

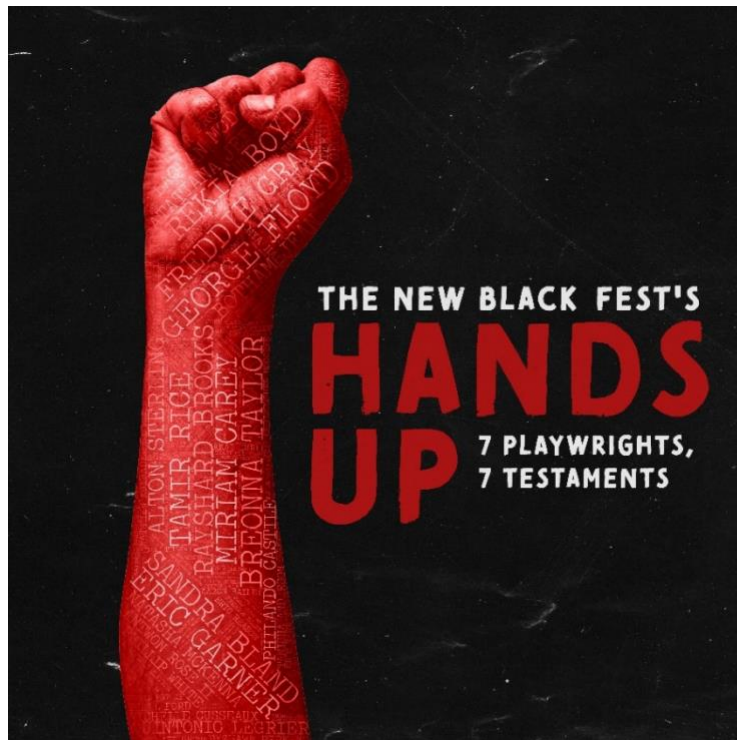
Alliance Theatre

institute

Study Guide

HANDS UP: 7 PLAYWRIGHTS, 7 TESTAMENTS

Created as part of the Alliance Theatre's Dramaturgy by Students program
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with: T Walker Scott and Kourtney McLaughlin, Drama Teachers
and: Drama III and IV students at the DeKalb School of the Arts
and special thanks to Courtney Moors-Hornick, Teaching Artist



By playwrights:

Nathan James, Nathan Yungerberg, Idris Goodwin, Nambi Kelley,
Glenn “NSangou” Gordon, Eric Mica Holmes, Dennis Allen II

Directed by Keith Arthur Bolden and Alexis Woodard

October 8 – October 31, 2021
Hertz Stage

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CONTENT WARNING

Please be advised that HANDS UP contains mature language and topics of racial trauma and systemic oppression. The students wish to inform viewers that the production – and this – Study Guide – addresses issues including death by suicide, police brutality, and intimate partner violence. The production may also include loud noises or bangs.

Recommended for Grades 9-12

Georgia Standards of Excellence

English Language Arts:

ELAGSE11-12RL1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

ELAGSE11-12RL2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

ELAGSE11-12RL3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.

ELAGSE11-12RL4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

ELAGSE11-12RL5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text.

ELAGSE11-12RL6 Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

ELAGSE11-12RL10 By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently

ELAGSE11-12W2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

ELAGSE11-12W4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

ELAGSE11-12W7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

ELAGSE11-12W8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

ELAGSE11-12W9 Draw evidence from literary/informational texts for analysis, reflection, and research.

ELAGSE11-12SL1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on

others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

ELAGSE11-12SL4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate

Social Studies:

SSPSP1 Analyze the impact of the social environment on behaviors, and attitudes.

- a. Explain phenomena that result from the influence of the social environment on the individual and vice versa: include obedience, social facilitation, social loafing, bystander apathy, conformity such as Asch's experiment, groupthink, group polarization, and deindividuation.
- b. Analyze attribution and cognitive dissonance theories pertaining to social judgments and attitudes.
- c. Explain the factors that contribute to affiliation and attraction, include: proximity, mere exposure effect, and similarity.

Fine Arts:

TAHSFT.CR.1 Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.

- a. Recognize or employ realistic and conventional speech patterns within dialogue/dramatic verse.
- b. Incorporate dramatic elements through improvisation.
- c. Recognize and interpret artistic choices in performance.

TAHSFT.CR.2 Develop scripts through theatrical techniques.

- d. Create and perform scenes for audiences.

TAHSFT.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments.

- a. Observe and demonstrate aspects of verbal and non-verbal techniques in common human activity for performance (e.g. voice, breathing, posture, facial expression, physical movement).
- b. Construct and interpret artistic choices in performance including the objectives, decisions, and actions of characters.
- d. Perform acting choices for an audience based on critiques.

TAHSFT.RE.1 Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.

- a. Articulate why the relationship between the audience and performers is critical to the success of the production and demonstrate appropriate audience behavior.
- b. State and support aesthetic judgments through experience in diverse styles and genres.

TAHSFT.CN.1 Explore how theatre connects to life experiences, careers, and other content.

- a. Examine how theatre reflects real life.
- d. Explore various careers in the theatre arts.

TAHSFT.CN.2 Examine the role of theatre in a societal, cultural, and historical context.

- a. Identify and analyze plays and dramas from a variety of historical periods and cultures.
- b. Explore the works of milestone playwrights and plays, and the relevance of historical theatre.
- c. Recognize historical events that have influenced the role of theatre and how theatrical events have impacted cultural development.
- d. Interpret cultural and historical research for use in a production.

