's analysis of Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*, I suggest that throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, the news media and mass media culture nurtured and reinforced the postcolonial narratives that associated Blackness with criminality and depravity. I analyze the national newspaper coverage for their narrative portrayal of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP). The national media and U.S. government targeted the BPP and their Black Power rhetoric to discredit them and the overall movement for Black Liberation. I argue that this media-

[11] See Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument," *New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 257–337.

state project only intensified during the 1970s and into the 1980s with the country's turn to neoliberalism and several presidential administrations' draconian policies that served to surveil and punish Black Americans. Indeed, welfare cuts, the infamous War on Drugs, and the country's turn to mass incarceration set the stage for twenty-first-century Black Liberation movements, such as Black Lives Matter (BLM). Just as the state and media worked together to other the BPP, invalidate their politics, and foster white (and Black) fear toward them, the same project evolved to other BLM in order to maintain the white supremacist hierarchy and domination in the contemporary United States. The media is meant to play an integral role in the democratic process, and to keep government overreach in sight of the public, yet white-majority news outlets across the nation shamelessly cultivated the state-sanctioned narratives that blame African Americans for their socio-economic and -political position at the bottom and in the margins of the United States. They were and are the weakest link in the political chain; they get all the blame.

Into the twentieth century in the United States, life for Black people had improved only marginally. African-American women remained the targets of racist sexualized violence especially in the Jim Crow South, but also in other regions. In 1955, fed up with the ongoing abuse from bus drivers in Montgomery, Alabama, Black women organized and executed a bus boycott that lasted over a year, in an effort to reclaim and protect Black womanhood. Sustained mistreatment and abuse over the color-line exemplified the humiliation and degradation that Black, working-class day laborers faced, a denial of their basic humanity. In historical memory, male African American activists often overshadowed the women who played integral roles in the long Civil Rights Movement. Jo Ann Robinson and Rosa Parks, the Black women who organized the Montgomery Bus

Boycott, directly challenged the South's sexualized racist hierarchy. Both African American men and women contended with their respective gendered experiences with white supremacy. By assuming the position of protective patriarchs, Black men in the early Civil Rights Movement could assert their masculinity and fulfill their duty to defend Black womanhood, a position denied to them by white supremacy.[12] While this male-dominated version of events tends to obscure women's roles in their fight for dignity, it also reveals the nature of gendered white supremacy. Not only could white men protect white womanhood, they could likewise undermine Black manhood by setting the parameters (the ability to protect) while also making them impossible to reach (white-on-Black rape, and lynching, all of which find their roots in slavery).

Early colonial laws strictly forbid interracial marriage, but not fornication or childbirth outside of wedlock.[13] Such laws and practices not only oppressed Black women, but Black men as well, through a type of psychological torture. White southerners routinely lynched Black men for perceived offenses—almost always imagined in fever and alcohol—against white womanhood, while themselves, raping and abusing Black women into coercive submission to the racial hierarchy. White men, obsessed with maintaining the socio-sexual order that allowed them to dominate the racial hierarchized society, framed

[12] Danielle L. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 51, 108. See also Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Women in United States History* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1990), Hine, Elsa Barkley Brown, and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1993), Hine, Wilma King, and Linda Reed, eds., *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1995), Hine and Kathleen Thompson, eds., *A Shining Thread of Hope: History of Black Women in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1998), Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894–1994* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999).
[13] McGuire, 243.

Black men as inherently violent and Black women as lascivious. Made to feel helpless, Black men—their masculinity—were perpetually challenged if they were unable to prevent or punish white-on-Black rape, while simultaneously facing the threat of state-sanctioned execution or lynching, for far less. White men constructed their own sense of self as perceived protectors of white womanhood against supposedly insatiable Black men. This paradox is a painful reminder that Colonial America was a fear-wrought and illogical place on several fronts, and that the consequences of such are evidenced in both the colonized (the enslaved) and the colonizer (slaveholders and -owners). Such a psychological stranglehold threatened Black masculinity for Black men's inability to prevent sexualized violence upon Black women while fighting a false narrative of their being sexually violent.

In the metropole-colony schema, rape played an integral role in the formation of whiteness and access to privilege. A (usually forced) union between a Black woman and white man was commonplace and the progeny of such a coupling could no more attain whiteness than an individual whose parents were both Black. Since it was commonplace for white colonizers to rape their Black slaves or servants, any people born were relegated to the social status of blackness. According to Fanon, in the French colonies, it was an honor to be a Black person with a white mother, and the opportunities for such an individual multiplied as compared to a child with a Black mother and white father.[14] This racial reality implies that personhood in the colonial situation did not apply to an individual who came from rape, since the woman raped was blamed for the coercive act. Were they not Black to begin with, they would not have enticed these sexual advances; therefore, white people (and some Black people) reinforced racial hegemony through violence. This hegemonic

[14] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 28–29.

schema deemed Black women's offspring unworthy of dignity or social mobility. The imperial project inextricably linked blackness with violence, yet the colonizers flipped the narrative and transferred their own savagery onto Black people, portraying them as uncivilized.

White slave masters raped Black women for centuries in order to strengthen their positions of political and economic power. Slaveholders likewise forced Africa-descended men to rape Africa-descended women for the same purpose, to grow the slave population. During the 1960s, the U.S. South condensed personhood to the politics of sexualized violence, whereby white supremacy continually dehumanized African and Africa-descended human beings. The long and sordid history of sexualized violence against African American women exemplifies the hypocrisy present in white people's invented fear of Black criminality. The period of the Civil Rights Movement between 1946 and 1963, referred to as the "Second Reconstruction," proved to be nearly as dangerous for Black women as the first. In order to maintain an already established racial hierarchy in the Jim Crow South, white men utilized the violent tactics of physical and sexual abuse, which undermined both Black personhood and Black bodily autonomy and self-determination.[15]

Although U.S. legislation ended official segregation and afforded African Americans increased constitutional protections, police violence on Black communities proliferated as ever before. In 1966, Stokely Carmichael, of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), made the pronouncement that African Americans must embody self-determination with Black Power. Carmichael's Black Power framework was

[15] Daniel R. Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets: Black Consciousness in South Africa, 1968–1977* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 8, ProQuest Ebook Central; Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 2–3; McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street*, 73, 189.

unparalleled in the Black community since Reconstruction and inspired Oakland activists and intellectuals Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton to form the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Nationally, journalists depicted Carmichael as an agent of chaos, while portraying civil rights battles in positive light and as a moral good. By contrast, Black Power garnered negative media attention and even rage from racist whites. Once Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968, a number of African Americans who once dedicated themselves to passive resistance determined to initiate a movement for Black pride, self-defense, and self-determination. In popular culture, the BPP is remembered for their image as hardened, armed men and women, an unnerving display of Black rage. This image applies to specific members in the movement, it is true, but it speaks to the collective consciousness (particularly that of whites) and their fear of Black freedom. Martinican psychiatrist Frantz Fanon argued that a society is either racist or it is not—there are no varying degrees of oppression. Black Power movements such as the BPP ushered decolonization rhetoric into their political rhetoric, which steered members in a socialist (and sometimes communist) direction. Black people built the movement from introspection and debate surrounding fundamental issues of being, all in the backdrop of imperial racial economies that continue to dictate dominant methods of knowing, interpreting, and feeling.[16]

Since Black Power's inception, white anxieties that stem from a deeply ingrained postcolonial *Weltanschauung* shaped much of the mainstream narrative that portrayed

[16] Penial E. Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 151; Penial E. Joseph, "Revolution in Babylon: Stokely Carmichael and America in the 1960s," *Souls* 9, no. 4 (December 2007): 287; Curtis J. Austin, *Up Against the Wall: Violence in the Making and Unmaking of the Black Panther Party* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2006), 168; Fanon, 66. Scholar Rob Waters demonstrates how the British Black Panthers engaged in the same conversations in the British colonial context by "thinking black." See *Thinking Black: Britain, 1964–1985* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).

Black Power organizations (and other minority liberation organizations such as the Young Lords, the Brown Berets, and the American Indian Movement), such as the BPP as dangerous and inherently violent. Although this persistent constructed idea of innate criminality and deviance dates to precolonial European thought, fears over the disruption of a social order that principally benefits white people intensified in the face of Black self-determination. Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a large swath white Americans determined to impede African Americans' freedom struggles and maintain their hierarchical position; some white Americans still bitterly resisted necessary change. Decolonization in the vast African continent (and elsewhere) likewise upended Europeans' orientation to a metropole-colony worldview. From the late 1960s into the 1970s, the African diaspora tapped into the righteous rage that long simmered in their minds in the wake of oppression. The global phenomenon of Black Power culminated in a sweeping movement for Black self-realization and dignity. Once violent means entered the discussion in Black circles as a viable option for human recognition, white fear served to reaffirm their own self-fulfilling prophecies regarding Black liberation. Considering the United States' not-so-distant colonial past (a past that is still very much present), there should be little wonder about why a portion of the African diaspora chose to meet force with force.

Although he passed away in 1961, Fanon's translated book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) was especially popular among Black Power activists during the late 1960s. Known for his decolonization theories, Fanon argued that violent means were liberating for oppressed people. Fanon claimed, "At the level of individuals violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair in inaction; it

makes him fearless and restores his self-respect." The urban uprisings of the 1960s struck fear in the hearts of white America with the dawning realization that many Black citizens seemed pushed by rage to this point. Following the Detroit uprising in 1967, a resident expressed that it was not "Black Power that caused the rebellion, it was the lack of power that caused the rebellions around the country. People did not see any hope for themselves." Black Panther Party co-founder Bobby Seale echoed many activists' feelings in 1967, stating "Black people have begged, prayed, petitioned, demonstrated and everything else to get the racist power structure of America to right all the wrongs which have historically been perpetrated against black people. All of these efforts have been answered by repression, deceit, and hypocrisy." Despite these and other all-too-true pronouncements, the national mass media in the United States stood unprepared to represent the genuine nature of the BPP's fight against police brutality and government repression.[17]

Largely ignorant of Black resentment within their communities, the national press, particularly newspapers, became notably complacent during the 1960s, due to the declining competition in most newspaper markets. White people predominantly occupied the United States' news organizations which ignored minoritized community views and reported stories and incidents based almost solely on official government sources. By the mid-1960s, television became a permanent fixture in American media culture with over ninety-

[17] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961; repr., New York: Grove Press, 1963), 45–47, quoted in Austin, *Up Against the Wall*, 90; Austin, 83; Bobby Seale, *Black Panther*, June 2 1967, quoted in Jane Rhodes, *Framing the Black Panthers: The Spectacular Rise of a Black Power Icon* (New York: New Press, 2007), 60. See also Elizabeth Hinton, *America on Fire: The Untold History of Police Violence and Black Rebellion Since the 1960s* (New York, N.Y.: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2021), Ashley Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), Robyn C. Spencer, *The Revolution has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2016), Donna J. Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003).

two percent of households owning at least one set. Television's popularity upended the newspaper industry and for the first time in U.S. history, printed news outlets no longer claimed a monopoly on information. Television news in the mid-1960s was still finding its foothold in the marketplace and consisted mostly of light features dominated by public officials. The industry was forced to focus on building their audience and, therefore, revenue. Because of this reality, broadcast journalists projected their ideological biases in the interest of their respective networks. Compelling visual content and sensationalized reporting dominated the media's reaction to Black Power politics, and while television news grew its consumer base, newspapers and magazines strained to maintain their place in the media market and in American minds.[18]

Through mid-1967, television news covered leftist activists such as the BPP and SNCC sporadically, and print media failed to report on the Panthers' early activities until April 1967. The BPP's presence trickled out from local print sources in Oakland and San Francisco, California until they exploded on the national mass media scene in the late 1960s. Knowing little about the Panthers, the press outside the San Francisco Bay area searched for a media frame with which to construct the BPP and to sell the public on that image. Publications such as the *Oakland Tribune* and *San Francisco Examiner* portrayed the Panthers as dangerous Black nationalists who carried guns and sought to harm police forces. National newspapers followed local media's lead and emphasized the Party's gun-toting appearance as the primary factor with which to justify white anxiety toward them. Contrasted with the nonviolent, more palatable Civil Rights activists, these belligerent-looking men clutching or brandishing weapons—and their potential for violence—drove

[18] Rhodes, *Framing the Black Panthers*, 62–63.

media outlets to capitalize on the salacious nature of the public's perception. Liberal print media contributed to the idea that civil rights activism represented a moral good, but Black Power received little public support and even inspired widespread white rage. Ultimately, print and television media leaped on the most sensational aspects of the BPP's activities to bolster their own respective ratings.[19]

Three national weekly magazines—*Time, Newsweek,* and the *U.S. News and World Report*—published virtually nothing on the BPP through most of 1967. Following some of the BPP's more highly publicized encounters with police forces, mass media directed public opinion to largely disdain the Party, casting them as the villains and law enforcement as the heroes. Government officials' harassment of Panther members, along with the mainstream media and national media culture, drew on the Black criminality narrative to discredit their movement and repudiate criticisms against institutionalized racism. These two facets of U.S. society framed the BPP as threatening to whites and to the larger social order. The verbal and visual images that they conjured in white America recalled the primal fear of Black male sexuality. While the Panther organization did cultivate in its members the necessity and benefits of armed struggle, most BPP activists focused on economic and political transformation of their communities. To increase revenue and to support white hegemony in the United States, national media chose to accentuate the violent rhetoric of members such as Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver, of the Oakland chapter (founded in 1966).[20] This perception frightened government officials, motivating them to enact policies that would further subdue and control the Black population. When President Richard Nixon took office, his vision of law and order and the policies he enacted laid the

[19] Rhodes, 59, 67, 69, 76; Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour*, 151.
[20] Rhodes, 70, 74, 80; Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour*, 275; Austin, 77.

foundations for further oppression of African Americans. His "silent majority"—uneasy, angry, scared white Americans—were the foot soldiers of the conservative backlash against African American freedom, civil rights, and social mobility.

