

THE VILLAGE



The Village Is Going International

New president, new allies, new format! In this Spring volume of the Village-Voice, we take an inside look at Judas & the Black Messiah, while premiering a new medium and interface for our newsletter. The Village is also pleased to present two young people heading the VC Youth Intern Program, working in tandem on The Village Voice's breakout international article on racial justice in the United Kingdom.

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Jenny Campbell: Brexit and Racial Justice In the Age of George Floyd, An Interview with the VC Youth Interns



On February 1 2020, the United Kingdom became the first and only country to formally leave the European Union. Some believe the exit of the British, or *Brexit* to be a politically ethnocentric movement toward white nationalism.

The Village-Connect youth internship program is a recent undertaking by the organization to galvanize youth of color to be involved in important conversations, and incorporate their unique perspectives and talents into the continual mission of the Village. This commitment to our collective future is developing in a myriad of ways, and our premiere international interview with Jenny Campbell regarding race relations, prevalent stereotypes and the Brexit movement is just one.

In 2020, the police murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin gave rise to the largest scale series of protests the world had ever seen. The abject pain felt by African Americans in the United States was echoed the world over, spring boarding conversations about racial justice and equity into international spotlight. This year, The Village-Voice had the pleasure of speaking with Jenny Campbell, senior social worker of East Safeguarding Team 7 in the UK, based in Birmingham for our premiere international interview on the topics of race, social justice, and the cross-continental future of Black people. This historic interview was conducted by our new youth interns, Tristan Quarrie and Anyla Blodger.

VV: What is the perception Blacks in the UK have of American Blacks?

Jenny: I can only give my opinion. Most English people, we know that your experience is very different than ours. As Black people in the UK, we don't have that history. Black people in America were slaves. In the UK we weren't, so there wasn't a transition. It's been a generational thing, so in terms of Black people in America we know that they're very very pro-Black. In the UK, our city, well it's just a smaller place. Everybody does integration. If we were to have segregation in the UK it just wouldn't work, because it's just so small, so we don't really have areas in terms of where you say that's a Black area. We have areas where there's more predominantly particular races, but we don't really have like in America. The setup is very different, and my perception is that Americans don't mix with white people as much as we do.

I feel that Americans are very very pro-Black. They know about their history, whereas Black Caribbeans, we don't really know much of our history. I've never met my grandparents. My history really stops with my parents. We don't know our history, because most of us never went back to the Caribbean. We've never seen our grandparents. We have no lineage from the Caribbean to bring to the UK. As a Black British woman, I'm still swimming around trying to find my identity, but you Americans are very secure as Black people in who you are.

VV: Is the prison population in the UK predominately Africans?

Jenny: It is a lot. In the UK, I think we make up about 4% of the population, but the prison population is about 12. So in England, Black people are either "Mad or bad"

VV: How does the UK provides for the urban youth in terms of getting them proper structure and training for jobs?

Jenny: We have school age education which is compulsory until 18, but at 16 one can leave the mainstream education and go into training, which is all government sponsored. They are funded through the central government in London and managed by the Prime Minister. He gives to the money to each city, and they decide how and where the money is spent. Birmingham gets a quarter of the money each year and they decide where to spend it, but they have set expectations as to how they spend the money which are laid down by central government in London. In terms of youth, Birmingham is expected to provide training for youth required by law that youth between ages of 16-18, if they choose to quit school have to undergo training before acquiring a job. Everybody under the age of 18 have either attended school or training for employment, and that's all provided by the government.

VV: Do you mind expanding on what you do with the youth?

Jenny: I am a social worker who works with youth from the age of nought (0) until 18 under central governments directive. It is like the United States protective services but in the UK we call it safeguarding. We deal with children who are suffering harm from their parents or their family members. We attempt to mitigate that by providing services for them. By the time they get 18 we attempt to set them up with accommodations and job training.

VV: What inspired you to get into that line of work?