About the Play

Across seven monologues written by seven Black playwrights, [HANDS UP](#) depicts the realities of Black America from the perspective of varying genders, sexual orientations, skin tones, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The play was originally commissioned in 2015 by the New Black Fest in response to a police officer fatally shooting an unarmed Black teenager, Michael Brown, in Ferguson, MO. The themes and stories it tells still ring true today. HANDS UP is produced in association with Spelman College.

Allusions and References: Other Important People and Events

Michael Brown:



Photo Credit: [140818-michael-brown-graduation-jms-2128.jpg](#)
(1656x2500) (s-nbcnews.com)

Michael Brown was an 18-year-old Black teenager fatally shot by white police officer, Darren Wilson, on August 9, 2014. It took place in Ferguson, Missouri. The situation escalated from the police stopping Brown and a friend, Dorian Johnson, for jaywalking and telling them to walk on the sidewalk into Brown getting shot while unarmed. Michael Brown's body was left in the street for several hours before anybody moved him. Brown had graduated from high school that spring and was planning to begin classes at Vatterott College two days after he was killed.

The event of his death led to protests in Ferguson that authorities responded to aggressively, using tear gas, curfews, and bringing in the National Guard. The grand jury decided not to indict Darren Wilson for Michael Brown's death. After the ruling, many riots broke out due to the decision. Wilson and the Chief of Police then resigned. A few other officers resigned during this time due to police reports showing heavy racial bias. Michael Brown's family sued and eventually won in civil court.

Ferguson, Missouri is a majority-Black city with a majority white police force and city government. About 67% of the inhabitants of Ferguson are Black while 29% are white (according to the 2010 census). This demographic is not shown in the city's leadership. In 2014, the mayor of Ferguson was white. Five out of the six city council members were white, and six out of the seven members on the school board were white. Out of 53 commissioned officers on the police force, three of the officers were black.

Source: [Essential Facts](#)

Sandra Bland:



Sandra Bland- Sandra Bland was a 28-year-old black woman from Naperville, Illinois. She was found dead in her jail cell after being convicted for assaulting a cop. There was suspected foul play; there was no evidence of her hanging, just evidence of her dead body. Furthermore, her body was released before conducting further tests, and the coroner stated the marks were inconsistent with hanging but rather a homicide. Bland was never clinically diagnosed with depression, and she wasn't on any medication. After looking deeper into her case, the employees of the jail, along with the police officer that arrested her were all sentenced. She served as a civil rights activist and a community outreach coordinator. Sandra spent her life giving back to her community and fighting racial injustice.

Photo Credit:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/08/26/sandra-bland-boulevard-texas/32409847/>

Learn More:

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/people-african-american-history/bland-sandra-annette-1987-2015/>

<https://www.cnn.com/2015/07/22/us/sandra-bland/index.html>

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/tv/ct-ent-sandra-bland-documentary-20181203-story.html>

Shereese Francis:



Shereese Francis - Shereese Francis was a 30-year-old woman, living with her mother in Rochdale, Queens, New York. At the age of 20, Francis was diagnosed with schizophrenia while studying at Nassau Community College. Shereese kept her mental illness under control by frequently taking her medication. Francis worked hard at a preschool and had no history of violence

The night of her death, Francis was experiencing a severe mental episode after not taking her medicine for a while prior to the event. Her sister decided to call 311, which calls services for non-emergencies, and she wanted to create a safe plan to get Francis to the hospital. That night, four police officers arrived, and they frightened Francis, making her think they were a threat, so she fled from them into her basement, where they followed. The officers cornered her in a basement bedroom and all piled their weight onto her, trying to put her in handcuffs. While she was face down on the bed, she suffocated and fell into cardiac arrest before

Photo Credit:

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/shereese-francis-1982-2012/>

she stopped breathing. When she got to the hospital, they pronounced her dead and said that she had been dead for about 90 minutes prior to her arrival at the hospital.

Learn More:

<https://inquirycommission.org/video-and-transcript-shereese-francis-hearing-saturday-january-23-international-commission-of-inquiry/>

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/shereese-francis-1982-2012/>

Rekia Boyd and Miriam Carey are also mentioned in the play.
Who were they and how do their stories relate to the themes of *Hands Up*?



Photo Credit:

<https://i.huffpost.com/gen/560713/thumbs/o-REKIA-BOYD-LAWSUIT-570.jpg>



Photo Credit:

<https://i.insider.com/524ed7856bb3f7af36a223db?width=600&format=jpeg&auto=webp>

Black Lives Matter Movement

- Founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's killer
- Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi created the movement
- Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, Inc. is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. They are combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy.
- An estimated 15 million to 26 million people participated in the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests in the United States, making it one of the largest movements in the country's history. The movement comprises many views and a broad array of demands, but they center on criminal justice reform.