Nixon's welfare budget cuts, the redistribution of public spending to the War on Drugs, and the introduction of mass incarceration had devastating effects on African Americans for decades. Subsequent presidential administrations built on these policies to create new forms of surveillance and policing. The political framework of "colorblindness" entered the American consciousness, diverting attention away from systemic racism toward an ethos that places the sole responsibility for African American destitution on Black communities. In a disciplinary society, such as the United States, the national news media and mass media culture have functioned (and still do) as a panoptic mechanism that seeks to construct a permanent visibility of Black people while simultaneously (re)enforcing the state's automatic operation of power. In postcolonial societies such as the United States, African Americans must both be seen as the object of information and unseen as the subject of communication This "laboratory of power," as Foucault calls it, persists today, and the news media utilizes it to invalidate the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. This discursive power dynamic inculcates fear among the general citizenry of white people—as well as people with a proximity to whiteness who stand to gain from white supremacy. It demarcates the news media and mass media culture, not as bastions of democracy, but rather, as cogs in a machine that exist as mechanisms of power to police and control (or discipline and punish) BIPOCs to the direct benefit of white people. The modern critical press originated in late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century France

to surveil the government's oversight of the citizenry in the midst of revolution.[21] While it could be argued that mainstream media outlets abandoned this practice for higher ratings (read more money), the press's actions demonstrate their active participation in the state's racist exclusion program. If African Americans are not truly citizens in the same manner that white people are citizens, then the press is upholding its duty to the hierarchy. In this sense, race supersedes class.

[21] Susanne Anderson-Reidel, "European Art: 1789–1900," Art History 481 (undergraduate class, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, Fall 2017).

Chapter Two: Panopticism and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense

The powerful have constructed history and its multilayered hierarchy of personhood, both with what is said and what is not said. Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot theorized that people participate as both actors and narrators of sociohistorical processes that are comprised of "both 'what happened' and 'that which is said to have happened.'" Throughout most of Europe and North America, positivist Western scholarship informed the public's historical knowledge and approximated truth, making power—and who holds it—irrelevant to the construction of narratives.[22] Trouillot shows us that the powerful create and disseminate the narratives that shape the lives of the powerless. The European imperial project incepted to aggrandize the powerful by violent means at the expense of the powerless and laid the foundation for anti-Blackness in a postcolonial, slaveholding society such as the United States. The trans-Atlantic slave trade completely disrupted the global social order, from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. American novelist Toni Morrison spoke on its irreversible consequences in an interview with English sociologist Paul Gilroy: "Slavery broke the world in half, it broke it in every way. It broke Europe. It made them into something else, it made them slave masters, it made them crazy. You can't do that for hundreds of years and it not take a toll. They had to dehumanize, not just the slaves but themselves. They have had to reconstruct everything in order to make that system appear true."[23] Euro-Americans consistently dehumanized Africa-descended people and Native Americans and excluded them (and other nonwhite people) from a constructed hierarchy of whiteness.

[22] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 2, 5.
[23] Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1993), 178.

Even after Emancipation in 1863, the sixteenth-century narrative that associates Blackness with criminality and whiteness with God-given favor remained tightly woven into the fabric of society. Historian Khalil Muhammad argues that the mainstream media, together with the developing field of social science and the Southern economic and political elites, used inflated statistics to build a post-Reconstruction narrative of Black criminality.[24] Published print-news sources have played an integral role in this racialized process for hundreds of years, first with descriptions and illustrations and eventually with photographs. By the mid-twentieth century, to add to the existing printed mainstream media, television offered everyday people a new means by which to consume the news. Throughout the 1960s, newspapers and television covering racial uprisings in the United States helped to reinforce white fear toward supposed Black criminality. In actuality, the burgeoning Civil Rights and Black Power movements offered African Americans hope for equal citizenship.

Throughout the uprisings (often referred to as riots) of 1964–1969, U.S. news media centered the American gaze on this pervasive white supremacist narrative that Black people are innately violent. This meant that each family that read the morning newspaper or tuned into the nightly news during this time was presented with a whitewashed version of events that automatically placed African Americans under scrutiny from the comfort of one's home. The consistent racialization of crime in the United States, and the resultant impoverished conditions of Black neighborhoods across the nation, situated them in a state of constant surveillance. Then, once confronted with the reality of the situation, state actors placed the blame upon African Americans as largely responsible for their environments,

[24] Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 3, quoted in Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, 112.

rather than on individual-level and structural neglect, marginalization, and racism, the actual causes.[25]

President Lyndon B. Johnson's Executive Order 11365 launched a federal investigation into the causes of these rebellions, forming the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (better known as the Kerner Commission) in the latter part of 1967 and early 1968. The commission examined employment and education opportunities, the welfare system, family structures, and housing and neighborhood conditions, and found that "white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it."[26] Made up of nine white men, one African-American man, and one white woman, these scholars (in their respective fields) confirmed what Black Panther Stokely Carmichael and social scientist Charles V. Hamilton indicated the year prior: institutional racism directly caused social unrest in the United States. Both the Civil Rights and Black Power movements pushed institutional racism as the primary explanation for Black inequality, as opposed to personal and familial failings.[27]

The Kerner Commission likewise oversaw an analysis of television, radio, and print coverage of the uprisings, determining that African Americans were highly dissatisfied with the mainstream media's portrayal of race relations in the United States. They offered three specific complaints: that mainstream media outlets acted as instruments for the white supremacist societal structure; journalists' information typically came from law

[25] Taylor, 8, 115.
[26] "Final Report, Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. March 1, 1968," *Civil Rights during the Johnson Administration, 1963-1969, part 5, Records of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission)*, (Austin, Tex.: Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, 1968), 1, ProQuest Black Freedom [History Vault].
[27] Taylor, 8–9.

enforcement officials; and that the national media downright ignored African Americans' attempts to aid the wounded and police brutality incidents. Historian Ashley Howard argues that newspaper coverage failed to focus on Black grievances and delegitimized them further by not acknowledging such protests. The Commission found that mainstream media sources failed to report the causes and consequences of the uprisings while exaggerating the mood of events. In other words, the Kerner Commission's findings were consistent with African Americans' accusations that the national news media's reporting was highly biased against Black communities.[28]

The civil uprisings of the 1960s unnerved most of the white population in the nation. News coverage of the events forced white Americans to confront the reality that African Americans lived with racial bias every day; only rather than acknowledge their own culpability, they felt more comfortable assigning blame to supposed Black criminality. The news media and mass media culture fostered this anxiety with their distortion of racial civil unrest throughout the 1960s. In response to President Johnson's question, "What effect do the mass media have on the riots," the Kerner Commission determined, "Elements of the news media failed to portray accurately the scale and character of the violence that occurred last summer [1967]. The overall effect was, we believe, an exaggeration of both mood and event. Important segments of the media failed to report adequately on the causes and consequences of civil disorders and on the underlying problems of race relations. They have not communicated to the majority of their audience—which is white—a sense of the degradation, misery, and hopelessness of life in the ghetto." In 1965, just two years prior

[28] Ashley Howard, "Linked Fates: Social Media as a Framing, Tactical and Witnessing Tool in the Black Lives Matter Movement," in *News of Baltimore: Race, Rage and the City* (New York: Routledge Press, 2017), 121–22.

to the publication of the Kerner Commission's findings, Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel Moynihan presented the Johnson administration with his personal report on racial discrimination and African American families. His findings sparked heated debate and provided both political sides with their own ammunition in the matter. While the Moynihan Report did advocate for policies that would address racial economic disparities, its contradictory nature also stoked the conservative narrative that blamed Black-family structures for inequality.[29]

Lyndon Johnson quickly dropped the Moynihan Report once it proved too controversial. Seemingly ignorant of the socioeconomic disparities and challenges African Americans endured, Johnson conflated the "riots" with Black criminality. African American Studies scholar, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor concludes that the president's summation set the stage for fearful oppression of the Black Power movement. She notes, "Characterizing Black anger at discrimination and segregation as criminal helped to explain Black Power and independent Black politics as crime, creating a pretext for yet more policing, arrests, and repression of the movement in general."[30] Black Power organizations, such as the Black Panthers, fought white supremacy on their terms and brought police brutality into the public spotlight, and in return, white society greeted them with immediate and panicked animosity.

Although the news media fashioned the 1960s uprisings as the lawless machinations of so-called uppity African Americans, instances of police brutality nearly

[29] "Final Report," *Records of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission)*, 9–10; Daniel Geary, "The Moynihan Report: An Annotated Edition. A historian unpacks *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* on its 50th anniversary," *Atlantic*, September 14, 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-moynihan-report-an-annotated-edition/404632/.
[30] Geary, "The Moynihan Report"; Taylor, 117–118.

always incited the unrest.[31] Yet, despite this fact, police in the United States had (have) a license to kill and were (are) fully willing to utilize it. In the twilight of his presidency, Johnson put forth the Safe Streets Act of 1968 that significantly enhanced public officials' power to surveil citizens, including the tactic of wiretapping. Once Richard M. Nixon entered the White House to lead the nation in 1969, he and his administration took a hard-line stance on law and order to confront Black insurgency, and further expanded the policing and surveillance state. Playing on white Americans' fears of Black bodies and supposed deviance, Nixon intensified the power and lengthened the reach of the criminal justice system, bolstering Johnson's Safe Streets Act in the process. Surveillance became essential to President Nixon's expansion of the police state, specifically targeting Black communities, and set the stage for mass incarceration during the 1970s. The Black Panther Party's attorney Charles R. Garry went as far as to say that the Nixon administration and Attorney General John N. Mitchell were "out to commit genocide" on the BPP.[32]

The BPP staunchly opposed police brutality and the growing policing by the state in the United States, incurring heavy surveillance measures as their clashes with law enforcement intensified. The white population, by and large, considered the police their lawful protectors against the scourge of Black rage that rocked their positions of privilege. As mainstream news media outlets reported on law enforcement–BPP exchanges, in the process constructing the Panthers and projecting them to the masses as threatening to civil white society, their collective image gained in notoriety. Historian Curtis J. Austin argues that the media used this carefully constructed image to instill fear in both white and Black

[31] In addition to African Americans, the 1960s emboldened numerous minoritized communities across the United States to fight for their rights as citizens.
[32] Taylor, 2, 65–66, 116; David Burnham, "F.B.I.'s Informants and 'Bugs' Collect Data on Black Panthers," *New York Times*, December 14, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

citizens so as to justify police repression.[33] Their presentation to the white viewing audience lent credence to the racist narrative that Black people sought to destroy the fabric of American society, which in many ways was true. However, the media's flagrant portrayal of the BPP as militant guerilla terrorists out to harm the police and white people ignored the truth and significance of their message of liberation, opportunity, and self-defense. In this manner, the news media acted as an agent of the policing state, rather than as an ally of democracy and a protector of its citizenry. The national news media and mass media culture served to normalize white fear and protect the status que that upholds white supremacy.

Television and newspapers steadily influenced United States society throughout the late 1960s by remolding and strengthening cultural racist stereotypes in the process. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense—now, the Black Panther Party (BPP)—caught the attention of newspaper journalists, inciting a wave of white anxiety within (and outside of) the United States. Historian Philip S. Foner compiled an entire volume dedicated to the BPP's ideology, given that the public's view of the Party had been so grossly distorted.[34] Later, building from Foner's text and others, legal scholar Bridgette Baldwin posited that "the mainstream media created a national imagined community of racial fear" through news reports about the BPP in spite of the fact that armed self-defense comprised a small portion of their objective to serve poor Black communities.[35] In public memory, the Panthers stand out in national media coverage, which highlighted any criminal activity or

[33] Austin, 89.
[34] Philip S. Foner, *The Black Panthers Speak* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1970), xxiv, xxviii–xxix.
[35] Bridgette Baldwin, "In the Shadow of the Gun: The Black Panther Party, the Ninth Amendment, and Discourses of Self-Defense," in *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement*, eds. Jama Lazerow and Yohuru Williams (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), 68.

other such provocative behaviors, and acted as the arbitrator of what constitutes legitimate and illegitimate protest.[36]

In 1971, the Committee on Internal Security (CIS) of the U.S. House of Representatives, chaired by Missouri congressman Richard H. Ichord, issued a report on the BPP outlining the Black Power organization's origins, purposes, objectives, and tactics. Early in the report, there was consensus with the Panthers that their media image was distorted to frame them as violent and hateful, and that the liberation organization possessed "a little publicized 'positive' side." However, quoting the word "positive" here foreshadowed the Committee's final summation of the Party on the last page:

> We have heard much testimony concerning their disillusionment. Originally the Panthers had some innovative community service ideas. . . . But the aims quickly shifted from service to the black community to vengeance on the white man. . . . There is no talk of better jobs, more equal educational opportunities, better houses. To the Panther, vengeance is sweeter than any of these things. They would unleash the destructive instincts in man—a very dangerous game to play. They have ended, not as noble Robin Hoods serving the oppressed, but as parasites living off the oppressed community. . . . They were glamorized by the press, which treated a shootout with the police as if it might be an exciting 4 to 3 baseball game (four Panthers dead and three police). . . . We must all realize that if our society is ever forced to choose between tyranny and anarchy, society will choose tyranny—for anarchy is the worst tyranny of all. Panthers, put down your guns and find your voices. If we rightly criticize the violence and lawlessness of the Panthers, we must offer hope and demonstrate progress as alternatives to the ghetto dweller in his misery.[37]

Only a few years following the Kerner Commission's findings that white society upholds African American degradation, the CIS castigated the BPP's actions, disregarding both their community aid and the racialized violence that spurred them on. As callous as it is

[36] Edward P. Morgan, "Media Culture and the Public Memory of the Black Panther Party," in *In Search of the Black Panther Party*, 325, 326.
[37] Hon. Richardson Preyer and Comm. On Internal Security, *Gun-Barrel Politics: The Black Panther Party, 1966–1971*, H.R. Rep. No. 92–470, at 55, 145 (1971) (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971), ProQuest Black Freedom [Congressional].

audacious, the CIS report was completely—even willfully—ignorant of the socioeconomic and political forces long at work in the United States. It was rife with racial, political, and class bias that ignores data and revels in establishment-led public opinion.

