FROM OUR EYES
#THEWORLDISWATCHING

Global Coalition

Global Black Lives Matter Network

Featuring reflections on advocacy and allyship
# BLACKLIVESMATTER
# THEWORLDISWATCHING

EDITOR’S NOTE

OUR MISSION
Global coalition demanding actions to end police brutality and systemic racism.

BLACK LIVES MATTER NETWORK
Connecting international leaders and organizers of Black Lives Matter protests.

MARCH ON WASHINGTON
Reflections from the 2020 Commitment March on Washington from our President and Director of Public Health.

IMPACT PAGE

CORE TEAM
Meet the leaders calling for a unified international front.

FROM OUR EYES FEATURES
Reflections from advocates and allies.

CONTACT US
I entered the workforce as a mental health counselor at the Inter-Cultural Center for Psychology in Oregon. As I immersed myself into the shared human experience, I organically aligned myself with advocacy, activism, and efforts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

The objective of From Our Eyes is to create a safe space to amplify the voices of Black Lives Matter activists and allies. Additionally, this is an opportunity to reflect on civil liberties and take action through civil engagement.

Britney Paddy, MA, QMHP
#TheWorldIsWatching is a global coalition demanding concrete actions to end police brutality and systemic racism in the US.

We are leaders, foreign and domestic professionals, organizations, grassroots activists and allies. We are creating a unified international front calling for policy, system, and environmental changes. Our inspiration stems from the critical role that international pressure had in advancing the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. We are now in the largest civil rights movement in history and we are strategically mobilizing the global community in the fight for justice.

Our work spans three core pillars: our International Declaration and accompanying petition, the Black Lives Matter Global Network, and amplifying voices.

Our International Declaration demands concrete policy, system, and environmental changes already proposed by activists in Campaign Zero, and has gathered thousands of individual signatures and institutional endorsements.

Organizers can join the BLM Global Network by filling out our contact information form at tinyurl.com/blmINTLform.

We host events with activists, policy-makers, and the general public. Our social media network and outreach team shares these events, in addition to building organizational partnerships, sharing resources and amplifying Black Lives Matter protests around the world.
INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION & PETITION

Our International Declaration unites institutions behind a global call to action for the United States to end police brutality and systemic racism. It puts on a universally accessible record that beyond issuing words of support, organizations and individuals around the world demand concrete change and policy action. We will send our International Declaration to policy makers at all levels of the U.S. government.

Our International Declaration focuses on 5 points:

1. **Beyond issuing words of support, enact the 10 policy solutions of Campaign Zero and those recommended by activists in your community to take real steps toward ending police brutality.**
   
   Visit [https://www.joincampaignzero.org/#vision](https://www.joincampaignzero.org/#vision) to see solutions.

2. **Recognize the pervasiveness of institutional racism and develop permanent, community-based oversight in all organizations to recognize and dismantle it.**

3. **Immediately end all use of tear gas, which asphyxiates, burns, and can cause lasting health problems. Similar chemical weapons have been banned in international warfare by the Geneva Protocol since 1925. Avoid crowd control tactics that accelerate COVID-19 transmission, including corralling, mass arrests and close-quarters detainment.**

4. **Respect and protect the right of the people to assemble and the free press, pillars of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and enshrined in the First Amendment.**

5. **Listen to and act upon activists’ and young people’s calls for change. Respect and permanently incorporate them into decision-making structures, for they are your future.**

Our petition calls on the voices of the international community—your voice, to tell the institutions that are directly or indirectly supporting state-funded violence and structured racism that the international community stands in solidarity for a just and peaceful society in the United States.

To endorse our International Declaration and support our campaign, visit: [https://theworldiswatchingblm.org/2020/06/01/read-our-international-declaration/](https://theworldiswatchingblm.org/2020/06/01/read-our-international-declaration/)
GLOBAL BLACK LIVES MATTER NETWORK

#TheWorldIsWatching is tracking and connecting international leaders and organizers of Black Lives Matter protests.