Learn More: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>

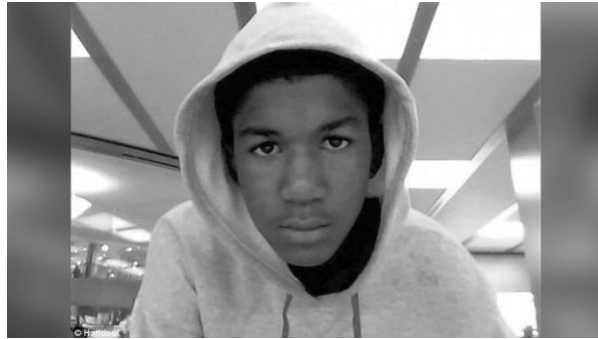
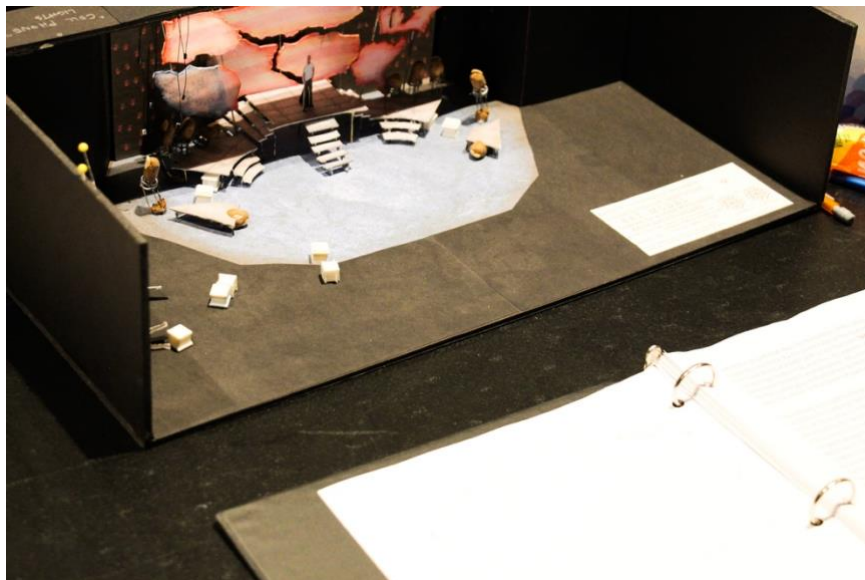


Photo Credit: <https://www.cnn.com/2013/06/05/us/trayvon-martin-shooting-fast-facts/index.html>

Who was **Trayvon Martin**? What was significant about his death and the trial of his killer?

Pre-Show Questions for Reflection

1. What can you infer about the theme of the play based on the title *Hands Up*?
2. When you hear “Hands Up,” what’s the first thing that comes to mind?
3. Can you connect the title of the play to an incident you have experienced in life?
4. What is your perception of race in America? What are your thoughts on race?
5. What portrayals of different races have you seen in America (in the news, television and movies, social media, etc.)?
6. How do you think this play is going to make you feel?
7. Have you ever seen white privilege in America? If not, do you think it exists?



First rehearsal of HANDS UP and Stage Model. Photo Credits: Aniska Tonge

The Monologues

***Superiority Fantasy*, by Nathan James**

About the Author: Nathan James is an actor and playwright from Pittsburgh. He has a BA in Africana Studies and an MFA in acting. He won 1st place at Amateur Night at the Apollo and his one-man play, *Growing Pains*, has been produced at the August Wilson Center for African American Culture, the United Solo Theater festival (Theatre Row NYC), and other theaters around the country.



Photo Credit:

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

Summary – *Superiority Fantasy* shows a black man's experience of policing and his efforts to act differently to be seen as harmless by the police.

Post-Show Questions:

1. What's the significance of the title *Superiority Fantasy*?

***Holes in My Identity* by Nathan Yunkerberg**

About the Author: Nathan Yunkerberg is an Afro-surrealist and storyteller who is living in Brooklyn and has had plays developed at many theatres such as The Cherry Lane Theatre, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, and The National Black Theatre. His plays have also been featured in the August Wilson Red Door Project and 48 Hours in Harlem. He is an educator, mentor, and community educator at many theatres and for many projects in New York and Philadelphia.



Photo Credit:

<https://www.nathanyunkerberg.com/about-1>

Summary – A gay Black man adopted by white parents talks about his experiences of race and feelings of being incomplete and insecure in his blackness.

Post-Show Questions:

1. How has the way you were raised impacted your life?
2. In situations with other people of your race, do you ever feel like there are experiences you cannot relate to?
3. How easily can you relate to people of a different race?

***THEY SHOOTIN! OR I AIN'T NEVA SCARED A Reverberation in 3 Parts* by Idris Goodwin**

About the Author: Idris Goodwin is an American playwright, essayist, breakbeat poet, educator, director, and organizer. In May 2020, Idris Goodwin became the Director of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College. He is the first Black man to hold the position in its 100-year history.



Photo Credit: [SCRIPTWRITER & BREAKBEAT POET \(idrisgoodwin.com\)](#)

Summary – A man trying to help a trapped bird is scared that people will mistake him for someone with ill intentions.

Post Show Questions:

1. How can you relate to the themes presented in the monologue?
2. Did watching the monologue change your perspective on the world?
3. Can you remember a time where you have changed how you act or present yourself to the world because of your surroundings?

Dead of Night...
***The Execution Of...* by Nambi E. Kelley**

About the Author: Most recently, Kelley is the winner of the 2019 Prince Prize. Nambi is a finalist for The Primus Award. Nambi E. Kelley is an accomplished and award-winning playwright and actress. Playwriting honors include: New Victory LabWorks Playwright-in Residence. She was chosen by Toni Morrison to adapt her novel *JAZZ*. An accomplished actor from the South Side of Chicago, Kelley is familiar to Windy City audiences for performances at Goodman Theater. You may also know her from her frequent television work. Kelley's artistic statement explains how her acting informs her overall theater practice: "I am an art practitioner. I practice art from the moment I awake and even while I sleep."



