

INTRODUCTION

Before I Was Trans, I Was Born Black

We're scared to death to be ourselves. We're human. We are a part of the so-called black community. I wish people would see us as that. We weren't confused black men who became black women. We were [black] women trapped in an unfamiliar body. That shouldn't make us a bull's eye.

—Venus Love

This book is primarily concerned with the toxic masculinity that threatens the humanity of black transgender women. The guiding framework centers on giving them a voice to address the increase of transphobic discrimination, violence, and murders. In that regard, the book focuses on three objectives: First, to better understand what it means to be a black transgender woman within the black community and in the larger American society. Second, to expand our knowledge and understanding of the societal and cultural impact of the black male-to-black female (MtF) transition on black masculinity and black femininity. Third and last, to address the deadly effects of toxic masculinity within the black community that leads to violence against black transgender women.

The above objectives are presented under the presumption that black LGBTQIA people and the lives they lead are a significant part of the black community and black American culture. As an extension of the Civil Rights

Movement and the fight for equal rights and protections, black people of all ages, creeds, color variations, sexes, national origins, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, disabilities, marital statuses, and socioeconomic statuses are an interdependent group. The history of this group's identification with one another has relied on the generative power of black solidarity where individual blacks share a conscious fate with the larger black community. The United States of America's (USA) mistreatment of blacks throughout the centuries has been the impetus that has evoked intra-group ties to address discriminatory and racist practices. The main point is that, blacks would not have progressed to this point in history without acting as a collective group moving in a unified direction to achieve societal, cultural, and political liberation. Therefore, all black voices that resemble the diversity within the black community must be heard and their lives must matter if we are to achieve collective group actions that further the interests of blacks in American society.

The exploration of these objectives is timely and relevant for a number of reasons. First, the continued examination of black masculinity is needed to better understand the multi-dimensions of black male life. Following the election and presence of the first black president, Barack H. Obama, I, as well as many academics, found myself grappling with the following questions: *What does it mean to be a black male in the twenty-first century? Does Obama's presence have an impact on the black male identity?* Two of my previous books, *Black Masculinity in the Obama Era: Outliers of Society* (Hoston 2014) and *Race and the Black Male Subculture: The Lives of Toby Waller* (Hoston 2016), were written to get to the core of these questions.¹ Both of the books emphasize the importance of examining the social construction of black masculinity, the need to appreciate the diversity within the black male subculture², and the seriousness of protecting black human life in an American society that views black masculine bodies as social and political threats deserving of death.

As a backlash to the violence against black masculine bodies garnering national attention in recent years, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement was established to help socially, politically, and legally legitimize the value of black male lives. Black men in the USA are most violently under attack in two realms: white police-involved deaths and intra-racial violence. The deaths of unarmed black men by white law enforcement officers have been front and center in the black public consciousness. The names of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown Jr., Jordan Davis, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, and a bevy of others shined a light on the rate of white police-involved deaths of unarmed black men. Take, for example, in

2015, black men made up roughly six and a half percent of the total USA population, yet an end of the year study by *The Guardian* revealed that they were nine times more likely than other Americans to be killed by police officers.³

In stark comparison, black men are killing each other at an alarming rate. Large proportions of intra-racial violence among black men occur every day in black communities. While such violence cultivated by age, gender, socio-economic status, and close geographical proximity is not a new phenomenon, the frequency in which it occurs identifies a disturbing trend within the black community. For example, Chicago, Illinois, or so inhumanely named in the twenty-first century, Chiraq, Killinois,⁴ sees a disproportionate number of black men murdered due to gang-related violence over turf and drugs. At the end of 2016, the city of Chicago had seen a total of 762 murders⁵ and more than 3,500 shooting incidents.⁶ There was an average of two murders per day. When compared to 2015, which saw 468 murders, the city observed its largest murder increase in more than 60 years.

The fact is, not only are white law enforcement officers killing unarmed black men but black men are also killing other black men. One could possibly concede that the far greater problem is intra-racial violence among black men. However, the historical symbolism related to white police-involved deaths of unarmed black men stokes a fire in black Americans that reminds them of the gaudiness of a past history that dehumanized black masculine bodies. Despite this, both forms of violence against black men are equally important to combat in the mission to preserve black humanity.

The second reason of importance is that in the examination of the social construction of black masculinity, other groups such as black women and black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) people who were carelessly excluded from the books mentioned above should have been included to provide a holistic viewpoint of black life.⁷ Frameworks of inclusion for black women and black LGBTQIA people were needed to further our understanding of the multiple forms of oppression such as discrimination, racism, intra-racial connections and conflict, gender erasure, gender identity dismissal, and patriarchal violence that all reflect the totality of the black conscious struggle. To adopt black feminist scholar, bell hooks' (2004) term "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy," which explains the interlocking political systems of macro-level constructs, the struggle to end forms of oppression that affect black life is embedded in social structures of power. As a result, a worldview analysis is needed to better understand the multiple forms of oppression in all spheres of black life.⁸

In her book, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*, hooks (2004) writes that the jargonistic term “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy,” is used “to describe the interlocking political systems that are the foundation of our nation’s politics. Of these systems the one that we all learn the most about growing up is the system of patriarchy” (pp. 17–18). The center of her argument is that each of these constructs is functioning simultaneously and acting as a web of oppression, however, patriarchy “insists that males are inherently [dominant]” and is the driving force of oppression “endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence” (p. 18). hooks contends that these macro-level constructs help to foster a system of patriarchy that first “demands of all males that they engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation” to “kill off the emotional parts of themselves,” which helps to enable the exploitation and violence against black women (p. 66).

These macro-level constructs also incorporate micro-level constructs. At the micro-level, Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) in her groundbreaking analysis on “intersectionality” titled, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex*, argues that the intersecting social identities of race and gender, along with other forms of exclusion, leads to forms of discrimination and violence against black women. The foundation of her argument is that “boundaries of sex and race discrimination doctrine are defined respectively by white women’s and black men’s experiences” (p. 143). Crenshaw contends that it is imperative to apply an intersectional frame that examines the equation of these social identities to best explain the dimensions of discrimination and violence against black women.⁹ The line of demarcation that separates macro-level constructs and micro-level constructs has often coalesced. However, related to black women, adopting both macro-level constructs and micro-level constructs as a tool of explanation when appropriate, helps to explain the rate and various forms of discrimination and violence against these women.

