

Verdict

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were found not guilty. Miami was engulfed in riots. After my two teenage daughters said they didn’t have much familiarity with the Rodney King case when I mentioned it in connection to McDuffie, we watched an hour of YouTube footage of the Rodney King beating, the acquittal of the officers and the unfortunate riots that ensued. My 16-year old daughter said to me “1980 in Miami was the same as 1992 in Los Angeles.” Though Zimmerman was just a

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wanna-be cop, we can now add 2013 in Sanford, Florida. My eldest daughter and I have been planning to see the new movie “Fruitvale Station.” The story is of a young black man shot and murdered by a transit police officer. Even with clear video evidence of Oscar Grant being shot and killed while he lay face down, not moving, on a train platform, white officer Johannes Mehserle was only convicted of involuntary manslaughter and spent less than a year in prison. The timing was ironic and painful. We had just seen the story of McDuffie and Rodney King. We were headed to watch the story of Oscar Grant and we were now experiencing the story of Trayvon Martin. Now, like many black parents across the country, I struggle with what to tell my son. A son whose whole life he has known his father primarily to be a law enforcement official. A son who has said he is interested in being a police officer. And like many parents, I have to have “that talk” with my son. The talk about Emmett Till, Arthur McDuffie, Rodney

Project Dayshoot



On July 15, 1983, 90 photographers set out to capture a day in the life of Oregon. This week photographers recreated that event for Project Dayshoot+30. The event will be recorded in an exhibit for Oregon Historical Society. Pictured here are Beatrice Montague and Ora Lee Green photographed at the Urban League Senior Center. See more Dayshoot+30 photographs on page eight.

King, Oscar Grant, Trayvon Martin, and countless other black men who have been beaten and killed by white authorities. I will tell my son to be encouraged that a black man is the president of the United States, but also know and understand that the murder of a young black man still can’t get justice. David Muhammad is the CEO of Solutions, Inc, former Chief Probation Officer of Alameda County Probation and former Deputy Commissioner of New York City Probation

Butler

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SPACE: THE FINAL FRONTIER

Brown and Imarisha share a love for Star Trek. The editors became Trekkies at an early age. Brown says her father was instrumental in her fascination with the sci-fi series. “I can’t remember a time before feeling interested in space travel, in futurism – I think in part because I came from an interracial Deep South love story and thinking about a future in which my family was normal was both interesting and necessary for me,” she says. Imarisha says watching Star Trek was her earliest memory at the age of two-years-old. She says she always loved the space of fantastical worlds and getting lost in them. One example of getting lost in the Star Trek world is a project she and a partner created called “Don’t Be Riker.” The website discusses the concept of privilege by poking fun at the character William Riker through a series of pictures. “He is the epitome of White, patriarchal, heterosexist, White normative, capitalist fetishes, fantasies and ideals shoved into one douchey, douchey dude,” says Imarisha. “Even the way he sits, he just takes up so much space. He is in no way conscious of how his actions affect other folks.” Imarisha says that “Don’t Be Riker” is her meditative practice. “There’s something very centering and soothing about looking at hundreds of pictures of Don’t Be Riker and thinking of ways to mock him,” she says

necessary political work.” The title is a takeoff from Lillith’s Brood and pays homage to its author Octavia Butler. Brown and Imarisha stress that they are part of the lineage of Butler. According to Brown, who is an Octavia Butler scholar, Butler’s work is an exploration of humanity and justice through speculative and science fiction. She says her characters are powerful examples of Black women in the future, in power, in non-traditional relationships, and in transforming societies and bodies. Imarisha says speculative and science fiction is perfect for conveying social justice concepts because they’re the only genres that allow people to dream whatever they please. “All organizing work is science fiction,” she says. “What does a world without poverty look like? What does a world without prisons look like? What does a world with everyone having enough food and clothing look like? We don’t know. That’s science fiction. We believe that if we’re able to dream it and see it in our minds then we are much better able to move towards creating it.” Brown and Imarisha reached out to contributors for Octavia’s Brood by targeting social justice writers who weren’t necessarily into science fiction. Although many of their targets weren’t initially interested, they found that these people had immersed themselves in project ideas when they checked back in a second time. One writer even turned a short story about a zombie apocalypse in an internment camp into a separate novel. In addition to using the project to spark

people’s imagination and set the framework for future works, the editors of Octavia’s Brood hope to create a sustainable model for supporting artists within social justice movements. “Oftentimes art gets relegated to a sideshow in the organizing movement,” says Imarisha. “These artists are helping the movement envision and create new worlds and the movement needs to be supporting artists to do that so they aren’t having to make choices between doing work that’s just and paying the light bill.” The project is being funded by an Indiegogo campaign which reached its ini-

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tial goal of \$8,277 for publishing within a couple of weeks. Octavia’s Brood has extended fundraising goals that will allow the editors to, among other things, compensate contributors (Other goals include a tour, color art and an e-book, and an expanded anthology). Currently, the contributors are doing their work out of love, says Brown. “Artists who use their art specifically to raise the need for social justice, explore it, offer alternatives and pathways through their art – often they are in situations of creating art and work for groups and movements that are already tight on

funds,” she says. “So that creation is from love, but it is SO important. “Knowing that art is a crucial way to bring social justice work and ideas into larger society is strategic. Investing in artists who create explicitly to grow and deepen and reflect and uplift community is strategic.” Octavia’s Brood needs to raise \$22,000 to compensate writers and advisers. Currently, the project has raised \$9,527 and has 26 days left. The editors stress that the project is more than just a good idea. Readers should expect vulnerability, sharp analysis, creative worlds, characters that look and feel familiar, and pathways to justice and freedom when they pick up Octavia’s Brood, says Brown. The goal was not to write the “great science fiction novel,” says Imarisha. Instead, she notes that people leave her and Brown’s workshops and advisory sessions more invigorated and with new ideas to apply to their lives. She hopes the project will build a foundation for others to create their own speculative and science fiction projects, as well as write in general. “That to me is a fundamental principle of community organizing,” says Imarisha. “You don’t want to be the leader. You want everyone to be empowered with the skills to be able to push this work forward.” For more information on Octavia’s Brood, go to the project’s Indiegogo page.