Photo Credit: [nambievelynkelley-home](http://nambievelynkelley-home.com) (nambikelley.com)

Summary – The story of a black woman's experience with the police after a fight with her boyfriend in the Wrigleyville neighborhood of Chicago and her reflection on the incident that happened.

Post-Show further reading on violence on black women:

- <https://www.blackburncenter.org/post/2020/02/26/black-women-domestic-violence>
- <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-issues/race-ethnicity-gender-and-economy/violence-against-black-women-many-types-far-reaching-effects/>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/unique-issues-facing-black-women-dealing-with-abuse-4173228>

Post-Show Questions:

1. Were you able to foreshadow who the police would take into custody based on the themes already shown throughout the previous monologues?
2. How do you feel about incidents that occurred during this monologue?
3. What can you infer about the police who were "hitting on" the black woman as she rode in the police car?
4. What events of this piece surprised you, if any?
5. What is unique about this piece compared to the other *Hands Up* monologues?

***Abortion* by NSangou Njikam**

About the Author: NSangou Njikam is an actor and playwright who has written for many prestigious theaters and organizations such as The New Black Fest, The Alley Theatre, The Flea Theatre, and Penn State. He was named NSangou Njikam by Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo after tracing his ancestry back to the Tikar people of Cameroon. He was born in Baltimore, Maryland and currently lives in New York. His work mainly focuses on personal stories about people finding their true identity.

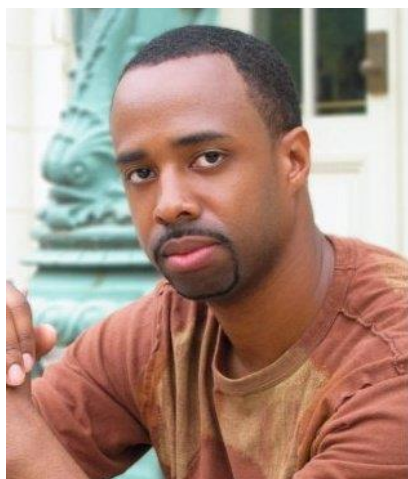


Photo Credit/Learn More:

<https://www.larktheatre.org/about-us/playwrights/nsangoun-njikam/>

[A Closer Look: NSangou Njikam : Blog | The Lark \(larktheatre.org\)](#)

Summary – Amen has written a letter to his unborn child about the world and its important lessons.

Post-Show Questions:

1. What is the significance of the title to you?
2. The path to having children (or not) is a big life decision. Why do you think some people choose to have children? Why do you think some people choose not to have children? Is having children (or not) always a choice?
3. What would America have to do for the main character to make a different choice?
4. Did the end surprise you?

Journal Prompt:

What do you believe is most important in life? Imagine you are an adult writing a letter to a child who has not yet been born. What wisdom would you want to impart upon them?

WALKING NEXT TO MICHAEL BROWN Confessions of a Light-Skinned Half-Breed
By Eric Micha Holmes

About the Author: Eric Micha Holmes is a playwright from Brooklyn, NY. His work has been seen and developed through many associations such as Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, MCC Theatre, The Lark, and many others.



Photo Credit/Learn More:

[ERIC MICHA HOLMES](#)

[Eric Micha Holmes | National Theatre School of Canada \(ent-nts.ca\)](#)

Summary – A man fantasizes about walking next to Michael Brown at the time of the shooting and going on *The Charlie Rose Show* to speak on the “subject of Race and America.”

Pre-Show Questions:

1. Who is Charlie Rose? What kind of show does he host?

Post-Show Questions:

1. When is a time you felt that you weren't seen as an individual but only as a stereotyped part of a group?
2. Why do you think his grandfather would write the angry letter, instead of being proud of his grandson?
3. Which perspective do you think is the most interesting or important?
4. Do you think that the outcome would be different if Michael Brown was white or light-skinned?
5. What do you think of the “magic words?” Did you expect them? What thoughts do they bring up for you?

***How I Feel* by Dennis A. Allen II**

About the Author: Dennis A Allen II is a playwright and actor who was fired from his job as a marketing manager because the CEO believed he should be “following his passion.” He went to school to get a degree in theater, started his own theater company, and eventually submitted a play to the Samuel French off-Broadway competition. Winning the competition made him a published playwright. Allen’s Black theater company was successful and popular in Harlem, New York. He was inspired by many different theaters’ shows. He says *A Piano Lesson* by August Wilson was the most influential because it was the first play he had seen that spoke to the Black experience.



Photo Credit: [DennisAllenheadshot.jpg \(552×365\) \(poetictheater.com\)](#)

Learn More:

[Dennis A Allen II playwright, Dennis A Allen II actor](#)

Summary – A man speaks to the audience about his thoughts on recent events and how his race and loved ones have shaped how he walks through life.

Post-Show Questions:

1. How did you feel during this monologue, and what deeper emotions or opinions might have surfaced?
2. What was your experience keeping your hands up? Did it improve your understanding of the situation?
3. What are socially acceptable behaviors that exemplify compliant conduct? When and why do these behaviors exist?

Instructional Resources

Allusions (II) Police and Policing:

With an incident like the death of Michael Brown at the heart of HANDS UP, police, policing, experiences of both, and feelings about them are central to much of the piece.

