

The Criminal Justice System, and How It Oppresses People of Color.

Mikayla C. Brailsford.

“The criminal justice system, like any system designed by human beings, clearly has its flaws.”

Ben Whishaw.

The Criminal Justice System was created back in colonial days. But, during this time everybody had to obey the laws of the British, and these laws weren't always fair nor were they just. Some of these laws, and the reasons behind why they weren't just are as followed.

The Criminal Justice System in Colonial America distinguished the difference between felonies, which are violent crimes that one can be sent to prison for more than a year, or can be sentenced to death for; and misdemeanors, which are minor offenses, which are offenses you can either be fined for, or sent to jail for a few days, or months. During this time, for more serious crimes you could stand trial in front of a grand jury which was composed of people from your community.

The Colonial legal process is different from the one we know now. In Colonial days, once a crime was reported and the judge received all admissible evidence, the judge would decide on whether it was a true crime, and the accused would be questioned, in the house of the magistrate, (a civil officer who administers the law, especially one who conducts a court that deals with minor offenses) and the accused would be testified against by witnesses. The one big difference is that there were no lawyers allowed. So, once the judge decided to convict the accused, it was over, s/he had to serve their time. You weren't allowed to challenge narrow points of the law, there was no leeway, in addition to the fact there weren't many trained lawyers and many defendants couldn't afford a lawyer.

The Criminal Justice System of the United States of America is a system which handles law enforcement, and is directly involved in apprehending, prosecuting, defending, sentencing, and punishing those who are either suspected or convicted of criminal offenses. Within the Criminal Justice System there are agencies which are established by the federal, state, and local governments. These agencies are in place to control crime, and impose penalties on those who violate the laws in their jurisdiction.

The Criminal Justice System is not just one system, but a group of individual, yet similar systems. The rules of the system vary depending on the city, county, state, or government. But, the one common thread between all systems is that there are two main systems. The state and the federal system. The state system deals with the crimes committed within the boundaries of the state, while the federal system deals with crimes committed in more than one state, or on federal property (i.e. business, homes, apartments, land, etc. owned, leased or occupied by a department/agency of the United States).

The Criminal Justice System has five components to it. The five components of the Criminal Justice System are as followed.

1. Law Enforcement.
2. Prosecution.
3. Defense Attorneys.
4. Courts.
5. Corrections.

The first component is law enforcement. Law enforcement is defined as when police officers report what happens in their areas, then a group of investigators is sent out to said area to investigate said crimes, gather and protect evidence. Police officers have the ability to arrest offenders, and during the court process, these officers may be called up to give a testimony.

The next component is prosecution. Prosecution is defined as lawyers who represent the state/federal government throughout the court process from the first appearance, until the accused is either exonerated, or sentenced. The job of a prosecutor is to review the evidence brought to them and the job of the prosecutor is to either file charges, or drop the case. If the prosecution decides to file charges, then the prosecutors present evidence, question witnesses if the case goes to trial, or decides whether or not to negotiate plea bargains; which are arrangements between a prosecutor and a defendant which the defendant pleads guilty to a lesser charge in the expectation of a shorter sentence, so the case does not go to trial which saves taxpayers money.

The one great thing about prosecutors is that they have an incredible amount of freedom in regards to making choices on the direction in which a case goes. The great thing about prosecution is that the victims involved in the case can contact the office of the prosecution, and find out who is in charge of their case, and inform the prosecutor if the defense attorney has contacted the victim involved, and to seek out other information about the case they're involved in.

The next component involved in the criminal justice system is defense attorneys. The job of defense attorneys is to defend the person standing accused for the crimes they have "committed". Defense attorneys are either hired by the defendant, or assigned to the person by the courts. The next component of the criminal justice system is the courts. The courts are run by the judges, and the job of them in the courts is that they are to oversee what happens in the courts, and the judges have the power to release offenders before their trial, or before their sentence is slated to be over. A judge in the court system can also accept and deny plea agreements, s/he oversees trials, and can sentence convicted offenders.