When a skewed public opinion combines with the power of government authority, false narratives are more easily embedded into the social order. A pre-existing narrative that conflated Blackness with criminality reinforced the state-sanctioned propaganda that targeted Black Power. The Panthers were unconventional and unique—thus, intimidating to white America. Yet the CIS's racist findings repackaged the Panthers' efforts as detrimental, rather than helpful, to Black communities. Many Black Americans, as well as white Americans, internalized the idea that Black Power, rather than state power, oppressed African American communities. In the hopes that Black communities would perceive Black Power as anarchical, the U.S. government spun the narrative to divert national attention onto the BPP instead of onto the true tyrants to Black communities. This tactic was representative of Fanon's argument that colonized people internalize racial stereotypes from their colonizers to the point of self-loathing.[38] Slavery endured in the United States for hundreds of years, and its destructive effects influenced how descendants of enslaved people perceived themselves. The national media culture and the state joined forces to regulate Black Power's message about Black communities, in order to curb its threat to the social order of white hegemony in the United States.

To protect this order, the Committee on Internal Security encouraged Congress to keep a watchful eye on the Black Panthers, their programs and activities.[39] Surveillance was particularly significant to the subversive group, following an ongoing program of

[38] See Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.
[39] *Gun-Barrel Politics*, H.R. Rep. No. 92–470, at 135 (1971).

exclusion in United States where Black people are constantly watched but never truly seen as human beings. BIPOC occupy an involuntary sociopolitical discursive realm in postcolonial societies, wherein they are both hyper-visible and hyper-invisible.[40] In a white supremacist society, they are Black first and foremost, hierarchized on sight. The national media culture in the United States has coopted the state's monopoly on citizen surveillance in order to provide a pervasive means for this society to both watch and punish people of African descent. The news aided and reinforced a state-sponsored project of surveilled exclusion and punishment of Black citizens by framing Black power groups, such as the BPP, as violent and threatening. Using images, racialized language, and biased information, the press manipulated and even constructed socio-cultural mores, including those nurtured in white supremacist conditions. The news—and the culture it creates—enable this visibility-invisibility dyad that exposes Black people while simultaneously ignoring their personhood. Both the news media and their white viewers and readers work together to other non-white individuals via a mechanism of collective gaze.

To replace the negative stereotypes that the mainstream media circulated, the Panthers formed their own printed newsletter, repurposing their agenda for a broader audience. Their friends in the mainstream media were few. The Black Panthers experienced widespread repression, a common experience among Black revolutionaries in a racist society. In 1970, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and notorious racist J. Edgar Hoover labeled the BPP the "most dangerous" extremist group in the country, a statement that proliferated in the major news sources such as the *New York Times*, *Chicago*

[40] Although all minorities including Native Americans, Latinx Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans, experience this racist phenomenon, I will specifically address individuals of African descent in this chapter.

Tribune, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Christian Science Monitor*.[41] This public framework made heroes out of police forces and villains out of the Panthers. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) released a list of forty-eight significant Panther-police incidents by the end of 1969, concluding that law enforcement officials were waging an all-out war against the Panthers. When confronted with this possibility, a New York policeman responded, "That's the silliest thing I've ever heard. The police hardly need any encouragement to go after the Panthers." The officer implied that the BPP came to them, when in fact, local and federal law enforcement targeted the Black Panthers. As a part of their community goals, the BPP even suggested organizing police departments by neighborhood, to better allow each racial demographic to oversee law enforcement in its community.[42]

Black Panther activist and mother of rapper Tupac Shakur Afeni Shakur stated in her letter from prison, "We feel that you are indicting, arresting, incarcerating, trying, and probably convicting us on an erroneous image of us that you have received from the daily press is not only erroneous but also brutally racist." News reports that sensationalized the Panthers as "gun-toting crazies who shriek and practice violence," were certain to cultivate anxiety among white people who already saw their position of privilege threatened by the Civil Rights Movement. Often viewed as needlessly subversive when contrasted with civil rights activists, argues mass media historian Jane Rhodes, Black Power politics was a

[41] Walter Trohan, "Washington Report: Black Panthers Plague Police," *Chicago Tribune*, January 5, 1970, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; "F.B.I. Brands Black Panthers 'Most Dangerous' of Extremists: Report Also Hits Weathermen as Guiding Force behind Violent Young People," *New York Times*, July 14, 1970, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; "Weatherman Group Has Violent Role—Hoover: FBI Chief Also Assails Black Panthers as 'Most Dangerous' of Extremist Groups," *Los Angeles Times*, July 14, 1970, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; "Imprisoned Black Panther Leader Pursues Revolution: Groups Accused," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 3, 1970, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[42] Howard, 120; Foner, *The Black Panthers Speak*, xxvii, xxvi, 179; Burnham, "F.B.I.'s Informants and 'Bugs' Collect Data on Black Panthers."

logical extension of the southern civil rights struggle, and there was considerable continuity among Black activists during this time. Accustomed to King's passive approach, U.S. society condemned Black Power for espousing violence, when, in actuality, the BPP sought to expose the hypocritical *carte blanche* that police forces held over African American communities.[43]

Police overreach was normalized in U.S. society, especially toward BIPOCs, yet when the Panthers employed similar tactics, the anxious white majority condemned them and Black Power politics as extreme. This double standard is indicative of the very practices the BPP attempted to highlight to U.S. citizens. Former NAACP president Robert Williams wrote in his manifesto *Negroes with Guns* (1962): "When people say that they are opposed to Negroes 'resorting to violence' what they really mean is that they are opposed to Negroes defending themselves and challenging the exclusive monopoly of violence practiced by white racists." BPP attacks on police (mostly carried out in their later years by members of the Black Liberation Army) were never unprovoked, they insisted, and reflected the polices' treatment—its abuse—of African Americans. After all, the BPP was formed in response to unprovoked violence on all Black people, and this context is essential to understand and acknowledge. The Panthers purposefully constructed themselves as a paradox to the general U.S. public. They were intimately familiar with constitutional law and utilized this know-how in police encounters, but also criticized nonviolent and reconciliation tactics. Unfortunately, this creative attempt at social commentary through protest clothing was lost on mainstream media.[44]

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[43] Foner, xxiv, 161; Taylor, 115–16; Rhodes, *Framing the Black Panthers*, 59.
[44] Austin, 89, 152–53; Rhodes, 59, 75. See also Destinee Forbes, "Readdressing Passivity: Protest Dress in 1960s Civil Rights Photography," *Fashion Studies Journal* (January 2019),

By 1967, the BPP was nationally known with chapters in California, Rhode Island, and Illinois, and print media failed to report on their activities until this same year. The *San Francisco Sunday Chronicler and Examiner*, in their first report on the Party, placed them on the front page with the article title, "It's All Legal: Oakland's Black Panthers Wear Guns, Talk Revolution." Tapping into the United States' fears of Black deviance and criminality, the article framed the Panthers as threatening, to white people especially. Government officials in Sacramento initiated a hysteria campaign that took hold nationwide, inspiring new firearms bills in response to the images of lethally armed African Americans. In 1969, Fred Hampton, Black Panther deputy chairman of the Chicago Black Panther Party chapter, was convicted of robbery, and, pending appeal, the presiding judge, Sidney Jones, denied him bail. When asked in an interview how the judge came to his decision, Jones responded that it was due to Hampton's answers to three questions asked of him by the assistant state attorney. Hampton's answer to the third question was telling: "Q[uestion]—Do you feel that a legitimate means of obtaining what you are after is armed violence or armed revolution? A[nswer]—I believe if we tried anything else we would end up like Dr. Martin Luther King."[45] Hampton had good reason to believe this, especially since he was later assassinated by law enforcement on December 4, 1969. It also speaks to the Panthers' overarching belief that they were defending Black communities from racist police brutality. The news and national media culture, then, sensationalized officials' biased misinformation and opinions into "truth" for the white populace, their consumers. This laid the groundwork for contemporary mis- and disinformation (also known as "fake

https://www.fashionstudiesjournal.org/longform/2019/1/25/readdressing-passivity-protest-dress-in-1960s-civil-rights-photography?rq=Forbes.

[45] Rhodes, 69–70; Foner, xxiv, xxi; "Why Judge Jailed Black Panther Aid: He Saw Hampton as 'Dangerous,'" *Chicago Tribune*, December 12, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

news," a phrase that, ironically, President Donald Trump popularized) to become normalized in the United States.

The phrase, "if it bleeds it leads" is a good depiction of how news reports took on a simplified dichotomized form in which dramatic entertainment and consumer culture's coopted responses drove the demand for a televised spectacle. Increasingly, personal stories that included internal conflict or those covering police encounters received the most attention. At the same time, the media shaped the public narrative of what constituted legitimate protest with credible leaders who were merely agitators upsetting the status quo. In this manner, the mass media closed itself off to outsiders' arguments and offered little more than a subjective response from consumers.[46] When controversy arose after a BPP member with an assault conviction was hired as a security guard for Crane Junior College in Chicago, Crane's freshly inaugurated president—the first African American man to fill his position—refused to confirm or deny the man's employment. Dr. Charles G. Hurst Jr. chastised the press by saying, "For all you know, I might be a Black Panther. All you want to do is write what the white community wants to read about. If you want a story about the security staff, come out here and do a complete story. There appears to be a tendency in this city to denounce every kind of black organization that displeases the white press or white authority."[47] Dr. Hurst's keen observation of both the news media and mass culture's propensity for confirmation bias powerfully illustrates my argument.

In his research of news articles covering the BPP, historian Edward P. Morgan examined three weekly magazines, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *U.S. News and World Report*,

[46] Morgan, "Media Culture," 326–27.
[47] William Jones, "Black Panther Hired as Guard for College: Convicted of Beating Bus Driver," *Chicago Tribune*, April 16, 1969, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

between 1966 and 1976 (he supplemented these with pieces from the *New York Times*, *Ramparts*, the *New Yorker*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*). None of the articles that he analyzed focused on community-building aspects of the Black Panthers (such as their free breakfast programs, free health clinic, and free clothing), nor did they pay substantive attention to the BPP's political ideology. The few articles that claimed to examine other aspects of the Panthers were peppered with references to police battles, guns, and violent rhetoric.[48] Indeed, sensational reports of violence—often containing racist undertones—are not in short supply when searching out articles covering the organization. Of course, when it comes to the news media and the culture it generates, general opinion builds a perceived group consensus, reminiscent of the psychological phenomenon Groupthink.

In a small opinions piece in the *Chicago Tribune*, the reporter stopped six people to get their take, respectively, regarding the Black Panthers (all of whom also allowed their photos to be taken and published). The group was comprised of two white men, two Black men, one white woman, and one Black woman. The general consensus among the interviewees was that Fred Hampton's murder was suspicious and that the government and law officials should not attempt to censor the Party, and the two Black men lauded their free breakfast programs. However, five out of six condemned them for their violent ideas—one white man described them as "a menace to society," and the white woman chose "a militant movement" as her depiction. The other white man said he found "them a bit dangerous," while one of the Black men went as far as likening the BPP to the Ku Klux Klan.[49] The overall review was not positive and reflected the largely negative feelings of

[48] Morgan, 330, 331.
[49] Michael Sneed, "mini'pinions: What do you think of the Black Panther party?" *Chicago Tribune*, February 19, 1970, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

average American citizens toward the BPP. Besides displaying white anxiety, it also shows how effectively the state and news media's project of othering and exclusion influences popular culture. One essential means by which the U.S. government and mainstream media subdued the African American population was to instill fear and mistrust in the Black citizenry of the BPP, to encourage Black Power rhetoric's repression. To convince Black people that Black Power was not for their (or anyone's) benefit, meant further discrediting the Party's efforts at political change.

