

To Show

the

World

the

Truth

The following is the response of Wilkinsburg high school students to the Baltimore protests and riots in April-May of 2015 in response to the death of Freddie Gray. The students were given options that they could use for starting sentences, but the rest of the writing is the thoughts and opinions of Wilkinsburg students.

Dear Adults & Children,

I've watched videos on YouTube and seen videos on the news and what I'm seeing breaks my heart but I think it's needed. You guys are fighting for what Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X died for. You want justice. You are angry because your voices aren't being heard. You feel like you need to retaliate. The problem is your retaliating in your own community. Your destroying what hasn't even be fixed since the riots in 1968. I also feel your pain that there is no justice. The world feels like they have control over the black community. They feel you guys are only "thugs" and you just want to fight and destroy because of Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, or Eric Garner but you want to be heard you want answers that are never given. Your trying to let out anger but letting out anger in that way won't help your case, it won't help what is going on. They want you to stand up for



the better and not try to fight. Fighting for African Americans is needed but the way that you are coming at the situation is going to make it worse. Your faces are splattered on the news, YouTube, and your talked about on radio shows. Your intention was to know your angry, your pissed off and believe me I'm with you on the anger but that won't make me destroy a place I call home. Think about when this is over will they come rebuild what you destroyed while you were mad ? Will you feel proud of yourself for what you have done to your home ? Will you want to leave your house after what you have done to your city ? You

reacted before you thought about when this situation was over. I fully understand your troubles but not to the extent of destroying my HOME!

Shantel M.

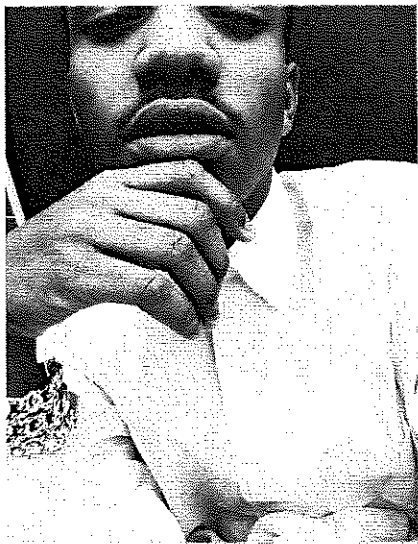
Dear Youth of Baltimore,

I've been watching you on the news. We all have. I live 300 miles away in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but in many ways I feel like we are the same. Our streets, our backgrounds, and our personal lives. I know you have so much anger inside. I do too. But we as young African American students already have bad names given to us. Is what you guys are doing making it better? Destroying everything and

putting us in danger? Our generation can't get no worse than it is. Living 300 miles away, I think we face the same situations that you guys do. People we love and care about are dying left and right. Whose the blame? Us? Maybe. The cops? Sure.

The cops don't show us any love here. A close family friend of mine was shot in paralyzed by the cops on November 11th, 2011 at a traffic stop for being mistaken for someone else by the cops. We have been fighting and fighting for Justice and finally received it. We have had non-stop protests for him. His name is Leon Ford. Google him. It amazes me that we can be in different cities, but find ourselves going through the same things. The difference between you guys and us is that we had non-violent protests. The sad part is the person he was mistaken for is actually my cousin, and he had actually passed away last year in a car accident. Making fires and causing destruction isn't helping at all. Freddie Gray isn't the only victim of police brutality. You guys have to stop this. The men in black suits and black boots with a gold badge wont stop until you will. It's hurting us hear because we come from all the same backgrounds. I feel your pain, but at the same time I'm highly upset at the damage that has been done.

Remy M.



Dear teens of Baltimore,

I've seen a lot of stuff that been happening to y'all in the past couple of days. From rioting, looting, police brutality, curfew, Fox News just coming down to report on the black rioting and not about the poverty and struggling people in you're city. I know y'all are angry and all y'all want is justice for the crimes that the cops have done to everybody in Baltimore and I to totally support everything that you're doing. I know you're Tired of the lack of justice the police are getting for killing your friends or somebody you don't even know. They get a free pass for homicide because they wear a little badges on their shirt. Then when they do get caught up, it

seems like nothing happens to them and other cops keep quiet and be in secret.

They are here to protect us, but the only thing I see them is protecting is white families. We are starting to believe the government was meant to protect only the white men and give them greater privileges than us and that's a shame.

It's 2015 I believe everybody should be treated EQUALLY no matter what the color of your skin is. Freddie Gray died from his spinal cord being severed. 6 cops did this to him. That was complete brutality and was not needed. Whatever crime he committed doesn't mean they do that to him. They can call us thugs and animals because we're tired of going through this and want to stand up and protest about it. Crips, bloods and other gangs had united to help protest because everybody deserves justice in their lifetime. Stand up, Baltimore.

