

DES MOINES DEFENDER

Community Zine



BLACK STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED!

On a crisp autumn morning a coalition of Black community leaders gathered in front of assembled media at Cheatom Park and declared the streets are no longer safe to travel alone. The announcement comes in response to a string of racially motivated hate crimes in Iowa, including the recent lynching of Michael Williams by a white supremacist family in Grinnell.

These crimes have gone largely unsolved as police confidently declare race wasn't a factor in the beating of Darquan Jones, in the disappearance of Abdi Sharif or a factor in the mutilation of Mr. Williams by a man with Soldiers of Odin symbolism all over his Facebook page.

The coalition stated that Black Iowans should always travel in groups of two or more, preferably not at night. When traveling always tell someone where you're going and when you plan to be there. Vulnerable members of the community are urged to know their fifth amendment right to remain silent and not to speak to police under any circumstances.

The shocking announcement was met by a largely apathetic media contingent. After listening to multiple people explicitly say they're being terrorized, five time Emmy award winning TV journalist Todd Magel stepped forward and asked, "What exactly are you trying to say here?"

Black Iowa News stepped up where mainstream media lacked and provided a full, comprehensive and professional news report from the press conference which can be read via @blackiowanews on Twitter & blackiowanews.substack.com.

In This Issue

June 3rd, 2020

**Register Spreads
Disinformation Ahead
of Sheriff Election**

**Lessons in Extortion:
Gold Braid Edition**

**Inside the Central IA
Homeless Shelter**

TO
BE RADICALIZED
YOU MUST
UNDERSTAND
THE IMPORTANCE
OF THE
LIBERATION
OF BLACK
PEOPLE

The history of voter suppression is deeply rooted in Jim Crow practices, where they once forced black voters to pay poll tax (a tax paid by blacks & other marginalized folk) in order to vote. Black voters were often forced to go above & beyond to create extreme measures to make the black vote significant.



JUNE 3RD, 2020

On June 3rd, 2020, one of the hottest days of the summer, the fruition of the black liberation movement was created through our purpose of demands, one of them being the end of felon disenfranchisement and giving people their voting rights back. These demands were greeted by riot dressed police officers and the Mayor

of Des Moines Frank Cownie. He wrote our ideas down nervously. This was the first demonstration that actually amplified Black voices with demands that takes steps toward creating equity for us. This was also the first demonstration law enforcement had not incited violence by attacking protestors.

The next morning our demand to end felon disenfranchisement had been heard, but not listened to. As it has been written into law that 'felons' could get their voting rights back only with the agreement to pay restitution. Restitution is victims pay—if a violent crime was committed—whoever was the victim of that crime is owed 'restitution'.

This situation of black people having to pay restitution before being able to vote is referred to as voter suppression. Before August 2020, 70,000 people with felony convictions were not allowed to vote. This is felon disenfranchisement. Taking away basic human rights because of a crime they



committed after the person has paid their debt to society. In the United States, Black people are 5% of the population, but make up 25% of the prison population. Iowa statistics are kinfolk to the mass incarceration of Black People with 3% of us being a part of Iowa's population, but 25% of us being a part of Iowa's prison population.

The felons voting rights bill turned into a political game with governor Kim Reynolds signing the executive order once Black Liberation Movement had become a collective. We strategized the whole summer ways to get Kim to sign an executive order. This EO would automatically restore people with felony convictions their voting rights back without having to pay restitution and without having to apply for their rights.

The signing of the executive order just means that the law is temporary and can be reneged by a future Governor, but the signing of this specific executive order is so monumental in the history of black people in Iowa because we're the last state to restore people with felony convictions their voting rights, which proves how far behind this state actually is. The dedication and consistency of the Black Liberation Movement is carrying the change of history for Black Iowans.



Defender Readers Confused by Register Disinformation Campagin

Dear Des Moines Defender,

I wanted to thank you for canvassing in my neighborhood the other week and giving me a copy of your zine! Even though we don't share the same politics, your publication is a delightful change of pace! I'm not much for internet or the Facebook. Can't even turn the thing on. I prefer news the old fashioned way, holding it in my hands! I'm a print only Register reader.

Your advocacy for write-in Sheriff candidate Jaylen Cavil was notable. I shared your fliers with all the ladies at the coffee shop. I would caution you though, about spreading disinformation regarding his eligibility for the office he seeks.

The morning before I snow bired to Florida, I set my absentee ballot and a copy of the Des Moines Register in front of me. I do my research, you know? I was surprised to learn from my favorite reporter Philip Joens that Jaylen is ineligible for Sheriff as he's not certified to win the election. That said, I dutifully filled in my box for Schneider because why bother voting for someone that isn't qualified according to my most trusted news source? Philip would never resort to defending the neo-liberal order through a disinformation

campaign against a long-shot write-in candidate for Sheriff. That would be electoral fraud.