Members of the Black Lives Matter Global Network can maximize communication and coordination for demonstrations oceans apart, sending a unified message to the world and policy-makers that we demand change.

Join our community by visiting https://theworldiswatchingblm.org/contact-us/ and filling out our contact form.
GUIDANCE FOR ORGANIZERS

RESEARCH & CONNECT
Identify the root problem. Understand your community’s organizing and race relations history.

Find existing organizations that align with your mission, values, and goals. Explore partnering with existing youth, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA+ led groups. Potential partners could include past march organizers.

Research and write policy demands. Research local legislation, police budgets, human rights laws and opportunities to create change.

Build your audience. Connect to potential partners over social media.

ORGANIZE
Connect key players with a strategy call.

Reach a consensus on your demands and strategy. Examples could include redirecting police funding to community investment and creating specific policies and social protections for all members of your community.

Plan your first event, in-person or virtually. Establish human connections by seeing each other’s faces and stay connected.

STRATEGIZE
Map your long-term strategy. Do members of your group have the knowledge or experience to create specific policy proposals? If not, can you partner with people and organizations who do?

Determine your scope. We recommend staying local and using grassroots tactics.

Create SMART goals: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely. Have weekly, monthly and yearly check-ins. Clearly communicate, debrief and rework these goals with your team.

For policy, system, and environmental reform ideas, check out our International Declaration, 8 to Abolition, and Campaign Zero.

Share your demands with the media, policy-makers, and on social media. Do not settle for symbolic concessions. Demand real policy changes.

Advocate locally, communicate globally. Talk to organizers in other cities or in your region to share best practices and advice. Amplify and draw attention to each other on social media.
56 years after the 1964 March on Washington, we found ourselves standing on the same ground that activists, political leaders and everyday citizens stood to demand change, equality, and basic human rights. As the world surged to urgency following the #JusticeforGeorgeFloyd protests, our personal call to action was engaging our global community on the matter. This journey brought us to the August 28, 2020 Commitment March on Washington.

We stood on these sacred grounds with thousands of others to protest police brutality and inequality in the United States of America. Being surrounded by others who were just as passionate, activated and called to this work was once in a lifetime. Throughout the day, activists, preachers, students and family members of those killed took the long walk up to the microphone in front of the Lincoln Memorial to share reflections, demands, and hopes.

Our day began early, en route to the National Mall around 5:30 AM. During transit we reflected on the historical moments that had impacted our lives, and the importance of being a part of and making a bold statement in today’s narrative. The theme of commitment was consistent throughout the day’s events. Commitment to oneself and each other was the most memorable and impactful aspect of the day.

As we were waiting in line to get access to the event space, we met a couple from Oregon and a man who was a member of Kamala Harris’ Los Angeles-based church. The couple told us of the current state of protests in Portland, Oregon, and described the importance of attending the march as an ally to their Black and Brown community. They described attendance as a continuation of the efforts and commitment set forth by their friends, family and fellow citizens in Portland, who were participating in the protests and subject to undue violence from the police system throughout the summer. The man from Los Angeles was very quiet on his solo trip to DC. He reminded us that even if you start your journey alone, you will meet people that support you and the things you value along the way. After the ‘doors’ were open for us to go in, we all went our separate ways.

Today the couple is back in Oregon, the man is back in Los Angeles, and Alexandria and Laurel are in the DMV. We would like to think that they remember us as we do them. However, what really matters is the continuation of the commitment to oneself, the community, and the cause that brought us together in the first place.

As the day came to an end, we walked from the Washington Monument to Black Lives Matter Plaza, where the route there was lined with vendors selling merchandise ranging from, “I was there” t-shirts, Black Lives Matter face masks, to paintings of Black Civil Rights leaders and Barack Obama playing pool smoking cigars. Al Green was blasting from multiple booths. On Black Lives Matter Plaza, the streets were lined with beautiful displays of artwork and graffiti. It was a reminder of the different ways we can use our talents to join forces in the same cause.

