

Anti- Blackness Is a Global Phenomenon

Portraits and interviews with three New York City activists participating in the largest social movement in American history.

Through it all, we *organize.*

The world thrives off anti-Blackness. Nations and states necessitate anti-Black violence. The question is: Who is willing to subvert such violence?

To be Black is to constantly be stripped of humanity and expected to perform as non-human. But to be Black isn't always pain and trauma. It isn't always a story of enslavement and subjugation. Through it all, we find love and joy. Through it all, we organize.

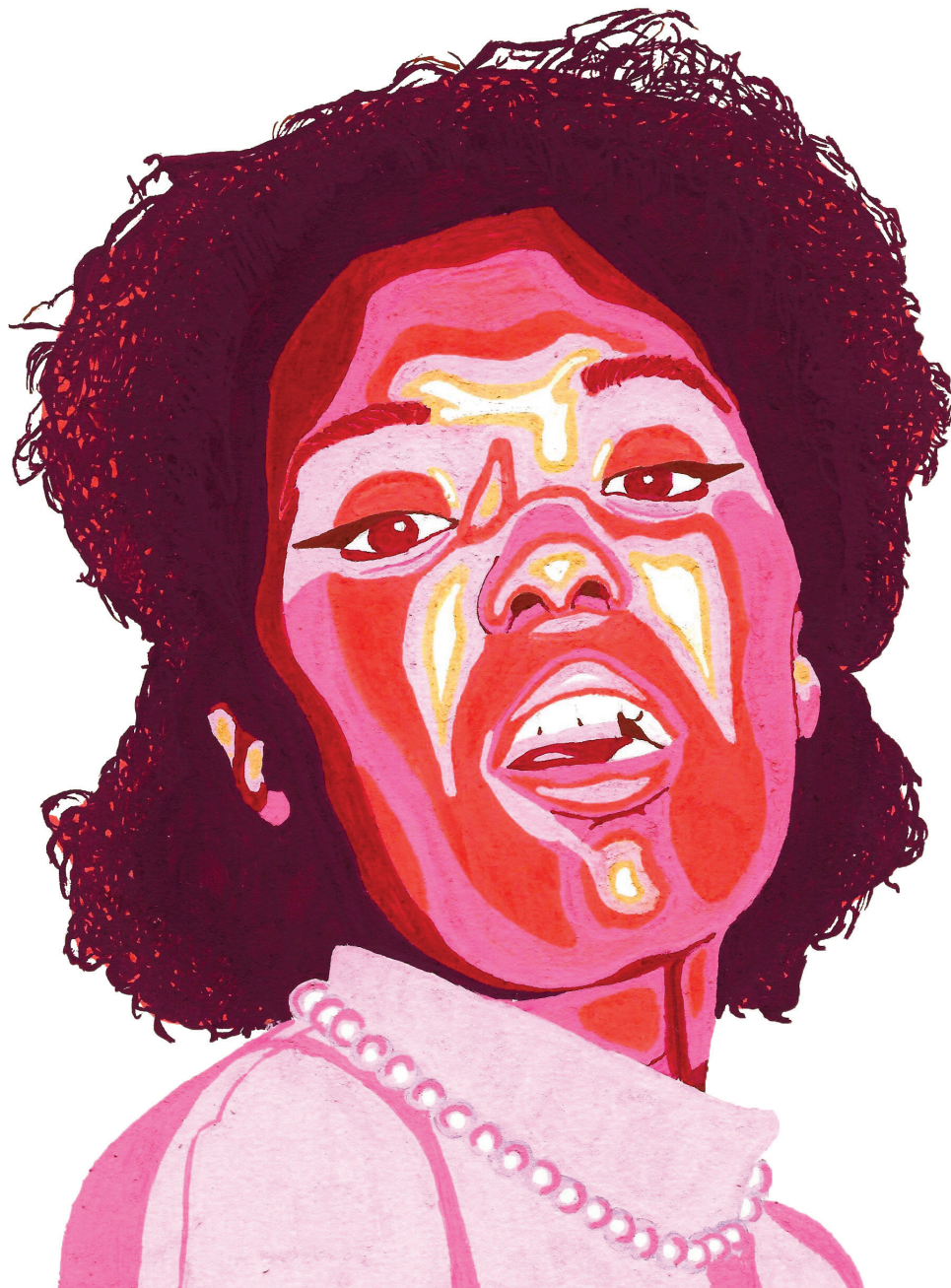
The voices of Black youth and organizers have been uplifted for profit, for performance. Yet blue checkmark activists and biased infographic creators are not always responding to the communities they claim to serve. So it is in our best interest to listen to those who exist in community spaces. We shouldn't deify or idolize one individual. The movement for Black lives is not led by one person. In fact, those who are mentioned in this zine are parts of a collective movement for our liberation.