I suspect your efforts to convince me that three candidates are eligible to win the election is the effort of Russian propagandists. They're everywhere this election, even here in Des Moines interfering in our Sheriff race. This is a free and fair election where only the long time incumbent can win.

The Register has setup an email hotline (iowavotingissues@gannett.com) where I will be reporting you for your attempt to convince me that more than one candidate is electable as Polk County Sheriff. This type of disinformation is the exact reason I avoid social media. It has no place in our democracy!



**DEFENDER DECLARES JAYLEN CAVIL
WINNER OF SHERIFF ELECTION**

Because he supports justice over jails. Do you?

Paid and printed by workers in Des Moines



LESSONS IN EXTORTION: GOLD BRAID EDITION

The first thing you want to do when setting up a protection racket is convince your target that they'd be in danger without you. Without you, they're at the mercy of a faceless enemy that's both incompetent and powerful at the same time. With this in mind, let's say you're a police union with an active racket and have a city councilman talking shit. You'd want to write something like: "Precisely what do you imagine would have happened if we had not protected City Hall, the Federal Courthouse, or the Polk County Courthouse? How would the protest in the Mayor's yard have gone if armed SWAT officers had not been present to ensure the safety of him, his property and his family?"

Remember, the perceived enemy is weak and strong at the same time. Be sure to use the words 'rudderless' and 'implacable' in the same sentence. Rip it straight from the fascist playbook. If executed properly, your mark should not feel threatened at all. They may even declare publicly that it's your right to threaten them all you want. The Stockholm syndrome runs that deep.

INSIDE THE CENTRAL IA SHELTER

The author of this essay requested anonymity. Small personal details have been altered to protect their identity.

The bed bugs! The goddamn bed bugs! They ate my feet and ankles alive the other night when I made the mistake of sleeping sock-less. I googled those little bastards after the fact and learned some nasty stuff. Bedbugs are blood sucking insects that are impossible to kill. They feast on the blood of mammals, the mammal in this case being me.

There's a person sleeping next to me on the floor as I write this. At first I mistook him for a pile of dirty clothes, but nope, there are his little shoes poking out from under the mound. I'm at the Central Iowa Homeless Shelter. I'm about to spend the night here, sleeping upright in a chair. My car is outside in the parking lot, out of gas. Otherwise I'd be sleeping in there.

There are many oddities to this place, but none stranger than the man who roams the grounds unleashing outbursts of incoherent phrases that sound closer to threats than anything. I swear I heard him cursing out members of a certain race. You can't tell for sure. Schizophrenic maybe? I don't know, I'm not a doctor. The mental hospital must not want him. When he's inactive, typically he lays his head on the bathroom floor. Sometimes he'll enter the stall and close the door. Other times he leaves it open. You can't discern how he chooses. The man in question just walked by and yelled,

"GOD DAMNIT! ARGGGAHHHBAWWWWA!"

He then cleared decades of phlegm from his throat, began clapping and entered the cafeteria where he continued the gibberish. Somebody really should help that man.

It's funny. Back when I had a home with an office I'd complain that it was hard to write under the conditions I then considered distracting. The kids, the dogs, the screaming neighbor. All very distracting. Now, with this mentally ill man pacing by me, randomly screaming,

"FUCK YOUR MOM'S BUTTHOLE!"

I find the prose flowing from my thumbs. This isn't distracting. My old life was. Don't feel sorry for me. It's safe in here. Outside, in the cold, where the patrol cars roam, is where danger lurks. I've been stopped by police six times since going homeless. I'm scared they'll impound my lone remaining asset one of these times.

There's this woman with long green fingernails staying here. She's hard to miss. She's one of those solipsist types who doesn't recognize that other people exist. She struggles to grasp the concept of waiting in a line. Twice yesterday I witnessed her budge in front of other homeless folks for meals and towels. When served her free dinner, she complained about the portion size and was served double.



EXTORTION CONT'D

Our racket must be limited to a written instillation of fear that something will happen to him if he does not show us respect. Make sure you address it right to the motherfuckers house. Put it right on top. Let him know you know where he sleeps.

Insist that your retaliatory kidnappings are not violent. In fact, they're a de-escalation tactic. Don't worry. You can say this with a straight face and media won't check you on it. The long term goal of our racket is to establish an indefinite bond with our clients on the city council. You must publicly declare them under your protection and any member who dares question the scheme should be embarrassed and met with thinly veiled threats.

There should be no confusion. The outside agitators and professional anarchists must know who is and isn't protected.

We are the victims after all. Classic spousal abuser stuff is not off limits. "I hit you because I loved you too much" and "it was our blood that was spilled" should be talking points.

