

“Why do people feel the need to proclaim that ‘Black Lives Matter’ out in the streets amid a global pandemic?”

Well, in our nation...

- \* Black people were legally constituted as property
- \* Enslaved for 246 years
- \* Legally constituted a 3/5 human
- \* From 1789 to 1850, 80% of U.S. Presidents owned slaves
- \* 8 Presidents owned slaves while serving as President
- \* 18 of the first 31 U.S. Supreme Court Justices owned slaves.
- \* 12 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, Black people were re-enslaved, by another name, through the exploitation of a loophole in the 13th Amendment. This new enslavement evolved into an exploitative system known as the convict leasing system.
- \* Convict leasing—which was actually worse for Black people than slavery in many ways—legally existed until 1921, & persisted underground until 1941 (well after we’re taught slavery ended in our nation).
- \* As convict leasing (the original form of mass incarceration) emerged in 1877, the Lynching era began alongside of it.
- \* Between 1880 and 1890, the number of Black people lynched in our nation equates to a Black person being lynched every other day.
- \* During a 88-year period of domestic terrorism, Black people were relentlessly murdered by white vigilantes—with impunity—with very conservative estimates concluding that at least 5,000 Black people were murdered in this manner.
- \* Black people were lynched for trivial, & often falsified, claims. They were denied due process & their civil right to be judged by a jury of their peers. Killed by lynch mobs.
- \* Lynching grew to become a sick form of entertainment, a spectacle sport, where as many as 20,000 white people gathered around to watch Black people be tortured, dismembered & hung.
- \* For 75 consecutive years, from 1877 to 1952, there was at least 1 black person lynched every single year in our nation.
- \* Lynching didn’t stop in 1952 though. The number of Black people lynched between 1880 and 1968 averages out to a Black person being lynched weekly, for 88 years.
- \* Black people in the Jim/Jane Crow era were constituted as 2nd class citizens, denied civil & human rights through 1968.
- \* 3 years later, in 1971, the War of Drugs was launched, targeting the Black community & we’re still enduring the impact of mass incarceration.

As if all of this weren’t enough, I would be irresponsible if I didn’t say that this tragic, but brief, history lesson doesn’t even touch on the horrors of the Middle Passage, the legacy of educational inequality, redlining, restricted housing covenants, the fact that Black veterans were denied the benefits of the G.I. Bill after returning from war, & the long legacy of Black leaders like Dr. King, Medgar Evers, & Fred Hampton being murdered in the prime of their lives because of their activism on behalf of all people.

Nor, does it account for the elongated history of police brutality or racism in our judicial system—from the disparities in death penalty sentencing, to criminal sentencing (i.e. crack vs powdered cocaine). Nor does it include the horrific history of racial purging, violence, & banishment that decimated entire Black communities in Rosewood Florida, Tulsa Oklahoma,

Forsyth County (Georgia), & Pierce City Missouri. Or, the racial violence enacted against Blacks in the 'Red Summer' of 1919.

There has been a continuous denial that Black Lives Matter in this nation (unless they are being exploited for their labor). There has been a consistent negation of the intrinsic worth of Black lives. These are historic facts! So, even if you do not support every element of the movement, hear the truth and affirm the pain that rings out through the proclamation 'Black Lives Matter!'"