



Over the last few weeks, a number of us have been talking about the need to march and demonstrate in all kinds of neighborhoods and communities. On Sunday we talked, and we decided to organize a march through the Highlands. And here we are!

I see many familiar faces. I also see many people I do not know, which is wonderful! We are here today because Black Lives Matter.

We are here because on February 23, 2020, 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery was shot to death by white men while he was jogging in Satilla Shores, in Georgia.

We are here today because on March 13, 2020, a 'no-knock' warrant allowed the police to use a battering ram to crash into Breonna Taylor's apartment, where the police fired over 20 shots, killing Breonna, who was struck by police bullets at least 8 times.

We are here today because we were horrified to watch George Floyd get murdered on national TV on May 25, 2020, by a satisfied and smug looking police officer who used his knee to kill a man (Minneapolis MN)

We are here today because when George Floyd called out for his mother, he called out for humanity - and here we are! We have been called into the streets to demand an end to the "American" way of doing things: a way which is racist, discriminatory, unjust, and uncalled for.

We are here to denounce police brutality, excessive policing, and a system which dehumanizes Black and Brown people not just in the criminal justice arena, but also through the intertwining tentacles of poverty, unemployment, lack of health care, the

school to prison pipeline, mass incarceration, and a list that goes on and on and on.

We are here because we have failed to protect Black and Brown people by not working hard enough to stop the cycle of racism, forcing the next generation to experience and endure continued hatred and violence because simply because of skin color.

Today, Black and Brown children across this nation are still consigned to underfunded racially segregated schools (our schools are more racially segregated now than then were in 1954); we have left this generation without work and livable wages; and we have allowed their continued slaying in the slaughterhouse of America.

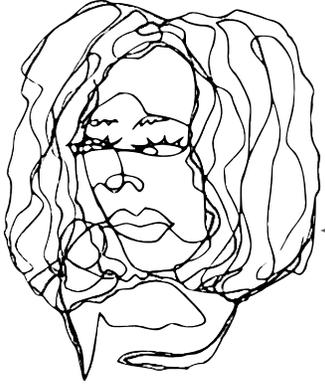
We are here today because we know that as a nation, we are fundamentally broken.

We know that merely focusing on a narrow criminal justice reform agenda will not catapult us into a non-racist space.

We are here because we know Black and Brown people are oppressed regardless of whether we have democrats or republicans in office.

We are here today to say enough is enough and begin the hard work of challenging the framework of white supremacy in our schools, in our workplaces, in our restaurants, in our neighborhoods, in our parks and in our homes.

We, the people, are here because we want to figure out a better way of doing things.



And I think many of you who are here today are beginning to recognize that and want to do something about it. That is why it is important to walk in cities and towns across the country, in Black and Brown neighborhoods, and in white neighborhoods just like this one.

I think it is important that so many of our Highlands neighbors are here right now. That is meaningful. You all are a powerful force in our society, and it is critical for you to show up, walk beside us, and demand change - we cannot end racism without you all.

Your commitment to this struggle - you being here today on the front lawn of the Delaware Art Museum - signifies to us - your friends, your neighbors, your family members, that you

- are standing up for racial justice and that
- know that fighting White supremacy is not a Black and a Brown issue, it is a human rights issue.

The coalition emerging across the country, filled with diversity and love signifies a new and different movement. At one of the marches I saw a very young white girl, a teenager, and she had written on her tee-shirt "when they start shooting, stand behind me." She blew my mind. She was so young, so brave, and she was putting her body on the line. When I look out at you all today, I see that same commitment, that same fortitude, that same refusal to accept injustice.

Five days ago Ta-Nehisi Coates was asked what he sees right now, as he looks across the country. He said "I see hope. I see progress...he said "A lot of us are feeling that the battle against white

supremacy has been joined by whites and other people of color, and that makes this a very different struggle than the one we had in 1968" (June 5, 2020)

Yesterday, Angela Davis gave a talk and she said "we are seeing a global challenge to racism and this moment holds possibilities for change we never experienced before (June 10, 2020). We are all here because even in the midst of our pain and anger, we also feel hope. Our hearts and brains our pounding and our bodies are trembling because we refuse to be silent. We know this is an uphill battle, but I believe Americans - including us, right here in the Highlands - are here to stay the course. And as exciting as movement building is, protest can also be scary.

So I want to share a quick story about protest and fear, by telling you about Bree Newsome. Five years ago, when Bree was in her early thirties, (June 27, 2015) she scaled a 30 a foot flagpole outside the S. Carolina state house with the intent of removing the confederate flag.

She said she was scared going up the pole, but she was not going to let her fear stop her from fighting racism and taking down the confederate flag.

As she went up to get the flag, her accomplice, James Ian Tyson, who was white, stood at the fence to support her, hold the line, and participate in the fight against white supremacy.

When they were asked why they decided to break the law, knowing they would be arrested, Bree told the press "If we really want to work for a peaceful society, we have to AGITATE for change..until the people in power have to deal with you, they won't."



We are here today because we know we must protest and demand change. As my sister Chandra Pitts says, this is a people's movement, a people's march, and I want to say, I am proud to stand here with you all this afternoon.

Sister Assata Shakur said "This planet needs a people's r/evolution. A humanist r/evolution. R/evolution is not about bloodshed or about going to the mountains and fighting. We will fight if we are forced to but the fundamental goal of a revolution is peace. We need a revolution of the mind. We need a revolution of the heart. We need a revolution of the spirit. She said the power of the people is stronger than any weapon. A people's revolution can't be stopped. She says revolution is creative. Revolution is sexy. Revolution is beautiful. Revolution means protecting the people. Revolution means love.

So in the spirit of resistance, in the spirit of change, and in the spirit of love, let us move together as we demand justice!

Calls to Action!

- Read Policing the Planet: Why the policing crisis led to Black Lives Matter.
- Write to your legislator and demand body cams on all police officers and also demand that they are always turned ON
- Vote in the upcoming school board election on July 21st, 2020.
- Demand the termination of SROs and law enforcement in our schools with a call to re-invest those funds in students and trauma informed health interventionists such as social workers, counselors, and psychologists.
- Defund SROs and fund our students!