Jenny: I am a first generation Caribbean. My parents came to the UK in the 1950's. I went to school here, and was raised by my parents, "You're a Black woman but you're English". During my time at school I felt invisible. There was nothing in the 70's at all for people of color. Nothing. We looked to America as the holy grail for Black people, with lots of things for Black people. I was completely invisible at school, and growing up nobody understood our culture. My parents in fact, tried to really damp down our Caribbean culture and just wanted us to be English and fit in, but at school every day we'd experience terrible racism. I wanted my voice as a Black woman to be heard. I explained to my parents about racism and they just didn't get it. They said "No." My mother certainly believed the teachers wanted me to do well, and I used to say to my mum "They don't. They don't want us to do well Mum. They don't like us." The teachers would call us racist names like monkey, and always encouraged us to take the lowest type of job. I have always wanted to be a voice of my community. As I navigate through life, I initially wanted to go into teaching because that was where my firsthand experience was, knowing what it was like as a Black child in school. Not seeing yourself, teachers putting you down, and whenever you challenge them, the stereotype: you're being aggressive. I started to go into teaching but felt that it wasn't for me. I saw the injustices started off at a young age and the parents didn't know how to navigate the system. That led me into the homes to help them fight the system that way, and support parents if their children were struggling to encourage them, navigate the system, stop their children from being taken away, and get positive outcomes for Black children starting from the home, hopefully going into education.

VV: How is the racial tension in the UK progressing?

Jenny: In the UK they like to say the racial problem is only in America. In England because of George Floyd, they're just starting the conversation. In England it's the elephant in the room. We all know what's going on but no one talks about it. In England we don't have a history of a Ku Klux Klan and that kind of in-your-face racism. But it's alive and well in the UK. In America you call it as you see it. In the UK, we're polite so we pretend.

VV: As an American it is astounding to hear about the racial inequality because that is not how America portrays England to be.

Jenny: Yes, we have riots however the government tends to speak more than they actually do. George Floyd has had quite a major impact in the UK. In your adverts (commercials) in America they're very multicultural. In England again, even in 2019 we were invisible. It's only since the George Floyd where everyone has come together to say that's enough. We're just now seeing adverts that reflect people of color.

VV: You stated that people of color were expected to take low paying jobs. What challenges have you faced as a woman of color?

Jenny: The challenge a lot of the time, particularly with white colleagues; they are automatically approached to be the one with knowledge which makes me practically invisible. I had an occasion when I went to a hospital. A child had sustained an injury and I went with a white colleague who was my assistant. She brought the child and the doctor told me to go into the waiting room, and took the white assistant into the office, so I sat quietly and waited for him to come back, embarrassed. This doctor is chief medical officer who does a lot of work around Africa and trying to get African children immunized, so he's seen as quite a figurehead who is doing good for African countries. Despite all of that, he still went to his unconscious bias of assuming I had come to aid the worker, when in fact the worker had come to aid me.

Another example is whenever I challenge families—especially white families—when I ask them to follow instructions for their children and families, there's a lot of complaints made. "She's aggressive, she's done this, she's done that." And that's been a constant over 20 years.

VV: Why do you believe that it's important to inspire others, especially women?

Jenny: Because we need it to be different. I want to not preach to anyone, but I believe in action. I believe by doing, and then seeing that I can then inspire them to do better and achieve. My eldest daughter is coming up to 39, my youngest is 15. I've got a daughter who's 30 and a daughter who's 20. All of them have been through college, but they've seen me going through. Not that it's easy, but you can do it too. It's to give them that believe in themselves, not only by saying but by doing.

VV: Do you believe there are any racial motivations behind the Brexit movement?

Jenny: Oh gosh, everyone knows that. Definitely.

English people, white British people have got this air of being supreme, being the top; superior. 150 years ago, England had an empire, and they controlled a majority of the world, which drew from the slave trade and helped all of that. India, Pakistan, Caribbean, all of those countries are very strongly influenced by England. Back 150 years ago, England made lots of things; they were the manufacturing hub of the world, but as time has gone on through the centuries, their manufacturing base died as everybody moved to China to get cheaper costs of manufacturing. I'm sure it's the same in America. In that time, where businesses could get it done cheaper, they moved. At that time, England lost. A lot of Brexit is based on the fact that England doesn't make anything, and a lot of the blame was placed on Europe, and it's people's belief that if we leave Europe, we'll be able to gain control again and become the Great Britain that we were 150 years ago, but you and I know that we can't go back. History doesn't work like that; you can only move forward.