One of the best-known national examples of the violence against black women during the BLM movement was the case of Sandra Bland. On July 13, 2015, her life was tragically altered after being stopped, abused, and arrested by a highway patrolman, Brian Encinia, for allegedly failing to use her turn signal. She committed suicide in her jail cell three days after being arrested. Bland’s death brought more attention to state violence against black women, and the fact that she was one of five black women found dead in local police custody in July of 2015 alone.¹⁰ The national outcry from Bland’s death further challenged the need to obtain and secure social justice in the

face of racialized state violence. During the same period, Daniel Holtzclaw, an ex-Oklahoma city law enforcement officer, targeted and sexually assaulted 13 black women from low-income neighborhoods while on duty in the community he patrolled. The defense attorney in the case attempted to label these black women as drug abusers and sex workers. Months later an all-white jury convicted Holtzclaw resulting in a 263-year prison sentence.¹¹

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is another way in which black women experience victimization. IPV is defined as “physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression (including coercive tactics) by a current or former intimate partner” (Black et al. 2011, p. 37). According to a 2015 Violence Policy Center (VPC) report, 453 black women (28% of total women) were murdered in 2013.¹² Ninety-two percent of black women were victims of intra-racial murders committed by their spouse, an intimate partner, or a family member.¹³ One heinous example is the 2016 death of 24-year-old, Joyce Quaweay, who was beaten to death by her 47-year-old boyfriend, Aaron Wright, along with his best friend, Marquis Robinson, who was a Temple University police officer. Wright beat Quaweay with his fists and a police baton while Robinson helped in restraining her because she refused to “submit to [Wright’s] authority.”¹⁴ Police charged Wright with murder, aggravated assault, unlawful restraint, conspiracy to commit murder, and abuse of a corpse. Robinson was charged with conspiracy to commit murder, aggravated assault, and abuse of a corpse.¹⁵ Sandra Bland’s and Joyce Quaweay’s cases are important examples of the dimensions of victimization that black women experience in American society and within the black community.

Third and finally, and the linchpin of this book, the objectives introduced are of great magnitude because black human beings who are members of both the black and LGBTQIA communities have become more at risk because of the systemic, institutional, and interpersonal underpinnings of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, misogyny, and anti-trans attitudes and behaviors. The intersectionality of these constructs has amplified the level of discrimination and violence against this group. These constructs, when applied to black LGBTQIA people, are often driven by a practice of fostering a culture of secondary marginalization within the black community due to a lack of tolerance and acceptance (Cohen 1999) and the perpetual nature of anti-blackness from the mainstream LGBTQIA community.

In the realm of their everyday experiences, black LGBTQIA people are confronted with the pressure to adhere to societal, cultural, and gender norms

as heterosexual people. Such heteronormative thinking is tied to a rigid gender binary. According to Kitzinger (2005, p. 478), heteronormativity is viewed as “the myriad ways in which heterosexuality is produced as a natural, unproblematic, taken-for-granted phenomenon.”¹⁶ Such erroneous thinking assumes that heterosexuality is the societal, cultural, and gender norm, whereas, those who embody other sexualities and gender identities are aberrations within American society.¹⁷

Richardson (2003, p. 64) in his description of the influence of compulsory heterosexuality on black Americans explains, “Any divergences from the social norms of marriage, domesticity, and the nuclear family have brought serious accusations of savagery, pathology, and deviance upon Black people.” Alternatively, Collins (2004), who in her work shows how whites have constructed black heterosexuality as pathological, did with the intent to control sexual and gender images of blackness.

Under the LGBTQIA umbrella, the life experiences of each social group have varied throughout history in their quest to achieve equal rights and protections. Despite LGBTQIA progress on the whole, according to national reports and past literature, the acceptance and inclusion of transgender men and women have lagged behind due to the social, cultural, and political subjection of their gender identity. In the struggle for acceptance and inclusion, transgender people who exhibit gender non-conforming identities and behaviors different from their birth identity, are labeled from conservative gender ideologies as individuals who are participating in a destructive human act by changing genders.

Transgender women (MtF), specifically, are stereotyped and observed by the masses in American society as biologically born males who suffer from gender dysphoria as a mental disorder. They are seen as males who dress in women’s clothing because they are either hypersexual monsters or want to prey on women in public restrooms and locker rooms. These are all fictitious claims that politicize the very nature of their being.

Many of these fictitious claims persist because transgender people are systematically muted by a gendered American culture that views their transition as mentally and biologically abnormal. Claims like these are deemed credible when political leaders like Republican Vice-President Mike Pence endorses these ideas. He once advocated in 2000, while a member of the U.S. Congress, to funnel money from HIV/AIDS research into LGBTQIA conversion therapy.¹⁸ Even more egregious, President Donald Trump is on record in a 2017 *The New Yorker* article saying that Pence “wants to hang them all

[LGBTQIA people].”¹⁹ Such ideologue in the political realm compromises the rights and protections of transgender people.

According to the 2011 National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS) conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) and the National LGBTQ Task Force, which was groundbreaking and the first survey of its kind, 63% of transgender people reported experiencing a serious act of discrimination.²⁰ The survey demonstrated that these acts of discrimination ranged from job loss due to bias, eviction due to bias, bullying, physical assault, sexual assault, homelessness, and incarceration due to gender identity. Forty-one percent of the respondents reported attempting suicide.²¹ In December of 2016, the NCTE released the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS), which is the largest and most comprehensive survey of transgender people to date.²² This survey continued to show that transgender people face widespread discrimination.²³ Equally troubling is that the various forms of discrimination and violence continue to lead transgender people to attempt suicide. Forty percent of the respondents reported attempting suicide in their lifetime.²⁴

These findings support, that in most cases, the life experiences of transgender people are fragmented in many ways. For instance, being unable to live comfortably in their transgender identity due to a lack of support from family and friends, harassment at school which can lead to dropout or poor performance, housing discrimination, denial of healthcare, the constant fear of losing employment, and even, being victimized by hate-based crimes at a disproportionate rate than nearly every other population in the USA. All of which, contributes to their heightened rate of suicide attempts.

The ability to secure justice for black transgender women who are systematically targeted has been difficult. These women represent an ostracized subgroup within both the black and the LGBTQIA communities. Generally speaking, within a black patriarchal community and culture, there is a rank and file approach of how societal and cultural issues and concerns are addressed by the community as a whole. Black elites are mainly responsible for determining which issues deserve the most attention. Thus, opposing the transphobic violence and murders of these women adds an ominous variable to this rank and file approach in determining whether it is “good, normal, and acceptable” for the community to help its “marginal group members” (Cohen 1999, p. 64). Consequently, this process inadvertently hurts, in general, the most vulnerable members of the community.