Origins of Police through Today:

Early police in the United States stemmed from private protection for rich people and volunteer watchmen for the public.

In 1705, it was proposed to pay watchmen, out of the state's pockets, to serve the public and not just the rich. However, at the time, "serving the public" was warring with the French, massacring natives, and stopping slave uprisings.

After being inspired by the hermandades ("brotherhood," a Spanish armed peacekeeping force), the colonists proposed slave patrols, and certain places made it required for men of age to serve on those patrols. Slave patrols were also used to enforce Jim Crow laws. At one time, being a patrolman was a punishment for certain crimes and not a desirable or respectable job.

The first publicly funded police force with full-time officers was created in Boston in 1838. It was designed to protect property and the goods coming in and out of the ports in the commercial center. Early police officers in the South were modeled after slave patrols, and police were created to catch slaves and preserve slavery.

New Orleans created "la police," armed public guards, who had uniforms and received wages (an upgraded slave patrol). Eventually, these laws made it to a federal level instead of a state one because of fear of a slave uprising.

By the late 19th century, all major cities in the United States had a police force, and they were supposed to protect businessmen and politicians from people like immigrants who looked and acted differently from the people who previously dominated cities. They also became a major force in breaking up strikes of workers fighting for better working conditions and unions, often through violence.

In the 1960s, many African Americans started protesting against segregation. Police continued to use tactics such as tear gas and violence to keep African Americans from protesting. These were caught on television, making many feel negatively toward the police. Policemen were also profiling the LGBTQ community by raiding bars and nightclubs all over the United States.

In the 1970s and 1980s, many middle class and wealthy white people moved out of cities to suburbs, creating a smaller tax base for budgets. Police forces became smaller. Police spent more time only reacting to calls about crimes instead of interacting with the communities they served.

After September 11, 2001, police work intensified in many communities, and some Muslim communities experienced racial profiling.

In the 21st century, police were called out for profiling Black and other People of Color on many accounts. In 2014, some police departments implemented body cameras in response to the shootings of Eric Garner and Michael Brown.

Police reform has been attempted several times since the early 20th century. Police themselves wanted less political influence in their system. They worked on being more “professional” to get rid of the politicians’ power. When prohibition came in the 1920s and 1930s, the mob and organized crime corrupted many police departments with bribes and intimidation. People lost confidence in the police.

Recently, there is a growing movement advocating for sweeping reforms in the police system. “Police reform aims to transform the values, culture, policies and practices of police organizations so that police can perform their duties with respect for democratic values, human rights and the rule of law.”

Source: <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/SSR-in-Practice/Thematics-in-Practice/Police-Reform>

In 2020, “after the murder of George Floyd, protesters began to call for “Defunding the Police.” In the year since this event, multiple states, including Massachusetts and Colorado, passed bipartisan measures which significantly altered law enforcement practices.”

Source: https://www.owlapps.net/owlapps_apps/articles?id=45579996&lang=en

Police Training in U.S. vs Other Countries

The United States police training and requirements take less time than other countries. It is 21 weeks before someone is qualified to go on patrol in the United States. Canada, England, Australia, and other developing countries require hundreds to thousands more hours of police training. Another difference is that the United States spends most of its training on firearms instead of de-escalation and other forms of handling situations.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-56834733>

Policing in Different Communities

Studies have shown that Black people are more likely to be pulled over in traffic stops by police. One of the most recent, a 2020 [study by Stanford University](#), analyzed 100 million traffic stops by police departments across the US, and found Black drivers were about 20% more likely to be stopped than white drivers.

The study also found that once stopped, Black drivers were searched up to two times as often as white drivers, although they were statistically less likely to be carrying illegal items.

“Over-policing and under-policing reproduce two assumptions that have long impacted Black communities. First, aggressive tactics like stop-and-frisk reinforce associations between Blackness and criminality. Tasking officers to stop people who appear to be “suspicious” relies on long standing racial stereotypes.

And saturating “high-crime” areas with police conducting stops will inevitably affect innocent residents of poor communities of color. Indeed, we see vast racial disparities in stop practices in cities across the country. And we have ample evidence that stops fray police-community relations, undermines the legitimacy of the police, and leads to disproportionate exposure to police violence.

Second, under-policing reinforces legacies of public service neglect in Black neighborhoods. This is a problem that extends well beyond police response to emergency calls. Cities have failed to invest in both the front-end resources that would enhance community safety and strength, and the back-end resources to adequately respond to challenges when they arise. This continues a historic pattern of undervaluing the assets, contributions, and potentials of Black communities.”

Source: <https://now.tufts.edu/articles/how-racial-segregation-and-policing-intersect-america>

More police presence raises crime rates in Person of Color (POC) neighborhoods, while quite possibly the same amount of crime is happening in a white neighborhood. Because a white neighborhood isn't under constant surveillance, like POC neighborhoods are, the crime rates will never be equal. Then, there are assumptions that there are higher amounts of crime in POC neighborhoods because police survey and find incidents, leading to a type of confirmation bias.

“Majorities of both Black and white Americans say Black people are treated less fairly than whites in dealing with the police and by the criminal justice system as a whole. In a 2019 Center survey, 84% of Black adults said that, in dealing with police, Black people are generally treated less fairly than white people; 63% of whites said the same. Similarly, 87% of Black people and 61% of white people said the United States criminal justice system treats Black people less fairly.”

Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/03/10-things-we-know-about-race-and-policing-in-the-u-s/>

Questions and Prompts for Further Reflection

1. Did the play's plot match your predictions based on the title?
2. What feeling(s) did this play bring about for you?
3. Which monologue did you enjoy the most?
4. Which monologue did you enjoy the least?
5. Was there a monologue that you were able to connect to? (Have you experienced something that happened in the play in your life?)
6. How can you step into different points of view when reading the script or watching the performance?
7. Are there specific moments you agree or disagree with? Which ones?
8. How did you feel during this play, and what deeper emotions or opinions may it have caused to surface?
9. ***Hands Up* was written in part to be an agent of change. How can you see theater as a way to make social change? What can you create as your own statement of action or inspiration to make change?**

Non-Threatening/ Socially Acceptable Behavior

Several speakers in *Hands Up* talk about making themselves appear non-threatening. What does this mean?

According to an article by the University of Kentucky, threatening or “high risk behaviors” include: “expressed intent to harm self or others, brandishing a weapon, suicide attempt or threat, and bizarre delusions or hallucinations”. Moderately threatening behaviors include “indirect threats and erratic behavior.” Source: <https://www.uky.edu/concern/behaviors-concern>

What is the right behavior? Can you find out what to do? Does that match with what you believed to be true?

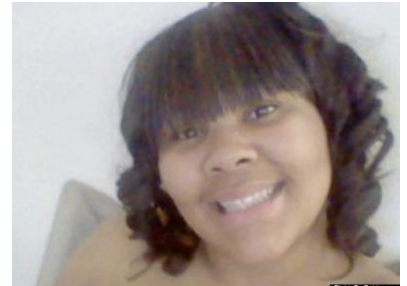


Photo Credits:

<https://www.biography.com/crime-figure/trayvon-martin>
<https://www.cnn.com/2013/06/05/us/trayvon-martin-shooting-fast-facts/index.html>

Photo Credits:

<https://inthesetimes.com/article/four-years-since-the-shooting-of-rekia-boyd>
<https://i.huffpost.com/gen/560713/thumbs/o-REKIA-BOYD-LAWSUIT-570.jpg>

Police

How do you feel about police? There are a lot of strong opinions about police and policing right now. Where do you stand? Do you feel comfortable talking about your thoughts on police in public?



Credit: <https://www.shutterstock.com/search/police>



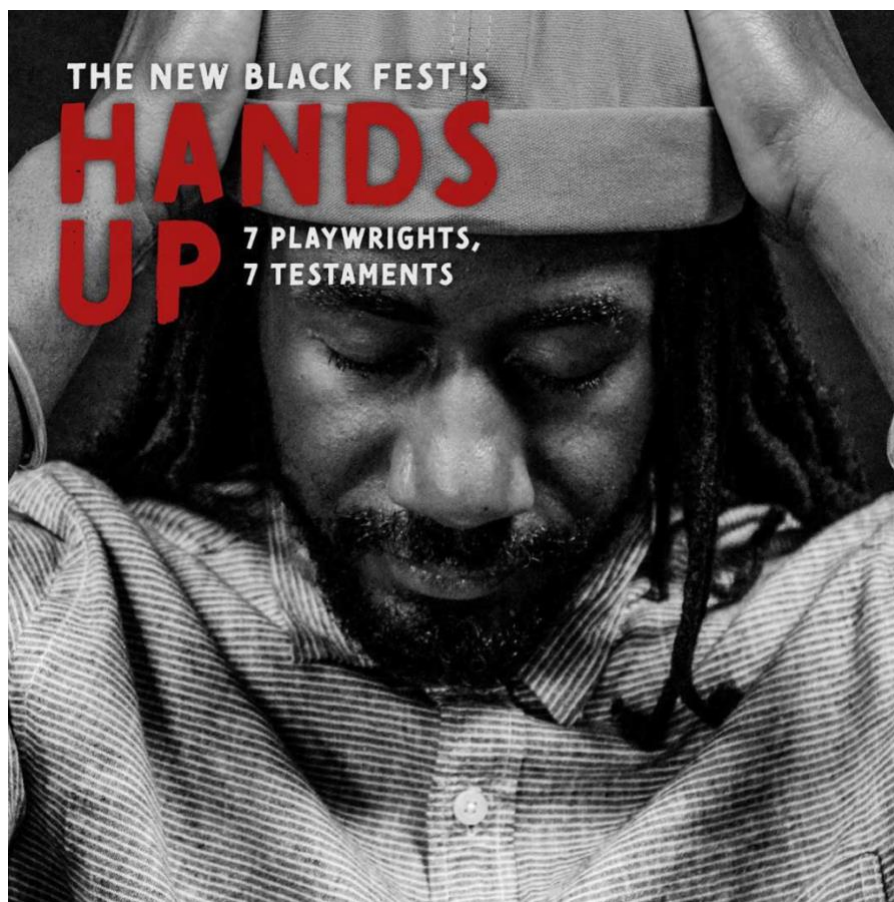
Credit: <https://thephoenixfile.net/2020/06/08/police-departments-need-less-brawn-and-more-brain/>