A lot of Brexit campaign in 2016 was based on the old stereotypes that England can be great again, and like you have Make America Great Again, it was Make England Great Again, but England aren't going to be great, because when they were great it was on exploitation of slaves. They had the Caribbean, they had the commonwealth they had all those countries they exploited. They choose to ignore that and believe that they can be great again, and Brexit already—although it's only been 3 months in since the start of year—it's already had an impact. They're saying exports are already down 40% from what they were this time last year. We know lots of food, we just can't get it because there's a delay on the border coming into the UK, but nobody's talking about it because it was all built on xenophobia, fear of others and the need to get back to greatness.

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Alameda County Urban Male Health Director Michael Shaw, On the State of Black Male Health in 2021



Michael Shaw is the Director of the Office of Urban Male Health in Alameda County. Before anything else however, he's a loving husband, and father of two HBCU graduates.

The new year has brought with it exciting prospects in terms of vaccination technologies, industry, and political discourse, but along with these have come a great many challenges. As COVID-19 vaccine rollout has gone mostly according to plan, the rates of infection and death among African Americans—especially men—have continued to rise with less and less media coverage as of late. Black men shed three years from their overall life expectancy in the year 2020, more than twice the national average and the greatest loss of any gender/racial group in the country.

Michael Shaw is the Director of the office of Urban Male Health in Alameda County, an office designed to impact policies and administrative protocols as they relate to urban males. The Village Voice hosted a virtual chat with Mr. Shaw to discuss the threats to African American male health in the age of COVID, as well the structural inefficiencies of the American medical system.

VV: In what ways do you think the novel Coronavirus led either directly or indirectly to the negatively affected Black male life expectancy last year?

MS: What Corona has done, is actually exposed and increased the awareness of the impact on the health of our society. In America, African American males have the highest mortality rate across the disease spectrum. We are less than six percent of the population, and yet we maintain the highest rates of cancer, hypertension, diabetes, all the chronic diseases across the board, and then COVID hits us.

Maybe 15 years ago, the director of public health, I recall him telling me in his office, "One day Michael, Black men will be in a museum. We're dying at that high a rate." Less than six percent of the population, carrying major numbers of disease and high case mortality. So now we have a pandemic which has crossed the whole world, making this picture even worse.

The reasons for that are very complicated but I believe they're embedded in the history of this country, and the system of governing we've decided that we would have, which is capitalism. When you add capitalism to a pandemic, it's not about the health of all; it's about the health of all who can afford good health, you know? In this country, we would call the opposite of that a socialist statement, or a communist statement, when we're trying to ensure there's health for all. Thus, we don't have health insurance for everyone in this country. In most industrial countries, health insurance is a given. It's free. But not in this country. It's a battle to even have inexpensive health insurance in this country.

VV: Black men have historically had the lowest life expectancy in the US, and this is true pre-COVID. Can you speak briefly to why that is?

MS: I spoke briefly about this before, regarding health care as an expense, but even when you have the money to have the best health care in the world, you still go into a health care system that's racist. You don't always get the best health care even if you can afford good health insurance, because you're going into a health system that's biased against you being a healthy person, particularly a healthy male. It's interesting that our health care system treats Black women profoundly better than Black men, and that's not to say that Black women don't have their challenges, particularly around breast cancer. It's a racist system, that we acknowledged to be a racist system, and we lift it up as the best health care system in the world. See how ironic this country can be sometimes?

VV: Speaking beyond the office of Urban Male Health, and regarding the Public Health office as a whole, have there been any programs or methods of dedicated outreach to place resources specifically for Black men in the wake of this pandemic?

MS: The direct answer is yes. The indirect answer is not enough. Not the kind of outreach that reflects the data of the mortality of the African American community related to this pandemic, particularly African American men, but there has been an outreach. I'm clear that the African American response to COVID circle that was developed by the Brotherhood of Elders partnered with the Alameda County Public Health Department to address this pandemic, and I get to say "we", because I'm a part of the Brotherhood of Elders, and I'm part of the administration in the Public Health Department. I was proud to be able to negotiate a focus on African Americans, so we did a mask up project around Lake Merritt, not funded by the Public Health Department, but supported by it. It was funded by the Brotherhood of Elders, partnered with the UCSF Helen Diller Cancer

