

Our Impact

Making a Difference to Improve People's Lives.

7th Issue

One Year Special

George Floyd the Hero

Exclusive interview with LaTonya Floyd, sister of George Floyd.

Racial Biases in AI

A look at artificial intelligence & Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.

Is Femicide Systemic?

An understanding of the femicide epidemic in the UK.

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Year
Anniversary
Special
Edition

October- November

2021

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ISSUE



It has been one year since OUR IMPACT Magazine published our first issue. During this time, we have published seven magazines, had coverage in over 27 countries, and had some great contributors on our platform. We have looked holistically at inequalities, and spoken to thought leaders to bring you issue after issue of thought-provoking content in a very unique format. This month, I had the special privilege of speaking with LaTonya Floyd, the bereaved sister of George Floyd. George Floyd is one of the most iconic people of this generation. Through speaking to LaTonya, we learned more about George Floyd's life, the family's recovery journey, and the family's message of hope, unity and justice. I also had the opportunity to speak to Professor William "Lez" Henry (father of OUR IMPACT's Courtney Grant) about his new Masters at University of West London. Also, Courtney Grant talks about Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion issues with artificial intelligence. Finally, the tragic deaths of Sabina Nessa and Sarah Everard have deeply moved society. After attending the vigil of Sabina Nessa, OUR IMPACT have dedicated an article on this issue to show solidarity and help raise awareness of gender-based violence targeting females.

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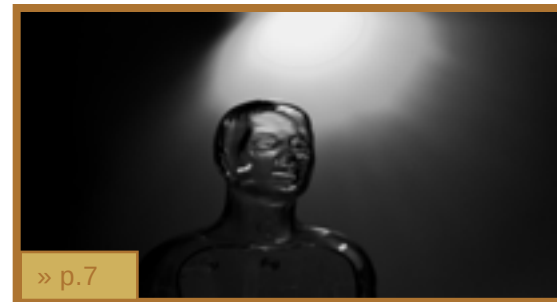
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George Floyd, the Hero.

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"We stood by each other, we held each other, we cried together, we comforted each other."

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George Floyd was apprehended by Minneapolis Police Officers after an incident occurred inside the Cup Food convenient store in Minneapolis Minnesota, on the evening of the 25th May 2021¹. The Police Officers detained and later restrained Floyd. Bystanders used their mobile phones to record police officer Derek Chauvin place his knee on Floyd's neck for what the court heard to be as long as 9 minutes and 29 seconds. The restraint has been described as

a 'choke hold', which continued even after Floyd was calling for help, saying the words, "I can't breathe", and ended after Floyd was pronounced dead shortly after. As the recorded footage soared virally through mobile phones, laptops and television screens across the world, a demand for action swept through every corner of society, across the globe. Advocates from diverse multi-ethnic backgrounds came together and demanded that "Black Lives Matter".

This led to societal reform across the world, including changes to policing, education and politics. On April 20th 2021, the jury found Derek Chauvin guilty of second-degree and third-degree murder, as well as manslaughter³. Chauvin was sentenced to serve 22.5 years jail time⁴. In this interview, Mohammed Ali speaks exclusively to LaTonya Floyd, the bereaved sister of the late George Floyd, to learn more about George's life.

Mohammed: Hi LaTonya, thank you for taking your time for this interview. Could you describe what was George like as a brother growing up?
LaTonya: George was a magnificent young man. When we were younger and he was born, me and my sister Jaja sat outside the hospital with my mom's friend. I heard him cry, I wanted to go in there but the nurse wouldn't let us in. When we came home, it looked like George could walk. We gave him a bottle, changed his diapers. He was just awesome, he always wanted to hang around us. We had little boxes that we used to build a dollhouse. When we wouldn't let him in, he would bust right through it. He would come sit next to us and look

at us from side to side, he was great. When he was three years old, we ended up moving to Houston, Texas. When he got old enough, I taught him to play basketball and he became an MVP (most valuable player) just like me. We were very close. Then he got into rap. I remember he was once outside in the streets passing out "Oodles of Noodles" to kids because that's all that he could afford. We were 7 years apart in age. He was fantastic, he was just an awesome young man.
Mohammed: How did you and your family cope with the tragic loss of your brother George?
LaTonya: Togetherness. We stood by

each other, we held each other, we cried together, we comforted each other. We weren't going to let this die. We held onto each other, we prayed together every day and that's how we coped.
Mohammed: How would you like George to be remembered, and how do you feel George's death changed the narrative to injustice worldwide?
LaTonya: As the man that was murdered and who changed the world. A hero. I could have never imagined that was going to happen to him. People now believe that the police broke the law. They now believe in justice and that justice can and will be served. They are not afraid anymore. There are still reasons for peo-