Vocabulary

Word or Phrase	Definition
Assimilation	<p>A process of consistent integration whereby members of an ethno-cultural group (minority groups) are "absorbed" into an established, generally larger community.</p> <p>Assimilation can also be the process through which people lose their original traits, such as clothing, speech particularities or mannerisms, when they come into contact with another society or culture. For example, a woman from the United States or Western Europe who moves to or visits a country where it is traditional for women to wear head coverings may adapt to that new cultural norm for clothing in a setting where it would be appropriate.</p> <p>Source: https://psychology.wikia.org/wiki/Cultural_assimilation</p> <p><i>Can you think of more examples of assimilation?</i></p>
Bias	<p>Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.</p> <p>Cause to feel or show preference or prejudice for or against someone or something.</p>
Code Switching	<p>The act of changing the way one speaks in different environments or around different people.</p> <p>Ex: People may speak differently in an interview than they do around their friends.</p>
Colorism	<p>The different treatment of a person of color, in this case African-Americans, based on the lightness of their skin.</p> <p>Ex: In Indian culture, lighter or fairer skin is seen as a trait of prettiness.</p>
Dialogue	<p>Conversation between two or more characters in a book, film, or play. The words that they say.</p>
Direct Address	<p>A direct address is when a character in a movie or play talks directly to the audience or the camera.</p>
Karens and Bobs	<p>White people that purposefully antagonize people of color, specifically Black people, usually by calling the police on them. These people paint themselves as the victim in situations where there is none and Black people as criminals by claiming that they are being harassed when no such problem took place.</p>
Monologue	<p>A long speech by one actor in a film or theater that expresses the character's thoughts and feelings.</p>

Word or Phrase	Definition
No Snitching	<p>An unspoken rule among some closer-knit communities, usually meaning that no one will call the police or report suspicious activities that occur in specific areas. Source: https://aldianews.com/articles/politics/opinion/police-complain-about-no-snitch-policy-they-contribute-it/58875</p> <p>It is less likely for a community to declare their no-snitch policy than for it to simply be instilled into the members from the moment they first set foot on the property. According to the Atlantic article written by Ibram X. Kendi, young Black males are taught the no-snitching rule as soon as they emerge from the womb.</p> <p>The unbalanced nature of the no-snitching rule referenced in HANDS UP is as follows: tighter-knit communities refuse to report suspicious behavior, potentially leaving dangerous criminals wandering free, and police officers complain. However, police officers refuse to snitch on themselves, leaving unfair, careless, reckless, or racist officers in positions of power. So, if one community is to abolish the no-snitching rule, all parties must follow suit, in order to even out the board.</p> <p>Source: https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/05/guis-custodiet-ipsos-custodes/560324/</p> <p><i>What unspoken rules are part of your community?</i></p>
Police Brutality	The misuse or overuse of force, power, and status by police.
Racism:	<p>Prejudice and discrimination towards a marginalized group coming from a place of power.</p> <p>In America, racism towards Black people and other People of Color (POC) is prevalent.</p>
Racism Denial	The denial that racism exists. Claiming that all people are treated equally by society and no one experiences any setbacks or prejudice based on their race.
Stop and Frisk	<p>A short, non-intrusive police stop of a person. The Fourth Amendment requires that the police must have a “reasonable suspicion that a crime has been, is being, or is about to be committed by the suspect” before stopping them. If the police have a reasonable suspicion, they may frisk the person. To frisk is to give a “quick pat-down of the suspect's outer clothing.”</p> <p>Source: https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/stop_and_frisk</p>
Systemic Racism	<p>Systemic racism is racism that is incorporated into laws and regulations. Often shows itself in education, economic, and healthcare systems. It influences on a community level rather than an individual level (institutional racism).</p> <p>Structures and procedures put in place that disproportionately affect Black people and other minorities of color.</p>

Word or Phrase	Definition
Toxic Masculinity	Adherence to traditional male roles to the point of potential harm of others; involves cultural pressures for men to behave in a certain way. Toxic masculinity refers to the notion that some people's idea of "manliness" perpetuates domination, homophobia, and aggression.
White Privilege	The set of social and economic advantages that white people have by virtue of their race in a culture characterized by racial inequality
White supremacy	The belief that white people are superior to other races in every way. For example, Hitler's followers were an extreme form of white supremacists, believing that the Aryan race (white people with blonde hair and light eyes) was superior to others.



Further Exploration (Reading, Watching, and Listening)

Listen:

- ☐ "[Love and Hate](#)" - Michael Kiwanuka song that was played in *When They See Us* after the wrongful conviction. A song that represents some of the emotions African Americans experience daily.
- ☐ "[Scholar Social](#)" - a podcast that talks about issues that are happening in today's society dealing with Black issues.
- ☐ "[Stand Up](#)" - Official Lyric Video - Performed by Cynthia Erivo
- ☐ "[Glory](#)" by Common & John Legend. Theme song for 2014 film *Selma*, which portrays the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches.
- ☐ "[Black Rage](#)" - Lauryn Hill: song dedicated to the people fighting for racial equality in Ferguson, Missouri