In an article from early 1970 published in the *Chicago Tribune,* the author takes a decidedly pro-police position regarding the Panthers' handling of law enforcement. Describing the policeman's experience as "a most confused one, to say nothing of being an unhappy one," the writer points out that Americans were recently pleased that U.S. military forces had thwarted a "communist take-over," interrupting plans for guerrilla warfare with stockpiled weapons. This is precisely what the BPP is doing, he said, so why not move against them? The conflation of communism with BPP socialist rhetoric is not accidental; during the Cold War, appealing to Americans' programed fear of communism was (and continues to be) an effective political framework. The U.S. Cold War propagandized the United States' imperialist efforts across the globe as crucial to national security, and as a continuation of the nation's noble civilization project, its Manifest Destiny. Likewise, this framework placed BPP on the side that opposed the United States and its good fight, making them simultaneously menacing and unpatriotic. Continuing to criticize the BPP while defending law enforcement, the article states, "Police are being made to feel they are villains and enemies of society." Completely ignorant to how this statement identically depicted Black peoples' own feelings, the article is tone-deaf to the

Panthers' objectives: "There has been no call for investigation of the militant organization, altho [*sic*] its literature and statements seem to openly call for extermination of lawmen. . . . The killing of a Black Panther [Fred Hampton] in [a] gun battle [with Chicago police] was justifiable homicide." The journalist expressed no indication or acknowledgement of police brutality toward BIPOCs, yet the article stated clearly that police were fully justified in their murder of Hampton, simply for being police.[50]

The reporter also quoted head of the Fraternal Order of Police John Harrington: "The Panther charge that the police intend to exterminate them in nonsense, but the Panther plan to practice genocide where police are concerned seems to be a matter of record. The organization prides itself on feeding children. . . . The youngsters are given coloring books which depict the slaying of a policeman, pictures with a pig head, by a black man." The accusation that the BPP planned a genocide against police is as ludicrous as it is racist. Completely ignoring the fact that the African diaspora comprised the survivors of slavery, this report makes law enforcement out as victims, entirely, and depicts the Panthers as vicious and vindictive. Likewise, it also implies that Black people were indoctrinating their children against the heroes of law enforcement. There is no mention of police treatment of BIPOCs, nor of the Panthers' commitment to self-defense and community justice. In the closing paragraph, the article twice refers to the BPP as "sinister" and casually mentioned the "increasing polarization between the police . . . and the black community."[51] This publication is emblematic of the endemic collective consciousness of white communities during the long 1960s.

[50] Trohan, "Washington Report: Black Panthers Plague Police."
[51] Ibid.

The BPP consistently referred to armed resistance as only a small part of their broader discourse on self-defense. The Party did not report a unified position on the means of self-defense, community protection and development versus armed resistance and guerrilla warfare; however, regardless of the tabloid journalism criticizing their methods, it is important to note that the Panthers sought to access constitutionally protected rights in order to realize self-determination and support district autonomy.[52] During the 1960s (and still, today), African Americans faced multiple violent forces—most of which were state-sanctioned—including lynching, police brutality, inferior social services and educational facilities, substandard housing, and unemployment and underemployment. White retaliation to peaceful organization and protests led many BIPOCs to adopt Third World philosophies and networks that provided a comprehensive framework to address structural abuse. Armed self-defense, then, was not only constitutionally legal, but likewise as rational as it was morally justifiable.[53] The news media and mass media culture both heightened white panic toward Black Liberation struggles during the 1960s and made a culturally- and state-sanctioned project of exclusion via a process of collective surveillance.

From this process of exclusion and surveillance, the white supremacist narrative that correlates Blackness with criminality flourished. The racial uprisings of the 1960s frightened conservative pundits to the point where they steered white sentiment away from compassion and toward contempt.[54] Following these and other racial uprisings in the country, with the support of law-and-order rhetoric the state incarcerated African

[52] Baldwin, "In the Shadow of the Gun," 77, 69.
[53] Ibid., 73–74, 70.
[54] Clarence Lang, *Black America in the Shadow of the Sixties: Notes on the Civil Rights Movement, Neoliberalism, and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 59–60.

Americans disproportionately, often assigning hyper-punitive sentences as a means of control. Many Black Americans were left with few options outside of criminal activity simply to survive. White men with criminal records were (and still are) more likely to gain legitimate employment over Black men without criminal records.[55] The criminal justice system and racist social structure in the United States worked in tandem to continually disadvantage Black people and then blame them for their own repression. Regarding Black Power organizations such as the BPP, fearful whites reinterpreted their anger and frustration toward an unjust judicial system as a moral failing, their outspoken views as innate volatility.

In a *New York Times* article from September 1968 titled "Black Panthers: Angry Men 'at War' with Society," the BPP are described as "angry young Negroes rejecting 'moderate' approaches to racial problems," and "a marriage of angry intellectuals and the just plain angry." This reductive depiction placed anger as the focal point rather than the actions, or actors, that triggered the emotion. Likewise, by their reporting style, the press deemed anger to be a negative emotion. While the author briefly mentions some of the BPP's direct goals, the overall tone of the article mocks the Panthers' machinations while also reframing them as aimless and embittered. A further description embodied the white attitude that Black Liberation organizations, such as the Panthers, encountered, "The rank-and-file members are much less concerned with revolutionary theories, although they do seem caught up in such militant rituals as Afro haircuts, secret handshakes and the rhetoric particular to the black revolution." In a single sentence, the reporter managed to infantilize BPP efforts toward the Black Freedom Struggle, minimize their intellectual capacity, and

[55] Taylor, 66–67, 3.

associate Black aesthetic with armed aggression. A few sentences later the article, again, compares the BPP to "elite United States military units," holding sway over seemingly aimless young men. The military comparison is designed to strike fear into the anxious white populace that benefits from the racist power structure in the country. More importantly, it reverberates Huey Newton's summation of BPP strategy, that "the only way [a Black person] can become political is to represent what is commonly called a military power." Newton and the BPP endeavored to create power where there was none to balance the scales. However, military intervention held a weighty context during this period, and rather than viewing the Panthers as liberators—as the U.S. Army was wont to be imagined—fearful white Americans pegged them as aggressors.[56]

In closing, the *New York Times* article quoted a Black Panther member, summing up its previous hints toward African American revolution: "'Whitey talks about black people should [*sic*] not be armed when this country was born in violence. What he really wants is to be violent himself and insist that black people be submissive but it's not going to happen that way, not any more [*sic*].'" This Panther was correct about the United States' birth in violence, and his statement carried an ominous tone that would surely frighten the members of a white supremacist society who benefitted from such a system. The BPP, and other "radical" organizations (such as, SNCC and the Congress of Racial Equality, [CORE]), sought a cultural and socio-political revolution that would upend the capitalist structure that continues to value "law and order" over (Black) human life. The Panther's implication toward violence here is actually contending for self-defense and not initiative. However, in that time, white anxiety surely heightened at the insistence that African

[56] Thomas A. Johnson, "Black Panthers: Angry Men 'At War' With Society," *New York Times*, September 15, 1968, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Austin, 84.

Americans would no longer remain submissive to white, capitalist oppression. White supremacy necessitates the surveillance of Black people to better enable and perpetuate the status quo within the structurally racist society. For this process to fully take place, state-sanctioned control of Black people must persist beyond law enforcement and into the general public. All the better to punish BIPOCs for existing in a racialized environment.

Resistance precludes punishment in a country where individuals and groups that demand self-determination are marked as subversive. In Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, he demonstrates how the plague in Europe created a societal necessity to both confine and watch the members of a community deemed too dangerous to mix with the general population. Throughout the course of his broader argument, Foucault posits that the modern society shifted from confining the body to confining the soul as a means to instill personal responsibility, or rather, fear of consequences. The plague required order, discipline "by means of an omnipresent or omniscient power that subdivides itself." He further writes,

> But there was also a political dream of the plague, which was exactly its reverse: not the collective festival, but strict divisions; not laws transgressed, but the penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life through the mediation of the complete hierarchy that assured the capillary functioning of power. . . . Two ways of exercising power over men, of controlling their relations, of separating out their dangerous mixtures. The plague-stricken town, traversed throughout with hierarchy, surveillance, observation, writing; the town immobilized by the functioning of an extensive power that bears in a distinct way over all individual bodies.

Utilizing fear as an economic tool for capital gain, the news media in the United States serves as an all-seeing, all-knowing entity that pervades every facet of American life. News reports, particularly those that were and are televised, open a window onto the othered collective for the dominant, biased collective. The news is available for most any citizen

to view, however, this gaze functions to binarize the dangerous from the harmless, the normal from the abnormal.[57] In U.S. society, nonwhite people occupy the position of dangerous or abnormal and this distinction is made in order to brand and exclude Black people. Othered from the outset by racist pseudo-science, African Americans, in mass media culture, inhabit a sociopolitical discursive realm wherein they are continually othered and oppressed in a white supremacist social hierarchy that daily pushes them toward the bottom, applies force to hold them there, and blames them for it all.

The panoptic mechanism that allows for a subject to be surveilled but is then unable to view his peers or captors, implies direct visibility but lateral invisibility; this invisibility acts as a guarantee of both order and exclusion. According to Jeremy Bentham, power should be both visible and verifiable: inmates must know that they may be viewed at any time, yet never know precisely when. African Americans endure the constant threat of surveillance through extensions of state power such as law enforcement, but corporations such as news media play an integral role in societal discipline. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the news and mass media culture forged new methods of power and control by placing the Black Panther Party under constant public scrutiny. National news was still largely segregated at the time that the BPP inspired press coverage—newspapers typically grouped stories covering African Americans together in a single section. Media, influenced by its own fears and repulsion, relied heavily upon racially encoded frameworks of criminality to trigger white outrage over the Panthers' politics and style of protest. News sources subsumed the fear of Black Power under law-and-order rhetoric, popular at the time. Under the collective gaze of anxious, middle-class white people, this movement for

[57] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978; New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 197–99.

social improvement and self-determination was repackaged as a violent revolution, sure to threaten white sensibilities and comfort. Foucault argues that this repackaging is an important mechanism because it disindividualizes and automatizes power. The Panopticon was designed to induce a state of "permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" in the incarcerated and allows for the exercise of power to be perfected. Its schema can be integrated into any institution to increase the effect of its function and its aim is to reinforce social forces or internal mechanisms of power.[58]

In the United States, the social order is hierarchized on a basis of white supremacy. A panoptic schema can operate in any given institution to arrange and fortify power as the society sees fit. A racist population, then, would see fit to nurture tired narratives that instill a false sense of white superiority and Black criminality. Government officials gazed at even the more-palatable Civil Rights activists with suspicion. A sanitized version of Dr. King is praised today in white circles; however, such was not the case during the 1960s. FBI Director Hoover, intensely anticommunist and paranoid to boot, consistently harassed King and his family despite a lack of evidence that King had any Communist Party involvement.[59] When the Panthers arrived on the scene with a harder stance and more unforgiving position than King and other individuals more beholden to passive or nonviolent resistance, white fear necessitated a disciplinary program whereby subversive Black Power organizations (such as the BPP, CORE, and SNCC), and BIPOCs more broadly, could be watched yet not heard. The news media and mass media culture made it possible for white people, collectively, to constantly dissect Panthers' more suggestive behavior while simultaneously ignoring their operations for neighborhood improvement

[58] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 200–202, 206, 208, 215; Rhodes, 88–89.
[59] Self, *American Babylon*, 229.

and social programs. Because of this, the BPP occupied a visible-invisible dyad that persists today.

Chapter Three: Neoliberalism, the War on Drugs, and the Mass Incarceration Crisis

The news media and mass media culture have not let up in their program of exclusion. Today, many of the same narratives are tossed around in relation to the twenty-first-century Black Liberation Movement, especially Black Lives Matter (BLM). Rather than focusing on the Black Freedom Struggle legacy that BLM inherited, the news continues to hype the most salacious aspects at the fringes of the movement. BLM supporters have been labeled Marxist subversives who are anti-American and anarchical. These same narratives enveloped the BPP in the United States (and elsewhere) and serve to enflame white fear and prop up white supremacy. Trouillot said that "narratives are necessarily emplotted in a way that life is not," and they distort life regardless of the presence of empirical evidence to the contrary.[60] To support the white supremacist narrative that saturates the Panthers' image is antithetical to the press's first duty to its citizens. The news media has a responsibility to unveil its liberal blind-spots in order to act as a true pillar of democracy and not as another appendage of systemic racism. White Americans have a responsibility to divest themselves of this contemporary panoptic schema that the digital age has made even more possible and to confront their colonial anxieties. If the 1960s have taught us anything, it is that racial injustice only grows stronger when a society accepts the visible-invisible dyad compulsorily assigned to BIPOCs.

White citizens have a vested interest in both the exposure of systemic racism, and in an expanded social welfare structure in the United States, argues scholar Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. Following his inauguration in 1969, Richard Nixon went to work shredding the welfare state that Lyndon Johnson built through his Great Society during his

[60] Trouillot, 6.

tenure as president. In order to obscure his efforts to cut public spending and reallocate the funds to the war without it appearing obvious, Nixon employed coded language in his rhetoric, such as the now well-known descriptor "colorblind." Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, courts could no longer argue that racist legislation was responsible for African Americans' economic conditions. Just as colorblindness obscured racism, this political framework likewise obfuscated the economic crisis of the early 1970s. Politicians could then explain away their departure from public spending as the result of moral decay and "inner city" criminality of the residents, Black people, of course.[61]

The U.S. presidencies that followed Nixon's only intensified his policies that cut public spending in favor of a robust industrial military complex. Jimmy Carter laid the groundwork for Ronald Reagan's famous retreat from social welfare provision policies, a plan that George H. W. Bush carried forward into his presidency. Democratic President Bill Clinton rivaled conservatives' harsh policies, however, with his administration's turn to "welfare reform," the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the "three strikes" law that mandated a life sentence for an offender's third violent felony. In 1993, the Clinton administration unveiled the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (1994) that instituted life sentences for nonviolent offenses and commissioned an additional 100,000 police officers to fight crime in the United States. Each of the U.S. presidents, from Nixon through to the end of the twentieth century, both republicans and democrats, systematically stripped the nation of its social welfare capability and capacity,

[61] Taylor, 5, 52–53, 60.

the consequences of which wreaked havoc upon African-American communities.[62] The social inequality that has resulted is undeniable, and yet neoliberal warriors are quick to point toward a small sample of African-American economic success while ignoring the socio-economic chasm that exists between them and the majority of Black Americans. The success of a few—Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas, for instance—allowed for racist neoliberals to chastise and blame Black people for their own hardships, labeling them lazy for not taking advantage of the myriad "opportunities" that the United States provides and the many doors it opens to them.[63]

President Nixon's "criminal justice information systems" worked to directly surveil and penalize African Americans following the Black Power uprisings of the mid- to late 1960s. He and other politicians reframed these rebellions as the blame for the Black underclass, saying that white sentiment would otherwise not have turned against impoverished working-class Black people. By characterizing Black indignation at discrimination and segregation as criminal, Nixon and the news media, together, created a pretext for increased surveillance, policing, and arrests, mainly, of BIPOCs.[64] In 1971, Nixon initiated one of the most detrimental state-executed campaigns against African American and impoverished communities of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: the

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[62] Clarence Lang, *Black America in the Shadow of the Sixties: Notes on the Civil Rights Movement, Neoliberalism, and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 50, 63; Taylor, 100–101; Self, 316; Matthew R. Pembleton, *Containing Addiction: The Federal Bureau of Narcotics and the Origins of America's Global Drug War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2017), 9–10, 300. For more on how the War on Drugs developed throughout George H. W. Bush's (and others') presidency, see Andrew B. Whitford and Jeff Yates, *Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda: Constructing the War on Drugs* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), Susan Stuart, "War as Metaphor and the Rule of Law in Crisis: The Lessons We Should Have Learned from the War on Drugs," *Southern Illinois Law Journal* 36, (2011): 1–44, Hein Online, André Douglas Pond Cummings, "'All Eyez on Me': America's War on Drugs and the Prison-Industrial Complex," *Journal of Gender, Race, and Justice* 15, (2012): 417–48, Hein Online.
[63] Taylor, 6, 82.
[64] Lang, 59–60; Taylor, 67, 118.

