

## HATE CRIME PREVENTION AWARENESS DAY OPENING/OVERVIEW

May 25, 2024, Norfolk (MA) prison.

By: Su'ganni Tiuza

Unfortunately and fortunately, welcome to our first "Hate Crime Prevention Awareness Day," event. I say unfortunately and fortunately, because unfortunately, our country (the United States) have a long and brutal timeline of crimes motivated from biases. Fortunately, today we are here to bring awareness around the work we are doing "in this space" to curb hate crimes in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

So, UGP started a educational project entitled, "Hate Crime Prevention Education," (HCPE) for short. Basically, HCPE promotes and engages in group discussions, transformative justice, diversity/equity/inclusion education, hate crime prevention initiatives, and facilitating positive narratives. We work with or for "everyone" and "every community" that is impacted by hate crimes in Massachusetts. Most importantly, we don't hijack nor blemish anyone's narrative or self-determination. As you will see today we give equity and support diverse leaders to use their voice to share their own narratives how they see fit. All while we all find solutions "Collectively" to curb bias motivated crimes in our own communities and each other's communities. This is very important to us!!!

Me, being convicted of a crime, not a hate crime but a crime nevertheless. I now fully understand the impact my actions had on my family, my community, and the family of Mr. Lewis and Mr. White - the two victims in my case. It devastated my family, my community, and the families of Mr. Lewis and Mr. White... Just like how I'm devastated when a member of one of the communities I'm a part of, are murdered, simply because they are who they were born to be.

Before I go further, I just wanted to take a moment to take responsibility and apologize for my own past actions... I helped to destroy communities and families. I harmed many people in pursuit of money and power. I engaged in violence that made communities unsafe. To these unfortunate truths, I apologize to my family members, community members, families of the victims, and anyone in this space who have been impacted and/or harmed by any of my past actions. This is important to me!!!

There are four brutal incidences of hate that has impacted me the most in my life. These four egregious acts is a large factor in why I'm doing this work:

- 1) The first is a picture I saw of a large group of White folks, in some Southern state - in the 1940's or 50's - having a picnic and smiling. There were kids adults in this picture. In the background of the picture, was the mutilated and beaten dead body of a Black man hanging from a tree. 2) The second was the

Orlando Pulse nightclub massacre, where 49 human beings, who were all LGBTQ+ and LatinX and people of color, were mowed down by the bullets of a queerphobic disturbed person. 3) The third is the 67 year old Asian woman who was brutally attacked in New York city by a Black man who was just released from a New York prison. This brutal attack stemmed from the rhetoric that China was to blame for the spread of the COVID-19. 4) The fourth is a specific incident that happened in the 1994 LA riots. These riots were a result of a long timeline of police brutality towards people of color in the Black community. The cops being acquitted in the Rodney King beating sparked off these riots. So, during these riots, a group of Black men pulled a White truck driver out of his truck, then they severely beat this human being close to death. In the interview with this White truck driver, it was evident that he was a good dude who was just trying to make a living. Him being White was the only reason for this extreme beating.

Some of you here today may remember 1 of these 4 incidences. Perhaps, in some way they have had a impact on you as well.

A lot of folks are wondering why we're pushing this Hate Crime Prevention Education project. Well, according to statistics prepared by the Executive Office of Public Safety & Security and the Anti Defamation League, hate crimes in Massachusetts and within the Nation is increasing daily at alarming rates never seen in the United States before. So if you or your loved ones are Black, LGBTQ+, Jewish, Asian, A Woman, Muslim, White, Latino, or a immigrant, you may likely become some sort of target of a hate crime while out in society and while you're incarcerated. Hate and unacceptance and anti-diversity - in America - is on the rise. Our right wing elected officials and ex elected officials get more political points by pushing laws and supporting legislation that's "Anti Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion," (DEI) and that is structurally racist, sexist, and queerphobic. Thus manufacturing and instigating hate crimes and pitting groups against each other for their own gain. As well, prison is a hotbed for racism, sexism, queerphobia, anti White, and other similar "ism's." Besides, when a offender is convicted of a hate crime, they are sentenced to prison. Our purpose of pushing HCPE is to provide adequate education and push effective initiatives that will help celebrate diversity, curb hate crimes, and replace retributive justice with transformative justice.

Bottom line, this country doesn't just belong to White heterosexual Christian men!!! Women are the most important co-owners of America. Black folks fought hard, died, worked hard, and went through hell to be co-owners of America. Immigrants, from all over the Earth worked the skin off their hands to

be co-owners of America. LGBTQ+ people sacrificed their happiness and helped win wars to be co-owners of America. Muslims, Pagans, Left hand path religions, and other religions and cultural groups showed loyalty to the Nation to be co-owners of America. And yes, our Indigenous brothers, sisters, and siblings are natives of this land, so we all are co-owners of America with them. Yes, America belongs to all of us in here, we all are co-owners, we all have equity.

To make this co-ownership work we need to be more understanding and respectful to each other. We need to take responsibility for our actions and check our own biases. We need to work with our legislators and community to undo structural racist, sexist, & queerphobic laws and proposed legislation while supporting real diversity, equity, and inclusion. We need to educate the prison society and free world society to the facts and statistics of each of our narratives, that is often slandered, demonized, or dehumanized. We need to respectfully teach the truth, no matter how uncomfortable it makes us. We need truth and reconciliation. We need to uplift each other.

Look man, we are not talking about coming together, to sing "Komb - By - Yah." (Misspelled). We are talking about deserved equity for all of us. We are talking about exposing the lies with truth about who each of us are and the rhetoric that got us attacking each other with hate.

Women are Man's equal, "not" some punching bag that should be in the kitchen barefooted. Mexicans and other immigrants are not taking our jobs. Asians are Americans too, not the perpetual foreigners. White people are not White devils. LGBTQ+ folks are human beings and they are the most creative and the most courageous people in our Nation. LatinX people are ambitious, hard working, and they are our brothers, sisters, and siblings. The underestimated Black people are the co-architects of the United States and the reason why other peoples of color have Rights in this country and they have helped this country become a global superpower. We have the facts and statistics to corroborate these truths.

In conclusion, today we are truly celebrating diversity. We are no longer allowing hate, rhetoric, and manipulative political talking points to instigate us into harming each other. Today, for the first time ever, we are coming together to help make a better future for all of us and to work together to curb crimes in each of our communities.

Thank you!

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