What liberation looks like may vary. Our activism, politics and organizing strategies are not the same. Yet that is what makes our collective liberation that much more important. We all, as Black folks, have a say. And it's about time you all hear what is being said.

Brandon Gonzalez

JEDIDAH PACHECO

Black activist based in The Bronx. She/Her.



Luisa

How did you get involved with activism and the Black Lives Matter movement in New York?

Jedidah

No black person chooses to be a part of this. We do it because we're forced into fighting for our lives. I got into activism because I was a direct victim of injustice. I live in the Bronx, and there's over-criminalization and over-policing in my neighborhoods. I've always seen that as an issue. Because of my skin color and because of how the world perceived me, I was propelled into fighting for my life.

Luisa

How has the activist community in New York impacted you?

Jedidah

I used to be a part of the organization called IntegrateNYC. Basically, we fight against segregation in our schools. I was first introduced to them in sophomore year when they did an event in Times Square. I didn't know that New York City has one of the most segregated school systems in the country and that our schools are over-policed. Black and Brown history isn't represented. It's sad how I thought this was normal. I thought having only white teachers in my classrooms, even though New York City's one of the most diverse cities in the world, was normal. I found a community in IntegrateNYC because it was youth-led and they always welcomed me with love.

Luisa

Would you say that this is one of the issues that you're very passionate about that is systemic in New York specifically?

Jedidah

School is our second home. When we go to these schools and we don't feel safe in our hallways, or we feel criminalized or over-

policed just for being and for existing unapologetically, it's disheartening. When you're a kid and you're walking through the halls of school, you want to feel safe, you want to feel heard. And a lot of kids don't feel that when they're in school.

Luisa

How do you think that we can fight the systemic oppression in New York City schools? How do you think that we can solve the issue of segregation?

Jedidah

We have to listen to students. A lot of people like to degrade youth because they assume we don't know much. But we're the first to be impacted by this. We should have more counselors instead of cops in our schools. We shouldn't feel unsafe in our hallways. We need culturally responsive education. Why is it that I'm learning about Christopher Columbus but not the people who came before him? Why am I not being taught about the Indigenous people? Why am I not being taught the positive aspects of my history? All we learn is the trauma and the hurt.

Luisa

How do you think that your individual perspective has influenced what you bring to the Black Lives Matter movement in New York?

Jedidah

I'm Dominican, and I feel that in the Latin-American community, and globally, period, we have anti-Blackness. But for me it took a long time to navigate my identity. When I finally owned my Blackness, I wanted to help my family. I wanted my family to also acknowledge their Blackness. When I'm in the front lines protesting and fighting for us, I'm also fighting for the people who disregarded their identity but are still being impacted by it as well.

Luisa

How has COVID-19 impacted you and your activism?

Jedidah

A lot of the youth in New York City and globally felt a sense of hopelessness for a long time. People felt like there's nothing much they can do because their parents won't let them go out to protest. A great thing that we came up with was using social media using Instagram and our platforms as ways of activism. Activism isn't just being on the front lines. It's also educating your platform, no matter how small it is, or educating your family. I feel like that was a really cool thing that we did as a generation. We used what we know.

Luisa

Do you think that social media could take away from the movement?

Jedidah

The only thing that social media has really taken away is not centering the movement around community. Because to have activism you have to have community. You have to know who you're fighting for. Social media, although it is great for activism, does not emphasize the need for community. It does not emphasize the value of knowing who you're fighting for and knowing your neighbors.

Luisa

What does allyship mean to you?

Jedidah

Allyship and friendship are not the same thing. A lot of people get that confused because they say, well, I do have Black friends, and they use them as a token. Your allyship has to come with actively fighting for these people and doing it genuinely. The first week of the uprisings, I had a lot of friends who would just be performative about their activism and their allyship. They wouldn't really check up

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on their Black friends or their queer friends during this time. For me, allyship has to be about more than just friendship. It has to be genuine and more than empathy for your friend.

Luisa

How can white people become allies through their actions? Beyond performative activism and the concept of white guilt?