War on Drugs. To combat the rising drug use that threatened conservatives' dream, or delusion, of a "family values" nation (read Christian and patriarchal), neoliberal politicians targeted Black people with exorbitant and unjust prison sentences that destroyed whole communities, irreversibly.

What neoliberal conservatives indicated as African Americans' personal inability to uplift themselves from economic decrepitude was, in fact, a continuation of the United States' protracted initiative to frame Black people as inherently criminal and morally under-evolved. Historian Clarence Lang argues that the War on Drugs manufactured a specified modern version of the general criminalization of the Black citizenry in the United States, and globally. On 14 October 1982, at the U.S. Justice Department, President Reagan announced his plan to crack down on the illegal drug trade—a pronouncement greeted with a standing ovation from law enforcement officials present. Two years later, Reagan signed the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, a system that established mandatory minimum sentences and procedures for civil asset forfeiture.[65] In 1986, the First Lady, Nancy Reagan, joined in the crusade with her "Just Say No" campaign for children. All of these public endeavors, however, belied the goings-on behind the scenes whereby cocaine entered the U.S. populace through government foreign policy measures.

At the University of New Mexico in 2018, former Captain and co-founder of the Seattle Chapter Black Panther Party Aaron Dixon (1968–1972) gave an account of his experiences with the War on Drugs. Following his stint with the Seattle Panthers, Dixon moved to Oakland, California, ground zero for the crack epidemic during the 1980s.

[65] Lang, *Black America*, 28; Mary Thornton, "U.S. Escalates Newest War on Crime, Drugs: Government Plans to Intensify Its War on Crime and Narcotics," *Washington Post*, October 15, 1982, ProQuest Historical News and Newspapers; Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, S. 1762, 98th Congress (1984).

Reagan's social cuts laid the groundwork for what Dixon calls the worst thing to happen to the Black community since slavery. "Ronald Reagan was the beginning. . . . Before Ronald Reagan we didn't have large amounts of homeless people. We had a level of socialism that existed in our society," Dixon stated. The Cold War and the threat of spreading communism in South America drove Reagan to make a deal with devil that would utterly destroy African American communities. Dixon explained the Reagan Administration's plans:

> And Ronald Reagan became so alarmed . . . and that fear and paranoia of communists spreading throughout South America, you know, created this thing where we started funding a counter-revolutionary group, the Contras. Oliver North was involved to try to get funding to the Contras. Congress said that they weren't going to fund it. So what did they do? The CIA turned to the Nicaraguan drug dealers who had been big time drug dealers in the 60's and 70's, who were also responsible for bringing a lot of cocaine into America, and so they began to use those drug dealers to import cocaine into America to raise money for the Contras to have this counter-revolutionary war against the Nicaraguan government and the Nicaraguan people who had fought and died to create a better society in their country. And so, you know, millions and millions of pounds [of cocaine] start[ed] finding its way into America.

Dixon went on to explain that during the 1960s, in the midst of the Vietnam conflict, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) brought heroin into the country, setting a precedent for the Reagan administration's actions with Nicaragua:

> So that was the first time the CIA brought heroin into America. And what that did then was it created a whole epidemic of heroin addiction and crime, which began this war on drugs by Nixon, they began to put more black people in prison. So here it is, 10 years later, under Ronald Reagan, they're importing all this cocaine into America. And at the same time, you have his wife saying, "just say no to cocaine", and it's, it's proven that Ronald Reagan, [George H. W.] Bush . . . and Bill Clinton, were involved in this cocaine coming into America.[66]

[66] Aaron Dixon, "Journey through the Black Underground" (public lecture, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, April 3, 2018), http://news.unm.edu/news/aaron-dixon-lecture-journey-through-the-black-underground; Aaron Dixon, "The Impact of the Drug Epidemic on Black Families," interview by Yuko Kodama, KBCS Radio, June 4, 2019, https://www.kbcs.fm/2019/06/04/the-impact-of-the-drug-epidemic-on-black-families/. See also Gary Webb, *Dark Alliance: the CIA, the Contras, and the Crack Cocaine Explosion* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1998), David Farber, *Crack: Rock Cocaine, Street Capitalism,*

This searing indictment of these presidential administrations speaks to the hypocrisy of these presidents, but also the lengths to which governmental officials will go to reinforce a white, Christian, neoliberal agenda. They will poison their citizens. Black lives did not matter, after all, so the detrimental effects of crack addiction meant little to politicians and seemed only to further harden the white citizenry toward African Americans.

Once cocaine's easy-to-produce and even-more-addictive cousin, crack, came on the scenes, Black communities were hit especially hard beginning in the Oakland and Los Angeles areas. Crack cocaine's addictive quality was unmatched at the time and doctors and researchers struggled to understand what they were dealing with. This, combined with budget cuts to mental health and public housing programs, left the country reeling as the drug decimated entire communities. The news media reported frequently on the crack epidemic during the late 1980s, showing the United States the grittier side and tragic cost of sociopolitical neglect. The state's ineffectual response and the news and mass media culture's coverage of crack addiction in Black neighborhoods further entrenched harmful stereotypes of Black people as criminal and enthralled by sensual pleasures. The news media chose to focus on the sensational aspects of the epidemic, the resultant violence and crime, and the seeming disintegration of the Black family. The Reagan administration turned a blind eye and blamed African American culture for the problem.[67] A more productive course of action would include a serious look at the myriad sociopolitical factors

and the Decade of Greed (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), Pembleton, *Containing Addiction*, Susan Stuart, "War as Metaphor and the Rule of Law in Crisis."

[67] The AIDS crisis ran concurrently with the crack epidemic, another public health crisis that destroyed African American communities while Ronald Reagan remained deafeningly silent on the matter. African American resilience is truly remarkable, without question, but the U.S. government failed Black communities in both crises, especially. See Dan Royles, *To Make the Wounded Whole: The African American Struggle against HIV/AIDS* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

and government policies in place that allowed for (and even fostered) such an epidemic in the first place. The media failed in this regard.

News reports of the crack epidemic primarily focused on the crime associated with the drug and its effects on users' children. Several newspaper articles from the late 1980s place a microscope on crack-addicted Black mothers, and, in the process, constructed a white supremacist narrative that African American women cared more for their personal sensual pleasures than for their own children. Former Black Panther Aaron Dixon commented on the racist explication: "And the thing about it is this drug is so addictive, that people would do anything to get some more crack. And, you know, black mothers have always been the most maternal, because they had to take care of the slave masters kids. They were used to take care [*sic*] of other people's kids. When slavery ended, they had a chance to take care of their kids. And so . . . black mothers were very maternalistic. But when they used crack cocaine that maternalism went away." Reporters and government officials told the general citizenry that Black people caused their own suffering and did not deserve help because African American mothers simply did not care about their children.[68] In their minds—originating from the white supremacist consciousness in U.S. society—Black women's licentiousness and supposed disregard for their infants and children spoke to their so-called criminal nature. Since the issue of fetuses and infants often receives a knee-jerk reaction from conservatives, it was all too easy for them to conclude that such Black people were vile and monstrous rather than woefully failed by their government.[69]

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[68] This is in stark contrast to the dialectics of the opioid crisis occurring today.

[69] Peter Kerr, "Babies of Crack Users Fill Hospital Nurseries: Crack Users' Babies Crowding Hospital Nurseries," *New York Times*, August 25, 1986, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Marshall Ingwerson, "Crack's heavy burden on mothers and their children," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 12, 1988, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; "547 Children Taken From Parents Who Use Crack," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, March 9, 1989, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Marcia Slacum Greene, "The Crack Legacy: Children In Distress; Abuse, Neglect Rising in D.C. Drugs Ravage Home Life; Rising Crack Use Brings

In addition to their critiques of Black motherhood, journalists depicted the crisis in terms of its danger to non-users more so than the crack consumers, themselves. Such reporting inculcated fear among anxious whites since they too, could become the next victims of the epidemic. This sort of framework draws readers' focus toward themselves, quashing empathy and the sort of critical thinking that leads the average citizen to question and critique their government's prescient role in the crisis. An article in the *Washington Post* from 1986 made it clear that escalating crack houses were the problem and that law enforcement was really the only solution to which policymakers turned. "It is anticipated that crack addiction will cause an increase in crime in the Washington, D.C., area," the D.C. Police Chief Maurice T. Turner Jr. informed residents. Descriptors for such areas usually involved the words "inner city," or "urban." Newspapers employed coded racialized language in some cases—such as "inner city"—while others declared their racism more plainly.[70]

In a *New York Times* article covering crack in Columbus, Ohio, it is clear that white residents considered themselves removed from the situation and were rather annoyed by

Parallel Epidemic of Neglected Children; Overburdened Officials See More Children Abused, Abandoned by Drug-Using Parents," *Washington Post*, September 10, 1989, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Marcia Slacum Greene, "The Crack Legacy: Ad Hoc Orphanages; 'Boarder Babies' Linger in Hospitals: Drug Users Abandon Their Infants; Abandoned Babies Burden Hospitals," ibid., September 11, 1989, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Sandra Blakeslee, "Crack's Toll Among Babies: A Joyless View, Even of Toys; Crack Takes Toll on Babies' Emotions," *New York Times*, September 17, 1989, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Lynn Duke, "Crack Abuser's Baby Is Born: Doctors Don't Yet Know Cocaine's Effect on Infant; Mother on Crack Awaits Prognosis of Baby Girl," *Washington Post*, December 20, 1989, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Dixon, "The Impact of the Drug Epidemic on Black Families."

[70] Peter Kerr, "New Violence Seen in Users of Cocaine: Crack Abuse Is Linked To Paranoid Behavior," *New York Times*, March 7, 1987, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Elizabeth Kolbert, "Albany Plans Tougher Penalties For Possession and Sale of Crack: Stiffer Penalties Planned For Possession of Crack," *New York Times*, May 16, 1988, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; John Kifner, "As Crack Moves Inland, Ohio City Fights Back: Cocaine Reaches The Heartland," *New York Times*, August 29, 1989, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Zita Arocha, "Ex-Addict Says He Cooked Cocaine at 10 Houses: Senate Probers Told Crack Was Prepared in Silver Spring High-Rise, Inner City Places," *Washington Post*, July 16, 1986, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

the threat to gentrification in the area. The reporter wrote, "Columbus has grown and prospered in recent years . . . with an array of shops that would have been found a few years ago only in New York and a handful of other cities. . . . [It's] part of an upper-middle class consumer culture spreading across America. . . . But little of the prosperity of this city of predominantly white-collar jobs has reached the inner-city neighborhoods; here, as in other urban areas, a far more insidious kind of consumer culture is spreading: the culture of the crack house." Ensuring to bring up the fear factor, the author made quick work of othering "inner-city" residents and the crack epidemic as an anomaly that threatened the moral fabric of white neoliberal society.[71]

The article then quoted the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), leaving no doubt in the minds of readers as to the War on Drug's racial implications. The DEA claimed, "Crack cocaine remains a predominantly inner-city urban phenomenon that is mainly confined to minority sections. Large-scale interstate networks controlled by Jamaicans, Haitians and black street gangs dominate the manufacture and distribution of crack. . . . Crack is basically confined to the inner-city black areas." News media implicated African Americans and Black immigrants in the crisis, who were involved, admittedly, but there was little or no indication of systemic reasons for the crack epidemic. The War on Drugs aided modern racial segregation by exposing African American communities to addictive substances; policing and surveilling their neighborhoods; imprisoning them on a massive scale; and blaming them for it all, with the news media and mass media culture's aid.[72]

[71] John Kifner, "As Crack Moves Inland."
[72] Ibid.