The final component of the United States Criminal Justice System is corrections. Corrections deals with the jail system, and in jail there are correction officers which supervise convicted offenders when they're incarcerated, or on probation or parole. In certain communities, the correction officers prepare the pre-sentencing reports with background information on the offender in order to ensure the best sentence is handed down to the offender. The job of the correction officers is to make sure that the prisons are secure so that no offender is able to escape from the correctional facility they are being held in. Corrections officers oversee the day-to-day custody of inmates, and oversee release processes for inmates, and in rare cases notify the victim(s) of changes in the offender's status.

The Criminal Justice System, in my opinion was designed to oppress people of color. The root of the oppression started with slavery, and once slavery was abolished, it didn't end. People of color have been controlled through systems of racial and social control that appear to die for a little bit, and is eventually rebirthed to cater to the needs of the time.

The oppression of African-Americans didn't begin in the Criminal Justice System. The oppression of African-Americans began when we were forced to become slaves. Slavery which began in 1619, where in Jamestown, Virginia 20 captive Africans are sold into slavery in the British North American colonies. But, it wasn't until 1640 when John Punch was sentenced to servitude for life to his two white companions which is the unofficial start to slavery.

By 1641, the state of Massachusetts is the first colony to legalize slavery, and in 1643, The New England Confederation of Plymouth, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Haven adopt a fugitive slave law. This fugitive slave law said that slaveowners and their agents have the legal right to reclaim runaways from other colonies/states and those colonies/states had to return the runaways.

By 1657, Connecticut had legalized slavery, as well as Virginia, as well as Virginia passed a fugitive slave law. We see that Rhode Island restricted having slaves for more than 10 years. By 1662, Virginia had passed yet another law which stated that slavery is hereditary. If a slave woman gave birth to a child, then that child would inherit the mother's status. (i.e. whether she was enslaved or not.)

By 1633, Maryland had legalized slavery, and a year later New York and New Jersey legalize slavery. Maryland in the year 1664, take legal action to prevent white women and black men from marrying each other, and then take legal action to mandate lifelong servitude for all black men, as well as New York, New Jersey, North and South Carolina, and Virginia. By the 1680s, Virginia forbade black slaves from the right to bear arms, and from congregating in large numbers. Virginia also declared that ALL black servants that were imported were slaves for life. New York made it illegal for slaves to sell goods to make money, or for the fun of it.

By 1704, Pennsylvania had legalized slavery. By 1702, New York passed “The Act for Regulating Slaves.” This Act gave slave owners the power to punish their slaves for committing crimes. In 1703, Massachusetts required every slave master who set a slave free to pay 50 or more pounds in the freed slave convicted a crime.

By 1705, we see that racial oppression kicks into overdrive.

By 1705, racial oppression became law. In 1705, The Virginia Slave Code says that **ALL** non-Christian servants coming into the Virginia colony are slaves. The VSC defines slaves as are property, and says that any master who kills their slaves if they're punishing them will be acquitted of all charges for which they stand accused. The VSC forbids slaves, and free people of color from assaulting white people, and denies the slaves the right to bear arms, or move to a new place without permission.

In 1705, New York declared that if slaves ran away, then they would be punished by execution, and Massachusetts made marriage and sexual relations between blacks and whites illegal. While in 1706, New York declared blacks, Indians, and slaves be sentenced to death if they killed a white person. In 1712, in New York City, a slave revolt occurs and nine whites are killed while eighteen slaves are executed, as a result. In the same year, New York also says that it is illegal for blacks, Indians, and slaves to murder their own kind, as well as forbidding this group of people from owning real estate and holding property. In 1715, Rhode Island legalized slavery, and Maryland declared all slaves entering the province of Maryland to be slaves for as long as they live.

In 1723, Virginia outlawed *manumission*. Manumission is the act of a slave owner freeing their slaves. In 1739, slaves in Stono, South Carolina rebel. These slaves take over, and eventually burn an arsenal, kill a few whites, and make their way to Spanish Florida to attain freedom, but sadly they're stopped by the colonial military. A year later, South Carolina passed "The Negro Act". "The Negro Act" made it illegal for slaves to move, meet in large groups, raise food, learn to read English, and it's legal for slave owners to kill slaves who rebel against the orders.