Jedidah

Acknowledging that you may be uncomfortable. But that's okay, because Black people have felt that discomfort for their entire life, and for you to feel uncomfortable for just a moment, it's a privilege in itself. Be uncomfortable and be okay with being uncomfortable. Talk to your family, even though it's hard. Talking to my family, even as a Black person, was really hard. But we need to have those tough conversations and not just ignore the problem. Check up on your Black friends, if you have any; and if you don't have any, question why don't you have any Black friends in your circle. A big part of it is humanizing Black people because we are human. A lot of people forget that because of the violence inflicted on us. It's so normalized that it doesn't even click that we're human.

Luisa

How do you think we can add positively to the movement through awareness while not contributing to the normalization of violence against Black people?

Jedidah

A lot of people, when they would circulate the video of George Floyd's murder and several Black persons' murders, they would say, well, people need to know about this. But why is it that it has to be on video? Does there need to be proof that this is going on? White people and non-Black people have to refrain from circulating videos of violence,

because it's traumatizing to see your own death displayed so many times. It desensitizes our murder and makes it normal. So just be cautious with what you are posting and recognize that there does not need to be a video for you to understand police brutality.

Luisa

What are some things that young people can do to contribute to the Black Lives Matter movement within their own communities?

Jedidah

Not shy away from conversations on race. A lot of white people, they're scared to be in those conversations because they might not know much. But that's okay. Nobody's expecting you to be perfect. Showing up to the conversation shows enough, even if you're just listening. That's what's important.

Luisa

What are ways in which white people and other non-Black people of color can practice accountability?

Jedidah

They can make sure that they're not centering their apology or statement around themselves when they're talking to the person they harmed. People like to center on themselves and say, I didn't know much, or, it's just the way I was brought up. But you're still not acknowledging the harm that was done. For non-Black people to take accountability, they have to make a promise to do better. Something beyond words that you're telling to the person you've harmed. You have to make an effort to not do that harm again.

Luisa

There has been a fight against racism for hundreds of years. Why do you think it's so difficult to change things in America?

Jedidah

It's taken so long because not only is it systemic and institutional, it's interpersonal and internalized. Capitalism and racism work together to oppress. A lot of our laws are to criminalize us and profit off of our poverty. The prison-industrial complex is an example. When people are in prison, they are doing labor and not getting paid for it. These systems uphold violence and racism.

Luisa

What do you think of the relationship between capitalism and racism in the U.S.?

Jedidah

Capitalism and racism were basically birthed at the same time. They were brought up together, and the way they interact manifests in many spaces. For example, we live in NYC, where people have to pay \$2.75 for a MetroCard, but not everyone has that money. Our laws and our systems criminalize poverty. Black and Brown people live in low-income situations, so they're getting set up to be arrested for these crimes that criminalize them because they don't have enough money.

An ideal world would have the complete abolition of these structures and laws that perpetuate the criminalization of Black people. We've asked for reform, but it has not shown up in a way that is for the people. It's important to see that the system was not broken but was designed to work this way. And that's why I believe we need complete abolition.

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*Listening to them.
Centering their voices.
Uplifting them.*

Be Uncomfortable and
Be Okay with *Being*

UNCOMFORTABLE

BRANDON GONZALEZ

Afro-Latinx queer activist based in The Bronx. He/Him, They/Them.



Luisa

What do you bring to the movement? What is your role?

Brandon

My role is the same as a lot of youth activists and organizers. It is to learn and to listen. It's also to teach what we know. I have the privilege to be in college. With that, I share all of the resources I can with folks who don't have that access. We all have our roles within our communities. My role is to educate and to think critically, guiding folks to thinking critically. My role is to bring theory to practice and to bring those theories and practices to people.

Luisa

How do we incorporate intersectionality within the Black Lives Matter movement through the inclusion of queer, trans and disabled people?

Brandon

My personal intersection or my identities are queer, non-binary and Black or Afro-Latinx. So I can speak to that more. Just not seeing Black folks as monolithic, 'cause a lot of people think that the experience is monolithic or that our politics are more monolithic. There's no one lived experience or true lived experience. It's so varied because you can be poor working class and then become a celebrity, or become someone of a higher economic status and your politics shift or your experience shifts. A lot of folks who are affluent and queer and Black or affluent and disabled or affluent and Black and female, still shift their personal politics because of class.

