

White feelings should never be held in higher regard than black lives.

– Rachel Cargle

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Issue 3

‘We are not morally superior. Justice for Shukri Abdi.’

By Ifrah Siyad

“I can’t breathe” 43 year old Eric Garner said 11 times to a white officer who held him in an illegal chokehold. “I can’t breathe” said 46 year old George Floyd as his neck was being kneeled on by a white officer, Derek Chauvin. Those were his last words before he died. 2 black men killed by 2 white officers pleading that they needed oxygen and their life was ripped away from them, all because of the colour of their skin. You may say “It’s simply a coincidence, the officers were simply doing their job”. 12 year old Tamir Rice, killed while playing with his toy gun on a snowy day. 17 year old Trayvon Martin killed whilst going to visit his father and fiancée. Michael Brown. Freddie Grey. Sandra Bland. The list goes on. And take note; what is the only thing this list of people have in common? They’re Black.

You may now say with a morally superior and righteous tone: ‘but the UK isn’t as bad as America, racism doesn’t exist here like it does in America... our officers aren’t routinely armed. Before I delve into such statements and opinions, I ask you 2 very simple questions:

Do you know the name of the middle class white girl that has been in the media for the last 13 years due to her disappearance?

And do you know the name of the school girl who was horrifically murdered by her peers, but yet her case barely made headlines for a week? Her name is Shukri Abdi.

The heart breaking case of Shukri Abdi evidences that racism exists in our country, and in schools- a place which should strongly encourage and educate students on the value of inclusion. Yet on the 27th of June 2019, Shukri Abdi was found dead, in a river, covered in bite marks. With the protests of George Floyd’s death, the world is finally opening up their eyes to the injustice innocent black people have, and remain to face.

Shukri Abdi fled Somalia with her mother (Zamzam Ture) and four siblings to Greater Manchester through a refugee camp in Kenya. Her family came to the United Kingdom as they thought this country embodied safety and peace. Only for Shukri to become a victim of a vicious, vile attack.

On the evening of June 27th, her mother Zamzam felt a “pain” and a “heaviness” when Shukri failed to appear home that day. Zamzam went to her daughter’s school to see if she was there, but she was not. Zamzam only then had one choice- which was to report her daughter missing at the police station. Within 4 hours, it was confirmed Shukri Abdi had drowned. There was an immediate controversy with the way Shukri Abdi’s death was handled by the police. The police had solely relied on a few interviews and dismissed the case. During a police interview, the young people who were with Shukri by the river moments before she drowned, told Police that she jumped into the river because she was ‘hot and wanted to cool down’, despite an autopsy revealing that there were bite marks littered across her body. It is integral to note: Shukri came to the UK from Kenya and would have experienced temperatures of 40 degrees, or near about on a daily basis. Yet it is only when she arrived to the UK, she started to find British summer ‘so hot’ that she jumped into a river to cool down knowing that she couldn’t swim. How funny.

Ask yourself this: how coincidental is it that the only eyewitness (a fisherman) to give an accurate account of what happened at the river suddenly becomes labelled a “drunk” and his account is entirely dismissed?

So, whilst this 'investigation' was underway- I'm not sure if I can even call it that- what was Shukri's school doing behind the scenes. Well, days after her death, the school: Broad Oak Sports College completely rebranded and re-named the school to: Hazel Wood High School, almost as if to disassociate themselves from the "tragic accident". To add insult and salt to the wound, the 5 school children who were linked to being in the exact river location when Shukri drowned, were given therapy and full support from the school whilst Zamzam's pleas for justice went unanswered. These 5 school children were not named for legal reasons; however one of the children admitted that the others knew Shukri could not swim and left her in the deep end of the river and did not do anything when they saw that Shukri was drowning. The same child said that when they tried to help Shukri, the others told them not to, and simply laughed whilst she struggled. By the time 2 of the children went to the police station and explained what happened, Shukri Abdi was dead.

Despite Zamzam visiting the school on many occasions to inform staff that her daughter is being bullied, her requests, pleas and calls for a solution went unnoticed. Broad Oak Sports College (yes, I'm using the school's original name) is well known for their apathetic attitude towards the bullying and harassment of both staff and students. In 2015, a teacher who worked at the same school as Shukri Abdi, committed suicide. When an inquest was made into her suicide, it was found that she had suffered "strategic bullying" in the weeks leading up to her death.

"This young girl was failed," says Bashir Ibrahim, a human rights activist. "She was failed when she was alive and she's still being failed now she's dead." For me, this particular case struck closely to my heart. Despite the fact that I was born in the UK, Shukri and I are both Somali and both spent some of our childhood living in Kenya. I have yet to face anything like Shukri Abdi's oppression. Justice must be served for those who have gone through what Shukri Abdi went through and we must not allow behaviour like this to be condoned. Bullying, racism and xenophobia is not inherited through genetics. You make that choice. Hands have been stained in red blood at the hands of law-makers and the rich who attempt to keep white supremacy firmly fixed into every fibre of our society. They do not fear what violent acts black people may commit, they fear us uniting and demanding our rights back. Now is the time to stand up and fight for the rights of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities.

Protests for the Black Lives Matter movement have been happening internationally. From Cape Town to Sydney to Rio. Even Syria, a war-torn nation has painted a picture of George Floyd on a wall of a bombed house. So why is it only in the United Kingdom that far right organisations such as Britain First and the EDL (English Defence League) have had anti-Black Lives Matter demonstrations? Oh but I forgot, we are so morally superior to America, aren't we? The former leader of the UKIP party and current leader of the Brexit party- Nigel Farage- has proudly compared a protest about the rights and equality for black people to "A new form of Taliban [being] born in the UK". And such a disgusting, manipulative and attention seeking comparison was applauded and condoned by many. Yet we are still so morally superior to America, aren't we?

I plead with you, when you see a black man walking down the street, do not believe the stereotypes which are perpetuated by media perception and coaxed the weak into believing their lies. When you see us, you see us. The colour of our skin has resulted in a genocide. A genocide that you have justified by staying silent. The black community does not seek vengeance, we only seek equality. Use your voice. Use your platform. Use your privilege as a way to protect your fellow humans. We can't breathe until equality is instilled.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT!

These far right groups have proven their ignorance when they were epically trolled by Youtuber Niko Omilano. In short, this Youtuber had attended an EDL march and had made fun of them and created his fan base: the NDL (Niko Defence League). If you haven't yet seen these 3 videos please do as they prove how idiotic these groups are in a light hearted comedic way.

Video 1: <https://youtu.be/rsMxZehUR1Y>

Video 2: <https://youtu.be/Y8cWGbCiwsA>

Video 3: <https://youtu.be/WtRA1dvBi4>

As always when on the internet please remember to stay safe, block and report anyone who is racist or offensive, do not share your personal information with strangers. Always report anything that makes you upset or uncomfortable to your parents or a teacher.

Previously, Analyce has suggested reading books such as "Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race" and "Black Skin, White Mask" by Frantz Fanon. If you have already read these and need more action steps to support the movement or self-educate, click this link to sign the petition for Shukri Abdi: <https://www.change.org/p/manchester-police-justice-for-shukri-abdi>

Secondly, here are a list of movies/ series on Netflix which you can watch that portray the struggles faced by black people:

1. Freedom Writers
2. When they see us
3. 13th
4. Dear White People
5. Self made
6. Mudbound

Want to get involved in creating next week's BAME Newsletter?

Please email:

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Remember you don't have to be an amazing writer to get involved. You're always more than welcome to share ideas/thoughts/feeling and even design skills– all of which can be contributed to the weekly writings.