

9-2021

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Recommended Citation

Ellington, Cashuelle, "George Floyd and I Are One in the Same" (2021). *Connecticut Law Review*. 501.
https://opencommons.uconn.edu/law_review/501

CONNECTICUT LAW REVIEW

VOLUME 53

SEPTEMBER 2021

NUMBER 3

George Floyd and I Are One in the Same

You and I are one and the same. The complexion of our flesh is a vessel that connects our deeply rooted family tree. Our ancestors crossed the Atlantic, sold to foreign oppression and lived awaiting death. My soul is spiritually connected to your spiritual essence. Our spirituality shares the realm of our deepest transgressions. My spiritual growth is a reflection of the areas of concern I keep within reach, never leaving it without addressing.

Before there was you, there was me, and those before you and me whose souls rest at peace because their living beings suffered and never had the platform to address their oppressive treatment. I stand in allegiance with those who lack the strength to object to mistreatment. I've normalized the misconduct by those policemen sworn to power. I'm on the verge of losing my inhibitions as my inner demons grow. The only thing I feel is equal is the capacity of pressure that is fully past the point exceeding.

I feel ashamed, displaced and unhinged by the unhealthy amount of suppressed rage. Branches of shame, planting seeds watered by urine and feces. The disregard of my family tree, deeply rooted to generations of enslaved people. My false sense of freedom is confronted. As I see the reality, my grip has slipped through my fingers. My grip on life continued to weaken, subsequently misplacing my sense of direction, catapulting my trajectory in a habitual pattern of trial and error.

Before George Floyd, there have been George Floyds in every one of the United States of America. My life's definition, in full detailed description, is growing in repetitive competition. I'm my biggest opposition. I'm the prime example of school-to-prison statistics. Wishing I knew what I know now, seeing myself as an example. I guess the time is now, to be the person in a place, doing that thing.

George Floyd, in front of a store, selling single cigarettes, is the event that caused his life to be cut short. How can he breathe when his airway is cut from the pressure of your knee? How can anybody with a heart listen to a man beg and plead and not adhere to his request for mercy? How can any nation be born on free labor and stolen land? There have been George Floyds before George Floyd. There have been town events centered around public lynching.

I have been displaced from my native land and brought to a land that has been stolen from native men. My sense of self is the sense I have grown as a minority. There have been George Floyds, racial wars and separation of south and north. There has been and will still be racial bigotry, and white supremacy, being encouraged by district attorneys advocating police brutality. We'll still fight for civil equality while our rights regarding humanity seem out of reach. Before George Floyd, there were racial voids and racial ploys of equality. I was George Floyd before George Floyd. I am still George Floyd, but I am a living vessel of social change. His death lives within me.

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* Cashvelle Ellington, *George Floyd and I Are One in the Same*, PRISON JOURNALISM PROJECT (Mar. 2018), <https://prisonjournalismproject.org/pjp-stories/george-floyd-and-i-are-one-in-the-same>.