I want non-Black people or non-POC people to understand that anti-Blackness is not necessarily the same thing as racism and prejudice. Anti-Blackness is the complete negation of Black humanity, Black life, and Black livelihood. We need to question

the structure of racism. There's so much when it comes to intersectionality; there's so much that's missing from that discourse; 'cause people don't understand Blackness and anti-Blackness. I would like to see everyone represented and supported, and have functional solidarity, which is reciprocal and tangible. However, I don't think we're at that stage yet.

Luisa

What does a world that prompts safety and visibility for Black women look like to you?

Brandon

The exploration of resources that are necessary to begin that process of healing, because society is the root cause of all that trauma. There is a lack of resources in Black communities to fight gender-based violence and give Black women safety and love and care. It has to go beyond just, Hey, you're on a TV screen because so much can be done on media. We have *Pose*, where we have Black trans representation, yet Black trans women are still being murdered.

Luisa

What does allyship mean to you?

Brandon

I want people to understand what whiteness fundamentally is. You need to do that in order to become an ally. Dig deep and ask yourself why, what, when were white people invented? When did the creation of whiteness and white folks and race come to be? The second question is, why? Why is whiteness whiteness? Why is race race? All those things come into play when discussing allyship. Because in order to understand allyship, you can't just enter your space and be like, okay, I'm going to support you in whatever magnitude I can without understanding that I am inherently complicit.

Whiteness is inherently violent because it was created to subjugate and oppress. It's barbaric in its creation. And that isn't to say that like, Oh, you're white so therefore you're immediately this evil individual. But if you're white, you need to ask: Why am I seen as that? Why is whiteness seen as the default? What are the social constructs of race? How was whiteness a legal classification and a phenomena of othering which was constructed by the state?

Interrogate whiteness and understand your position in society. If you're a white woman, obviously you face gender-based violence and discrimination. But you're still complicit. Which isn't to say you're a white supremacist. But in your existence as a white person you are benefitting off of the concept of race.

There's so much about whiteness to unpack and to be unlearned. It's not the duty of anyone to unpack that for you. And it has to be very intentional and deliberate. When you make a mistake, actively listen and be radically honest. Radical honesty looks like saying, Hey, I don't know what this is. I don't know what all of these terms mean. I don't know how to start this work.

Also, allies don't try to position themselves as the empath. White folks want to position themselves as like, I understand where you're coming from, so I'm gonna fight for you because I feel bad for you. I don't want people fighting for me out of pity. I want people fighting because they care about the fight. Resistance isn't something that's just like this quick instantaneous, feel-good thing. It's constantly being uncomfortable. As a Black person, I'm constantly uncomfortable. I just hope that readers do the work and do the research and do the deep self-reflecting on how they themselves exist and benefit from their

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BLACK ACTIVISTS in NEW YORK CITY

existence. How do you think that white people can become better allies through actions beyond white guilt or performative activism?

You don't need to be an activist to care about Black people. You don't need to be wealthy to care about Black people. You just need to care about people. Think about uplifting Black folks, paying Black folks, sharing the work of Black folks, crediting Black folks, doing research on our experiences and history. Understand that, Hey, this isn't about me right now. Or, this isn't about me at all. This is about the betterment of oppressed peoples, marginalized peoples.

I had a conversation a while back with a person who said BLM is this Black nationalist, Black supremacist organization. I really want people to unpack their fragility. When Black people are asking for liberation, that doesn't mean it's at the expense of y'all. Throughout history, profit and capital gain and all those things have been at our expense. Because of that, people think that if we're asking for liberation, we're going to do the worst things. They think we're going to enslave them. But that's not the case. I don't know anyone that's like, Yeah, just destroy the whites. Nobody's saying that. No one at all has ever said that we're saying abolish whiteness as a social construct. We're saying abolish capitalism; we're saying abolish the carceral state, the state itself. We're not praying for the downfall of people. We're praying for the downfall of systems that create this hierarchy of people—whiteness, thinness, cis heteronormativity.

Luisa
How have you discussed the relationship between racism and capitalism in your activism?

Brandon
I was calling it racial capitalism mainly because it laughs in the

face of folks that are like, it's just class, there's no such thing as race. Racism wouldn't exist without class. It's so strange to reduce that dialogue or that discussion to just class. That's not to say that in a socialist or communist society racism immediately goes away. However, racism and capitalism are very much linked. There's no separation of the two; they're the best of friends. Capitalism supports slavery; capitalism requires racism; both necessitate the violence of each other.