Because of this war on Black People, the prison population exploded, rising by 700 percent between 1970 and 2005—a larger increase than that of both crime and population growth. The most rapid spike occurred during the mid-1980s through the 1990s, when the U.S. government implemented harsh mandatory minimum sentences and penalties for nonviolent drug offenses. Between 1970 and 1980, the prison population grew from 196,429, to 315,974, the largest number of Americans ever incarcerated. Lang states, "The deadly linchpin of these economic and political trends affecting African Americans is mass incarceration. It has replaced mass migration as the central historical force shaping black life, serving as the dumping ground for the nation's social problems and racial inequities." As of 2015, one out of every 15 Black men was incarcerated in the United States as compared to one out of every 106 white men, and Black women are the fastest growing demographic of the prison population.[73]

The U.S. criminal justice system incarcerates African Americans at a rate six times higher than their white counterparts. This systemic overimprisonment of Black people conflates race and criminality in order to legitimize the state and media's scrutiny of Black communities. Scholars Michelle Alexander, Ibram X. Kendi, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor contend that the entire criminal justice system works at the expense of African Americans and that, whether consciously or not, white Americans benefit from this system.[74] Not only are white people far less likely to be penalized as often or as harshly for the same offenses, but their racist fear that lies at the center of this surveillance project

[73] Lang, 27–28, 54; United States Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prisoners, 1925–1981* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1982), 2, quoted in Taylor, 68.
[74] See Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (2016; repr., New York: Bold Type Books, 2017), Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist* (New York: One World Press, 2019), and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Chicago, Ill.: Haymarket Books, 2016).

reinforces the United States' white supremacist hierarchy. By perpetuating deeply ingrained stereotypes of Black people as dangerous, careless, and wanton, the news media and mass media culture nurture the social environment necessary to encourage and excuse both the mass incarceration crisis and police brutality in the United States. Governmental policies and mass media culture engage in a symbiotic relationship to advance the state-sanctioned project of African American exclusion.[75] Furthermore, beginning in the 1970s and continuing into the 1990s, politicians and pundits blamed the Black working poor for the United States' economic and welfare state, in addition to and apart from the Black community's own struggles.

Neoliberals and liberals alike shifted the focus away from the Black Panthers' critiques of institutionalized racism toward African Americans' imagined cultural shortcomings. This political maneuver functioned to uphold the myth of the "American Dream" while simultaneously implicating Black Americans in their societal hardships.[76] Since "personal responsibility" failed to contain the substance-use issue in the United States, its conservative-led government turned to the surveillance and control of African Americans via mass incarceration. The War on Drugs' further erosion of Fourth Amendment protections allowed for unquestioned racial profiling and harassment in the name of cleaning up the nation's growing moral decay. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, news pundits and neoliberal commentators espoused a retrospective history that blamed the Civils Rights and Black Power rebellions of the late 1960s for the African American underclass. In reality, following these events, the U.S. government's crusade against Black people laid the groundwork for the mass incarceration crisis. Government officials played

[75] Taylor, 3.
[76] Ibid., 8.

their own role in disseminating the drugs against which they so vehemently fought, then waged war on poisoned Black communities.[77]

Historian Khalil Muhammad argues that for white Americans, Black criminality became one of their most widely accepted bases for discrimination and racial violence as a mechanism for public safety (and control).[78] Alongside the War on Drugs and its resulting mass incarceration crisis housing segregation accounted for the disparities between white and Black wealth. Physically separating the Black citizenry from the white citizenry allowed for detrimental stereotypes of African American criminality to multiply easily within mass media culture. Living conditions deteriorated rapidly in these segregated communities, and whites then blamed these conditions on Black peoples' supposed inferior hygiene, a stereotype propagated by mass media culture. A racist narrative was far easier for the collective white consciousness in the United States to accept over the stark realities of redlining, redistricting, and gentrification.[79] In 1981, President Reagan effectively eviscerated the Housing Act of 1968, along with his predecessor's federal subsidies program for Section 8 public housing. The Reagan Administration cut the U.S. Department of Housing's (HUD) funds nearly in half, planning to rely solely on private sector production to cover Section 8 housing.[80]

In a departure from the news media's prevailing trend, two correspondents for the *Washington Post* challenged Reagan's destructive law-and-order policies, in June 1988. Reasoning that drug use, while still high, had decreased, public awareness had increased,

[77] Lang, 27, 59.
[78] Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, 4, quoted in Taylor, 112–13.
[79] Taylor, 113.
[80] Andre Shashaty, "U.S. Cuts Back and Shifts Course on Housing Aid," *New York Times*, October 18, 1981, https://www.nytimes.com/1981/10/18/realestate/us-cuts-back-and-shifts-course-on-housing-aid.html.

and that the American people seemed more than willing to allow for strict antidrug measures, the article brings up the matter of civil liberties. The article states: "The danger exists that public demands for fast results will translate into government responses that are both ineffective and needlessly intrusive into individual liberties, potentially undermining support for the long-term education, control and prevention efforts that promise real improvement." This seems to indicate concern for white Americans, as officials and media alike pushed that increased policing measures would solve this "inner-city" problem. The authors, Richard Morin and Jodie Allen, quoted a social science researcher for the University of Michigan, lauding the media: "Clearly there has been rapid diffusion of this drug, but we believe that the very extensive media coverage of its hazards helped to put a cap on this epidemic far more quickly than we have seen for any of the other drugs." Indeed, U.S. government authorities were successful in their bid to surveil and punish the people the crack crisis hit hardest: African Americans. However, the detrimental effects of the punitive War on Drugs have carried the United States into an era of mass incarceration that disproportionately targets Black communities for the benefit and "relief" of white communities. Black Power movements carried forward from the 1960s into the twenty-first century. The rise of #Black Lives Matter, an on-the-ground intersectional protest movement, in 2012 brought white supremacist anxiety in full force on the news media culture scene.[81]

[81] Richard Morin and Jodie Allen, "Are We Shooting Ourselves in the Foot in the War on Drugs?" *Washington Post*, June 26, 1988, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. See also Ojmarrh Mitchell, "Is the War on Drugs Racially Biased?" *Journal of Crime and Justice* 32, no. 2 (2009): 49–75, https://doi.org/10.1080/0735648X.2009.9721270.

Chapter Four: #Black Lives Matter and the Legacy of Black Power in the Twenty-First Century

The mass incarceration of BIPOC following the Black Power uprisings of the late 1960s exacerbated the pervasive criminalization of African Americans and Black culture. High African American imprisonment and the racial stigma associated with the Black underclass generated a wealth of racist ordinances directed at Black people in public spaces.[82] The news and mass media culture worked in tandem with state authorities to enable a public-controlled panoptic mechanism designed to target African Americans. Welfare and public housing cuts occurred right alongside the War on Drugs creating a three-pronged assault on Black communities. This resulted in propaganda that stoked white people's fears surrounding an old, unfounded racist stereotype of Black criminality, and sanctioned and enabled the over-policing, surveillance, and incarceration of millions of African Americans. Whether consciously or not, the state and news media and mass media culture reinforced one another to sustain the white supremacist hierarchy in the United States. Fortunately, Black Power movements, from the 1960s through to the present day, have worked to dismantle this hierarchy for the liberation of all BIPOCs. Black Power's legacy lives on in the twenty-first century through the #Black Lives Matter movement.

Protests broke out in spring of 2012 following the February shooting death of seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida. The massive response to his murder at the hands of George Zimmerman illustrates the legacy of the Sixties and Black Freedom struggles. Scholar Clarence Lang argues that historians and activists should not frame current movements for justice in the history of the 1960s because it creates the

[82] Lang, 105.

appearance that racist violence is a thing of the past, when it most certainly is a present-day issue. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the nightly news and television shows such as *Cops* portrayed Black people to the general public as violent, deviant, and thuggish, contributing to the continued criminalization of African Americans in the twenty-first century. Such stereotypes are clear within Zimmerman's story of the shooting. Although Martin committed no crime (like so many other stolen lives) Zimmerman shot him and claimed self-defense, a statement that Martin's close friend, Rachel Jeantel, disputed as she was on a phone call with Martin when the incident occurred.[83] Zimmerman said he feared for his safety, citing Martin's hoodie as reason for suspicion. Police officers who arrived at the scene accepted his story outright, and Zimmerman was ultimately acquitted for the crime. Law enforcement assumed Martin was the aggressor because he was Black, and simply being Black is thoroughly associated with a threat to the social order.[84]

Appearance—or respectability politics—plays a significant role in this white supremacist narrative, as evidenced by Zimmerman's testimony regarding Martin's hoodie. Martin was walking through Zimmerman's neighborhood, on his cellphone, doing nothing suspicious, and yet was shot for being Black in a public space, a white neighborhood. Racial profiling and the pathologizing of Black people, not his actual behavior, led to Martin's murder. Officials did not arrest George Zimmerman until forty-five days following the shooting, largely due to public outcry. The state's inaction in the matter is representative of the racist hysteria that is commonly accepted among white

[83] Several news media continuously misreported Jeantel as Martin's girlfriend. Zimmerman's defense team then vilified her in an attempt to illegitimate the complex intimacy that Jeantel and Martin shared. See Jennifer C. Nash, "Unwidowing: Rachel Jeantel, Black Death, and the 'Problem' of Black Intimacy," *Signs* 41, no. 4 (Summer 2016): 751–74.

[84] Lang, 34, 63, 103, 105; "Lawyer: Girl on phone with Trayvon Martin cuts shooter's self-defense claim," *CNN*, March 20, 2012, https://www.cnn.com/2012/03/20/justice/florida-teen-shooting; Taylor, 13, 147.

Americans. Although Zimmerman was known to utilize racial slurs and espoused vigilantism, the state and news media portrayed him as the victim, and Martin as the criminal. The *Christian Science Monitor* even referred to Zimmerman as a "former altar boy"—the reason for this language choice is ambiguous, however, the juxtaposition of Zimmerman as religious and Martin as just Black, harkens back to the Black deviance and criminality narrative made popular from the sixteenth century onward. The fact that Zimmerman was allowed to walk free for such a protracted period is emblematic of the racist criminal justice system in the United States. The people's collective voice stirred law enforcement and government officials to action, however reluctantly. Leading news anchors devoted the spotlight to Martin and his killer George Zimmerman only after celebrities involved themselves and once public outcry against state-sanctioned violence toward BIPOC captured the zeitgeist.[85] Black activists achieved this victory and others by means of a new media: social media.

Social media use has transformed the social-protest arena, challenging the dominant narratives of criminality that surrounded reporting of the uprisings during the 1960s. The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter first appeared in a Twitter post in July 2013 by activist Alicia Garza. Following the police murders of Michael Brown and Eric Garner in summer of 2014, people for Black lives elevated the phrase to its status as a modern movement for Black Liberation. Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi and Garza formed the Black-centered movement Black Lives Matter in response to Zimmerman's acquittal. Between 2012 and 2016, the hashtag was tweeted over 30 million times. The procurement

[85] Lang, 34, 97; Patrik Jonsson, "Who is George Zimmerman, and why did he shoot Trayvon Martin?" *Christian Science Monitor*, March 24, 2012, https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2012/0324/Who-is-George-Zimmerman-and-why-did-he-shoot-Trayvon-Martin; Taylor, 13, 15, 148–50.

of news through social media websites has erased the days when Americans waited for their morning newspaper or nightly television news report. It also provides a different perspective on happenings that mainstream media news sources often downplayed, and cellphone videos offer the citizenry a new means by which to surveil law enforcement, thus turning the tables on the state. Philando Castille's murder, livestreamed from his girlfriend's Facebook live video feed, turned the panoptic mechanism back onto law enforcement and their lack of accountability. It likewise exposed white Americans to the realities of Black life of which they were ignorant. Such videos are vital witnessing tools that better expose and prove unjustifiable police action.[86] Everyday Black citizens organized through social media venues, creating political bonds in the process. Black Freedom Studies scholars agree that popular mobilization is effective to address social injustice, and in the twenty-first century, social media sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, provide the discursive space for activists to gather and strategize. Mass media culture creates a space whereby members of a society use the dialectics present for multitude purposes. Technology placed the power of public opinion back in the citizenry's hands, allowing them to challenge the propaganda machine. Activists rejected the tired narratives reiterated by the press and recirculating in the American consciousness and utilized their own form of the U.S.'s panoptic media to achieve large-scale resistance to police brutality—that stretched across the globe.[87]

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[86] It is important to note that while these recordings serve a purpose for accountability, they are also a spectacle and recreation of Black lynching, of which the emotional and mental toll is incalculable for Black people. Activists encourage others to avoid sharing these videos on social media because it further compounds the harm and multiplies the trauma.

