

black body

Survival

guide

**“When reality gets absurd
it’s time to get surreal.”**

FOREWORD

“After watching the juror interview on CNN last night it was clear to me that Trayvon Martin was Collateral Damage. He died for no other reason than his Black Body. The same black body that drives (unreasonable) fear in white folk. This is why Zimmerman’s defense spent so much time talking about Trayvon’s body (his height, his build, it was dark at night etc). They wanted invoke that white fear of the black body. Our black bodies pose a threat to white safety, white wealth, white stability and anything else that makes you white and happy. The juror’s logic was “well Trayvon may not have been doing anything wrong but George is here to protect us so if that means there has to be one less black body in the world..thats how it gots to be.” Cause thats all Trayvon was to her...another scary black body.”

Terry Marshall, Facebook July 16, 2013

How? That’s all I could think of afterwards. Even with all my advanced political thinking, theory, consciousness, critical race theory, intersectional thinking, blah blah blah, I still could not wrap my mind around how jurors could decide that George Zimmerman was “Not Guilty”. Even with all my knowledge of US History and the system of white supremacy which pervades it, sometimes you like to think that common sense would prevail. I don’t have any faith in the U.S. justice system, that’s not the point. The point is that none of my political knowledge, none of my sociological understanding of human beings, nor political ideology could help me understand why this would happen again. This was the driving force behind the collective disbelief expressed by Black America that could be heard around the world, not only by ears but by hearts, on the day of the verdict.

A few days later I watched an interview with one of the jurors and I received my answer. What struck me the most from the interview was how she so strongly identified with the defense’s arguments. Especially those arguments which focused on Trayvon being scary looking and George Zimmerman being concerned for his life. A lot of those arguments focused on Trayvon’s body. How tall he was, how big he was. It hit me. I rushed to my computer and opened up Facebook. I let out a stream of consciousness that resulted in the statement above.

It struck me; we are nothing but scary black bodies to them. You know “oh Georgey boy might have been a little overzealous but he just trying to protect lil ole us”. That thought stuck with me for months.

In the fall my mind become preoccupied with zombies. This is because I am a big fan of The Walking Dead. I love figuring out the strategy of how to survive and debating what the genre says about our society. This led me to read the *Zombie Apocalypse Survival Guide* by Max Brooks. The thought of scary black bodies never left my head. Somewhere in this swirl of thoughts came out a joke made in passing to my friend where I said “with all these police killings of us wouldn't it be nice if we had a survival guide? I mean some of the shootings are so ridiculous, it's clearly all the police's fault. Obviously there are some new rules out there we just don't know about”.

We both stopped dead in our tracks. We both knew it was supposed to be a joke but it felt too real. It felt absurd but needed at the same time. That's the moment we crossed into another world and dreamt up the idea of producing a book in one day. The book had to produce that same feeling we had that day. It could not be a real survival guide, no survival guide will save poor black folk from Patriarchal WhiteSupremacist Capitalism. But the feeling of the need for one was not fake. As a people our condition had entered the realm of the surreal. The book had to be satirical in order to fulfill its purpose.

We called for a hack/write-a-thon to crowd source the tips needed for this Black Body Survival Guide. We did it. We needed more time. And in the mean time there were more killings. We did it again. We needed more time...again. We thought we failed. More killings happened. To be honest the killings is probably what kept us going. Why did we put the project on such a short timeline if we were dealing with such a long term problem? As more friends heard the idea more people started to say “yeah that should be a real book! Y'all should do that”. There was a hunger for it.

That world we entered when I first made that joke was the same world that Black America finds itself in today. Sur-reality. There is something about the surrealism that unveils the apocalyptic times we live in. A black President, the highest rates of black incarceration ever, black music dominating the airwaves, back churches still burning, etc., etc., etc.

Rationality (the foundation of the modern left, European enlightenment) was not going to be able to help. The only answer was irrationality. You can't fight absurdity with rationality. Our tagline became “When reality becomes absurd, it's time to get Surreal”. It is very similar to a D. Scot Miller quote “People have to be able to transform their living situation. “With Afro-Surreal, it allow us to address the absurdity head-on” says Miller. “That's why. Kara Walker has an understanding of the absurdity of it. Sometimes you have to be irreverent. Sometimes the situation is so absurd that the only way to address it is to be absurd.”