Luisa
What are some things that young people can do to contribute toward the Black Lives Matter movement within their own communities?

Brandon
There's nothing wrong with just educating yourself and folks around you. We all want to fight the fight; we all want to put our bodies on the front lines for collective liberation, for the fight for Black lives, the fight against racism, fight against whites. But we have to be really honest and see that's not possible for every single person. We all have different roles, like I said earlier. Ask yourself, what's my role? It's necessary for y'all to find y'all role. It's necessary for young people to find their role. There's so much more to do than being on the front line. There're people who organize protests; there're people who are medics; there're people who stand by the side and help with legal things; there're people who fight off the police. Everyone has a role. Look up some "activist" cookbooks; look up some methods and organizing strategies and tactics that aren't necessarily just protest, protest, protest, but are different forms of direct action.

Research is the most important thing. Always read. Reading is something I stress even with Black folks who I'm in community with, making sure we know what we're saying, the theory

we're supporting, or that we're aware of theory that supports us. Constant listening and reading, and researching our ancestors, our predecessors who've done the work. There's a PDF online called "26 Ways to Be in the Struggle Beyond the Streets." It's a long list that entails things you could do that aren't necessarily like, I'm going to be protesting every day. Also, considering we're in a pandemic, that's not possible for everyone. We want everyone to be safe and alive.

Luisa
How has technology changed the ways in which we protest and fight for Black lives?

Brandon
Everyone wants to make infographics. Everyone wants to make cute digestible posters and flyers. There's so much more to that than cute graphics on Instagram. There is a need for art in revolution. But we are not in the revolution; it's an uprising. There's a lot of romanticizing revolution, romanticizing armed struggle, which completely erases folks who die from that. We don't want this at the moment; at least we're not ready for it.

The infographics are digestible, but sometimes it's watering down the theory. It's watering down the movement. However, there's an importance in a lot of the infographics, at least the ones I share. You have to make sure that when you're making these infographics, you are not trying to force a whole book into a slide just to make it accessible. Accessibility is important, but it's more important to make sure we're not watering things down. It's also important to make sure that your social media activism is intentional and not like, Okay, I'm going to post this on my story and not do anything about it. A lot of people share the GoFundMe links but don't donate.

It could be like, Okay, I posted an infographic and now I'm being watched by the feds. We need to be cautious of what we post online because cops exist online, too.

Luisa

What are ways in which white people or non-Black people of color can practice accountability within their own lives?

Brandon

I want people who aren't Black to understand that, yes, you can be a person of color and that's totally cool. There's so much anti-Blackness within

POC communities. POC does not equal Black—because the Black experience is inherently very different from the people of color experience. Anti-Blackness is very specific and deliberate, and it is literal dehumanization of Black people. We experience anti-Blackness daily and see its manifestations in media, politics, policing, the military, housing and healthcare. Anti-Blackness has had a disastrous effect. Not just during the transatlantic slave trade, but after slavery and even before slavery, when Europeans were colonizing West Africa and East Africa. We also need

to recognize that BLM does not take away from other movements. Somebody posts Black Lives Matter and someone would ask about Latinx people or ICE detention centers. Where was this outrage while those things were occurring? Black people were fighting against detention centers, the Muslim travel ban, lax agricultural labor laws and the exploitation of farm workers. It's anti-Black to derail and minimize the movement. It's misdirected rage. We all should be angry at the obvious issues, the obvious oppressors, the capitalist elite who are white, who are men. The issue

This Movement Is

INTERSECTIONAL

isn't Black people saying Black Lives Matter. The issue is Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk. These people have names and addresses. Let's find them, let's talk.

Luisa

Why do you think the Black Lives Matter movement is the largest social movement in U.S history?

Brandon

There's so many things happening at the same time. We have a looming eviction crisis and a global pandemic, and the U.S. is far behind things. These things affect Black folks and non-Black

folks. Black Lives Matter has grown beyond a fight for racial justice. It has grown into a movement for Black liberation, and it's addressing the oppression that non-Black people face as well. This movement is intersectional; intentionally intersectional. This is very deliberate in the founders' mission.

What they were aiming for is anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, anti-white supremacy. It's a global call. We've seen movements all over the world. Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, the Caribbean; everywhere we're seeing

uprisings. This feels significantly different than the Black Lives Matter that I've known since 2014. It feels like we're finally getting it, understanding that Black Lives Matter doesn't mean other lives don't, even though there're obviously people who are gonna say "all lives matter." There're also Black folks and people of color who are for the man. They want to contribute and continue our own oppression as long as they get some capital from it.