In the larger LGBTQIA community and culture, forms of anti-blackness plague black LGBTQIA people. The white LGBTQIA community may

embrace racial and sexual stereotypes of racial and ethnic minority groups, which influences their perception of an individual's sexuality and gender identity (Barnard 2004). According to hooks in a one-on-one interview with *Trans-Scripts* when discussing anti-blackness in the context of black transgender people, she argues that "When most people think trans, they don't think black, they think white," which maintains such stereotypes.²⁵ Bey (2017), in his article that explores the concepts of black and trans, concurs with bell, however, adds that the integration of blackness within transness and vice-versa can lead to blackness-as-fugitivity, which harmfully places black human bodies in racial and gendered scripts.

Transgender scholar, Susan Stryker, who herself is transgender and has helped to revolutionize the field of transgender research, maintains that "Trans women of color get hit upside the head from a lot of different directions" when explaining their juxtaposition to white transgender women.²⁶ She describes, "First of all, there is misogyny. Then there's homophobia. And then you add the disparagement of black people on top of that, and that's a whole other level of disparagement and devaluation."²⁷ However, within the white community and given its culture, transgender women are somewhat more privileged because of the color of their skin and tend to be more isolated from many of the would-be forms of victimization. Moreover, there are more opportunities for employment outside of sex work, and more outward support from family and friends (Namaste 2000; Meyer 2008; Meyer 2010). In juxtaposing the lives of black transgender women and white transgender women, it is imperative not to belittle the negative circumstances that white transgender women do experience and assume that the benefit of privilege extends to the masses of these women. They are not shielded from mainstream normative ideas about sexuality, gender, and gender identity. However, it is an undeniable fact that black transgender women battle more forms of systemic, institutional, and interpersonal circumstances that make them societal and cultural outliers.

New black transgender voices have emerged to replace those of yesteryear who made significant strides to bridge the gap of gender identity understanding such as Miss Major Griffin-Gracy and Marsha P. Johnson who both participated in the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City, which served as the impetus for the formation of the modern LGBTQIA movement.²⁸ Black transgender activists like Andrea Jenkins,²⁹ Janet Mock, Laverne Cox, Tracey Norman, Monica Roberts, Fran Watson, Dee Dee Watters, Mia Ryan, Elle Hearn, Chernobiko, and Raquel Willis have emerged to fight on behalf of black transgender women in the USA.

In a 2016 HBO documentary, *The Trans List*, Griffin-Gracy makes the case that despite progress for the LGBTQIA community as a whole, more change is needed to advance the specific agenda of the transgender community. Using the Stonewall Riots as an example, she stated, “To me, T [within the LGBTQIA acronyms] should have been first. We were there doing most of the fighting. So let’s start there and then let’s get the gay and lesbian and bi [equal rights and protections addressed].”³⁰ She also expressed that past meaningful efforts were diminished due to the larger patriarchal and heteronormative frames that preserve the remembrance of white transgender archives. Ware (2017), in his article that examines the erasure of racialized and indigenous histories from white trans archives, argues that we must begin with black trans and queer history to best weigh the influence and significance of black LGBTQIA people.³¹ The power and privilege of selective remembrance that Ware describes in the article is the impetus for the marginalization that maintains a divide for the lack of black transgender acknowledgement in the larger LGBTQIA community.

A New Communal Epidemic: Black Transphobic Violence and Murders

In recent years, more cases of transphobic violence and murders against transgender women, specifically black transgender women, have gained national attention (see Table 1.1). For example, in 2015, the number of murders recorded hit a historic high. The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) reported that there were a record total of 22 transgender women murdered.³² Black transgender women accounted for 17 of the 22 deaths (77%) in the USA (see Table 1.2).³³ This marked the most black transgender women murdered within a single year on record to date.³⁴

An awful example of the transphobic violence and murders of black transgender women occurred in Detroit, Michigan. Between 2011 and early 2016, seven transgender women and/or gender non-conforming individuals were murdered in the city.³⁵ In 2015, two black transgender women, Ashton O’Hara and Amber Monroe, and one gender non-conforming individual were murdered near Palmer Park, an area known as a black LGBTQIA hangout spot and for transgender sex work.³⁶ In the summer of 2014, three black transgender women were shot near the park, with one being fatally shot.³⁷ Because of these acts of violence, black transgender women near Palmer Park feared that random

Table 1.1. The Deaths of Transgender Women, 2012–15.

2012	2013	2014	2015
1. Crain Cornaway	1. Evon Young	1. Yaz'min Shancez	1. Papi Edwards
2. Deoni Jones	2. Cernia Dove	2. Kandy Hall	2. Lamia Beard
3. Agnes Hernandez	3. Kelly Young	3. Zoraida Reyes	3. Tyra Underwood
4. Coko Williams	4. Ashley Sinclair	4. Tiffany Edwards	4. Yazmin Vash Payne
5. Tyrell Jackson	5. Islan Nettles	5. Mia Henderson	5. Taja Gabrielle DeJesus
6. Paige Clay	6. Dominique Newburn	6. Alejandra Leos	6. Penny Proud
7. Brandy Martell	7. Eyricka Morgan	7. Aniya Parker	7. Kristina Gomez Reinwald
8. Lorena Xtravaganza	8. Jessica Bringas	8. Shelly Hiliard	8. Keyshia Blige
9. Tracey Johnson	9. Melony Smith	9. Ashley Sherman	9. London Kiki Chanel
10. Tiffany Gooden	10. Betty Skinner	10. Breana Fowler	10. Mercedes Williamson
11. Deja Johnson	11. Brittany Stergis	11. Deshawnda Sanchez	11. Jasmine Collins
12. Kendall Hampton			12. Ashton O'Hara
13. Kyra Cordova			13. India Clarke
14. January Lapuz			14. K.C. Haggard
15. Rene Hidalgo Hernandez			15. Shade Schuler
			16. Amber Monroe
			17. Kandis Capri
			18. Elisha Walker
			19. Tamara Dominguez
			20. Keisha Jenkins
			21. Zella Ziona
			22. Mya Hall
N=15	N=11	N=11	N=22

Source: The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP)

Table 1.2. The Deaths of Transgender Women, 2015.