In 1770, Crispus Attucks, a slave who escaped is killed by British forces in Boston, Massachusetts, making him the first colonist to die in the war for independence. By 1773, the first church for blacks is founded in South Carolina. In the same year, slaves in Massachusetts petitioned for the right to freedom, but were ultimately shot down. By 1775, the first abolition society was founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

By 1776, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the members of the Continental Congress had signed the Declaration of Independence, as well as the Society of Friends/Quakers had forbid members from acquiring and keeping slaves.

By 1777, the colony of Vermont is the first of the original thirteen colonies to abolish slavery, and in 1778, Rhode Island forbid the removal of slaves from the state, and then Virginia prohibited the importation of slaves. In 1780, Pennsylvania slowly began the act of freeing slaves, while Massachusetts liberated all men regardless of race as a freedom clause in their Constitution is understood to be an annihilation of slavery. By 1781, Mum Bett, and another slave in Massachusetts sued their master for freedom, and won their freedom.

In 1782, the state of Virginia encouraged the freeing of slaves, but in a more private manner. The freeing of slaves didn't have to be extremely public. By 1783, "in New Orleans, Louisiana, wealthy, free blacks had organized the Perseverance Benevolence Mutual Aid Association to support their own interests, and assist the poor." ([PBS](#)).

By 1787, the Northwest Ordinance forbid slavery except as criminal punishment in the Northwest Territory, and by these means, residents of the territory are required to return fugitive slaves. In 1787, in Philadelphia Pennsylvania, The United States Constitution is drafted, as well as the first African Methodist Episcopal Church is founded. The first black fraternal organization, the African Mason Lodge is founded in Boston, Massachusetts with the intention of providing services to the black community, and rally against slavery and discrimination.

By 1788, The United States Constitution is adopted, and New Hampshire is the ninth state to agree to the Constitution. There is not only a “three-fifths clause”, but also a fugitive slave clause. The “three-fifths” clause is that enslaved blacks in a state would be counted as “three-fifths of the number of white inhabitants of the state.” The fugitive slave clause meant that all runaway slaves had to be returned to the owner in the state that they escaped in. However, The Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution made the fugitive slave clause moot.

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States of America. At this time, there were over 4 million slaves. By this time, Arizona passed the Expulsion Act which banished all free blacks from the state. By 1861, Harriet Tubman's autobiography "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl" is published, making it the first published autobiography of an African-American woman. In 1862, the United States Congress abolishes slavery in Washington, D.C. and President Abraham Lincoln signs the Homestead Act, which means that public land is given to public qualified citizens, which included black heads of the households who were over 21 years old, and single black women. In 1863, slaves in all areas were freed by President Lincoln under the Emancipation Proclamation, and shortly thereafter states began to abolish slavery.

The official end to slavery came under The Thirteenth Amendment of The United States Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution states "*Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*"

By 1866, the struggle was far from over, but it seemed that not all hope was lost. During this time, two African-Americans had a seat in the Massachusetts Legislature, which marked the first time any person of color had participated in this branch of United States of America government. Later in 1866, nearly 15,000 people gathered in the United States' capitol to celebrate their emancipation, but former Confederate States weren't fond of this and created "Black Code" laws to counteract the text of the Thirteenth Amendment. "Black Code" was the intent to restrict African-American's freedom. Later in 1866, there were racial riots that took place in Memphis, Tennessee and in New Orleans, Louisiana and we eventually saw the rise of the white supremacist group, the Ku Klux Klan.

In the late 1860s, the Reconstruction Era began. Congress passed the first, second, and third Reconstruction Acts, and the governments of all Southern States with the exclusion of Tennessee are broken into military districts which were overseen by federal troops. In 1867, Congress allowed African-Americans the right to vote, and in 1867, the real HU, Howard University was founded in Washington, D.C. The fourth Reconstruction Act was passed in 1868, and in 1869, the state of Tennessee is the first of many Southern States to establish an “‘all-white’ Democratic ‘Redeemer’ government sympathetic to the cause of the former Confederacy and against racial equality.”([PBS](#))

In 1871, the Ku Klux Klan Act is passed, which allowed the President to suspend the writ of habeas corpus to combat the Ku Klux Klan, and other white supremacist organizations. The Second Enforcement Act is passed to enforce the rights granted to the African-Americans under the United States Constitution. By the late 1870s, early 1880s we see the birth of “Jim Crow” laws.