"When I heard that part, that one line of him crying, all I heard was that little boy crying at the hospital."

ple to be afraid whilst there are still police officers like Derek (Chauvin) around, and there is always going to be a Derek in every division, in every precinct and every city. But guess what? There is justice right there behind him. So, if that is the route they chose to take, then they will suffer the consequences. I have suffered, because of that police officer, and he is just one of them. I will pray for them, especially Derek. I could never understand what urged him to take great pleasure in murdering my brother on national television. When I say he took great pleasure, I mean he took great pleasure. I saw the look on his face, but I didn't see his knee on George's neck. I looked down at the TV because I have never watched that video,

and I never will. People have encouraged me not to watch it. There is no way. I don't know what gave my brother, Philonise, the strength to sit in that court house, and watch that video of George being murdered, over and over again. George was pleading for his life from what I gather. George was a teenager when his younger siblings were born. Me and JaJa watched George come from the hospital, we fed him, we changed his diapers, and we held him as much as we could with his big old self. We shared the same bed. We shared the first life and the ending. I could not watch my baby brother die over and over again. I can't do that, because I saw him from the moment he took his first breath.

His younger siblings could watch it, and they were crying, and were hurt, but no one can feel the way me and Jaja feel. I don't think anybody can feel the pain of the loss of my brother like me and my sister Jaja, other than mom and dad. When I heard him say "PLEASE, NO!" I freaked out. I threw a bottle at the television and bust it right open and then ran out. When I heard that part, that one line of him crying, all I heard is that little boy crying at the hospital. I have no mercy on these guys! None!

Mohammed: What has the support for George's legacy been like from the White House?

Latonya: It has been awesome. The Pres-

ident of the United States, Joe Biden, calls us. He's always supportive and he's invited us to the White house. He's a good guy because he actually cares. He's going to be the change for us. In fact, it was my brother that was the change for us.

Mohammed: In the United Kingdom, there have been injustices that have affected race relations. What would be your message to people affected by these injustices, and their supporters and allies?

Latonya: Try to stay strong and don't ever stop fighting, because we are never going to stop fighting for what is right. The ones that wronged us, they will be dealt with. They may not see it but it is going to come. Have faith

and belief and don't ever stop fighting.

Always know that the Floyd family are with you guys, we love you guys. You (OUR IMPACT) were one of the first to reach out to us from your country and we will fight for you until the end. We will make a trip to the United Kingdom, whatever it takes. Keep your head up and look up to God. Just know even if it means your life, don't stop fighting!

Mohammed: Thank you very much for your time LaTonya and we wish you and your family the very best.



LaTonya Floyd is the older sister of the late George Floyd, who was murdered during a US Police arrest. She studied at the University of Mount Olive, North Carolina. She works for an upholstery store and is based in Houston, Texas in the United States of America.



Racial Biases in AI

By Courtney Grant

Artificial intelligence (AI) brings great opportunities. However, it is not without problems. Campaigners have raised concerns about the way that artificial intelligence can introduce racial biases, which only serve to exacerbate the racial biases that already exist in society. For example, Propublica published a paper called "Machine Bias" that looks at how artificial intelligence predicts future crime re-offenders. As just one specific example from the paper, they compared the risk profiles of two

individuals: Bernard, a black man, and Dylan, a white man. Bernard and Dylan both had near identical past criminal records¹. When it came to predicting their risk of re-offending, the system classed Bernard as high risk, yet classed Dylan as low risk. This finding wasn't isolated; the researchers saw this same pattern consistently in the data¹. This can have serious implications because these systems help to determine outcomes in the American criminal justice system. Using a participatory approach is critical to combating racial biases in artificial intelligence. A participatory approach encourages all stakeholders to work together to achieve a particular

goal². For example, Zicari et. al (2021) found that through using a co-design methodology that thoroughly investigated the different ethical, legal, and technical issues linked to an artificial intelligence system, they were able to ensure the trustworthiness of the data within the artificial intelligence system³. Human Factors data can help combat biases in an artificial intelligence system. For example, Sujan et. al (2020) found that automation bias is a Human Factors challenge for artificial intelligence in the healthcare sector. The paper found that if the system takes an inappropriate action, then there is a risk that the user may fail to recognise this because

"Automation bias is a Human Factors challenge for artificial intelligence in the healthcare sector."

