

*'Why us?'*

– Mya Z

Too many times. The repetition is sickening. Put yourself in the shoes of the family on the other side. The family who must carry the news that someone close to them has been wrongly accused. That fear and pain. It is becoming too common that our black youth are being handled with force and brutality by our police. The people that we are meant to rely on. In a time where things are evolving so fast and people may be unsure and afraid, the police are the people that we are told to trust. But when that trust is broken too many times, who are we meant to turn to. Where are we meant to go?

There have been a variety of cases in which a black teenager has been a victim of the excessive force and brutality by a member of the police force. There was a case in which a young teenager with learning needs was handled incorrectly by the police. This left a lot of fear and confusion in the eye of not only other black teenagers, but their parents. Imagine the terrifying feeling of uncertainty that your child will even make it back home.

The ethnic group 'black other' has the highest stop and search rate with 103 stop and searches per 1000 people. Even celebrities like Strictly come dancing's Johannes Radebe, the chases' Shaun Wallace, and professional athlete Bianca Williams have been stopped by the police for crimes that they did not commit. We should not be afraid of the people who are meant to protect us. The people who we are meant to look up to. Multitudes of young black children aspired to be a police officer and help their communities, but as they grow up, they are faced with the unfortunate reality that this may not even be possible for them. No one should have to be afraid to go out and be themselves. No one should fear going and out and having a good time with their friends just because that possibility of one of them being harmed by the police is lingering over their heads. No one should have to fear or question what they are doing wrong by being themselves. So why do we still fear. We want to enjoy being young and free and not have to worry about things that we shouldn't be.

As James Baldwin said, 'Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.' Things need to change. We want to feel safe again. We want to feel like we can trust in the police again. But how can we do that if they don't trust in us. Our world is evolving, and I think that it is time for us to evolve too. Let's break this vicious cycle. Together.