Jim Crow laws were introduced in the late 1880s. This was the rebirth of slavery, without explicitly calling it slavery. Jim Crow introduced segregation in the United States. Jim Crow was enforced until 1965, and it made segregation in all public places mandatory. While Jim Crow was on the rise, we saw the rise of the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights Movement, is a group who wanted to end the racial segregation and discrimination against the African-American race, and to ensure that we all received equal protection of the law, that is explicitly laid out in the United States Constitution. The Civil Rights movement was successful, with achieving what they set out to. However, The Civil Rights Movement was seen as the notion of criminality. The Civil Rights Movement “contributed” to the rising crime rates, as politicians believed that if black people were given more rights, then the Country would be repaid with more crime.

Until the 1970s, the crime rate was at a constant, but we soon saw the beginning of mass incarceration. The rule of law states that “Nobody was above the law, nor below the law. The law was going to be enforced.” However, we saw that this wasn’t the case. During President Nixon’s Era, crime stood in for race. *The War on Drugs* was treated as crime and race issue, as opposed to a mental health issue. The drugs of choice were crack, and cocaine. Crack was the black person’s drug, while cocaine was the white man’s drug. *The War on Drugs* was a coy to lure blacks into jail, according to a Nixon Advisor, John Ehrlichman.

Ehrlichman said “The Nixon Campaign in 1968 and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I’m saying? We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black... but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities... We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.”

The prison population was steadily increasing as the years progressed. By 1980, the prison population was at 513,900 and counting. During the 1980s, we saw the election of Ronald Reagan and the negative connotation that it came with. *The War on Drugs* was turned into a literal issue. There were mandatory sentencing penalties for crack, which were harsher for powdered cocaine. People of Color were getting longer sentences for possession. You faced the possibility of going to jail for the rest of your life, as opposed to a white person just getting a slap on the wrist for possession.

By 1985, Reagan had promised to cut taxes for the rich and throw all the crack users in prison which destroyed the colored communities. So, by promising to throw all crack users in jail, by 1985 the United States prison population was 759,100 and counting.

In 1989, there was a case of the Central Park Jogger, Trisha Meili. She was found naked, gagged, tied up, and covered in mud and blood. Five males of color were arrested, tried, and sentenced to 6-13 years in prison because there was a public demand to get these “animals” off of the street. These innocent young men were tried as adults, and sent to prison before DNA evidence proved their innocence. When George H.W. Bush was elected, he won the Presidency by painting black men to be criminals.

By 1990, the prison population was at 1,179,200 people, and in ten years, the population increased to 2,015,300 people, and the cause was because of Bill Clinton’s crime bill. This crime bill caused a surge in the imprisonment of black people. This Crime Bill expanded the death penalty to include crimes that usually wouldn’t end in the death penalty.

By 2001, the black community was weakened, we couldn’t fight for ourselves out of fear. By 2001, there were 878,400 blacks imprisoned.

The Corrections Corporation of America built, owned, and managed secure correctional facilities. They made contracts with the states, and had to protect those investments, which means they had to keep a certain amount of people imprisoned, even if they were arresting people who had never committed a crime a day in their lives, which played a crucial role in prison privatization, and the rapid increase in criminalization.

People in the prison systems don't want change, they want to make sure that their economic model is being met, because once the number of inmates drops, the money goes away.

Mass Incarceration has become extremely monetized, so that's the reason why nobody dares to talk about it, or even question it. We see Kalief Browder is a prime example. Kalief Browder was charged with a petty crime, once which he didn't even commit. He was taken to the precinct and told he could post his \$10,000 bail but his family couldn't afford it. He was imprisoned, and offered a plea bargain which he turned down, instead wanting to prove his innocence and take the chance of getting a higher sentence.