1. Papi Edwards, 20, Black, Louisville, Kentucky
2. Lamia Beard, 30, Black, Norfolk, Virginia
3. Tyra Underwood, 24, Black, Tyler, Texas
4. Yazmin Vash Payne, 33, Black, Van Nuys, California
5. Taja Gabrielle DeJesus, 33, Hispanic, San Francisco, California
6. Penny Proud, 21, Black, New Orleans, Louisiana
7. Kristina Gomez Reinwald, 46, Hispanic, Miami, Florida
8. Keyshia Blige, 33, Black, Aurora, Illinois
9. London Kiki Chanel, 21, Black, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
10. Mercedes Williamson, 17, Hispanic, George County, Mississippi
11. Jasmine Collins, 32, Black, Kansas City, Missouri
12. Ashton O'Hara, 25, Black, Detroit, Michigan
13. India Clarke, 25, Black, Tampa, Florida
14. K. C. Haggard, 66, White, Fresno, California
15. Shade Schuler, 22, Black, Dallas, Texas
16. Amber Monroe, 20, Black, Detroit, Michigan
17. Kandis Capri, 35, Black, Phoenix, Arizona
18. Elisha Walker, 20, Black, Smithfield, North Carolina
19. Tamara Dominguez, 36, Hispanic, Kansas City, Missouri
20. Keisha Jenkins, 22, Black, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
21. Zella Ziona, 21, Black, Gaithersburg, Maryland
22. Mya Hall, 27, Black, Baltimore, Maryland

acts of hate-based violence such as “robberies, knifings, sucker-punchings, more homicides, dismemberment, charred bodies, trans women being shoved out of moving cars, and other acts of violence” would affect them as well.³⁸

Many of the black transgender women in Detroit and within the USA who were murdered in 2015 worked in the sex trade profession. According to a 2015 joint report on transgender experiences in the sex trade profession led by the NCTE, 44% of black transgender women and 33% of Latina transgender women were more likely to engage in sex work than their white counterparts.³⁹ As laborers in this profession, the majority of these women are reluctant to report incidents of abuse, harassment, and violence to law enforcement officers for two major reasons: First, black transgender women fear being criminalized for sex work. Second, according to the 2011 NTDS, 38% of black transgender people reported being harassed by law enforcement officers and 51% felt discomfort with seeking their assistance.⁴⁰

The mounting national violence and murders against the transgender community prompted U.S. Representative Mike Honda of California (D-17),

whose granddaughter is transgender, to call a congressional forum on November 17, 2015, and launch the Transgender Equality Task Force (TETF) to address this growing epidemic.⁴¹ During this forum, Harper Jean Tobin, the Director of Policy for the NCTE, who is transgender, said in her presentation to congressional members that, “We know the numbers [of violence and murders] are far higher than that [reported]. Even the FBI will admit the data are collected and reported so inconsistently as to render them almost meaningless.”⁴²

The black transgender women interviewed for this book claim that black cisgender men commit the vast majority of transphobic violence and murders against them. Cisgender, the opposite of transgender, is a term used to describe individuals whose medically birth-assigned sex matches their gender identity.⁴³ The women interviewed believe that a traditional gender norm gives rise to a toxic masculine makeup, which is bred in a patriarchal system of male domination influenced by the authoritative nature and structure of white supremacy. As an offspring of hegemonic masculinity (i.e., dominant masculinity) that is connected to heteropatriarchy, where men adhere to a cultural script of primacy over women, toxic masculinity is a rebellious form of manhood practiced mostly by black men in low socioeconomic environments and utilizes violence to legitimize masculinity (see Harris 2000, 2011).⁴⁴

According to (Kupers 2005, p. 714), toxic masculinity is “the constellation of socially regressive male traits that serve to foster domination, the devaluation of women, homophobia, and wanton violence.” Moreover, feminist activist, Bailey Poland, defined toxic masculinity as:

The version of masculinity that values physical strength and aggression, downplays overall emotional well-being and expression, connects men’s value to domination by force and sexual prowess and often finds its voice in misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia.⁴⁵

When applied to black transgender women, toxic masculinity is most put on display when black cisgender men are motivated by hate, engage in intimate personal relationships with these women, or solicit their services as transgender sex workers. Afterwards, they rationalize their decision and their sexual involvements with these women, which often leads them to question their masculinity, and as a response, use violence as a defense mechanism to regain dominance, control, and gain a psychological sense of wholeness. This allows them to subdue their attraction for these women and return to a very strict idea of gender norms. Toxic masculinity, in this manner, is harmful to the humanity of black transgender women.⁴⁶

The black transgender women interviewed unanimously agreed that black cisgender men through hate-based violence, intimate partner violence, and violence against transgender sex workers, murder a disproportionate number of black transgender women. For instance, Jessica Sugar, a 31-year-old participant, who works in the sex trade profession, described:

Excuse my language, but some of these black cis men will fuck you, kill you, and leave you to die. I do not accept inquiries from black cis men. I state that on my [Backpage.com] profile. We are a novelty to them. Once it wears off, their masculinity kicks in and we become the scum of the earth. If we date them, there is a chance we will die. If we service them, there is a chance [we will die]. We can't live safe.

Shugrue dos Santos (2012) supports her statement. Her research on intimate partner violence within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected (LGBTQH) communities, found that transgender people are at a much higher risk for intimate partner violence and sexual violence (SV) than non-transgender people in given situational and cultural contexts.

A different form of victimization against black transgender women comes from law enforcement officials who “misgender” these women after their deaths. While statistics related to the harassment, assault, and criminalization of these women have been recorded somewhat, gender misidentification is a serious concern in the transgender community because it contributes to the difficulty in quantifying the total number of transgender deaths each year. In the deaths of Keyshia Blige, Shade Schuler, Mya Hall, and others during 2015, the failure of law enforcement officials to either investigate, accurately report their gender identity, or mere refusal of these officials to acknowledge the victim's gender identity based on the patriarchal way in which they perform their jobs often delayed or negated proper identification of these women when struggling to secure justice.

In July of 2015, Shade “Ms. Shade” Schuler, a black transgender woman from Dallas, Texas, was the 13th transgender woman to be reported murdered for the year. She was shot and abandoned in a vacant field. Her badly decomposed body partly prolonged the proper identification of her body for nearly two weeks after she was found.⁴⁷ In the aftermath of her death, the Dallas police department and news outlets misidentified Schuler as a male when referring to her death to the public.