We have witnessed and actively contributed (big and small) to the largest global Civil Rights Movement in recorded history. The call for equality and justice has been heard worldwide. We must continue to fight the good fight and celebrate the wins along the way. Ultimately, the Commitment March on Washington served as a call to action and celebration of the historical significance of where we have come. In this lifetime, we all have the opportunity to make an impact, whether in person or virtually, big or small.
THE WORLD IS WATCHING IMPACT

CONTACTED LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS
We directly contacted 660+ local elected officials across 37 cities in the US to demand policy changes to end police brutality.

INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION ENDORSEMENTS
Knovva Academy endorses our International Declaration. Knovva Academy prepares students for the 21st century by enhancing educational opportunities.

Magna Youth Action endorses our International Declaration. Magna Youth Action is a youth headed body structured for the betterment of young people in Africa and beyond by advocating for youth opportunities and climate change.

LIVESTREAMED MARCH ON WASHINGTON
Our President and Director of Public Health livestreamed the March on Washington via Instagram.

PETITION
Our petition currently has 2,100+ signatures worldwide. The petition calls on the voices of the international community to tell the institutions that are directly or indirectly supporting state-funded violence and structured racism that the international community stands in solidarity for a just and peaceful society in the United States.

PRESS RELEASES
We released a statement regarding the shootings in Kenosha, WI. Read our full statement and learn how you can help Jacob Blake’s family and the community of Kenosha on our website.

We released a statement regarding police brutality in Nigeria in solidarity with #EndSARS. Read our full statement and learn how you can get involved with the fight against police brutality on our website.

SUPPORTED NERI ITALIANI BLACK ITALIANS
We stand in solidarity with NIBI to demand justice for Willy Monterio Duarte and his family, and collaborated in launching a social media awareness campaign.

A UNITED AFRICAN DIASPORA PANEL
We hosted a virtual discussion with The Alliance of NGOs and CSOs for South-South Cooperation and African Views.

DA ASIAN HIP HOP FOR BLACK & ASIAN SOLIDARITY CONCERT
We co-hosted "We Stand With You," a benefit concert to raise money for Black-owned small businesses impacted by COVID-19 with our partner, Da Asian Hip Hop.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY & STRIVE WITH ME PANEL
We co-hosted a panel with the Democratic Party and Strive With Me on Asian American Pacific Islander allyship to the Black community.

ERADICATION OF STRUCTURAL RACISM EVENT
We co-hosted an event with the United Nations Association, US-ASEAN Youth Council and International Association for Political Science Students for the 75th anniversary of the United Nations.

KIND OF AN EXPERT PODCAST
Kind of an Expert Podcast features our President to discuss the global Black Lives Matter movement and making US policy spaces more inclusive.

RISING TIDE PODCAST
Rising Tide Podcast features our senior director to discuss advocacy, expression and processing as it relates to mental wellness, as well as promote youth voices in From Our Eyes.

WOMANHOOD & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PODCAST
Womanhood & International Relations Podcast features our Vice President and Executive Director to discuss how our work advances the Black Lives Matter movement.

YOUTH GOVERNANCE AT CIVIL 20 SUMMIT PANEL
We hosted a civil society panel for the Civil 20 Summit, the civil society engagement group of the G20, to discuss young people driving global governance and local action, as well as the impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented communities of color.
ART

Art is an outlet for communication, expression, imagination and technical skill. Artists across cultures evoke emotions and explore the nature of perception using different artistic means.

From Our Eyes spotlights two artists, Kunle Adewake and Shony Robles. Adewake and Robles use art to inspire conversations and create change.
KUNLE ADEWALE

*Enough is Enough* is a digital art piece borne out of my observations on police brutality in Nigeria. Over the years, a segment of the Nigerian police force has continued to harass innocent Nigerians; they maim, kill, assault, rape and even rob the citizens at will. Many Nigerian Youths have been unjustly detained and sentenced to prison. *Enough is Enough* is a call for citizen participation in social change, through advocacy, education, engagement (peaceful protests) and collaboration with relevant stakeholders to stop police brutality in Nigeria and reform the police force.