Afro-surrealism (along with Afro-Futurism) is what you will find in these pages. It is to our collective imaginations we must turn to to find our new strategies, our new ideologies, our new dreams. We want the black body survival guide to be read as a real guide to navigate the unreal reality. Hopefully your laughter can expose how extremely ridiculous police departments around the country sound whenever they try to explain away the deaths they cause. When a work of truth/fiction can describe a situation better than your hired PR hand then you have a problem.

Like its inspiration, *The Zombie Apocalypse Survival Guide*, This book is about the Apocalypse. The Apocalypse is about unveiling. If you pick it up and think that its real then hopefully it reveals the truth that there can never be a real survival guide for Black people. If you pick it up thinking that it's a joke then hopefully it will show you the severity of the situation. Welcome to the Apocalypse.

Terry Marshall,
Intelligent Mischief

Survival



CLASSIFIED

BLACK BODY SURVIVAL AGENT: Sojourner Truth

AGENT No.: 0457850

ALIAS: "Elizabeth Baumfree"

CORE SURVIVAL SKILLS: Choosing her own name, Escaping Slavery, Protecting her name and reputation from slander, Rescuing her Son from Slavery, Activism, Public Speaking, Publishing

ASSIGNMENT: New York State, Slavery in the North , Abolitionist Movement, Suffrage Movement

SPECIALIZATION: Abolition of Slavery, Women's Rights, Intersectionality, Book Publishing, Reparations, Desegregation, Prison Abolition, Black Economic Self-Determination

SURVIVAL TIPS: "If women want any rights more than they's got, why don't they just take them, and not be talking about it."

"Those are the same stars, and that is the same moon, that look down upon your brothers and sisters, and which they see as they look up to them, though they are ever so far away from us, and each other."

RETURNED TO WAKANDA: November 26, 1883

HOW TO SURVIVE IMMIGRATION

WITH A BLACK BODY

Even though much of our focus so far has been on the survival of the Black Body in the United States region of the planet we recognize that the United States is a global imperial power, used by the M.E.N., to exploit black bodies and destabilize the black body politic all over the world.

Yes, that's not a typo, Black bodies are located all over the world. In this chapter we will focus on survival tips for those black bodies that swim, fly and pack themselves into suitcases to make it to the United States for the promise of a better life... after their homelands were bombed, stolen, terrorized, made toxic, deprived of economic resources and rendered all around just not safe by said promised land...but now we're just getting into minutia of things.

This process is known as migration.

Information gleaned from our latest field reports show that the struggle for immigrant rights (globalized Black people) is at the forefront of the fight for Black Body survival today. Black immigrants are being scapegoated for the economic problems of today. All the while being denied their rights as workers, subjugated to arduous working conditions and restricted in their right to movement in order to create greater profits for the M.E.N.



We were briefed by Black Body immigration expert Tia Oso of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI). Tia coordinates BAJI's flagship project, the Black Immigration Network (BIN) a national network of over 40 organizations, along with academics, activists and faith leaders in communities serving African-Americans and Black Immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean.

The network works on building relationships, developing skills and advancing an agenda for immigrant rights and racial justice. Tia is also that brave Black woman that interrupted the Democratic party presidential candidates to put the national spotlight of racial injustice back into the national debate and therefore changing the course of history. Or as Tia Oso would call it...just another Saturday.

AGENT NURI Al-HADI: What's really going with black bodies and

immigration?

TIA: Well one: historically there have been high numbers of African and Caribbean black bodies moving to the USA. Some of the Factors are in the 70s and 80s large # of African immigrants emigrated to USA after the wave of independence struggles in their home countries. Many people immigrated because of the lack of development; there was not enough employment for all of the college grads. Another factor is the US's citizenship laws which say you have to be a resident for a certain amount of time before you petition for your family to come over. Therefore about every 10 years the African population doubles because the petitions are just being answered. The majority of African immigrants come from Nigeria and Ethiopia, 10% Afro-Latino from South and Central America

.
Another major reason for this black migration influx is the global displacement caused by wars and climate change.

AGENT NURI AL-HADI: What has been the history of organizing black bodies around this issue?