[87] Niraj Chokshi, "How Twitter Hashtag Came to Define Black Lives Matter Movement," *New York Times*, August 23, 2016, ProQuest New York Times; "Herstory," About, Black Lives Matter, accessed March 11, 2022, https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/; Howard, "Linked Fates," 123, 127, 129, 130; Taylor 10, 151, 174; Barbara Ransby, *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimaging Freedom in the Twenty-First Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 101–102; Lang, 103.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) activists disrupt the news media and mass media culture's portrayal of police brutality as one-time local events. They humanize the victims and bring the conversation to the fore, so that broader audiences can empathize with the deceased. In the same manner, activists on social media challenge the news media's tendency to display images from the victims' social media accounts that portray them as more threatening.[88] By taking these narratives to task in the public sphere, BLM activists reveal the symbiotic relationship in which the news media and mass media culture engage in order to uphold the white supremacist societal hierarchy. Social media use for Black Liberation increases the likelihood that people such as Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, Eric Garner, and Philando Castille will not just fade into obscurity, the world unaware of their personal (and collective) injustices. Social media use does not guarantee long-term systemic change, however effectual it might be. Law enforcement has turned on to social media and cellphone technology's usefulness, adjusting their own tactics to engage, manage, and oppress BLM and African Americans more broadly.[89]

Just as activists have turned to contemporary technologies to mete out justice, law enforcement officials make use of such technologies for surveillance and policing purposes. The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) contracted a Cessna plane to take video surveillance footage of citizens. In an article from the *Wire*, the author makes a keen observation of the BPD's tactics: "It turns out that Baltimore checks off all the requirements to build a modern American urban panopticon: High crime rates, racially biased policing, strained community-police relations, and lack of police oversight have turned Baltimore into a laboratory of emerging surveillance techniques." Even as activists

[88] The same organizations tend to choose innocuous school photos for white male perpetrators.
[89] Howard, "Linked Fates," 124–26, 130, 132.

evolve their engines for social change, so too do law enforcement agencies, by way of undercover police presence at protests, and law enforcement officers monitoring social media. There is evidence to show that both the New York Police Department (NYPD) and the Department of Homeland Security have spied on BLM activists, and the Federal FBI has used planes to surveil protests. BLM members have also reported their cellphones suddenly shutting down or losing reception while filming. The NYPD claimed they "could neither confirm nor deny"—a legal strategy called the "Glomar response" that law enforcement agencies employ under the guide of investigative integrity or cases of national security. Justice Arlene Bluth of the New York State Supreme Court responded that this is a violation of citizens' civil liberties, and that police cannot hide behind the "Glomar response."[90]

BLM activists now train members for digital defense, to combat the U.S. government's latest mechanism by which to surveil and punish Black Power organizers. However, law enforcement agencies have proven themselves to be creative when battling activists technologically. Recently, in 2022, some police officers in Santa Ana, California began blasting Disney songs from their patrol vehicle during a traffic stop. When people in the area questioned the police, one of them pointed toward a cellphone videographer and stated, "copyright infringement." Should the filming individual post the video to a social media website, such as YouTube, by copyright law, moderators have to remove the video.

[90] Lily Hay Newman, "How Baltimore Became America's Laboratory for Spy Tech," *Wired*, September 4, 2016, https://www.wired.com/2016/09/baltimore-became-americas-testbed-surveillance-tech/, quoted in Howard, 132; Thor Benson, "Is Big Brother After Black Lives Matter?: Black Lives Matter activists are convinced they are being watched by the government and have even gone to hacker Edward Snowden for advice on how to escape the prying eyes of the law," *Daily Beast* (New York), October 27, 2015, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Ali Winston, "Did the Police Spy on Black Lives Matter Protestors?" *New York Times*, January 15, 2019, ProQuest New York Times.

This tactic, therefore, slows the rapid dissemination of information for which technology such as the internet provides, and combats cellphone videos as tools for accountability.[91]

Just as the U.S. government watched the Black Panther Party during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, in contemporary times they now keep watch of Black Lives Matter. The news media and mass media culture play a key role in narrativizing BLM as violent revolutionaries, much as they did the BPP. BLM activists report they are still actively resisting the same recycled narratives of deviance that law enforcement and their supporters use to exculpate murder and the routine violation of Black peoples' rights. In the year 2020, the political climate in the United States reached a fevered pitch with the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 presidential election, and numerous highly publicized police killings of unarmed African Americans.[92] George Floyd's callous murder at the hands of police drove activists (and many who had never protested in their lives) to hit the streets and demand justice. News media reported on the peaceful demonstrations which spread around the world, but most chose to focus on the more sensational scenes—nearly always incited by individual agents of chaos or police officers, themselves—to maintain viewers' attention. In defense of the colorblindness ethos and white supremacy, itself, conservative pundits took these images and ran with them, placing BLM on blast as violent and vindictive "Marxist" revolutionaries.[93]

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[91] Craig Timberg, "In Trump's America, Black Lives Matter activists grow wary of their smartphones: Concern about government monitoring is especially strong among groups such as Black Lives Matter," *Washington Post*, May 25, 2017, ProQuest Current Newspapers; Julian Mark, "Police under review for blasting Disney songs in alleged attempt to keep videos off social media: YouTube and other social media sites can remove content with unauthorized copyrighted materials," *Washington Post*, April 12, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/04/12/santa-ana-police-disney-music/.

[92] The year 2020 often mirrored the scope of political discord reminiscent of 1968, a parallel worth exploring.

[93] Christopher J. Lebron, *The Making of Black Lives Matter* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 23; Peter Holley, "Wisconsin sheriff: Black Lives Matter's 'hateful ideology' caused police killings; the outspoken sheriff made his comments during a volatile interview with CNN's Don Lemon," *Washington*

Several tiresome, white-supremacist narratives resurfaced from the background to push back against the spotlight shining on police brutality and systemic racism. Fearmongers revived the old threat of godless communism when predicting BLM's anarchic takeover by spreading Marxist ideals. In truth, BLM recognizes that capitalism and neoliberalism have always worked for the powerful at the expense of the powerless. Since the 1960s, African Americans have critiqued the capitalist structure of the United States, fighting for the redistribution of wealth and resources. Intense government repression disrupted this discussion as to the praxis of Black liberation, then as they do now.[94] Black people are still seeking equality and justice, and this frightens the white majority. The news media and mass media culture act as purveyors of white supremacy when they choose to act as state agents, rather than as their intended genesis: agents of the citizenry. Talking heads proffered another old argument: that Black-on-Black crime is a larger issue than police brutality.

A journalist with the *Daily Beast* professed, "It's not that we don't know racism exists or shouldn't be fought where it is the obstacle. Rather, we think that racism alone is no longer the only, or often even the main, problem black people have. . . . But what disturbs a great many—and I highly suspect many more—people about the philosophical underpinnings of BLM is that black people in poor neighborhoods are in vastly more danger of being killed by young black men than by the occasional bad cop." This narrative ignores the underpinnings of BLM's message that echoes the Panthers': the problem is

Post – Blogs, July 18, 2016, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; John McWhorter, "Black Lives Matter Is Living in the Past: Yes, black lives taken by cops matter. But so do black lives taken by other blacks. BLM won't win over America until it acknowledges this," *Daily Beast* (New York), September 28, 2015, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

[94] Taylor, 17.

found on a systemic, institutional level. The police force in the United States was originally built to uphold white supremacy as well as punish and surveil Black people. Black-on-Black crime should, likewise, not be condensed to individual instances, but rather, analyzed from a socio-economic and -political view. The U.S. government consistently cut social welfare and public housing expenditures in favor of an increased police presence in the War on Drugs. All of these factors blend to create the environment we see today, where, due to extreme poverty, mass incarceration, and felon prejudice, many are left with few options to survive, crime being one of them. Furthermore, the comparison of police killings to Black-on-Black crime is a red herring argument, a tactic commonly employed in colorblind circles. Simply put, one has nothing to do with the other. Acting as state agents, the news media and mass media culture, since the Black Power uprisings of the 1960s, cultivate the narrative that Black culture is responsible for the problems the Black community faces.[95]

A guest columnist for the *Leaf Chronicle* in Clarksville, Tennessee, repackaged the Black culture critique: "Blacks need to find out about their true culture. Every other nationality or race in America knows their history or culture, and through statistics you will see how they have lower crime rates, lower poverty rates and higher education levels. When black Americans become just as enthusiastic about bettering themselves collectively, that is when all lives matter will become a reality. Until then, black lives don't matter until black lives matter to blacks." Not only does this commentary ignore the structural reasons for crime, poverty, and higher education rates, it brings up the antiquated theory, "racial uplift," a self-help doctrine that Black elites such as W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T.

[95] McWhorter, "Black Lives Matter Is Living in the Past,"

Washington espoused. When commentators point toward the economic success of a small percentage of African Americans as proof that the structural argument is fallacious, they ignore class's deep impact on this disparity. The vast majority of impoverished Black citizens simply cannot will themselves into a better situation, and the U.S. government refuses to take any responsibility in the matter, including under Barack Obama's presidency.[96]

The gaslighting stretches beyond the argument that Black people kill Black people disproportionately in response to a frightening prospect to white supremacists: defunding police departments. It seems that some correspondents intentionally misread BLM's pronouncement to reallocate funds from the domestic (and foreign) war machine in favor of social welfare expenditure. White radio host and writer Phil Valentine appealed to white anxieties by saying, "one surefire way to watch America burn is to disband the police. . . . What would they replace the police with? Apparently it's social workers. Nothing against social workers, but social workers aren't going to stop a riot." Some in the movement push for abolition of police forces, but more frequently, activists seek to relieve police officers of situations they are not equipped to handle, such as mental health crises. The article insists that riots threaten the general populace, insinuating that white people must fear Black people, and that law enforcement reinforces the white supremacist hierarchy. Insisting on the Black criminality argument while deaf to the institutional factors involved, the writer continues:

> Black Lives Matter isn't concerned about black lives. There's been no concern over the black lives lost during the riots. There's no concern, either, over black citizens who are killed by other black citizens. About half of the murders in America are committed by African Americans. Over 90% of their victims are black. How come

[96] Joseph Bailey, "Black Lives Matter won't work until black lives matter to blacks," *Leaf Chronicle* (Clarksville, Tenn.), June 20, 2018, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Taylor, 82, 144.

> those victims never get talked about? . . . These are the people on the front lines of crime. We should be devising ways to protect them. Instead, Black Lives Matter calls you a racist if you even raise the issue. These are the people being victimized, and they don't really care what color the perpetrators are. They just want it to stop. You think that's bad now? Wait until you disband the police.[97]

While professing to speak for an amorphous group of Black citizens, the author also offers statistics without any data to support such statements. The writer also admits that there is a police brutality problem in the United States, but he does not recognize the larger implications for these events, boiling them down to isolated incidents. This author, and so many others, are seemingly unaware of the police force's racist background in the United States, nor even the white supremacist foundations that undergird the country. This colorblind ethos insists that racism is an experience that remains on the individual level and that Black Power activists invent reasons to attack law enforcement. This colorblindness, a white supremacist narrative, renders politicians, news pundits, and ordinary citizens alike, blind to the reality that socio-economic and -political failures foster the sort of environment that leads to violent crime.

The news media and mass media culture brought respectability politics to the fore when reporting on police-brutality victims' life choices that may (or may not) have influenced the deadly outcomes, respectively. Journalists portray African-American males as criminal, lazy, careless, and unconcerned with family responsibilities, and as general threats to public spaces. They present the image to the citizenry, who often conclude that the victims somehow deserved it, based upon such a framework. White fear packaged Blackness as threatening to the public; but what if the victim was not occupying a public space, but rather, their own personal domicile? Breonna Taylor's murder in 2020 proved

[97] Phil Valentine, "All black lives matter, but not all of them matter to Black Lives Matter," *Washington Examiner* (Washington, D.C.), June 10, 2020, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

that African Americans are not safe from surveillance, invasion, and punishment in public or private spheres.

Outrage erupted over twenty-six-year-old Breonna Taylor's death in Louisville, Kentucky, which caught the attention of ordinary citizens and celebrities, globally. In a botched effort to determine if Taylor's home was used for drug storage, the three Louisville police officers at the scene fired a total of thirty-two shots into her home in response to her boyfriend's single shot at the would-be intruders. The officers utilized a "no-knock" search warrant—a tactic meant to surprise the people in the home in order to obtain drug evidence—on Taylor's home and burst into the residence with a battering ram (the officers claim they did knock which Taylor's neighbors denied). Taylor's boyfriend, a legal firearm owner, said that he did not hear law enforcement announce themselves and thought a burglar had broken in. He shot toward the intruder, the response eliciting a barrage of return fire. In the aftermath, investigators discovered that Louisville detective Joshua Jaynes obtained a "no knock" search warrant for Taylor's residence under false pretenses—he lied by saying that a U.S. Postal Inspection Service agent confirmed she was receiving suspicious packages at her apartment. This raid occurred after Louisville Metro police apprehended Taylor's ex-boyfriend of over two years, thinking perhaps the two might still be in contact and engaging in the drug trade together. No drugs were found inside her apartment. Claiming they could not determine whose gun discharged the fatal shot, the Kentucky attorney general chose not to bring charges against any of the three officers, although the FBI concluded that officer Myles Cosgrove fired the shot that killed Taylor.[98]

[98] Justin Rohrlich, "Sole Cop to Face Charges From Breonna Taylor Raid Is Acquitted: Brett Hankison was not charged with killing Taylor but with "endangering three lives" next door," *Daily Beast* (New York), March 3, 2022, ProQuest Current Newspapers; Emily Hamer, "NO-KNOCK WARRANTS GET SCRUTINY: PROPOSAL WOULD URGE END TO POLICING TACTIC," *Wisconsin State Journal*

Although Kentucky officials determined not to pursue a criminal charge for Breonna Taylor's death, a grand jury decided in favor of charging officer Brett Hankison with three counts of wanton endangerment of Taylor's neighbors. A Black life stolen did not matter as much as the possibility that three white lives might have been stolen. Hankison was ultimately acquitted and LMPD fired him, Jaynes, and Cosgrove for their respective roles in the tragedy. He also has a book deal in the works. News that Taylor would not receive justice left activists and regular citizens grief-stricken and angry. Civil rights attorney Ben Crump stated what African Americans already knew for centuries: "There seems to be two justice systems in America. One for Black America and one for white America." He continued, "It's yet another example of no accountability for the genocide of persons of color by white police officers. With all we know about Breonna Taylor's killing, [*sic*] how could a fair [and] just system result in today's decision? If Hankison's behavior constituted wanton endangerment of the people in the apartments next to hers, then it should also be considered wanton endangerment of Breonna." African Americans are not safe from surveillance and punishment in the privacy of their own homes.[99]

(Madison, WI), April 11, 2021, ProQuest Current Newspapers; Arya Hodjat, "Charges Permanently Dropped Against Breonna Taylor's Boyfriend: Kenneth Walker had originally been charged with assault and attempted murder of a police officer in the March 13 incident. A judge dismissed those charges with prejudice Monday," *Daily Beast* (New York), March 8, 2021, ProQuest Current Newspapers; Tessa Duvall, "Former detective wants his job back: Cosgrove hearing set in Breonna Taylor case," *Louisville (KY) Courier Journal*, October 22, 2021, ProQuest Current Newspapers; "Breonna Taylor shooting sees former police officer Brett Hankison charged with wanton endangerment of her neighbours: The former Louisville police officer indicted in relation to the Breonna Taylor shooting has been charged with wantonly endangering the lives of Breonna Taylor's neighbours, but not Breonna Taylor herself," *ABC Premium News* (Sydney, Australia), September 23, 2020, ProQuest Global Newsstream.