Visit Kunle Adewale’s website here: [https://kunleadewale.com/atunbi/](https://kunleadewale.com/atunbi/)

SHONY ROBLES

I was born in the Dominican Republic and raised in Baltimore, MD. My inspiration for this piece stems from the declaration and purpose of the coalition, “The World is Watching.” I love the idea of an all seeing eye watching on a global scale. Throughout the world, people have attempted to debate racism, discrimination and prejudice. The harsh and unequal treatment and murder of black people is not debatable. Racism is not debatable. Black lives matter; they are valuable, beautiful, heard, and seen.

View Shony Robles’ portfolio here: [https://shonyrobles.myportfolio.com/](https://shonyrobles.myportfolio.com/)
PHOTOGRAPHY

The world’s first photograph made in a camera was taken in 1826 in France. Since then, photographers across cultures have captured powerful moments on film.

From Our Eyes spotlights two photographers, Andrea Rhymes and Christina Turner. Rhymes and Turner advocate for the Black Lives Matter movement while using their passion for photography to illustrate the magnitude of allyship that exists in their community.
"My identity as a photographer transforms me into an advocate and historian."

Andrea Rhymes, owner of Indelible Images, captures the Black Lives Matter march in Indianapolis, Indiana. The photos serve as a powerful reminder of history, as well as a learning tool for three local children.
I became a photographer in 2009. My identity as a photographer transforms me into an advocate and historian. When I take a picture, I am both capturing and documenting an experience the world can look back upon. It feels powerful that I can use my artistic vision to create something long-lasting. I rightfully named my agency Indelible Images because it aligns perfectly with my mission statement. Indelible means unforgettable; memorable; and marks that cannot be removed. The inspiration for the name stems from a song that resonated with me emotionally. A friend of mine, who is a mother of 3 mixed race children, asked me to capture her family’s experience at the Indianapolis Black Lives Matter protest. As I watched through my lens, I took in the diversity within ages and races that marched. I felt empowered by the magnitude of the march and I could physically sense the energy in the atmosphere. I was overcome with emotion by what I saw. The awareness that God put me here to take indelible images washed over me. I hope these photos symbolize the importance of unity and advocating for reform. I acknowledge that viral footage of injustices against Black people can be traumatizing, but it is sometimes necessary to spark conversations for policy reform. I will continue to advocate for myself and others with the support of my faith, my loved ones, and my Canon camera by my side.

Visit Indelible Images here:
https://www.instagram.com/indelible.images/

CHRISTINA TURNER PHOTOGRAPHY

These photos hold significance because they represent two things that I am passionate about, the Black Lives Matter movement and my ability to express myself through photography. These photos symbolize coming together and standing up; this is everyone’s fight. I use my voice to stand up for people. I value my ability to stand up for my son, our family, and my friends. I will continue to be an advocate for diversity and justice. The world is changing, which means we all need to do our part to be progressive.

Visit Christina Turner Photography here:
https://www.instagram.com/christinaturnerphotography/
MUSIC

Music is foundational in every culture, past and present. Music is a form of storytelling that speaks to individual and collective societal experiences.

*From Our Eyes* spotlights two musicians, L.A. Doom and SHYNYÈ. L.A. Doom and SHYNYÈ use music as a therapeutic intervention for reflecting on their experiences, processing current events and gaining insight into their identities.
When I transitioned to general population, I was attacked based on what the media wrote. I was grateful to be completely acquitted, and I thought an acquittal would be vindication. The first job I applied to informed me that I passed the background check and drug test but failed the media check after they googled my name.