While people of color are imprisoned, instead of feeling secure at the hands of the guards who are supposed to protect us, they are instead beating on us, and treating us like absolute scum, and this causes our mental health to go into overdrive, and cause us to do things we wouldn't have done such as committing suicide.

The justice system which is supposed to treat us fairly, treats us better if we're white, rich, and guilty as opposed to being poor, innocent, or a person of color. The system is meant to dehumanize us, and break us. It takes away our rights, as we accept plea bargains to avoid the "mandatory minimum" for crimes we didn't commit.

The criminal justice system has too many laws which lock people up for petty offenses, bully them for taking heed to their Constitutional rights, imposing harsh sentences, putting them into prisons, and doing very little to rehabilitate these inmates. The criminal justice system imposes collateral consequences, you have to label yourself as a felon on applications, your chances of getting a student loan are ruined, you are unable to attain certain business licenses, it's a scarlet letter which follows you throughout your natural born life, even after you've passed. That's all you are remembered by.

It is the belief that once we've done wrong, we should pay it back, and that is the end of it, but sadly it isn't the case. You're shunned by society. You're put into a box with the rest of the released ex-convicts. It's a Jim Crow situation, we haven't ended the racial caste system, it's just been redesigned. Once you've been convicted of a crime, you are a slave to the state you committed the crime in, per the Thirteenth Amendment.

While The Thirteenth Amendment guaranteed freedom to ALL Americans, there is a small portion of it that was overlooked. This portion is what we refer to as the *criminality clause*. The Thirteenth Amendment states “*Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*”

The clause in this which is often overlooked is “... *except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*” This clause means that once you’ve committed a crime, you’re now a slave to that state because you will be prosecuted, and will serve your prison sentence in that state.

After all of my research, it was time to see if the views that were expressed in the research were mimicked throughout. So, I talked to a student who studies Correctional Counseling, and a person who has experienced the criminal justice system.

I asked the following four questions.

1. In your opinion, do you think that the Criminal Justice System was designed to oppress people of color?
2. Do you know someone who has gone through the system? If so, what was their experience like?
3. What do you think about the state of the Criminal Justice System?
4. What do you think about the #BlackLivesMatter movement? Does it have an impact on the system? Does it expose the flaws of the system?

Interview with Correctional Counseling Student.

1. In your opinion, do you think that the Criminal Justice System was designed to oppress people of color?

a. I don't think the system was created with the intention of only oppressing people of color. Jails and prisons were created to bring punishment, deterrence, and retribution. In the beginning, it was for criminals and over time, the system started to target people of color much more by integrating drugs into our communities and then cracking down on drugs by targeting us; and now it is used to oppress people of color.

2. Do you know someone who has gone through the system? If so, what was their experience like?

a. I know someone who has gone through the initial process (arrest, arraignment, court, jail). They were not convicted of assault and battery but they definitely got to see how it all worked. They were scared they would get deported or never see their son again. It was hard, on top of the fact they had no money and they could not get commissary. Luckily, it was just jail opposed to prison but it was still a scary thing to experience.

3.

Interview (Cont'd.)

3. What do you think about the state of the Criminal Justice System?

- a. The Criminal Justice System is pretty messed up. If we're talking about jail/prison, the [Trump] administration is attempting to close some jails and start working on early release programs, so those offenders who committed petty crimes and have shown good behavior get early release without parole. So, that's good. However, the system has been trying to cut costs for years and they did it by sending prisoners to privately owned prisons. These facilities didn't have to follow all the rules and regulations and they were able to increase revenue by paying workers less, not buying food and necessities for inmates, while still taking money from the government. It was a mess, but the system is slowly getting better.

4. What do you think about the #BlackLivesMatter movement? Does it have an impact on the system? Does it expose the flaws of the system?

- a. This question is hard, because it could be either yes or no. BLM hasn't really done much in my opinion except to show People of Color that we can have solidarity. It contributed to getting body cameras on officers, but it isn't helping to reduce the number of bodies in prison. I can say that it has helped expose the flaws and abuse the police have but it hasn't reached the entire system. It's hard to say definitively that BLM has impacted the criminal justice system but I'll say it has played a part.