The death of Shade Schuler prompted black transgender activists Monica Roberts, who herself is a black transgender woman, and Fran Watson, both from Houston, Texas, to set up a petition on the White House website

to encourage former President Barack H. Obama to launch a formal investigation into the issues associated with transgender violence and murders.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, their petition failed to garner a sufficient amount of signatures.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) Response

Three black women, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, helped to pioneer the BLM movement. This proactive, decentralized movement has become an influential voice for the black community.⁴⁹ However, the movement, while now serving as one of the most socially and culturally significant since the Civil Rights era, only contains a small fraction of black people from within the community working together to secure justice for the community as a whole.

Black participation in the BLM movement as a whole has been stagnant for a number of reasons. There are unfounded claims that certain factions of the black community are reluctant to fully support the BLM movement due to: (1) the movement being started by three black feminists, (2) two of its founders, Alicia Garza and Patrisse Cullors, identify as queer, (3) the movement rejects the hierarchical style of patriarchal leadership, and (4) the social institution of the black church is not the anchor in catapulting their message. In stark contrast, their leadership is deemed refreshing to some due to the sexism within the Civil Rights era that often silenced the voices of great women activists such as Fannie Lou Hamer and Ella Baker.

Former columnist Barbara Reynolds, and a member of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, wrote her dissent to the BLM movement in a *Washington Post* article:

Many in my crowd admire the cause and courage of these young activists but fundamentally disagree with their approach. Trained in the tradition of Martin Luther King Jr., we were nonviolent activists who won hearts by conveying respectability and changed laws by delivering a message of love and unity. BLM seems intent on rejecting our proven methods. This movement is ignoring what our history has taught.⁵⁰

Moreover, while it is consciously assumed that there should be solidarity from non-BLM members that would extend activism throughout the black community as a cultural norm, such communal solidarity is needed to further overall progress. Ultimately, a greater majority of the people within the black community must want to work as agents of social change to make the community a safer cultural haven for all black lives, which includes black transgender people.

One of the central arguments presented in this book is that the black community and the BLM movement must not solely be responsive to the torrent relationship between white law enforcement officers and unarmed black men; but also, be responsive to the victimization of black women, black LGBTQIA people, and all forms of internal community violence that ravages the black community. Are the black men senselessly murdered from intra-racial violence devalued in the BLM movement? Are black women devalued in the BLM movement? Are black LGBTQIA people and their lives devalued in the BLM movement? All of these questions carry significant weight since the black community has inoculated, to a large degree, the BLM movement as a de facto homogenized face and voice of black solidarity for a community whose historical mission has always been to combat structural and cultural inequality while attaining equal rights and protections for all of its members.

Lost in the early origins of the BLM movement were any substantive discussions about black women and their rights and protections. Even though three black women founded the movement, the desire to urgently address the victimization of black men was prioritized over the needs of black women. hooks, in the interview with *Trans-Scripts*, maintained that:

I find a lot of feminists/women saying “yeah, but the subtext is really black male lives matter”—that the killing of black women never seems to be relegated to that equal place of the killing of black men and the fact is black women are being killed everyday in all kinds of ways ... Any black man’s life has so much more value than a black female life.⁵¹

Other black feminists also shared hook’s position. After the jail suicide of Sandra Bland, the BLM movement, who had already adopted a universal hash tag “#BlackLivesMatter,” eventually pushed for another hash tag “#SayHerName” to make the movement more gender-inclusive and to bring more awareness to black female victims.⁵² As the deaths of black transgender women gained national spotlight, another universal hash tag “#BlackTransLivesMatter,” was also embraced to address this epidemic, which called for more transgender advocacy through political, legislative, and communal channels.

In response to the murders of black transgender women, one of the founding members of the BLM movement, Alicia Garza, who is queer and dates a transgender man, not only advocated for more space in the movement for all black people, including black transgender people, but also made the point that, “[Black Trans Lives Matter] speaks most directly to the marginalization and disenfranchisement of trans people within the black community.”⁵³ During the height of these black transgender murders in mid-2015, she wrote

on her Facebook page, “Each one of these women should still be alive—but they are not because the lives of trans women are seen as disposable.”⁵⁴ Garza went on to add, “The murders of trans women alongside the multiple other forms of violence that trans women experience must be elevated to the level of conversation that the murders of cis Black men now occupy.”⁵⁵ Garza closed her post by stating, “It cannot constantly be the job of trans women to constantly remind us that their lives matter too. The liberation of Black people as a whole depends on the liberation of Black trans folks. None of us are free until all of us are free.”⁵⁶

In 2016, amidst the backlash from the black transgender community, the BLM movement introduced an LGBTQIA agenda:

We are committed to embracing and making space for trans brothers and sisters to participate and lead. We are committed to being self-reflexive and doing the work required to dismantle cis-gender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence.⁵⁷

Despite pledging to be transformative and working to address the “trans-antagonistic violence,” some of the black transgender women interviewed believe the action of the BLM movement fails to address one of the more critical mitigating factors of this epidemic: black cisgender men who murder black transgender women.

Black transgender women’s inclusion into the societal and cultural responsiveness of the black community and the BLM movement revolves around the need for equal rights and protections, which must be given for their human survival and well-being. It can be argued that black transgender women are first human beings, who represent every possible human, physical form (i.e., from being medically assigned the sex of male at birth, from being identified as a black gay man, from transitioning to a black transgender woman, and from being perceived as a black cisgender woman). Thus, there is a fluid and complex viability to their humanity.

Why the Time Is Now?

Black people of varying gender identities and sexual orientations compromise the black community. In that regard and according to, this textured analysis argues that the humanity of Michael Brown Jr., Sandra Bland, and Shade “Ms. Shade” Schuler are all intertwined. The truth is that, whether you are

Michael Brown Jr., Sandra Bland, or a black transgender woman self-identified as Ms. Shade, you can be gunned down in the middle of the street by a white police officer, found dead in a jail cell after failing to use your turn signal, or shot and abandoned in a vacant field for nearly two weeks.

The deaths of Michael Brown Jr. and Sandra Bland were catapulted into the national spotlight and garnered enormous support from the black community and the BLM movement. In stark contrast, the death of Ms. Shade who was the 13th transgender woman murdered in 2015 should have garnered equal attention. However, it did not. Violence and murders against these women were largely ignored, especially within the black community. Much of the disregard for the humanity of black transgender woman centers on the patriarchal and heteronormative frames within the black community and in the larger American society that dehumanizes their existence.