I have been out of jail for 1.5 years. Since being released, I am on a journey to transform my name and image through music and community connection. I know who I am and those closest to me know who I am, yet I have to overcome the media’s description of me as a cold-blooded killer. The mischaracterization of who I am started a couple years ago when I was involved in a “racially motivated crime,” in which two white men died. During my trial my house was referenced as the “Black people’s house.” I knew then that my fight for freedom would include defending myself - not just as a man, but as a Black man. In jail I spent a significant amount of time in administrative segregation shielded from the media’s lies.

I felt discouraged but I used that feeling to propel forward. I am not a cold-blooded killer, I am a father, a musician, a student and an ally. I applied to college and enrolled in a business administration program. My hope is to use my degree to increase the success of my music. I am an active father to my two kids and I am the sole parent with custody. I create music that provides an outlet for my anger. I recently released an album titled “White Noise” that I am excited to share with the world. I am an ally on social media; I use my platform to promote diversity and inclusivity, and spread happiness. Everyone deserves to be seen and heard for who they truly are. I no longer accept being judged based on what the world thinks they know about me.

I am a music producer and engineer, as well as an advocate for diversity and justice. These identities formed over years of self-exploration. My journey started when I joined the United States Marine Corps. I was dismayed by the blatant acceptance of racism and emotional invalidation that was embedded in military culture. I vividly remember finding a noose on my door and thinking, “racism is alive and well.” At that point I gained insight into why few BIPOC join the Marines. This institution attracts individuals that come from systems that perpetuate inequality. To say it boldly: The Marines attracts males from small towns that thrive on White patriotism.

I USED THIS CURIOSITY TO SEEK MY PASSION

It took a combination of courage and comfortability to start the dialogue on how racism impacts others. I found my voice through teaching my brothers that we are a family that must value each other’s differences. When I became a civilian, I asked myself, “what do I do now?” The last time I was a civilian I was a high-school wrestler. This naturally led to another question, “who am I now?” I used this curiosity to seek my passion.

Before I knew it, I spent $1,000+ on equipment and taught myself to create beats. In August 2020, I invited several friends to my studio to watch the NBA playoffs. The players came together to boycott the game and engage in dialogue about racism and police brutality. Myself and the artists in the studio started our own conversation. I started making a beat and recording artist, vO.N.E, started writing lyrics. We recorded “Boycott” that same night. The track is raw and so is the song art. Everything about the song comes down to pure emotion. It is full circle that I can create art that is validating after coming from an environment that is dismissive. I want the track to touch others. If you listen to the song and feel it, then you get it. If you don’t feel it, then maybe next time you will. “Boycott” is dedicated to Shane Spells, my friend that died from senseless gun violence.

Listen to SHYNYE’s music here:
https://music.apple.com/us/artist/shyn-y%C3%A9/1491412928
Linguistic scholars believe poetry predates written text. Poetry is a poignant art form that facilitates explications of human experiences while evoking emotive responses.

*From Our Eyes* spotlights four poets, Ashleigh Baker, Chassidy Brady, Nader Nader and Vernon Paddy. These poets express their innermost thoughts and feelings about systemic racism and social violence through literary forms and conventions.
By: Ashleigh Baker

I ate hashtags for breakfast.
I swallowed them entirely- their names that will settle into rally cries. Their faces that will rest, eyes closed,
They don't have to read this article. -Thank God.
Their families hesitation when they say "he was a good man."
The new usage of past verbs to describe a person who was just right there,
Being a good man,
Is hard to swallow.

I ate headlines for lunch.
I sprinkled "self defense" and not guilty verdicts in my fries.
Injustice does not taste whole without lies in the seasoning.
If only he had some kind of clear reasoning for pulling that gun out of its place,
Besides a description of shadow and an un-matching plate.
If only there was a purpose behind the headstones in my drink.
If only He hadn’t moved His hand, from His head to the echoes in His gut.
If only someone didn’t break Her door down without even a knock.
If only anyone listened, when He screamed He couldn’t breathe.