of the amount of trust that the user has in the system. The paper also mentioned that if the system explains its action, and the user is trained to spot the system's inappropriate behaviours, then the user can spot the problem and take action to fix it⁴. The same approach can be used to combat racial biases in an artificial intelligence system. Human Factors design guidance, such as the use of pre-attentive attributes, can help to make any high-risk areas more prominent. This would reduce the effort needed to spot them. It is important to recognise the impact of design on behaviour⁵. Gkikas et. al (2021) found that Human Factors is particularly useful for the following aspects of artificial intelligence: "risk assessment, the design of risk controls, human-AGI (artificially generated intelligence) interactions, teaming, standard operat-

ing procedures, dynamic function allocation, usability assessment, AGI errors and failure, and also aspects of AGI cognition, such as decision-making, situation awareness and cognitive workload"⁶. Human Factors therefore has a role to play in identifying, and thereby helping to eliminate, any racial biases introduced by the system. By adopting a systems approach, it is possible to look at all aspects of the artificial intelligence system, which can help to identify any areas that are at high-risk of being discriminatory. For example, Lisa Rice, President and CEO, National Fair Housing Alliance, said that, if the goal is to tackle racial biases in these systems, then it is important to train artificial intelligence specialists to identify areas of the system that are high-risk of being discriminatory⁷. Adopting a systems approach can help to achieve this objective.



Courtney Grant has a BA (Hons) in Psychology, and an MSc in Human-Computer Interaction with Ergonomics. He is a Fellow, a Chartered Member, and a Council Member of the CIEHF. He is also a Registered European Ergonomist.

Is Femicide Systemic in the United Kingdom?

By Mohammed Ali



On Friday, September 17th 2021, Sabina Nessa, a 27-year-old primary school teacher of Bangladeshi heritage, was murdered in Cantor Park, Kidbrooke, South East London¹. Nessa's death follows the murder of Sarah Everard, which was carried out by an off-duty police officer. It follows on from the double murder of Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry, and the murders of Julia James, Balvinder Gahir, Khloemae Loy, and Libby Squire. High-profile females, including BBC newscaster Jill Dando and Labour MP Jo Cox, have also been victims of femicide. All these aforementioned female victims were killed by men. In this article, I look at how public health tools could be utilised to better understand the rising femicide cases in the United Kingdom.

Femicide is a complicated subject matter. It is important to understand what the term femicide actually means. The World Health Organisation defines femicide as "the intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killings

of women or girls"². The Femicide Census adds that "femicides are the epitome of the state failing to respect, protect and fulfil women's human rights, and a public response of this nature minimises and obscures the scale, extent and connected nature of men's violence against women"³. Femicide can fall under the following categories; femicide committed by a current partner or former partner of the victim; honour killing; dowry-related murders; and non-intimate femicide².

The Global Health sector has been tackling femicide in low-and middle-income countries, where the femicide cases are a lot higher than in the UK. Since the 1970s, there has been significant development in preventing violence against women, such as The United Nation's adaptation of The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979⁴; the adaptation of The Declaration on the Elimination on the Violence against Women in 1993⁵, the World Health Assembly's declaration of violence as a public health concern in 1996⁶, and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal number 5.2, which calls for the end of all violence against women and girls by 2030⁷.

The United Nations and the European

Union have set up an initiative called "Spotlight", which is a comprehensive multi-stakeholder initiative to tackle femicide. The intervention consists of six pillars; legislation and policies; institutional strengthening; violence prevention; accessible and quality services; information management; reliable and accessible information; movement of women; and civil society organisations strengthened to work to eradicate gender violence and femicide⁸. The objective is to provide women with more access to their rights, to remove the presence of masculinities and gender stereotypes, to prevent violence and to create a safe space between victims and support services⁹. In Argentina, digital and social media campaigns were targeted to shape public attitudes on behaviour towards females using the campaign #AmigaDateCuenta (which translates to "Friend, realise what is happening")⁹. Recent data from Argentina covering 2019-2021 indicates a drop in the rates of femicide¹⁰. Furthermore, in October 2020, the World Health Organization and a consortium of global actors have developed a framework called "RESPECT", which aims to tackle violence against women and girls¹¹. RESPECT takes a comprehensive and holistic approach



to tackling violence against women and girls. RESPECT includes the following components; relationship skills strengthening; empowerment of women; ensuring services; reducing poverty; safer environments; prevention of child and adolescent abuse; and transformation of attitudes, beliefs, and norms¹¹. Therefore, there are a number of tools designed to tackle violence against women and girls.