The quest to address the aforementioned objectives introduces the following questions to guide this book: *What are the implications for black transgender women medically assigned the sex of male at birth but have chosen to exercise their right to identify as a transgender and/or gender non-conforming person within the black community, which has historically shown a propensity to promote a toxic masculinity within the context of a black patriarchal culture and suppress any form of femininity in black men? How, then, do black transgender women live as black women within a black patriarchal culture that facilitates toxic masculinity? Can the black community and Black Lives Matter movement progress in a unified direction to protect the humanity of black transgender women?*

The goal of this book is to widen the discussion on black transgender women, and by extension, to expand our understanding of black masculinity and black femininity. Some within the black community and in the larger American society view these women as the more ill-fitting pieces of our gendered American culture. The concern for their human survival and well-being is the charge and significance for writing this book. The aspiration is to preserve the dignity of their humanity by analyzing their lived experiences in a gendered American culture that works at every turn to marginalize their human existence.

Overview of the Book

Toxic Silence contributes to a growing body of transgender scholarship. This book examines the patriarchal and heteronormative frames within the black community and in the larger American society, which propels the toxic

masculinity that violently castigates and threatens the collective embodiment of black transgender women in the USA. Such scholarship is needed to shed more light on the transphobic violence and murders against this understudied group. Little is known about the societal and cultural issues and concerns affecting black transgender women and how their gender identity is met with systemic, institutional, and interpersonal roadblocks. During a time period in American history defined by *Time Magazine* as, “The Transgender Tipping Point,”⁵⁸ black transgender women have emerged as social, cultural, and political subjects to advance our understanding of the lives of people who identify as a part of both the black and LGBTQIA communities.

Chapter 2, “The Black Trans Identity,” attempts to offer an expanded cultural perspective of the lived experiences of black transgender women, and explores both their gender identity and their ability and willingness to fit, or not fit, into mainstream black communal life. Their sense of identity within the black community stands as the assemblage of the social constructions of race and gender identity, socioeconomic status, and a biased communal perception influenced by the ideological indicators of religion, morality, and ethics. Drawing on survey data and in-depth interviews, this chapter provides an empirical analysis of black cisgender attitudes towards black transgender women.

Chapter 3, “Black Transphobic Violence and Murders,” focuses on the transphobic violence and murders of black transgender women. Even with the total number of murders in recent years, little is known about the circumstances surrounding the deaths of these women. This chapter applies an intersectional approach to explore the situational and cultural contexts that lead to the transphobic violence and murders of these women.

Chapter 4, “Black Trans Voices,” presents a case study of the life histories of three black transgender women from Houston, Texas. Drawing on participant observations and in-depth interviews, this chapter provides a rich and engaging description about the lived experiences of these women. It seeks to give a more complete picture of the MtF transition of black transgender women as it examines the extensive systemic, institutional, and interpersonal circumstances that affect these women. The objective is to discover whether the oppressive constructs of race, sexuality, and gender identity, and the socioeconomic status said to exist in the dominant norms of heterosexuality lead the majority of transgender women to live on the margins of society.

Finally, Chapter 5, “Black Trans Liberation,” offers a summary of the overall findings and argues that it is critical to create more societal and cultural spaces for black transgender women to foster acceptance and inclusion. To

end the book, provided are solution-based recommendations to propel equal rights and protections for black transgender women and to improve the generative power of black solidarity within the black community and culture.

Research Design and Data

The setting for examining the toxic masculinity that threatens the humanity of black transgender women is the city of Houston, Texas. With a population of over two million people, this liberal-leaning city within a conservative state is the fourth most populous in the USA. Houston contains a very diverse population. According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, whites accounted for 50.5% of the population, with non-Hispanic whites making up 25.6% of the total population. In terms of the city's racial and ethnic population, 43.8% are Hispanic, 23.7% are black, and 6% are Asian.

The city of Houston is a suitable contextual laboratory to study the lives of black transgender women for the following reasons: First, from 2010 to 2016, the city was led by a Democratic mayor, Annise D. Parker, who was openly lesbian in office, and who aggressively pushed for measures such as the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (Ord. No. 2014-530), commonly known as HERO, which, among other things, would have provided transgender protections in public accommodations such as entering gender-preferred bathrooms.⁵⁹ Before and during her time in the mayoral seat, Parker was a staunch LGBTQIA activist, which helped to create a more LGBTQIA-friendly atmosphere of acceptance and inclusion in the city. Second, Houston ranks among the top metropolitan cities with a large LGBTQIA population.⁶⁰

In an interview with the former mayor, during the beginning stages of writing this book, Parker explained why there were increasing numbers of black transgender women being murdered in American society. She stated that:

Society is still largely ignorant of what it means to be transgender. The economic and social impact of transitioning can be financially and psychologically devastating. Transgender women are often dehumanized and the lack of knowledge means that societal taboos against harassing the minority are ignored. Too many transgender women are forced into the sex trade [profession], where they become particularly vulnerable targets.⁶¹

This study of the transphobic violence and murders affecting black transgender women employs a multi-method approach that includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative analysis involves the use

of in-depth interviews and participant observations. Due to the scarcity of research on black transgender women and limited access to willing participants in such studies, using a qualitative methodological approach was most appropriate. A purposeful sample of nine black transgender women from the city of Houston, Texas—Bobbie Golden, Arianna Gray, Venue Love, Naomi Mars, Jae Palmer, Sophie Rush, Mia Ryan, Jessica Sugar, and Alexandra Sweet—is the primary method of data collection (Patton 2002; See Appendix A.1 for a full description). Six of the nine black transgender women interviewed work in the sex trade profession. The selection of these women was based on willing participation and availability, and not to further stigmatize transgender women as a whole as mere sex workers. Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, the research assured participants' anonymity to the women. The use of a purposeful sample allowed for a closer look at these black transgender women and their lived experiences.

This qualitative approach is combined with survey data from black cisgender people in the greater Houston metropolitan area. Such data is collected to gauge their attitudes toward black transgender women. These different approaches allow the triangulation of data to give more insight and credibility to the extensive systemic, institutional, and interpersonal circumstances that affect these women.