TIA: It depends on how you view organizing. There have always been black immigrants. Even during slavery there were folk from the caribbean who came over as free people. As resistance to slavery in the USA grew so did the restrictions of black folks' movement. As the abolition movement grew, there came more restrictions on free black people. In Canada, you had the threat of free black people trying to free slaves. The story of black immigrants is tied to slavery. Not till emancipation was the completely free migration of blacks allowed. You could only come as a worker. Denmark Vessey came from the Caribbean. He was born in St. Thomas, became free and migrated to the United States. There has always been small number of free black folk fighting for freedom. And then there are figures like Shirley Chisholm, Stokely Carmichael, Marcus Garvey [all from the Caribbean][and deeply involved in] the struggle for black liberation. The civil rights act led to greater numbers of immigration in US. Black people's issue with immigration is subsumed by the larger issue of Racism [and black body survival].

AGENT NURI AL-HADI: Who have the M.E.N appointed as counter agents?

TIA: ICE/Immigration and Customs Enforcement. [These are] agents

of the state used to carry out these harsh policies against the black body and other bodies. Right wing politicians. The Koch brothers. The Tanton Network.

[These counter agents] all villainize immigrants. Specifically, John Tanton, a right wing organizer, organizes anti immigrant groups, started in the '80s & '90s organizing anti-immigrant movement, policies, behind a lot english only legislations. A lot of them (legislation) really is anti-black but they put an anti-immigrant face on it. Because African American's have been so effective at defeating overt racism these attacks come in an anti-immigrant form. Same as Jim Crow laws. Very few target raids, less militarized. There is lots of tension around migrant workers, increase organizing of agricultural workers, union busting and more.

AGENT NURI AL-HADI: Which are the black bodies most vulnerable to this attack?

TIA: Undocumented black bodies who have no path to naturalized citizenship are the most at risk of being targeted and deported. Bodies with criminal records. Refugees can be deported if they have a criminal record. Bodies whose status is provisional (student visa, work visa etc.).

AGENT NURI AL-HADI: What's an example of how this issue plays out? Paint a picture if you will.

TIA: Imagine a mother who is coming from the Cameroon to the United States to work with a nanny agency. Maybe she has 3 kids. She applies for a visa. She is working, making minimum wage. Her relative taking care of her children becomes ill, applies for visitor visa for them. They can only come for 6 months. Let's suppose the family can no longer afford to keep a nanny. She looks for another job, enrolls kids in school with American names. Soon, the whole family is undocumented. This is fine for a few years until one of the children wants to go on a field trip and needs an ID for school. They learn they are undocumented. They work under the table jobs, they are hard working. They go to party with friends. Their friends get drunk ask them to drive, they get pulled over by police. Police ask for driver's license. No license and now you can be deported. People figure out ways to survive.

AGENT NURI AL-HADI: What is the cause of this attack on the

black body?

TIA: American immigration policy is focused on keeping America white. There are enormous restrictions on non-European countries.

AGENT NURI AL-HADI: What's the cultural assumptions that underpin this issue? What are the veils that obscure this problem?

TIA: Many assume the policy we have now works and is reasonable. It is actually very cumbersome, expansive and doesn't work. If you come through the right channels, there is a lot of bias. It is not a fair process. It is very restrictive; very long backlog (the federal budget does not allow for enough employees to process it all.)

AGENT NURI AL-HADI: What will happen to those with black bodies if this issue persists?

TIA: Black bodies will be further marginalized, pushed out of the formal economy and pushed into the underground economy. They will not be able to have healthcare, drive, spend time with family. They will engage in smuggling, smuggling themselves and others. There will be more trafficking of black bodies, more facing deportation, more stress finding ways to work, to keep families together.

AGENT NURI AL-HADI: And if they survive?

TIA: Families would be able to be together and be happier, be able to contribute to health and well being with dignity, find good jobs, apply to school. There will be a big drop in crime and fraud. No need for smugglers and lawyers who could take advantage. There will be fewer tensions without having to live with these issues. No fear of living looking over their shoulder. No stigmas attached [to migrant status]. People will be living in less exploited positions.

Survival TIPS

In light of the field report received here's a list of recommendations for surviving immigration with a black body.

