



Context

Over the past few months, our society has witnessed a series of traumatic events:

- **February 23, 2020** – [Ahmaud Arbery](#), a 25-year old Black Georgia resident, who was jogging through his neighborhood and chased down, hit by a truck, shot, and killed by three white men, who accused him of burglarizing the neighborhood. This incident did not receive widespread attention until early May when a video was posted online.
- **March 13, 2020** – [Breonna Taylor](#), a 26-year old Black Louisville EMT, who would have turned 27 on June 5, 2020 was shot eight times and killed while she slept in her bed when Louisville police broke down the door unannounced. Her boyfriend, [Kenneth Walker](#), who was licensed to carry a gun, called 911, and fired upon the unknown intruders. He initially was charged with first-degree assault and attempted murder of a police officer, but the charges have since been dismissed.
- **May 21, 2020** – [Patricia Ripley](#), a 45-year old white Hispanic Florida mother initially stated that her 9-year son, Alejandro, who had autism, had been abducted by two Black men, but later admitted that she had drowned her son. This false accusation reminds us of other cases, where Black men were also falsely accused of crimes, such as Susan Smith in South Carolina on October 25, 1994, [Charles Stuart](#) in Boston on October 23, 1989, and Emmett Till, an accusation, which led to his lynching.
 - [“Because they can get away with it’: Why African Americans are blamed for crimes they didn’t commit: Experts”](#) (African Americans make up 49% of wrongful convictions since 1989).
- **May 25, 2020** – Amy Cooper, a white woman, called the police on [Christian Cooper](#), a Black man, who was birdwatching in the Bramble section of Central Park in New York, and falsely accused him of threatening her after she refused to place a leash on her dog as was the rule in that section of the park.
- **May 25, 2020** – [George Floyd](#) died in the custody of Minneapolis police officers, who knelt on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. This set off protests across the United States and the world with the rallying cry of BLACK LIVES MATTER, demands for justice, accountability for police brutality and killings, and an end to racism.
 - [#Say their names](#), a list of Black people killed during police encounters
 - [#SayHerName Report](#), a list of Black women killed during police encounters
- **May 26, 2020** – [Tom Austin](#), a white venture capitalist, called building management and threatened to call 911 on 4 Black men, who he accused of trespassing by using a gym in a shared workspace building in Minneapolis.
- **May 27, 2020** – [Tony McDade](#), a Black transgender man, who police said matched the description of a stabbing suspect, was killed by police in Tallahassee, Florida after they claimed that he had shot at them. However, eyewitnesses said that McDade had been a recent victim of a hate crime, was unarmed, and that police did not identify themselves before exiting their vehicles and shooting. This was the third fatal police shooting in Tallahassee in the past two months.

The United States did not reach this point overnight. This situation has been 401 years in the making with the first enslaved Africans brought to Virginia (near Jamestown) in 1619.