It is very deliberate in the founders' mission.

Intentionally
Intersectional

It is very deliberate in the founders' mission.



MARCUS ALSTON

Black activist based in Brooklyn. He/Him.



Luisa

What was Teens Take Charge like for you?

Marcus

I was a part of Teens Take Charge, which is somewhat close to IntegrateNYC. They fight to ensure that all New York City high school students, no matter their race, socioeconomic background, gender, whatever the case may be, have access to an equitable education. They acknowledge that there is systematic racism when it comes to the New York City admissions criteria for elite, specialty high schools, like Beacon [School] and Eleanor Roosevelt [High School]. The mission of IntegrateNYC and Teens Take Charge means abolishing discriminatory screens in schools.

I was at Teens Take Charge for about two years. It was fantastic. I went from being a regular member to being a leader of a team. It was stressful as hell. I mean, no sleep, doing integration work nonstop, during school, after school. It was a lot of work. However, it never felt exhausting because every time I was in a meeting late, or whatever the case may have been, I felt like I was doing something good. My work and my effort were hopefully gonna create change. What I was doing had purpose. That was one of the most exciting times of my life and activism career.

Luisa

What did your work entail at Teens Take Charge ?

Marcus

I was the head of public action, along with a girl who goes to [The Bronx High School of Science]. This entailed normal team management tasks, like emails, making sure you and your team members are situated. The public action team led the organization through an eight-week strike campaign. We were

striking at different schools for eight weeks straight. The number of schools grew throughout those weeks.

We had to make sure we had schools to strike at and figure out when to strike. How many people are going to strike? What's their plan of exit? What's their plan of making sure the administration doesn't bust them? Who are the speakers? It was a lot of organizing and doing work behind the scenes.

I planned a rally every week for eight weeks straight. There were multiple schools rallying in one week, so that meant planning maybe two, three or four rallies in one day. My school attendance dropped because I would have to go to the school where the strike was happening. Or I'd have to figure out who the speakers were. This was essentially every Monday when we had a strike. Even when I was in school, when I had free time, I was writing, responding to emails, writing emails, editing speeches, making speeches, contacting speakers. I would take advantage of every second I had.

Then I would go to the office of Teens Take Charge and have meetings until seven or eight at night. Then I'd go home, do homework, and continue doing my work from the meeting. I regret nothing, though. I loved every single minute of every single stress I had.

Luisa

How did you get involved in activism and the Black Lives Matter movement?

Marcus

I got involved in 2017. When the Parkland shooting happened, there was an organization called New York City's Had Enough. They were a group of teenagers who organized a rally in Washington Square Park on April 20th [2017], which was the