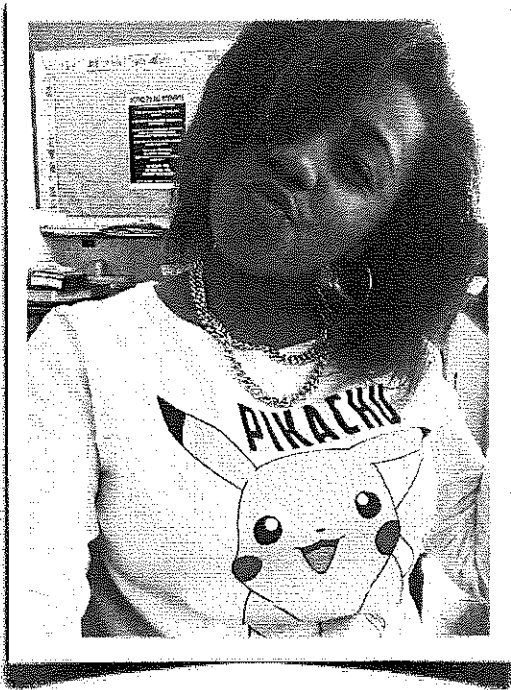
Anfernee F.

Dear Youth in Baltimore,

I'm really starting to become too numb to things like this for real. It's only because when you see so many things in your life that's so similar to it; it's all just the same. I understand why y'all are doing the things y'all are doing. Feeling as though us blacks are not getting justice correct? Feeling as though our rights are

actually our wrongs according to the whites? I feel your pain as while; angry, sad, and disappointed. Honestly do you think it's really going to change anything? Just think about all the riots we already had before this one... Did it change it anything? Too me it hasn't changed anything, because if it did I believe we wouldn't be having a riot right now at this very moment. So honestly what are u rioting for too exact? To have more negative comments thrown at us? Too have us just talked bad about for what? Your honestly doing what your doing for a good effect but not a good cause. Just really think about your outcome before anything.

Shadai R.



Dear Baltimore,

It's not just about Freddie Gray. Not really about Mike Brown, or Trayvon, or Eric Garner. I get the anger you all are showing and nobody here is judging you all. This had been brewing for hundreds of years since slavery. Everyone thinks that since we are some what equal to each other the affects of "White Supremacy" do not still linger around today. But Blacks are constantly judged just because of their race and how the media portrays us. The riots are just the affects of protesters that have been fed up with the bullshit they're dealing with. You were trying to speak and no one would listen, so you are forcing them to. They try to sneak diss and do certain stuff that we wouldn't catch on to because they think we're dumb and uneducated.

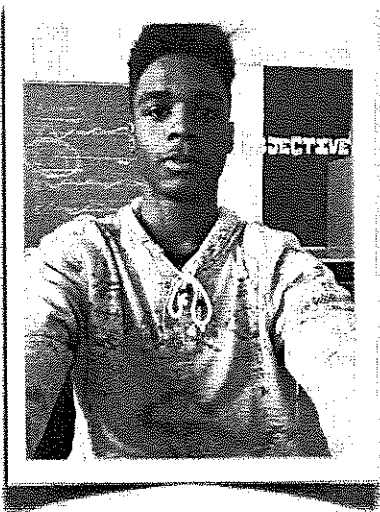
For example, you get more time for crack because it's a so called "Black people drug" because it's cheaper. For cocaine you get less time because it cost more and it's more used by White people. Coincidence, I don't think so. As for the riots I have no problem, but don't give them more reason to judge us then they already do.

Daniel S.

Dear Youth of Baltimore ,

It is not just about Freddy Gary . It's really not about Michael Brown , or Trayvon Martin , or Eric Garner. I get the anger & nobody here is judging you. This is more about the police getting away with a lot of these killings. Justice will come sooner or later. But y'all going about it the wrong way you guys are tearing your neighborhood apart. If y'all going do that go tear up there part of there town . Instead of tearing up your neighborhood march & protest the right way. We are all tired of these cops killing black people & getting away.

Marquon H.



Dear Youth of Baltimore

I been hearing and watching you on the news and honestly I think what y'all are doing down there is the right thing. I just feel like the rioting is unnecessary. I feel where you all are coming from, but violence isn't the answer for what you are upset and angry about.

Destroying your city doesn't help or bring Freddie Gray

back to life, and your just letting everyone watching you guys looks down. You are giving them a reason to say "black people only know how to solve their problems with violence." Y'all are making us look more worse when you act like animals. Like I said before, I can see why your angry and upset. I also believe that the Baltimore Police had something to do with Freddie Grays death, but going around tearing things apart and burning stores down isn't the answer to our problems.

Rashad N.

Dear Youth Of Baltimore ,

I've been watching you on the news. We all have. I live 300 miles away in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but in many ways I feel like we are the same. We are young and we are tired of the police just thinking they can just get away with the horrible stuff they are doing to us as youth. I know what you think your doing is the right thing to do and I feel it's okay too do it because they wasn't paying attention to you when you was protesting peacefully, they would just push y'all to the side and not give hall answers and now y'all are destroying the city. I am okay with you all riots, it's just that don't destroy stuff people need like that CVS. How are people suppose to get medical things now that y'all destroyed it? Like the old people how are they suppose to get their medicine? See sometimes you have to stop and think about what you are doing and destroying. That CVS was a stupid mistake. I think you should destroy symbols that keep people down and symbols that matter to the police. Don't destroy things that poor people need like stores. Destroy things that matter to the police. Take it to the squad cars and the station and things like that. That would bring the bad side out in them, and help to show the world the truth that we see every day: that they are truly racist, bad people. Sometimes, you have to push people to their limits to see the bad side of them. With the police, we all know that you can get the bad side of them to show up real quick.

