

Corlisa Hockless

“SAY HIS NAME, RODNEY KING.” This name stirs up nothing but tons of controversy because of the simple fact that it was a turning point in the lives of many African American men and women, especially in Los Angeles. Rodney King suffered a severe beating by the LAPD and the result of this traumatizing sequence of events highlighted the riots that sparked among minorities. There was an uprising of Asian American and African American conflict that was so unheard of, killing thousands of people. To say the least, George Holliday was a “saving grace” being that this was the identified person who filmed the incident nearby and used this as evidence. The justice system remained unjust, giving two officers prison time and the action of acquitting the other two. The civil lawsuit filed the city of Los Angeles liable and granted him \$3.8 million for damages but that does not take back the pain and agony he had to endure.

This shifts your attention immediately to a young lady who had experienced a similar instance. “SAY HER NAME, LATASHA HARLINS.” This young lady was only a teenager, and lost her life to an ignorant soul. This young lady purchased a drink and an Asian American (the owner’s wife) assumed she was going to steal a drink that was about to purchase. Mrs. Ja Du proceeded with snatching her by her clothing and by all means necessary, this young lady defended herself. In all, her life was taken due to senseless activity. There was no reason to even place any harm on this young lady. Ms. Ja Du was convicted due to the camera in the store providing evidence but only for a decade. To make matters worse, her sentence was cut shorter and she had to complete community service and cover the funeral costs. The justice system has failed once again and this happened a year after Rodney King's beating.

Saying their names puts tears in my eyes, feeling a sense of hopelessness for the generation to come and even fear of stepping into the role of a Social Worker. There is so much injustice in the world that requires more than one person willing to handle many controversies, but I refuse to take a step back. From all that I have learned thus far, watch your surroundings and know that we are always a target. That could be expressed in a negative light and a positive light because as an African American woman, there are so many hidden targets, look at Sandra Bland. As a black man, you cannot even go to the store and return home safe, look at Trayvon Martin or George Floyd. All I can do is pray for our generation as well as myself and continue to walk in my truth of becoming a change agent.

Becoming a change agent is searching for a sense of comprehension in regards to the “nations” or the injustices that you are fighting for and becoming a voice for those individuals. You cannot take on the world if you do not understand the world. You have to be authentic, bold, committed to handling the pressures of what may come your way. On the flip side, as odd as it sounds, it is great to know that we are what other people wish to become. We are educated, strong, role models, ambitious, and beautiful.