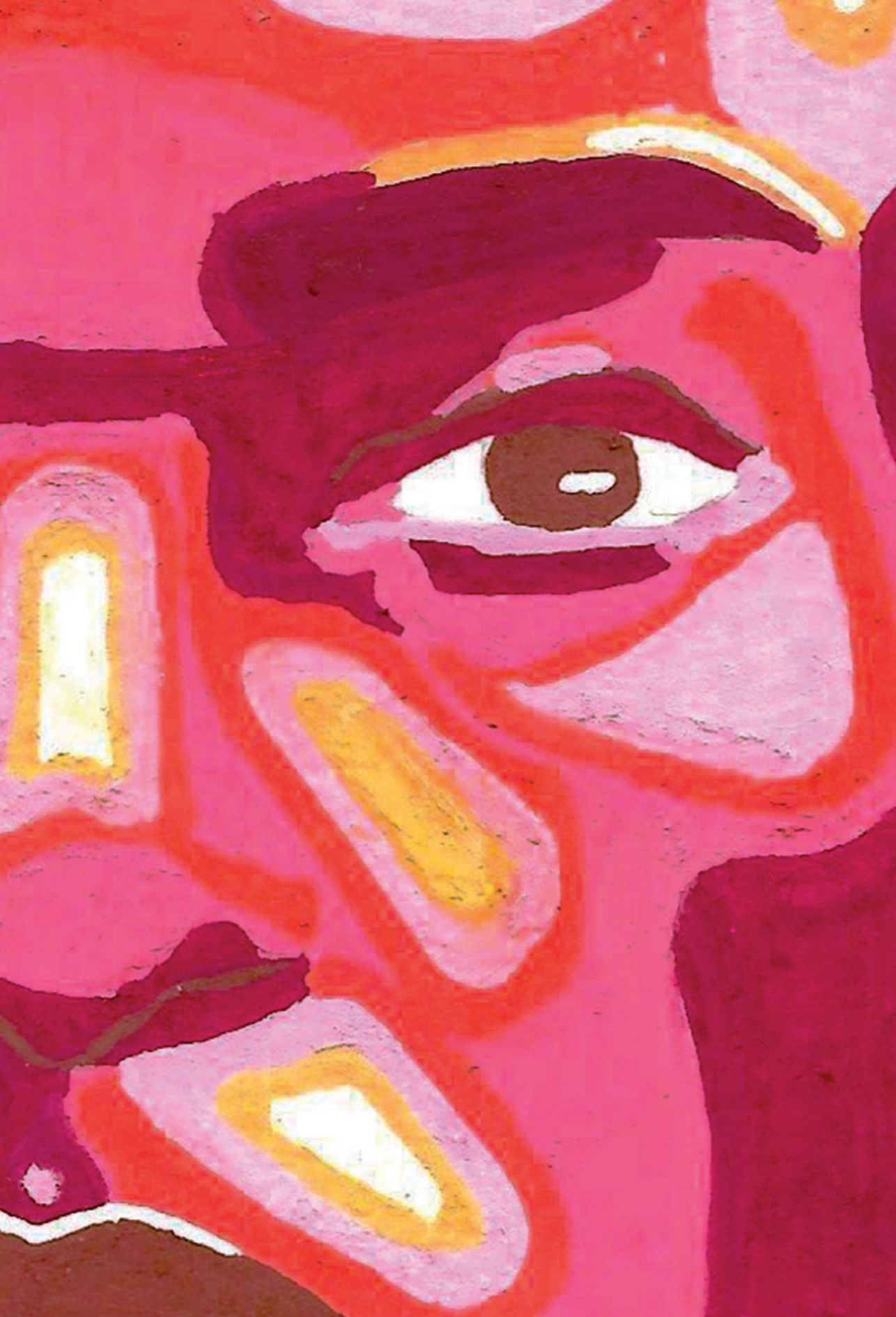
anniversary of the Columbine shooting. I got involved with them and was there for a year and a half. Slowly, I started to realize the lack of intersectionality within the organization, within the activism community in general. Activism is really centered around white activism. What it means to be an activist is usually centered around having all the free time in the world, or being able to get arrested at protests, being able to do all of these things that come with white privilege.

I was one of only two Black people in the organization. When it came to tackling the problem of gun violence, the organization never included communities of color that experience gun violence on a daily basis. It became clear to me that my time there was exhausted and that I needed to go somewhere where I felt like I was actually fighting for my community. I went to Teens Take Charge, where I became aware of the issues with segregation and was able to acknowledge, even as a person of color, my own privileges.

When the BLM movement first came around, I was in elementary school. Ever since then, I've had a passion for the movement. Now that I'm older, I'm equipped with everything that I know now and I'm dedicated to learning more. It became the perfect time to get involved with BLM. I stopped focusing on just integration or gun violence and really focused on BLM.

Getting involved in the movement was very painful. It took an emotional and psychological toll because it reminded me every day that someone is brutalized simply because of the color of their skin, and I am the color of that person's skin. I just count my blessings that I had not been in that person's shoes. I became

I STARTED TO REALIZE
THE *LACK*
OF *INTERSECTIONALITY*
WITHIN THE
ORGANIZATION.



mortified with the state of the world, but I'm just excited to see where the movement goes.

Luisa

What are some things you think that people can do within their own communities to contribute to Black Lives Matter?

Marcus

Everyone can start by doing things from their house. They can talk to family members, read a book, watch YouTube. Educating yourself can be done in different ways. If you're white, educating yourself means acknowledging your privilege and seeing how your actions contribute to these intrinsic racist systems that we have in America. If you are a person of color and you want to get educated on the issues that Black people face, it's important to do a lot of reading; reading all the things that will help you understand the scope of how severe these problems actually are. People can contribute outside of their homes, too, by creating a "sign up to vote" table, or setting up flyers in their neighborhood, or hosting a community-based Zoom or forum. In New York City, every neighborhood has a community board, so maybe you can access and contribute to that.

Luisa

What does allyship mean to you? What is an ally?