Dremar L.

Dear Youth of Baltimore.

I Understand this Situation that is Going on Is Unbelievable. Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, and Trayvon Martin were all very difficult to handle, but I never think violence is the right thing . Baltimore- We can feel all of your tears here in



Pittsburgh and we are not judging you. The way everything went down isn't Right. Im kind of 50/50 with everyones' Choices because I dont believe ruining Business and churches is right. But Everything Hurts . It's complicated I guess.

If I could be there with you, I Would just try to help because in this Situation Everyone Needs a hand.

Taylor C.

Dear youth of Baltimore

I've seen you guys on the news lately, and what I'm seeing is wrong. But I feel what your going through is rough. I understand your upset, and mad, but you can't just wreck your community. Where I'm from kids are getting killed, and believe me, cops are fucked up. I've seen people killed in my face. Family and friends are in jail for nothing. How do you think the people in jail feel, they would die just to see street lights and there loved ones.

What I'm trying to say is violence isn't the way to solve your problems. Just because your upset and angry about Freddie Gray's death doesn't mean acting like animals is the answer.

Nigel N.

Dear Baltimore,

My teacher asked me to respond to the incidents that are accruing in Baltimore right now. I feel as what is occurring in Baltimore is sad and depressing. My heart breaks watching the news about Freddy Gray. He deserves justice for what the police did to him. It wasn't right. In my opinion, they're wicked and evil people. They knew what they did to that poor man. He asked for medical attention and they refused. Hearing that is upsetting. Why wouldn't you help him! Why would you let him die! They killed him because in their eyes black lives don't matter. As a police officer you are suppose to serve and protect. So why should you not give Freddy Gray the same respect as you would give to any white man. We won't ever

be equal or, have justice severed for are brother and sisters. Innocent people are dying! Why won't this stop! You can walk down the street and see a black man be gunned down and shot by the police . I bet you would look in the other direction. Just because you don't want any part of the situation. If I were to shot and kill a white man. I would get thirty years to life. But, if a white man does it they are able walk free? This system is so messed up! I wouldn't dear say I support the system! Why can't we protest in peace. We are angry, we will only be heard if we riot! We try to protest in peace. We aren't allowed to even have that. All we can do is riot to get are opinion across. We're not free until we get justice. I do not approve of this little dream we call America. we are not truly free here. Until every person killed that is African American gets justice. Black Lives Matter!

Caja S.

People of Baltimore.

I can understand your frustration with the injustice of a community that is being oppressed by your own police force, but I think it has gone a little too far. I support you as you protest the death of Freddie Gray. That may or may not have been due to the sheer violence of police brutality. But how is shoplifting, burning cars, and throwing bricks going to help. If this goes on people could seriously be hurt or even killed, these are armed policemen with the authority to shoot someone if they are attacked. By doing this you are giving more people a reason to accuse black people of being violent and irrational. Protests should be done with words not fists.

Taylor H.

Dear youth of Baltimore.

I've been watching you on the news. We all have. I live 300 miles away in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but in many ways I feel like we are the same. I'm a kid from Pittsburgh and I've seen many of the same things here as you have in Baltimore. I've seen police brutality too, but I haven't heard of anyone dying because of it around here in a long time. I don't see anything wrong with what y'all are doing in Baltimore. I'm actually with y'all, people didn't care at first but for all of you to get your point across and make everybody see what's going on y'all did what y'all had to do. People keep talking about black on black crimes. It's not about that it's about police brutality. And it has to stop.

Myrion M.

Dear Youth of Baltimore,

I've been watching you on the news. We all have, to me you guys are doing a great thing and also a bad thing. The reason why it's good you guys are finally fighting back, we can't just have these cops run over us, now they know not to try us. They hurt one of us we hurt some of them just keep throwing them rocks at them there shields won't help them that long. Because how they killed Freddy gray is horrible, breaking his spine is worst than getting shot to me, even getting choked to death.

Also everybody's

hoods in Pittsburgh, New York, and Chicago seen how y'all's bloods and crips came together to help fight back the cops that's some real stuff. It ain't about the gang and gang violence, I see y'all just care about your own kind. Now the bad things you guys are doing is y'all are destroying your guys community. Lighting buildings on fire and cars that's not saying anything good about us, you guys have to set a better example, because the people outside the state are probably looking at you guys like your crazy. You guys aren't crazy, your just mad maybe even emotional and wanna take it out on something. I just don't want to see no more deaths no one does. But I'm out.

Anthony W.