I ate a white washed world for dinner.
It froze my teeth shut, silence is supposed to add to the flavor-we saw that on the tv.
It made my gums bleed and my guests laugh at me while other families cried through the tweeting prayers.
I ordered a side of serenity and my waiter from some country south of me,
Muttered something like help Me under the tape on His lips- and He gave me 600 something voices that came hands up right before gunshots.
Those did not settle in my stomach.
No one in my party noticed how sickening this dinner was until the screaming in the restaurant began to bother their own brains.

Even though it’s getting hard to swallow, it’s time to end this unnecessary sorrow.

#
LIVING WHILE BLACK
By: Chassidy Brady

What if you were born into this world and no one accepted you?
Never knew about life but somehow had to be perfect because
everyone expects it from you
Being judged because of the gifts God blessed you with
And beaten by words but are expected to take the hits
You weren’t born like them,
You’re not the same so you can’t be treated equally
And though you couldn’t control being different
You still apologize because this world makes you feel so low and
sickening
How was I placed in this world and the only escape is death?
Why am I here feeling so alone when I didn’t even ask to
compete in this lonely test...
This is how the life I live makes me feel
Feeling like I’m being controlled by a controller
Having to face every battle under my own will
Being tormented by my own thoughts
But having to keep a smile on my face because this is what I was
taught.
So now I’m here fighting this scary world all alone
Even though I can never get used to it because I know this isn’t
the place I call home...
Rest in peace George Floyd, Sean Reed
And to the billions of others who died
Before & behind the camera scenes.
DARE TO BE FREE
By: Nader Nader

Black Lives Matter
Kids from cribs to teens
Grow up watching their fathers and peers killed on live streams,
And even they fear to see the end of today,
No way will we sit back and let shit get dusted away,
This is everyday life for a person of colour,
My mother brought me in to this world hoping that I get treated like others,
And that’s just the basics, I’m half Arab half African
So that means I’m a terrorist or nigger to racists,
Face it,
Racism never left and that’s real,
Our ancestors suffered and we still getting killed
For a supposed counterfeit bill,
Those that stand with the movement
We appreciate your solidarity against this barbarity,
Those who oppose is just a racist exposed.
We won’t stop until there is justice and equality,
What a useless democracy,
Get new leaders in our countries that won’t have frivolity,
Just some brain cells and the media are just like the leaders hoping pain sells,
Well our pain is plain to see,
We will protest in the street,
Leave our emotions in a tweet,
We are not overreacting
We are fighting to be FREE
They’re bawling out justice
Society enraged
Years of anger kept in a cage
Tears flowed, washing away the blood stains

Society has had enough
We are not taking this stuff
Such is such
They’re bawling out justice
Society enraged
Things about to blaze

Years of suppressed anger, today might just be the day

Fire and looting
Police will be shooting
Cities will be burning
Justice they’re seeking
Society is tired of civilian killings
Police brutality
Hush ups and cover ups
Mess ups and fuck ups
Politicians’ lies
Government’s negative vibrations
Our leaders crippled this great nation
Instead of us rising
We are sinking

They’re bawling out justice
Today is the day
We’re tired of racism
Black, White
Wrong, Right
Up, down
We need to set things right
We are sailing in the wrong direction
The captain is lost
It’s time for new management
Clean out negative elements

They’re bawling out justice
Society enraged
Years of anger will be released today
Storytelling is a fundamental human experience that bonds people. From the earliest recorded history, storytelling was a method used to share knowledge and connect experiences.

*From Our Eyes* spotlights Morrison Chea, his story is reminiscent of invalidating police encounters.
July 5th was a normal day for me. I was a full-time student attending Sacramento State University to receive a bachelor of science in Fashion Marketing and Design. I was also working part-time as an associate at J.Crew. I went to my 8am class and started my 10am-5:30pm shift. The day started and progressed wonderfully as I had a good day at work and was excited that the end of my shift was approaching since I had plans to attend my friend’s birthday dinner. I ended my shift, clocked out and made my exit in the “employees only” hallway towards my vehicle.