[99] Rohrlich, "Sole Cop to Face Charges From Breonna Taylor Raid Is Acquitted"; Duvall, "Former detective wants his job back"; Tessa Duvall, "Jury finds ex-cop Hankison not guilty: Man cleared of 3 wanton endangerment charges in Breonna Taylor shooting," *Indianapolis Star*, March 5, 2022, ProQuest Current Newspapers; Blake Montgomery, "Louisville Cop Who Shot Into Breonna Taylor's Apartment Gets Book Deal: Sgt. Jonathan Mattingly remains on the force after the no-knock raid that left Breonna Taylor dead," *Daily Beast* (New York), April 16, 2021, ProQuest Global Newsstream; Carlos Barria,

By all rights, Taylor did everything "the right way." She was lauded in the news for her position as an EMT, her aspirations to become a nurse, and her generally kind manner. In other words, Taylor looked nonthreatening and acted "respectably" and did not engage in any of the drug trafficking that LMPD had suspected. However, in a disturbing display of victim-blaming, mass media culture condemned her for associating with a man who had dealt illicit substances over two years prior to her murder. This allegation speaks to racism in America—Taylor filled the role of "respectable Black person," was not even tangentially involved with drug trafficking, and yet the state-sanctioned War on Drugs took her life. The state of Kentucky initially brought charges against her boyfriend at the time of the murder, Kenneth Walker, for assault and attempted murder of a police officer when he fired his legally owned firearm once (the charges were later dropped).[100] This speaks to the completely lopsided criminal justice system in the United States, wherein police officers rarely receive punitive sanctions for committing the same crimes as civilian citizens. In the United States, law enforcement lives are valued over Black lives, because law enforcement agencies were designed to first protect the white supremacist hierarchy and its enablers. Both the state and the news media and mass media culture constructed Blackness as criminal in the United States (and other colonized spaces) to make their genocide more palatable to the general citizenry.

Institutionalized racism spreads across all sectors of society and is not just localized within law enforcement agencies. Chief equity officer John Marshall for Jefferson County

"Lawyer calls for release of grand jury evidence in Breonna Taylor's killing; Louisville relatively calm after protests of Breonna Taylor's death by police," *North Bay (Ontario) Nugget*, September 26, 2020, ProQuest Global Newsstream; "Breonna Taylor shooting sees former police officer Brett Hankison charged."

[100] Hodjat, "Charges Permanently Dropped Against Breonna Taylor's Boyfriend."

Public Schools in Kentucky explained: "There are no separate systems. The education system, justice system, housing system, banking system work interconnectedly. They're almost symbiotic." All the subsets of U.S. society intersect to place Black people beneath a white supremacist gaze intent on reinforcing the hundreds-of-years-old hierarchical tradition. The news media and mass media culture work in tandem with state officials to keep this hierarchy in place. In a tragedy eerily similar to Taylor's, the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) executed a "no-knock" search warrant on the residence of twenty-two-year-old Amir Locke's cousin (who was not there at the time) and killed Locke in the process. Police officers entered the apartment shouting and kicked the couch where Locke was sleeping; he rose from the couch holding a legally owned firearm and the officers opened fire. Locke was not listed on the "no-knock" warrant issued to locate Locke's cousin and two additional teenagers in connection to a homicide investigation.[101]

Although Locke was neither involved in the murder, nor listed on the search warrant, the already-scrutinized MPD killed him almost on sight. The Black criminality narrative that both the state and the media support in the United States fosters a racist anxiety in society whereby lay-people and law enforcement view African Americans as intrinsically threatening. Locke and Walker legally owned their firearms, but their Black

[101] Bailey Loosemore, "Beyond Breonna: Systemic racism simmered in Louisville for generations. Then Breonna Taylor died. How does our city fix its deep racial woes?" *Louisville (KY) Courier Journal*, September 8, 2021, ProQuest Current Newspapers; Aya Elamroussi, "Amir Locke's parents say their son got a gun legally, but they always worried about interactions with police," *CNN*, February 5, 2022, https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/05/us/minneapolis-police-shooting-amir-locke-parents/index.html; Omar Jimenez, "Teenager wanted in connection with no-knock warrant that led to Amir Locke's death was his cousin," *CNN*, February 8, 2022, https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/08/us/arrest-no-knock-warrant-amir-locke-investigation/index.html; N'dea Yancey-Bragg, "2nd teen charged in investigation that led to police killing of Amir Locke in Minneapolis," *USA Today*, February 23, 2022, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2022/02/23/another-teenager-charged-homicide-investigation-led-amir-locke-shooting/6907764001/; Jay Senter, Sophie Kasakove and Sergio Olmos, "'We Need Something Different': Protesters March in Minneapolis After Police Killing," *New York Times*, February 5, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/05/us/amir-locke-minneapolis-police-shooting.html.

bodies seemingly disqualified them of their Second Amendment rights and justified Taylor and Locke's deaths. Like Taylor, Locke fulfilled "respectable" expectations, his parents trained him how to handle police interactions in the public, yet he was targeted and killed because of police overreach and racism. Black Lives Matter activists demonstrated their outrage and sorrow for both Taylor and Locke peacefully, although law enforcement began arresting and clubbing protestors in Kentucky following the decision not to bring charges for Taylor's death. This last fact demonstrates the inaccuracy behind the accusations that BLM activists are dangerous and riotous, sharply contrasting with law enforcement's behavior.[102]

In the aftermath of both Taylor and Locke's deaths, Civil Rights and Black Power activists sought an end to "no-knock" warrants in the United States. In states such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, New Mexico, Ohio, and California, lawmakers proposed different versions of "Breonna's Law," restricting the usage of "no-knock" search warrants. In Minneapolis and Louisville, such restrictions have been mandated, but they still hold exceptions that cover "no-knock" warrants in certain instances. In Louisville, and in Minneapolis, law enforcement may utilize the tactic if "the crime alleged is a crime that would qualify a person, if convicted, as a violent offender" or if "giving notice prior to entry will endanger the life or safety of any person." This qualifier only continues the traditional practice in the United States whereby law enforcement officers' versions of events are accepted as the ultimate truth. It also explains the push for increased use of body

[102] Sanjana Karanth, "Biden: Justice Must Come For Breonna Taylor, But 'Violence Is Never Acceptable,'" *Huffington Post* (New York), September 24, 2020, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/biden-america-must-do-more-justice-breonna-taylor-violence-never-acceptable_n_5f6bfce9c5b6e2c91260d90a?ncid=txtlnkusaolp00000616; Senter, Kasakove, and Olmos, "'We Need Something Different.'"

cameras in more police departments, a further effort at turning the panoptic gaze back upon the state. Attorney Jeff Storms, who represents Locke's family, emphasized that although some measures are now in place to restrict them, "no-knock warrants continue to be overly sought by the Minneapolis Police Department and overly granted."[103] Law enforcement expanded its surveillance and punishment tactics technologically, to buttress the media's function as a panopticon and to combat Black Power activists' reversal of the panoptic gaze. Similarly, police enlarged their territory from the public realm into private spheres, as well.

In the history of the United States, policing has always been racist and abusive, and remained as such even after law enforcement reform efforts following the Black Power uprisings of the 1960s. Police tactics remain largely unchanged since the BPP donned their black berets, and this truth informs the current racial situation in the country. Socio-economic and -political factors such as the War on Drugs and welfare and public housing budget cuts intersect in a white supremacist society to situate Black Americans beneath white Americans and perpetuate the traditional racial hierarchy. The news media and mass media culture work together with the state to interweave Black anger into the criminality narrative in order to characterize Black Power politics as crime. While activists work to improve economic conditions in Black communities, police violence consistently incites

[103] Tessa Duvall and Darcy Costello, "In cities and states across the US, Breonna's Law is targeting deadly no-knock warrants," *Louisville (KY) Courier Journal*, March 12, 2021, https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/breonna-taylor/2021/03/12/spread-of-breonnas-law-across-us-has-become-policy-legacy/4642996001/; Rachel Treisman, "Kentucky Law Limits Use Of No-Knock Warrants, A Year After Breonna Taylor's Killing," *NPR* (Washington, D.C.), April 9, 2021, https://www.npr.org/2021/04/09/985804591/kentucky-law-limits-use-of-no-knock-warrants-a-year-after-breonna-taylors-killin; Akela Lacy, "IN RESPONSE TO AMIR LOCKE'S KILLING, MINNEAPOLIS MAYOR GESTURES TO LIMITS OF POLICE REFORM: Mayor Jacob Frey announced a moratorium on no-knock warrants Monday, but local officials and legal experts say it contains unnecessary carveouts," *The Intercept*, February 8, 2022, https://theintercept.com/2022/02/08/amir-locke-no-knock-warrants-minneapolis-jacob-frey/; Senter, Kasakove, and Olmos, "'We Need Something Different.'"

Black rage because it represents African Americans' compromised citizenship. Black rage is typically repackaged as irrational and unproductive; however, scholars such as Audre Lorde and Barbara Ransby argue that fury and indignation fuel constructive pressure on our politicians to implement policy change. Ransby explains how rage influences Black Power movements: "Rage is not always ineffective. If channeled and mobilized, collective rage can be simply the refusal to tolerate the intolerable." The politics of both the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and Black Lives Matter exemplify this reasoning. The U.S. culture interprets the well-deserved emotional displays of outrage toward the white supremacist hierarchy and accepts that, somehow, Black people did this to themselves. This implantation into the collective white psyche allows for the abuse that Black Power activists, such as Black Lives Matter, continue to resist in colonized spaces. The news media and mass media culture have helped to propagate this narrative.[104]

Baby boomers led the charge in the fight for civil rights and Black Power during the 1960s. A generation later, Generation X, also known as the "television generation," grew up learning from the news media and mass media culture that Black people, Black Power, and Black rage are all intrinsically criminal. Subsequent generations learned this message as well. When once the media predominantly informed the citizenry, now the news takes its cues from the public. U.S. citizens collectively spoke out against the state-sanctioned violence perpetrated on African Americans from the country's inception. In order to turn the panoptic mechanism back upon the state, BLM mobilized and expressed their outrage on social media platforms. The Black Panthers' legacy is undeniable in the age of information, having set the groundwork for BLM (as well as Gay Liberation

[104] Taylor, 19, 118; Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1981): 7–10; *Ransby, Making All Black Lives Matter*, 94–95.

movements then and now). Black Power was and remains an essential framework by which to dismantle the panoptic mechanism that white supremacy cultivates in all colonized spaces. Thankfully, due to the globalized nature of the current moment, BLM activists have connected transnationally, from Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and the United States, to engage intersectionally on best practices for creating a new and equitable society. Ordinary people everywhere continue to challenge the Black criminality narrative and stand up to police violence.[105]

Shamelessly recalling centuries of racist stereotypes, George Zimmerman's defense team rested their case by appealing to white women's latent fear of Black-on-white rape. The jury in the trial consisted of five white women and no Black people. The trial outcome, like so many others in the U.S. criminal justice system, was disheartening but not surprising in a white supremacist society such as the United States. In the midst of activists' call for justice for Trayvon Martin, a small Black Nationalist group called the New Black Panther Party announced a bounty on George Zimmerman's head. The original Black Panther Party for Self-Defense made a statement, however, condemning any militancy of the sort and distancing themselves from the group. In truth, the heart of Black Power lies not in retribution—Black Power did and still does fight for equality and dignity for Black people. Colorblindness continues to inform the white citizenry in the United States, wherein they silence discussions of institutionalized racism to obscure racial disparities and to assuage their own guilt.[106] White Americans can leave behind a better legacy by

[105] Howard, 126; Tiffany N. Florvil, *Mobilizing Black Germany: Afro-German Women and the Making of a Transnational Movement*, Black Internationalism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 179. For more on the Gay Liberation Movement, see Emily K. Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016).

[106] Formed in Dallas, TX in 1989 by radio producer Aaron Michaels, the NBPP is not affiliated with the Black Panther Party, who denounced them as a "black racist hate group." The Southern Poverty Law Center has classified the NBPP as "a virulently racist and antisemitic organization whose leaders have

acknowledging and unlearning the state-sanctioned, media-sponsored white supremacist narratives they consumed. It means relinquishing privilege, holding our government actors to stricter accountability, and challenging our cultural narratives in perpetuity.

encouraged violence against whites, Jews and law enforcement officers." See "New Black Panther Party," Extremist Files, Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed March 11, 2022, https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/new-black-panther-party; Lang, 33, 104–105; Taylor, 72.

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hacker Edward Snowden for advice on how to escape the prying eyes of the law." *Daily Beast* (New York), October 27, 2015. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

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