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Center, however the outcome was to reach out to young Black folks who were not wearing masks in the middle of this pandemic, to make sure they were educated, to make sure they got masks, and to have that education and that offer done by people who look like them, in their age. We were able to hand out about 1,000 masks in a day to majority African Americans. Fast forward to the testing: we were able to negotiate with African American churches, pop-up testing sites focused on the African American community, and used the county and UCSF's resources to provide testing in a culturally relevant way. Then you take it to the vaccine, which is now the key to addressing this pandemic. We were able to do the same thing with those churches. I like to call that our faith factor. It was a way of focusing on a low number of African Americans being tested or receiving vaccinations. They actually were the data

target of the health department, of the state, of the country. Yet, we weren't getting to African Americans to the extent we should be, given that data point. So, to be able to be a part of negotiating a relationship that allowed some of this to be community driven by African American leaders, is a success in my humble eyes.

VV: Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was predicted that the virus would hit Black communities harder due to institutional access along racial lines but the gender dimension wasn't mentioned. Do you see any difference in institutional access along gendered lines within the Black community?

MS: Oh yeah. If you look at our institutions, there are more Black women in charge than Black men in those institutions. So if you take our local health department—many people might not know this but there's a Black woman in charge of the local health department. But when you begin to go beyond that position, you stop seeing a large number of Black administrators, and you see very few male administrators who are African American. In fact, you see very few personnel in the health department that are Black and male, and you see very few males in our health system making decisions period. Whether they're Black or white or Asian or Latino, our health care system was designed for women and children in this country, very much like our school system was designed for an agricultural community, so men were supposed to be healthier and more in charge, and maybe at one time the data did show men as being healthier, but something happened where our health system quit focusing on males to any extent and it was really designed for women and children. Now we live in a society where clearly males, particularly and specifically Black males have the highest mortality rate, and we have a health system not designed for men.

VV: The Biden Administration put forward their 100 Day plan, and we're near halfway through by now. The year 2021 is not yet half-passed, but the Biden administration projected the rate of viral spread to increase before it gets better. Where do you see the Black community going from here?

MS: You're talking to a man who believes in life, the glass is half-full, not half-empty. I think we're gonna get through this pandemic as a community of African Americans. I really believe this pandemic is gonna bring us closer together, even though in it's design, you have to be further apart. I believe that sometimes when you bring out the worst of something, you see the best in you, and this pandemic has allowed that to happen for many people. I believe they're going to live with their best side moving forward. Maybe I'm naive but I believe that there's been a consciousness, awareness that in my 65 years of life I've never seen.

Now my mother might have said that 65 years ago when schools were desegregated, but I can only express this hope for my belief, which is: things are only going to be better for us, because it's going to bring us closer together. It has brought us closer together. I can't wait until we're actually together and we can actually hold each other and hug each other around some of these issues, because there's something about the power of touch that digital meetings can't give you.

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Black Panther Party Lieutenant "Cappy" Pinderhughes: Regarding Judas & The Black Messiah



Dr. Charles "Cappy" Pinderhughes has had several run-ins with the FBI serving as Lieutenant of Information in the New Haven chapter of the BPP from 1969-1970.

Dr. Charles "Cappy" Pinderhughes is a professor of Sociology at Essex County College in New Jersey. Dr. Pinderhughes is also alumnus to a more controversial and revolutionary organization: The Black Panther Party, where he served as the New Haven chapter Lieutenant of Information from 1969 - 1970. In addition to teaching countless students at Essex County over the past several years, Dr. Pinderhughes is also a political educator and writer specializing in the history of the party. His website BlackPantherOnline.com is a platform where visitors are encouraged to download films and other resources, and book webinars, speaking presentations, and film discussions around the party in American history, as well as pop culture.

The Village Voice was honored to host Dr. Pinderhughes on a 1-on-1 interview regarding the historical accuracy, impact, and cultural relevance of the 2021 Blockbuster title, Judas & The Black Messiah.

VV: What is the most important thing you would want young people who didn't live in the 60's and 70's to take from the film?

Dr. P: I think that they need to realize that it's not so much what was in the film as much as what was related to the film. Fred Hampton was probably the most charismatic of all the Panther leadership, either on a regional or national basis, but he was also highly intelligent and amazing at boiling complex ideas down into very popular presentations. That was a part of the charisma we saw when he spoke. That's one of the things that I think would be important to understand: as powerful as he's presented, he was even more powerful than that. You can get the sense of it listening to some of the people talk about him when they heard him live.