Looking at femicide in the UK, the largest UK census on femicide captured data over a 10-year period (from 2008-2018)¹². The report found that at least 125 women have been murdered each year, and since 2016 the number of femicides have been on the rise, with 149 deaths reported in 2018¹². The report also highlights that around 57% of females were murdered by someone that they knew¹². The report also found that 9 out of 10 killers were said to be male¹². 207 females have been killed in Great Britain since March 2020¹³. Campaigners and advocates have been pressuring the UK Government to give violence against women and girls the same priority level as counter-terrorism¹³. The aforementioned report found that London, Scotland, and Greater Manchester reported the highest cases of femicide within the UK¹². A study carried out in Mexico used heat maps to identify areas prone to violence against women¹⁴. This can help to identify areas where women may be particularly more vulnerable.

In the United Kingdom, the UK Home Office took the policy lead on the Vio-

lence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy in 1999. They then published the first national strategy on VAWG in 2009, before publishing an 88-point plan titled "Calls to end violence against women and girls"¹⁵. The strategy has to date resulted in the developing of legislation (such as the Domestic Violence Bill 2021), which has helped further define/criminalise the following; controlling/coercive behaviour; stalking; revenge porn; and upskirting¹⁵. Recent prevention measures include the introduction of mandatory "Relationship and Sex Education" classes in secondary schools that look to shape attitudes at an early age¹⁵. After the tragic murder of Sarah Everard, the Home Office have started work on a 2021-2024 strategy, and have called on the public for evidence, in which they have gathered over 180,000 responses¹⁶.

However, there is still more work required in creating a whole systems approach for tackling femicide in the UK. Advocates debate that violence against women needs solutions that takes a deep dive into the contributory factors of gender-based inequalities, and works towards restructuring institutions in a more equitable manner¹⁷. They emphasise that it is not only the individuals causing the violence that needs to be addressed, but also the environment and culture that facilitates these types of attitudes, such as workplaces and other institutions. Females having equal agency, autonomy, and decision-making authority as men will help remove

unequal balances that exist in institutions. Furthermore, a World Health Organization brief states that promoting gender equality can prevent violence against women by developing safe relationships, building life skills, changing cultural norms, identifying perpetrators and providing support and care for victims¹⁸. The murder of Sarah Everard not only highlights the heinous violent acts that transpired on the 3rd of March 2021, it also highlights that the police officer had the ability to abuse his authority, agency and power to place Ms. Everard in a vulnerable position in order to carry out the kidnap, rape and murder¹⁹.



Mohammed Ali has a BA (Hons) in Accountancy and Business, and an MSc in Global Health Policy. He is a member of the Coordinating And Mobilising Emergency Response Activists (CAMERA) Emergency Volunteer Team in Hammersmith & Fulham. He is also President for Sutton Speakeasy (Toastmasters International).



Global Black Studies

Professor William Henry interview
by Mohammed Ali

Professor William "Lez" Henry is a Professor of Criminology and Sociology at the School of Social Sciences, University of West London. His expertise includes Criminology, Sociology, Anthropology, Race Education, Youth Cime, and Cultural Studies. Professor Henry is also an author, musician, poet and a Shodan Kyokushin Karate and Hung Kuen Kung Fu teacher. He has appeared on many daytime TV shows, news outlets, and radio shows, including BBC News and The Big Questions, among others. As a musician under the stage name Deejay Lezlee Lyrrix, he pioneered British Reggae music, which laid the foundations for modern Urban music today. Here, I interview Professor Henry about his new Masters course, "Global Black Studies, Decolonisation and Social Justice", and his influence on British music.

Mohammed: Thank you for your time Professor Henry. How important is cultural diversity in the education curriculum and how would that shape the minds of the younger generation in appreciating equality, inclusion and respect for all?

Professor Henry: Firstly, we need to understand what cultural diversity means. In history, children are taught about Kings, Queens, and conquests, but they are never really exposed to the history of ordinary British people. In the National Curriculum, it states, and I paraphrase, that children should be taught folk ways, mores and cultural attributes in line with their heritage. So, all children should be exposed to a more positive representation of their background. Think about the more regular aspects of education, like people of ethnicity that were inventors or were forerunners, forefathers or foremothers of certain disciplines. If educators are aware that these people

come from a different racial and cultural background to the indigenous Caucasian British people, then introduce and embed it into the curriculum. Not just as something peripheral and on the edge, but as something essential.

Mohammed: You have a new masters course called "Global Black Studies, Decolonisation and Social Justice", could you talk us through it please?