Notes

1. The first book, *Black Masculinity in the Obama Era: Outliers of Society*, provides an in-depth examination of the current state of black males and identifies the impact of living in the era of the first black president (Houston 2014). The second book, *Race and the Black Male Subculture: The Lives of Toby Waller*, uses the literary embodiment of Toby Waller from Alex Haley's highly acclaimed book and mini-series, *Roots*, as a historical figure to examine the effects of systemic racism and discrimination on black masculinity (Houston 2016).
2. The black male subculture is defined as a broad term to include all black men. The term does not imply that black men are a monolithic or homogeneous group. One of the primary goals of each book is to contend against the narrative that black pathology is embedded within the black male subculture. The beneficiaries of white empowerment, who work to uphold the authoritative nature and structure of their supremacy, employ the notion that black men suffer from a pathology that makes them hypermasculine, violent, and criminal. This age-old lie has been planted into the mental psyche of the American people.
3. See Swaine, J., Laughland, O., Lartey, J., and C. McCarthy. 2015. "Young black men killed by US police at highest rate in year of 1,134 deaths." *TheGuardian.com*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/dec/31/the-counted-police-killings-2015-young-black-men> (December 31).
4. The city of Chicago was given this description by local rap artists such as King Louie and the news media. The number of murders in the city over the last decade has been comparable to *Operation Iraqi Freedom* (OIF). OIF started on March 20, 2003, and ended December 15, 2011, recording a total of 4,422 casualties. In that same time frame, Chicago recorded just fewer than 4200 murders.
5. This murder total is more than New York and Los Angeles combined. Both are larger cities than Chicago. New York ranks number one, and Los Angeles ranks number two. The city of Chicago is third.
6. See Gallardo, M., and L. Podesta. 2017. "762 murdered in Chicago in 2016, CPD releases plan to curb violence." *ABC7Chicago.com*. Available at: <http://abc7chicago.com/news/762-murdered-in-chicago-in-2016/1681356> (January 1). It should be mentioned that 781 murders were recorded for the year. However, the CPD statistics do not include murders on the expressway, police-involved murders, self-defense murders, and murders under investigation.
7. In *Black Masculinity in the Obama Era: Outliers of Society* there is a chapter titled, "We All Came From a Woman: Rap Music and Misogyny," which discussed the misogynistic message of sexual assault and rape in rap music.
8. In a Twitter post (2015, November 14) black transgender woman, Laverne Cox (@Lavernecox), provided her own interpretation of the constructs. She wrote in response to one of her followers, "Actually its (sic) cisnormative heteronormative imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy my spin on @bellhooks." Available at: <https://twitter.com/lavernecox/status/665595357288640513>.
9. It should be noted that black feminist scholar, Moya Bailey, coined the term "misogynoir" to describe how facets of both racism and anti-blackness alter the misogynistic experiences of black women from white women.

10. See Edwards, B. 2015. "At least 5 black women have died in police custody in July; WTF?!" *TheRoot.com*. Available at: http://www.theroot.com/articles/news/2015/07/at_least_5_black_women_have_died_in_police_custody_in_july_wtf.html (July 30).
11. See Larimer, S. 2016. "Disgraced ex-cop Daniel Holtzclaw sentenced to 263 years for on-duty rapes, sexual assaults." *WashingtonPost.com*. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2016/01/21/disgraced-ex-officer-daniel-holtzclaw-to-be-sentenced-after-sex-crimes-conviction/?utm_term=.bf7355883d1d (January 22).
12. See the 2015 Violence Policy Center (VPC) report, "When men murder women: An analysis of 2013 homicide data." Available at: <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2015.pdf>.
13. Ibid.
14. See Farr, S. 2016. "Police: Ex-Temple cops killed roommate because 'she would not submit.'" *Philly.com*. Available at: <http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/dncrime/Police-Ex-Temple-cops-conspired-to-murder-roommate-.html> (August 2).
15. Ibid.
16. It is important to note that "cis-normativity" nor "hetero-cis-normativity" were discussed in this text. These terms imply that it is normal to be both cisgender and heterosexual. While these terms are indeed connected in all forms of hegemonic practices, yet different and distinctive, their omissions was not to conflate sexuality with gender but to stay grounded in a framework to understand toxicity toward black transgender women.
17. In 2017, Merriam-Webster dictionary confirmed that in 1923 the term "heterosexuality" was defined as "morbid sexual passion for one of the opposite sex." See @ MerriamWebster (2017, March 18). Available at: <https://twitter.com/MerriamWebster/status/843278973081718785>.
18. See Taylor, C. 2016. "Trump selects anti-LGBT bigot Mike Pence as vice president running mate." *OccupyDemocrats.com*. Available at: <http://occupydemocrats.com/2016/07/14/trump-selects-anti-lgbt-bigot-mike-pence-vice-president-running-mate> (July 14). In the U.S. Congress, Mike Pence outlined a political agenda to "Renew the American dream." The agenda is available at: <http://web.archive.org/web/20010408125427/http://mikepence.com/issues.html>.
19. See Mayer, J. 2017. "The danger of President Pence." *NewYorker.com*. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/10/23/the-danger-of-president-pence> (October 23).
20. A full description of the 2011 report conducted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), "Injustice at every turn: A report of the national transgender discrimination survey," can be found at: http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds_full.pdf.
21. Ibid.
22. The 2011 National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS) study, which was the most comprehensive at the time and the first large-scale national study of discrimination against transgender people, had approximately 6,456 participants. The 2015 study had 27,715 participants.
23. For a full report, see James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., and M. Ana. 2016. *Executive Summary of the Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality. Available at: <http://www.transgenderquality.org/sites/default/files/docs/USTS-Executive-Summary-FINAL.PDF>.

24. Ibid.
25. For more information on the one-on-one interview with bell hooks, see the online version from *Trans-Scripts* 5 (2015). Available at: http://sites.uci.edu/transcripts/files/2014/10/2015_5_hooks_rev.pdf.
26. See Terry, D. 2015. "In the crosshairs." *Medium.com*. Available at: <https://medium.com/hatewatch-blog/in-the-crosshairs-3700fbf2203d#.rwxk10nyh> (June 9).
27. Ibid.
28. In 2016, former President Barack H. Obama designated a new national monument at the historic site of the Stonewall Uprising in New York City to honor the broad LGBTQIA equality movement.
29. In 2017, Andrea Jenkins was elected to the Minneapolis City Council. She spent years as a policy aide to former council members.
30. Greenfield-Sanders, T. 2016. *The trans list*. HBO Documentary. United States: Perfect Day Films.
31. LGBTTI2QQ is an acronym for "lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, transsexual, intersex, two-spirit, queer, and questioning."
32. See the 2015 National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) press release, "NCAVP mourns the death of Zella Ziona, a transgender woman of color killed in Gaithersburg, Maryland; the 22nd reported homicide of a transgender/gender nonconforming person NCAVP has responded to in 2015." Available at: http://avp.org/storage/documents/2015.10.7_ncavp_ma_zellazionamd.pdf.
33. Some official reports note 23 murders of transgender women. However, one of the victims, Jessie Hernandez, a 17-year-old Hispanic from Denver, Colorado designated as a gender non-conforming person. Jessie was shot by police officers while driving a stolen car.
34. In a 2017 report titled, "Unerased: Counting Transgender Lives," *Mic.com* estimates that from 2010 to 2016, 111 transgender and gender non-conforming individuals were murdered in the USA. Seventy-two percent were black transgender women. The report can be found at: <https://mic.com/unerased>.
35. See Gross, A. 2016. "The throwaways: How Detroit is becoming a flashpoint for violence against trans women." *MetroTimes.com*. Available at: <http://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/seven-transgender-women-have-been-murdered-in-detroit-since-2011-the-harm-runs-far-deeper-than-the-headlines/Content?oid=2392648> (January 27).
36. Ibid.
37. See Holden, D. 2015. "Why are black transgender women getting killed in Detroit." *Buzzfeed.com*. Available at: https://www.buzzfeed.com/dominicholden/why-are-black-transgender-women-getting-killed-in-detroit?utm_term=.wmmOmoGq3G#.dynY2N7I17 (November 19).
38. Ibid.
39. A full description of the 2015 report, "Meaningful work: Transgender experiences in the sex trade," conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), the Red Umbrella Project (RedUP), and Best Practices Policy Project (BPPP), can be found at: http://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/Meaningful%20Work-Full%20Report_FINAL_3.pdf.
40. A full description of the 2011 report conducted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), "Injustice at every turn: A look at black respondents in the national transgender discrimination survey," can be