The second interview that I conducted, we went a little more into depth about their time in the system, in addition to answering the questions from the previous interview.

1. How many times have you stood in front of a judge, and what was it like each time?
 - a. Well, too many times to remember over the course of my sentence, but the experiences were all the same. It was very difficult, embarrassing, and demeaning. I had a few different judges, and they were all rude, and nasty.
2. What was the sentencing phase of your trial like?
 - a. Well, I didn't have a trial. I was arraigned on the 19th of June 2013, and no later after that, I met with the District Attorney, because I didn't want to go to trial, because I didn't want to prolong the sentencing phase even longer. I met with my lawyer and the DA to discuss a plea bargain. A plea bargain is where I plead guilty to a lesser charge in exchange for a lesser sentence. My first deal was 7-14 years, which means that I would have to serve the minimum of 7 years before I would have been eligible for parole. I didn't accept the deal that the DA was offering, so the DA came back with a new deal which was 5-10, years which was supposed to be my final offer, and I denied it. The final offer that I was given was 2 ½-5 years which I accepted, and began to serve my sentence once the judge was made aware.
3. So, what was the transition experience like? You were going from having freedom, to having your life controlled by the system.
 - a. Well, the transition was quite difficult, I was going from being with my family, everyday, to being in isolation for 23 hours out of the day, and only being allowed out for 1. Once you're in the system, you no longer have an identity, you're just "Inmate Number...".

4. So, what was the routine for you, once you were accustomed to the system?
 - a. The normal day was very mundane. It's not much to do, you get access to television and the radio in your cell. You can write letters to your family, and receive letters. We were allowed out at least 3 times a day. Once for each meal, and we were allotted an hour for each meal. We also were allowed recreational time.
5. When you were finally eligible for parole, what was that experience like? What is the process like?
 - a. I don't remember exactly how I felt, but I'm sure it was a feeling of excitement because I was one step closer to getting out. The experience on the other hand was a lot less stressful than the sentencing process. The process of getting paroled depends on the charges. A few people review your case, and ask you questions about your future plans pending your release.
6. What was your experience in the system like?
 - a. It's a very humbling experience. The process is humiliating. There's so much that you miss while you're away, and you can't make that time up. There's nothing like having your freedom. For me, being incarcerated was an experience that I would never want to relive.

7. Okay, final question. What do you think about the state of the criminal justice system?

- a. I think that there's a lot of work that needs to be done in the system, because it seems to be a race issue in the system. If you're an African-American, you are treated differently. The system isn't designed to help and rehabilitate, it's designed to keep you in the system. It's a business, it's almost like the more prisoners that a prison has, the more money that prison in particular is given. It's designed against African-Americans. The Scales of Justice are weighted in terms of the minorities and the majorities. The system is designed in reference to certain crimes. There are certain programs that you need to complete while incarcerated, in order to be paroled and then you need to complete programs similar to those upon your release.

8. In your opinion, do you think that the Criminal Justice System was designed to oppress people of color?

- a. Yes, it's only because the system is more so based on race and what your demographics are. If you're a minority, a poor minority at that it's designed to you. If you're white and affluent it's more breaks, and more chances given. It leads to less harsher sentencing, and suspended sentences. The financial penalties are not as harsh.

9. What do you think about the state of the criminal justice system?

- a. I think that they need reform, sentencing reform, prison reform. It's not designed for rehabilitation, there is no skills training for guys who weren't used to working, and there is nothing designed to help them go into the workforce. There are no real programs to help people who have been incarcerated for extended periods of time who are preparing for release adapt to the changes in the outside world.

10. What do you think about the ##BlackLivesMatter movement? Does it have an impact on the system? Does it expose the flaws of the system?

- a. The #BlackLivesMatter exposes the flaws in the system because it shows the disproportionate number of minorities killed by the police as opposed to their white counterparts, and it exposes the myth if a police officer kills a person then they will stand trial for the crime they have committed. People don't want to accept the movement because it deals with black lives, so they try to flip it to all lives matter. But, all lives are not impacted by the killings of innocent kids at the hands of police officers, like blacks are. Yes, the #BlackLivesMatter movement has forced people to realize that there are issues that we need to deal with.