As I walked through the corridors, I could hear whispers in the distance but thought nothing of it because it could be other mall employees entering the mall. I approached closer to the voices and there stood a man and a woman around their late 30s glaring at me. I felt like something was off because their stance and body language did not seem positive to me so I turned around, hoping to make my exit amongst the crowds of shoppers who would use the main entrance of the mall. I walked as fast as I could, but before I could open the door to exit back into the mall, the man ran in front of me and stopped me in my tracks while the woman stood behind me. The man proceeded to say he knows me and he used to work across from me at MetroPCS, which was incorrect because metroPCS was never located in front of J.Crew for as long as I worked there. He then told me that the woman was his friend and she was going to read my palm because she could see that a bad aura was floating around me. I kindly declined because I did not want to be touched by strangers. The woman got closer as she was speaking and handed me her phone for me to input my phone number, but again I declined and in that moment the man grabbed my wrist really tightly and forced me to put my phone number in. They were very physical with me; the way he grabbed my wrist made me feel as if he was going to dislocate it. The woman began screaming, “you will always face sadness.” Then, she grabbed my index finger. I was using all of my weight to fend for myself. I managed to break away my wrist from his painful grip and I ran back towards the exit, back into the crowd of people. I was startled and panicked.

A middle aged couple came to my defense after they saw me flustered and scared and saw how the couple stared at me. They quickly escaped back into the hallway as the lady who helped me dialed 9-1-1. I stood there out of breath and scared, complying with the couple as they spoke on the phone with a responder. She explained what she saw, which was when I ran out of the hallway being chased by two solicitors. The lady then said that she would like for the policemen to come out to the mall in order for me to file a report and to also escort me to my vehicle since I was afraid to do so alone. The lady appeared speechless as to what the responders said. In her paraphrased explanation, the dispatcher chuckled and told her that incidents like mine happen all the time and policies would be everywhere if they were to come out for every case like mine. The lady then asked again if someone could at least come to the mall and escort me to my vehicle in order to make it back home safely, but that request was denied and I was asked to contact mall security instead. The couple then walked me back to my vehicle and made sure I was safe enough to leave the premises. From then, I truly never felt that the emergency number (9-1-1) was going to be my safe haven.
The clinical realm is a safe space to advance the wellbeing of others using evidence based practices that are respectful, receptive and responsive.

*From Our Eyes* spotlights two clinicians, Amy Syper, M.A. and Kathleen Fitzgerald, MSW. Syper and Fitzgerald use best-practice therapeutic approaches to empower others and cultivate change.
AMY SYPER, M.A.

I earned my Master’s degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the University of Denver and I’m currently a third-year Counseling Psychology Ph.D. student at Fordham University. I’ve worked with teens and adults struggling with depression, anxiety, relationship stress, body image concerns, individuals on the Autism spectrum, and those who have experienced trauma. Clients come in with various concerns that are often tied to or exacerbated by external stressors such as their socioeconomic status, experiences of racism, and other forms of discrimination based on their gender, sexual orientation, etc.

I primarily utilize a humanistic approach in conjunction with cognitive behavioral skills. I strongly believe that therapy is a collaborative process and I strive to give clients autonomy throughout our work together. My clients are the experts on their life and I hope to help them build on the strengths they already have and empower them to find their ideal path in life.

ALLOW PEOPLE TO BE THEIR AUTHENTIC SELF

I’m passionate about creating an environment where people of all backgrounds feel safe to express themselves openly. As a therapist, it’s crucial to be an advocate and ally both in the room with clients and in the larger community. My role is to allow people to be their authentic self and that becomes challenging when they’re facing discrimination in their daily lives. It’s part of everyone’s responsibility to use their privilege to challenge systemic injustices and make space for the voices of those who have, and continue to be, oppressed in our society.
I am a social worker and advocate. Post-graduation from Indiana University’s social work program, I entered the workforce full of ideas about creating positive change. Shortly after starting a career working with children in foster care, I felt devastated by how broken the system is. I transitioned out of that career and began working with individuals struggling with addiction. Still, I felt powerless and stuck in an unhealthy system with glaring problems. I acknowledge that the system has been broken for a while and the populations I serve experience barriers to treatment in this system that are notoriously underfunded, and in many ways inherently designed to fail.