TIP #1: ORGANIZE A DAY WITHOUT BLACK BODIES (OR MAYBE A MONTH)

Part of the problem is that the white folks think they can get along without us. We who are the arbiters of cool. The paradigm by which to measure your level of hipness. So wrong. Here's what to do. Organize a collective Black Vacay. Do all the things you've talked about. Go back to Africa, visit the Caribbean, check out a country in Asia or South America. Sit on a beach somewhere and watch them lose their collective white minds figuring out who is going to do all the jobs they never think about. All that invisible labor will be gone. **Because everyone wants blackness but nobody wants Blacks.**

TIP #2: THE 'KISS ME I'M IRISH' TRICK...WITH FLAGS

Wear a shirt that says 'kiss me i'm (insert white country)'. That way nobody will be the wiser. You may also insert your own country's flag on the shirt because let's face it Americans don't really know what other people's flags look like. **Truthfully the only accepted immigrants are ones from predominantly white, recognizable (Western European) countries.**

TIP # 3: STEAL A WHITE IDENTITY

Get the information of a respected white person or feared mob boss and make copies of it for yourself. I'm not just talking about just the ID I'm talking about right down to the car they drive. Copy their entire identity, That way when the cops pull you over they won't want to mess with you or they'll be so confused they will leave you alone. **In an unfair system, identity theft becomes a form of survival.**

TIP #4: DON'T GO TO PARTIES

Not much to say here, just don't go. Any party that's good the cops will show up to, and regardless if you were at a friends party, if it is your party , or hell even if you're just walking by or even so much as glanced at the party with curiosity the cops are going to try to talk to you. And that's never a safe

situation. Plus, you should be home getting your secret night education (refer to education chapter). **Did we mention that cops are dicks?**

TIP #5: AMERICAN NAME WORD BANK

I know you have pride in your country of your origin and you want your child's name to be able to reflect that...BUT it is not safe for you and your blackness. Names like Muhammad, Nene, Khadijah, Kelechi, or Obama instill fear into the hearts of the M.E.N. so here we have provided some safe Anglo names you can choose instead. On a side note you may want to de-immigrantize your last name too.

Adam
Amy
Becky
Brad
Mark
Mary
Jennifer
Kate
Liam
Scott...

and more...

For some reason white supremacy makes it hard for people to spell.

TIP #6: REAL UNDERGROUND ECONOMY (LITERALLY TAKE YOUR BUSINESS UNDERGROUND)

As an immigrant or non native black you need to still be able to practice your skill or ply your trade if you will. So we say take it to the underground and we're not not just talking about black market under the table type shit. I'm talking dig some tunnels, go to some abandoned underground railway station and set up shop. They can't stop what they can't see. **Sometimes being literal can save your life.**

TIP #7: GET A CAMO TARP FOR YOUR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

This is a way to disguise the amount of resources in the ground in your country of origin to stop the wars that are often a cause of migration. Americans in particular are addicted to oil (and diamonds...and the stuff in cell phones...). And just like any addict they will do whatever they can to get their hands on it. What's that? People already live on the land that we want to get oil from? Not anymore! A couple of drones and a CIA funded

coup took care of that. So take our advice, don't let them know what you got! We've found that giant camo tarps work, they've used them during war to disguise targets from the air and you can reappropriate it for your own use. Take your pick from "look nothing but a beach here" all the way to "you already bombed us last year you pricks" camo tarp. **America's been a crackhead for long time. He ain't changing. Hide your shit!**

TIP #8: "BLACK UP DAY!!!"

Open a travel agency that brings more black immigrants to blacken up america! Tagline "the blacker the berry the sweeter the juice"/ "The Blacker the country the sweeter the Koolaid"

Your Momma always said there was safety in numbers! If you bring enough people in AND procreate at increased levels you will soon outnumber them. So if you're not sponsoring someone yet, start now and if you know some folks that need help with a border crossing by all means go help them cross over to the land of the "free". **Your enemy's worst nightmare is your dream come true.**

TIP # 9: GOOGLE JOHN TANTON...NO...REALLY...GOOGLE HIM!

TIP # 10: ANGELA'S LIST /JORNALERO APP

You'll need to find out where the underground jobs are and where you can get a counterfeit social security card. You can find all this and more on Angela's List. And for the day laborer brothers and sisters please use the Jornalero App where you can rate your day laboring experience. (Jornalero is a real app created by the good folks of New Immigrant Community Empowerment). **It's all about the access to information. Data data data.**