11. Let's talk about the rates of recidivism. In your opinion, why are these rates incredibly high, and how did you beat the odds of not going back?

- a. If you don't have a strong support system, i.e. family, friends, once crimes are committed they turn their backs on you. There is no funding for people who don't have income. The system does not create opportunities for jobs, or even helping find jobs. Dealing with POs, a lot of companies don't want to deal with felons because of the meetings they have to have with their POs. If you don't have someone to steer you in the way of getting employment, you're at a disadvantage. Halfway houses don't have preapproved home plans, which lead to halfway houses that don't offer much, they're just a jail part two, but you have access to the outside world. It leaves them in a hopeless place, and leads them to go back to their previous life.

Yes, The Criminal Justice System does oppress people of color. When we don't learn from our past mistakes, history will begin to repeat itself, and it will rear it's ugly hand, ten times worse. There are currently 2.3 million people who call a correctional facility their home. Some of those people will never see the light of day again, African-Americans make up 40.2% of the prison population. It's a well-known statistic that every 1 in 17 white men will go to jail or prison during their lifetime, while every 1 in 3 black men will go to jail or prison during their lifetime. We're being stripped of our rights that we fought so hard for. It's important for us to stand up for our rights, and continue to fight. It doesn't get easier. We've never had it easy, we can't talk about the story of black power, without mentioning the oppression that we've suffered through, and that we continue to suffer through.

Bibliography.

Netflix Official Site. N.p., 07 Oct. 2016. Web. 12 May 2017.

<<https://www.netflix.com/watch/80091741?trackId=13752289&tctx=0%2C0%2C3c6fe8d9956cbf3e86f908774fad687ef4a88b08%3A29bff9fa30e8fd6eace5fc5beba800de83bb47e3>>.

"The Criminal Justice System." The National Center for Victims of Crime. N.p., 2008. Web. 21 Apr. 2017.

<<https://victimsofcrime.org/help-for-crime-victims/get-help-bulletins-for-crime-victims/the-criminal-justice-system>>.

"The U.S. Criminal Justice History Resource Page." Criminal Justice Degree Online. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Apr. 2017.

<<http://www.criminaljusticedegree.net/resources/the-us-criminal-justice-history-resource-page/>>.

Bibliography.

"The Evolution of the American Justice System." University of Cincinnati RSS. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Apr. 2017.

<<http://cjonline.uc.edu/resources/criminal-justice-research/the-evolution-of-the-american-justice-system/>>.

"The Early Years of American Law - Colonial Freedom, Britain's Push For Greater Control, A New Start, A New Criminal Court System." JRank Articles. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Apr. 2017.

<<http://law.jrank.org/pages/11900/Early-Years-American-Law.html>>.

"Slavery in the United States." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 1 May 2017.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_the_United_States>.

"Slavery and the Making of America." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service, 2004. Web. 6 May 2017. <<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/timeline/index.html>>.

Bibliography.

"New York Slave Laws: Colonial Period." Famous Trials. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 May 2017.

<<http://www.famous-trials.com/negroplot/367-slavelaws>>.

Malik, Simba. "The Three-Fifths Clause of the United States Constitution (1787)." Black Past - Remembered and Reclaimed. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 May 2017.

<<http://www.blackpast.org/aah/three-fifths-clause-united-states-constitution-1787>>.

"Black Codes (United States)." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 14 May 2017.

<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Codes_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Codes_(United_States))>.

"Second Enforcement Act of 1871." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 14 May 2017.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Enforcement_Act_of_1871>.

"History of Criminal Justice." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 1 Apr. 2017.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_criminal_justice>.

Bibliography.

"Jim Crow Laws." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 14 May 2017.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Crow_laws>.

"African-American Civil Rights Movement (1954–1968)." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 5 May 2017.

<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_Civil_Rights_Movement_\(1954%E2%80%931968\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_Civil_Rights_Movement_(1954%E2%80%931968))>.

"Central Park Jogger Case." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 5 May 2017.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Park_jogger_case>.