Individuality is not taken into consideration; systems perpetuate the idea that there is only one way to heal and recover. I am strongly committed to using my skills and voice to provide support within an individual’s microsystem that honors their capabilities and individuality.

**IT’S IMPORTANT FOR ME TO CONSTANTLY QUESTION WHY**

The support I provide is consistent with core values of social work, specifically being client-centered and strengths-based. It’s important for me to constantly question why certain requirements are in place, whether they are reasonable or attainable, and how clients could be better served. One of my values is helping others, and I certainly didn’t enter this field expecting financial fulfillment. Working in the field of addiction is what sustains my passion, and if there comes a day when I start to feel jaded or I lose my spark, I’ll try another career. Social work is such a versatile field and for me, there’s no reason to feel discontent or bitter at work. I strive to be a positive force in every client’s universe and I’ll keep doing that one interaction at a time.
THEOLOGY

Theology is the systematic study of religious belief and theory, the nature of the divine and religious traditions.

From Our Eyes spotlights Ian Carlos Urriola, M.Div. Urriola is the director of the Shenandoah University Youth Theology Institute.
The life of a prophet is not easy. If we can take away anything from the witness of Jeremiah, it’s that. “There’s always a possibility,” Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel reminds us in his chapter on Jeremiah in The Prophets, “that the divine word will shatter the human vessel that carries it.”

The task of criticizing the world as it is and casting a vision for a more righteous reality won’t earn you any friends amongst those who stand to benefit the most from the way things currently stand. To look at a world that’s on fire while saying “this is not fine, it doesn’t have to be like this” is a direct challenge to those who profit off the systems that set the world ablaze in the first place. And make no mistake, when power is directly challenged like that, power fights back. Power fights back hard, and power fights back dirty.

In the thirty-seventh chapter of Jeremiah the titular prophet is victimized and brutalized by the police force of his day. His very existence and persistence to answering his call was a threat to the power, which the monarchic and priestly classes were so desperately trying to hold on. He was only trying to reclaim his share of his ancestral property. He was only trying to return home, and for that, the guards arrested him, beat him, and threw him into a cistern on trumped up and false charges of desertion to Babylon. The life of a prophet is not easy.

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While the monarchic and priestly classes of first temple Jerusalem would eventually fall and be whisked into exile at the end of this book, the call to prophesy did not yield. The call to prophesy has not yielded, even to this day. For over four hundred years in what we now call the United States of America, white supremacy has been the reigning power and principality. And in a white supremacist system and society, there can be no liberation for black bodies.

A black body that is free to pursue those inalienable rights we proclaim to hold so dear is a direct threat to the power that white supremacy is clinging onto for its dear life. A liberated black body proclaims the theological truth that it is made in the image of its almighty creator and is good—very, very good.

In this way, to be a Black person living in America is inherently to live the life of the prophet. To live as a Black person in America, and throughout the world, is to simultaneously criticize and humiliate the power of white supremacy while also casting a vision for a more beautiful alternative. And for daring to live into this prophetic task, our white supremacist society does what power has always done to the prophets. It casts them off. It dehumanizes them. It slanders them. It locks them up and beats them. It kills them.

The life of a prophet is not easy. Never has been, never will be. But throughout scripture and throughout history, one thing has been unequivocally clear. God is on the side of the prophets. The question that we have to struggle with, ourselves, is whether or not we will have ears to hear the Word of the Lord being proclaimed by our Black siblings. What will we do to ensure that the divine word does not shatter the Black human vessels that carry it?
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