Marcus

Allyship means more than just not being racist. It means speaking out against racism. An ally is someone who, if I'm out walking with you on the street and I'm stopped by a police officer, is willing to make sure that I'm protected physically. An ally is someone who doesn't just apologize for the past but also drives toward fixing the problems we face today. A great ally is someone who wholeheartedly and

holistically wants to make a more progressive future. That means being there for your Black and Brown brothers and sisters, being there for Black trans and nonbinary people, using your white privilege to do good as opposed to perpetuating and contributing to this racist system.

Luisa

How do you think that we can incorporate intersectionality within the Black Lives Matter movement in order to make sure that we're fighting for all Black lives?

Marcus

That is a complex question. In the Black community, there's so much transphobia and homophobia. It would take a serious understanding that when we say Black Lives Matter we mean all Black lives, no matter sexual orientation, gender or gender expression. A way to include trans women is not even asking for inclusion. It's including, period. It's also important to see how Black trans people are affected by the same systems we want to abolish. When we talk about those systems, we look at it only through a lens of a straight Black male or a straight Black female. We don't look at it through the lens of a gay overweight Black male or a transgender female. As a community, we need to acknowledge the different levels of oppression to be more inclusive. There is no point in putting trans women in the conversation without acknowledging what they actually experience and reflecting on how you could be contributing to their oppression.

Luisa

How do you think that non-Black POC or even white people can practice accountability?

Marcus

They can reflect on the thoughts they have about things like hair; beauty standards; what you

consider to be pretty; what you consider to be worthy; who you consider to be smart. When you walk down the street, what do you assume about the person walking towards you? Ask yourself, is what I'm thinking hurting or helping someone? If it's hurting someone, then you clearly need to reevaluate those thoughts and do better.

You need to teach yourself how to be an antiracist in all aspects—financial aspects, sometimes even your diet. For example, white vegans don't understand that the same quinoa they're praising themselves for eating over a hamburger is coming from overworked children in Guatemala and Ecuador. We live in a really fucked up and complex world. It comes down to seeing what you're willing to give up to ensure that you stay true to your morals and value Black lives. That means Black lives in the Caribbean, South America, and Africa.

Luisa

What does your perspective bring to the Black Lives Matter movement or to activism in general?

Marcus

I lead with empathy. I try to seriously understand why people think the way they do. Then I try to educate, because I think the difference between educating someone on these issues and just canceling them because they don't understand is that one leads to productivity, and the other leaves someone in ignorance. Holding someone accountable is for them to have a learning outcome. Canceling them does nothing. I hope that through my empathy I'm able to help and lead in a way that allows people to change their minds. I want to create a culture where it's not wrong to ask questions or make mistakes, as long as you learn from them.

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Luisa

How has COVID-19 impacted you and your activism?

Marcus

I had COVID in March, and I was already in a slump because of the George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Elijah McClain cases. I felt powerless because I couldn't go out in the streets and fight for them. I felt hopeless because I couldn't in that

moment contribute to a solution.

I was never a person who did activism from home. There are great ways people can, but I've always been the person to want to go out in the streets and create direct change. However, being at home helped me in my journey of self-reflection. It allowed me to analyze my thoughts. When George Floyd was murdered, I was gung-ho all the way [for justice]. However, when Breonna

Taylor was murdered, it took me a bit longer to get there. I asked myself, why did I have that gap of time? I realized that it was internalized misogyny that came from what I have been taught over the course of my childhood.

We Mean All Black
Lives

I became *mortified*
with the state of
the world

but I'm just excited to see
where the movement goes.

RESOURCES MENTIONED:

26 Ways To Be in The Struggle Beyond The Streets (recommended by Brandon)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/OBzyi8YMLtF11cOV4dW9IaIZCaW8/view>

IntegrateNYC (organization Jedidah worked with)

<https://www.integratenyc.org/>

Teens Take Charge (organization Marcus worked with)

<https://www.teenstakecharge.com/>

ANGELA DAVIS



BOOKS WRITTEN BY BLACK WOMEN TO GET YOU STARTED:

Killing Rage: Ending Racism, by bell hooks

Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics, by bell hooks

Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism, by bell hooks

Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement,

by Angela Davis

Are Prisons Obsolete?, by Angela Davis

bell hooks



This project was spearheaded by Luisa Gazio and Maya Braunstein, brand strategy and design interns at ThoughtMatter, a strategic branding and design studio focused on #WorkWorthDoing. We help the people who stand up, stand out.

What's your big idea?

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