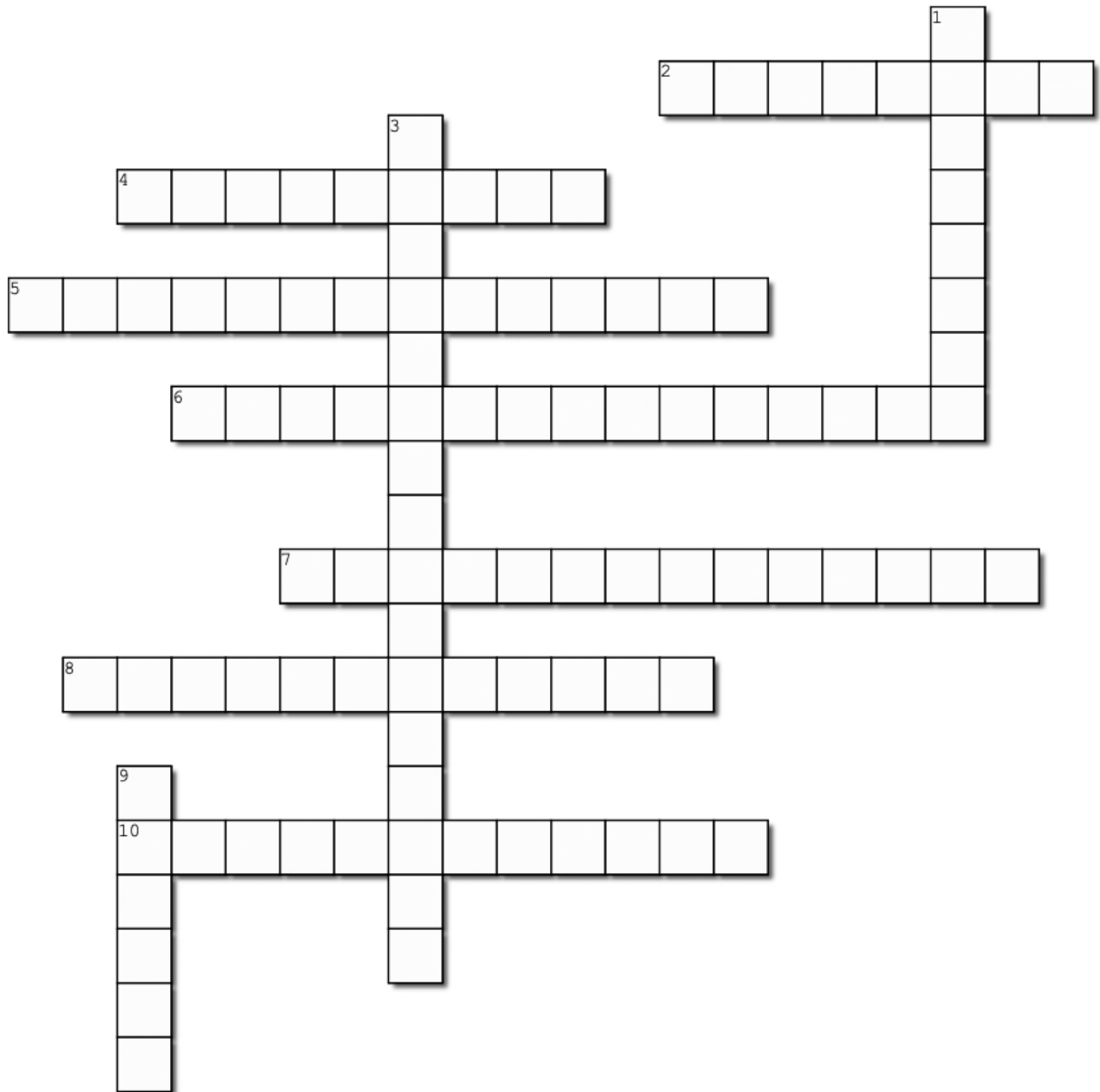
Read:

- ☐ *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone
- ☐ *We Do This Til' We Free Us* by Mariame Kiba
- ☐ *Why I Love Black Women* by Michael Eric Dyson
- ☐ *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly
- ☐ *Battle Cries: Black Women and Intimate Partner Abuse*
- ☐ *The Miseducation of the Negro* by Carter G. Woodson
- ☐ *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander
- ☐ *Piecing Me Together* by Renee Watson

Watch:

- ☐ *When They See Us* - three-part mini-series about falsely convicted young black men
- ☐ *Selma* - movie about the Civil Rights Movement
- ☐ *The Hate U Give* - Movie about a black girl in a predominately white private school and her best friend gets shot by a police
- ☐ *Fruitvale Station* - movie based on the story of Oscar Grant, who had an altercation with the police that resulted in his death
- ☐ *12 Years A Slave* - movie based on the book memoir by Solomon Northup
- ☐ *Just Mercy* - movie based on a true story of a young black lawyer and his battle for justice that made history
- ☐ *Candy Man* - Movie based on systematic racism from police portrayed as a horror film

Crossword:



Across

- 2. The different treatment of a person of color based on the lightness of their skin
- 4. A long speech by one actor in a film or theater that expresses the characters thoughts and feelings
- 5. Changing the way one speaks in different environments or around different people
- 6. Social and economic advantages that white people have because of their race
- 7. When a character in a movie or play talks directly to the audience or the camera
- 8. An unspoken rule that no one will call the police or report suspicious activities
- 10. A process of integration where members of a minority group are absorbed into a larger community

Down

- 1. Conversation between two or more characters in a book, film, or play
- 3. The misuse or overuse of force, power, and status by the police
- 9. White people that purposefully antagonize people of color, usually by calling the police on them

Works Cited

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Crossword Puzzle Answers:

Across

2. Colorism
4. Monologue
5. Code Switching
6. White Privilege
7. Direct Address
8. No Snitching
10. Assimilation

Down

1. Dialogue
3. Police Brutality
9. Karens



Directors Alexis Woodard and Keith Arthur Bolden on the first day of rehearsals.
Photo Credit: Aniska Tonge