



Ideation Title: The Graham Boys and Garfield Park

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Category: Practitioner

In 2000, we produced and "Infographic" 10 Rules of Survival If Stopped By the Police as a community education effort designed to teach young Black males strategies for navigating police interactions. On August 9, 2014, the shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri sparked a series of riots in the St. Louis suburb. Brown an 18-year-old African American male was one in a number of high profile cases involving unarmed Black males at the hands of the police.

A few weeks after Brown was killed and the riots continued to receive national and international attention. As a result of the national attention the infographic went viral creating a host of radio, television and news print interviews discussing the 10 Rules of Survival If Stopped By the Police. BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), CNN, Huffington and PBS top a list of major media outlets interested in our work around preparing young Black males for police encounters. Within four months we received thousands of requests from parents and community groups via email and social media requesting information about our work. Hundreds of community groups like Delta Sigma Theta, colleges/universities and several police departments contact us to use the infographic.

In December of 2014, we received a call from Trinity United Community Church of Christ (Chicago) and the SALT Project inquiring about our work. A youth group at Trinity UCC along with the SALT Project were working on a video highlighting the 10 Rules of Survival If Stopped By the Police. In January of 2015, Get Home Safely was released. The video featured youth and parents reading the 10 rules to music. This Emmy nominated short film received overwhelming support.

Sadly, over the last two years we have witnessed violent police encounters in Baltimore, Charlotte, Chicago, Minneapolis, Baton Rouge, and a host of other cities. Incidents like the not guilty verdict of Freddie Gray consistently demonstrate the difficulties of holding police departments accountable. In May of 2015 six Baltimore City Police Officers faced criminal charges related to the death of Freddie Gray. Gray an unarmed Black man ended up dead after an encounter with the Baltimore City Police. Sparking days of riots and thousands of dollars of damage to Baltimore affectionately known as Charm City. Months later the city would be shocked after six officers were found not guilty in a series of trials.

Cases like Gray in Baltimore, Sandra Bland in Texas continue to undermine faith in the police and leave many African American families struggling to make sense out of justice. Since the death of Trayvon Martin at the hands of George Zimmerman a man involved in the neighborhood watch program African American parents struggle to find language to



FOR BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR

discuss police encounters with their children.

We believe communities greatest response to address escalating violence targeting toward young Black males at the hands of police requires greater community education. While other efforts like Black Lives Matter, ACLU and other national groups advocate for police reform and accountability, Black men continue to be illegal stopped and in many incidents injured.

To this end, based on the eye-opening response to our work we are interested in creating a “graphic novel” for pre/teen African American males and parents to assist them with understanding the rules of engagement when interacting with the police. Our efforts suggest that deepening community engagement and education around navigating police can reduce violence encounters. While we realize that no guarantees exist that young Black males can and will successfully navigate encounters, we believe that our 10 Rules of Survival If Stopped By the Police increases the likelihood of survival.

To extend this important conversation among young Black males and their parents a graphic novel will be written by David Miller and award winning illustrator Jerry Craft. Miller and Craft have worked together on several children’s book projects in the past.

The graphic novel will highlight the story of two brothers growing up in Chicago who are routinely stopped by police in the Englewood section of Chicago. Both brothers learn some hard lessons about interacting act with the Chicago Police Department at a young age. The graphic novel will feature bold illustrations and a rich storyline. We believe the graphic novel is a great resource for beginning a life saving conversation with parents and African American male youth. The lessons learned from the graphic novel will empower an entire community with useful strategies to navigate police encounters. Over the past few years countless schools have contacted us about resources for beginning this vital conversation with students.