Professor Henry: In 1984, I met the late Professor Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe, and it is interesting how I met him. Early on in my life, I remember reading the South London Press or the Mercury, and I came across this advert for this course called "African Literature across the Diasporas, is there a black perspective?". So, I turned up to this course, which was at Goldsmiths, University of London, and this is where I met Professor Ekwe-Ekwe. He had a profound impact on me. So, with my Masters course, I am paying homage to



Professor Ekwe-Ekwe because he took me on a journey with his teaching. He started off teaching us about the African Caribbean Diasporas living in Britain and introduced us to writers such as Joan Riley, Linton Kwesi Johnson, and Professor Gus John. Then, we went to Africa and were introduced to people like Bessie Head. We went to America and studied people like Dr. Martin Luther King. Then we went to the Caribbean and studied from the scholars there too. That was my introduction to a global mindset to studying the African presence around the world. The way Black Studies is currently being taught is very African American driven. It misses out the African experiences found in other parts of the world. So, this course at the University of West London, which I am spearheading, focuses on this global experience as well as other aspects, such as the Indian presence in the Caribbean, and the Chinese diasporas as well.

Mohammed: Before your academic career, you were involved in music through your stage name Deejay Lezlee Lyrrix and also your involvement with your Sound System "Ghetto Tone". Could you tell me about the importance and the influence that this genre had in British culture and identity?

Professor Henry: When the Sound Systems first started in the late 1960s, they were playing some of the music that was coming out of Jamaica and some of the other islands. The music they were playing was not just for entertainment. It was there to uplift people as well. When people think of Reggae music, they think of Bob Marley and the Wailers, which is great because they globalised Reggae music. However, the message was in the music from the beginning in Jamaica, before Reggae music came to be. When Sound Systems became popularised in the UK, people who were born in the UK and never travelled to the

Caribbean or Africa got these alternative perspectives, stories and narratives on what it is like to be black through the music. In reggae music, you would hear about the Pyramids in Africa, Stone cities in Zimbabwe, and Marcus Garvey's words come to part. People like myself, who started to deejay on the Sound Systems in England, revolutionised the music scene here. So, a lot of the popular artists today, like Stormzy and Akala, who I love to death, we set the foundation that opened the doors for artists like them. We always had an alternative way to locate ourselves as people of African ancestry through Reggae Sound Systems. I was one of the pioneer deejays, born in Britain, that spoke about that Black/African experience. I was given the name Lezlee Lyrrix because I had the most lyrics, and I spoke about the harsh reality of everyday life growing up in Britain. Also, the speakers and sound systems that you see in cars today, all that comes from the technologisation of early Sound System culture.

Mohammed: Your PHD research was based on the Black British experience through an analysis of Reggae Sound System culture. What was your transition like from being a musician to an academic?

Professor Henry: I did my doctoral thesis on Sound System culture, which created an alternative public arena but it had an amplified platform. We were recording performances on cassette and they went global. So, for my doctoral research, I focused on the 'Yard tapes', which were performances recorded in Jamaica, and also 'Session tapes', which were performances recorded in the UK, USA (mainly New York and Miami), and Canada. So, I designed my doctoral thesis like a tape with an A and a B side. For me, nothing really changed between my performances and my academic work. The only difference was that I now had tools and understood the system when I came into academia. So,

to me I haven't really made a transition. I have just added another string to my deejay bow, because now instead of writing a three or four minute lyric for a song, I write essays that are 8000 words long. These consist of a beginning, middle, and end, like the structure of any good music.

Mohammed: The impact of George Floyd's death has changed how the world. What advice can you offer allies, advocates and supporters that would like to see a fairer system that treats people equally?

Professor Henry: We have to be careful here, because often you have people offering symbolic change, and not structural change. For instance, the taking down of statues is symbolic, but where is the structural change? What happens with taking down of statues is that you erase that history. Instead, what could be better is for there to be QR Codes, which people scan on their phones. Where these statues used to be or where roads have had their names changed, the QR code will then tell you why these names changed and why these statue removals happened. That creates a structural change instead of a symbolic change. So, my message to our allies and advocates is to learn the difference between symbolic changes and structural changes. Then, recognise the commonalities of your condition and then reason with people. This does not mean we start dismissing people's realities and their struggles. We need people to reason. If you have a group of like-minded people that really want to create critical change, then let's create educational arenas, so people can come in and educate themselves about people's differences.



Professor William "Lez" Henry has a BA (Hons) in Anthropology & Sociology and a PHD from Goldsmiths, University of London. He is the current Professor of Criminology and Sociology at the School of Social Sciences, University of West London.

AUTISM AWARENESS FILM

YOUNG SUTTON VOICES
UNDERSTANDING THE
AUTISM
S P E C T R U M

YOUNG PEOPLE IN SUTTON

This powerful film explores the diverse variations within the autistic spectrum, as well as highlighting the stigmas associated with autism.

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