found at: http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds_black_respondents_2.pdf.

41. Before the close of 2015, Mike Honda, with the support of 26 Democratic co-sponsors, introduced House Resolution 561: Expressing support for support of transgender acceptance. The Resolution has two main objectives, which are to: (1) Recognize the systematic and structural challenges facing the transgender community and the need for action to improve safety and opportunity for transgender people; and (2) Express support for such community and allies through the LGBT Equality Caucus and Transgender Equality Task Force. The Resolution died in the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice. Last action was on 01/15/2016.
42. See Tourjee, D. 2015. "He's not done killing her: Why so many trans women were murdered in 2015." *Broadly.Vice.com*. Available at: https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/hes-not-done-killing-her-why-so-many-trans-women-were-murdered-in-2015 (December 16).
43. The term "cisgender" is used to describe human beings whose assignment of sex at birth is congruent with their current gender identity. In a 2014 *Times* article titled, "This is what 'cisgender' means," it suggests that they are,

People who use the word to describe themselves are often sending two messages: A) I'm hip to gender politics and B) I believe people are all the same when it comes to being normal and legitimate, even if their experience of gender identity is different. But there is no consensus on who should use the term or when.

Article available at: <http://time.com/3636430/cisgender-definition> (December 23). An offspring of "cisgender" is the emerging term "cisHet." This term is used to describe a person who is both cisgender and heterosexual. Often the term is used in a derogatory fashion to refer to an individual who is critical of transgender people.

44. Harris (2011, p. 23) has a meaningful discussion on this point. She argues that heteropatriarchy shapes one of the most important rules of hegemonic masculinity: a "real man" is not a woman.
45. See Agu, C. 2016. "Toxic masculinity and preventing interpersonal violence." *Daily-Nexus.com*. Available at: <http://dailynexus.com/2016-04-05/toxic-masculinity-and-preventing-interpersonal-violence> (April 5).
46. Black feminist contributor, Esther Armah, in a 2016 *Ebony.com* piece titled, "Toxic masculinity matters" defined toxic masculinity as "deeply emotional, and simultaneously utterly dismissive and contemptuous of emotionality. Insecurity-laden, dominance-obsessed, fear-filled—it teaches boys and men to stand their ground, confront unapologetically and aggressively—except when it comes to intimate partner violence, and then it says, *look away, not your business.*" Available at: <http://www.ebony.com/news-views/toxic-masculinity#axzz4Nq2Epcmn> (August 12).

47. See Browning, B. 2015. "Victim number 13: Transgender woman of color murdered in Dallas." *Advocate.com*. Available at: <http://www.advocate.com/crime/2015/08/13/victim-number-13-transgender-woman-color-murdered-dallas> (August 13).
48. The petition was archived because it did not meet the signature requirements. Information on the petition is available at: <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/formally-investigate-transphobic-violence-leading-rising-death-toll-transgender-women-color-us-0>.
49. For an in-depth analysis of the BLM movement, see Lowery (2016) who provides an influential voice for the movement.
50. See Reynolds, B. 2015. "I was a civil rights activist in the 1960s. But it's hard for me to get behind Black Lives Matter." *WashingtonPost.com*. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/08/24/i-was-a-civil-rights-activist-in-the-1960s-but-its-hard-for-me-to-get-behind-black-lives-matter> (August 24).
51. One-on-one interview with bell hooks, *Trans-Scripts* 5 (2015).
52. The BLM movement has declared May 19th #SayHerName National Day of Action. According to their Facebook page, "On this day, we are standing in solidarity with all Black women (cis and trans), girls, and femmes in efforts to shed light on the abuse that they endure under systems of anti-Black misogyny." For more information, see their link: <http://sayhername.blacklivesmatter.com>.
53. See Brydum, S. 2015. "Alicia Garza: Taking Black Lives Matter to another dimension." *Advocate.com*. Available at: <http://www.advocate.com/40-under-40/2015/12/09/alicia-garza-taking-black-lives-matter-another-dimension> (December 9).
54. See Ring, T. 2015. "Three more black trans women reported murdered." *Advocate.com*. Available at: <http://www.advocate.com/transgender/2015/08/16/three-more-black-trans-women-reported-murdered> (August 16).
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. For more information, visit the Black Lives Matter organization website. Available at: <http://blacklivesmatter.com/guiding-principles>.
58. See Steinmetz, K. 2014. "The transgender tipping point." *Time.com*. Available at: <http://time.com/135480/transgender-tipping-point> (May 29).
59. See Driessen, K. 2015. "Houston Equal Rights Ordinance fails by wide margin." *Chron.com*. Available at: <http://www.chron.com/politics/election/local/article/HERO-results-6608562.php> (November 4).
60. Newport, F, and G. J. Gates. 2015. "San Francisco metro area ranks highest in LGBT percentage." *Gallup.com*. Available at: http://www.gallup.com/poll/182051/san-francisco-metro-area-ranks-highest-lgbt-percentage.aspx?utm_source=Social%20Issues&utm_medium=newsfeed&utm_campaign=tiles (March 20).
61. Annise D. Parker, Personal interview, December 7, 2015, Houston, Texas.

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