I don't know of anybody else that I could still quote from The Party, other than Huey Newton or Bobby Seale, but I can remember the quotes of Fred Hampton. The one I remember that burns in my mind of course is "We're so proletarian revolutionary intoxicated, we cannot be astronomically intimidated." The other thing I'll say about the film that makes me mad is, they really didn't spend enough time thinking about the presentation of him. They literally murdered his quote about murdering a freedom fighter. If you listen to that, there's really great oratorical presentation but it just gets destroyed by turning it all into "murder, murder, murder", instead of the actual beauty of the quote. I don't know why they did it, but someone wasn't really thinking about what they were crafting.

(The actual quote was, "You can jail a revolutionary, but you can't jail revolution. You might a liberator out the country, but you can't run liberation out the country. You can murder a freedom fighter, but you can't murder freedom fighting.")

VV: What was your impression of FBI informant Bill O' Neal's character as portrayed in the film?

Dr. P: I didn't know the real O' Neal. I thought they went light on him. I think he did more negative things within the party in his capacity of being head of security.

VV: The official story is that COINTELPRO (The FBI Counter Intelligence Program) was ruled as unconstitutional after an overview by the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities of the United States Senate in 1976, but the official end date of the program is unknown to the public. What is your impression?

Dr. P: Oh, this? Look, they still keep tabs on us. Literally. They do. I'll give you one example.

In 2008 I was dating a Cameroonian woman who became a naturalized citizen in France. She had to go back to France to get a renewal of her US Visa. She sent the paperwork in and they told her to come to the Embassy. She goes to the Embassy, they send her upstairs. As she walks into the Vice Consul's office, he picks up a folder and says "How do you know Charles Pinderhughes?" All she did was list me among the people she was going to visit when she came. That's all. So yeah, they still enjoy doing crap like that. As far as I'm concerned, I figure they have me on the next list after the no-fly list. I can get on planes fine but I don't expect that they don't know that I'm getting on planes. But I've never done anything for which they can indict me so that's that.

VV: Given the close ties between the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) and US policymakers, do you expect any government tampering or misinformation from the film?

Dr. P: I don't particularly go there. To me, you might as well look at the facts, and call the facts out for what they are. No matter what you do, when you mess with Hollywood, they want to rewrite stuff, and make it so that it's cinematically more dramatic; better in their own minds.

A perfect example would be the movie Glory, which is about the Massachusetts 54th Regiment, the first all Black fighting unit in the Civil War. The fact is that the first Black Medal of Honor came out of that regiment, but they chose not to tell his story. They wanted to do a fictitious version so they could have their stereotypes about the conflict between a "street Black" and a "bookish Black" and so forth and so on. The problem is that when we start going down that rabbit hole we start thinking in terms of conspiracy theory. We need to make an analysis of the facts that are right or wrong and call them on that basis.

"Fred Hampton was probably the most charismatic of all the Panther leadership, either on a regional or national basis, but he was also highly intelligent and amazing at boiling complex ideas down into very popular presentations. That was a part of the charisma we saw when he spoke."

Whether or not there was intent on one person's part or no intent on another person's part is not the main thing. If we spend our time doing that we're going to make the mistakes that the Panthers made, worrying about police agents when the FBI's whole idea is to make people think police agents are always around, so that we police ourselves.

Looking for Upcoming Events & Projects?

We've been working on strategic planning to make Village-Connect more capable of achieving our mission and have reduced our events calendar. As we return to full capacity, we need your support for the following projects:

Tune in for our next Brothas! meeting event in April, where we'll be showcasing an exclusive presentation from The Bay Area's own Bishop Bob Jackson from Acts Full Gospel Church.

Come join Village-Connect in our Return To Black Wall Street series, where participants can learn how to establish and maintain worker-owned businesses, and gain cooperative experience in a culturally relevant atmosphere.

Get involved in Village-Connect's efforts to foster connections between diverse groups of people by engaging in our upcoming project, Culture Connects Us. Send a simple 3-5 minute video response to the following questions, and upload to our submission box here.

- 1 - What is the ethnic background of your family?
- 2 - What misconceptions exist about your culture that you'd like to correct?
- 3 - Name a culture that you admire other than your own, and let us know why.

Support the Village!