Making false criminal complaints are a subtle form of extortion. Use anything and everything to victimize yourself. Urine, feces, railroad ties, frozen water bottles, these all have been thrown at you whether it happened or not.

CENTRAL IA SHELTER CONT'D

When I finally reached the front of line after a 25 minute wait, there was no coffee left. I'd seen her make a trip back for seconds on java.

You're subjected to a quick pat down each time you enter the gates. Forfeit your fourth amendment rights in exchange for a meal and warmth. Not everyone is happy with this. Without fail, each time I exit and enter, there's a homeless person in a dispute with the cadre regarding illegal search and seizure. Without fail the argument escalates to a level where the displaced person is further displaced and turned away from shelter.

There's a computer lab at this homeless shelter. Pretty accommodating, eh? High speed internet sure makes looking for a job easier, There's a man sitting at the next terminal over. He's wired in to his Michael Jackson playlist on YouTube. It's not just him that's wired in, all of us are, because he sings along to Smooth Criminal, oblivious to his surroundings.

Womanizing and sex trafficking is rampant. Over dinner last night I listened to a man shamelessly hit on an immigrant woman who spoke little English. He was really laying the game on thick, talking about his huge penis, sexual prowess, female orgasms and their future together, outside of the homeless shelter. Food is difficult to stomach.

Every so often the reception area pages a resident to the front desk. The announcement coming over a cranked, squawking, distorted speaker system with the treble turned all the way down. It startles you every time it comes awake. I sure hope nobody comes here looking for me.

I like to practice Transcendental Meditation. Shit works. I can even zone out while sitting on the concrete floor of a bustling homeless shelter. Last night, deep in the throes of hypnosis, a homeless guy walked by and tripped over my outstretched legs. Kicked me basically. My eyes were closed. He had to see me. There wasn't anything else in his path. Just legs. He continued on his way without apologizing or acknowledging the imposition. Oh do I look forward to having my own space.

Tonight a drunk guy showed up in the day room at 1:00 AM. Let me paint a quick picture. 25 homeless people in a 16x16 room. Some sleeping on the floor, others sleeping in rigid backed chairs. The lucky homeless people (if there's such a thing) have two chairs to sleep on, separated just enough to form a quasi-bed. You must obtain a doctors note to secure this sleeping arrangement. I picture how a doctor may craft such a note:

"Please allow Patient X the use of two steel arm chairs to sleep on at night. He has a lower back condition."

The drunk appeared at the stroke of 1:00 and began providing a narration of every move he was making. He's cursed out three separate times, told to shut his mouth. He kept talking, waking everyone in that tiny room. Someone threatened to beat his ass. After five minutes of arguing he rolled up a pillow with dirty laundry, bumped in to me a few times, laid on the concrete, passed



EXTORTION CONT'D

We are the benevolent force. There was a time when we knelt before this mob in prayer, before unleashing a barrage of CS gas. We even apologized for George Floyd. This is the extent you are willing to change. Meet attempts to question our authority with mafioso inspired tactics. Those of us in the warrior caste are seen by society as protectors. In times of war or crisis power is easily stolen from the many by the few on a promise of security. The more elusive or imaginary the foe, the better for manufacturing consent.

CENTRAL IA SHELTER CONT'D

and immediately began snoring as if possessed by demons trying to escape. I call the snoring "Symphony of the Destitute". The noise, breathing patterns and apnea are unrelenting. Just when you get comfortable with the rhythm of one snoozer, another starts wheezing at a different pitch.

It's not easy sleeping on a non-reclining chair with two arm rests either. Especially when you're a bigger guy like myself. I'm tall, with limbs stretching everywhere. It's hard to pack me in tiny spaces. Eventually sleep comes. My dreams are lucid. I have an unusual vision of having my daughter with me at the shelter and discovering a wallet filled with \$50's and \$100's. "Now we'll find a better place to sleep," I tell her. In reality, she's safe for now, with her mother. Following our separation, it was me that hit the streets to fend for myself. Sometimes I think I'm a masochist, but I'm not. I'm a soldier. Women, children and the lower enlisted come first.

The shower alternates between freezing and scalding. Scalding feels good though. Especially when it's been days since your last hot shower. I feel clean, despite washing in a bathroom where one stool is clogged to the brim with feces and the floor is littered with discarded bars of soap which date back to last Fall.

Sleeping in my car was much more comfortable and that's where I'll be again tonight. As long as I have a good tip night at work I'll have enough cash to fill my gas tank. That way the heater will run all night or at least the 2-3 hours I can grab a little shut eye. That's what we homeless people call a good night's rest.

If you are currently experiencing or facing eviction in Des Moines contact Des Moines BLM & Des Moines Mutual Aid to fill out an application for rent relief as the current social safety net has proven to be inhumane and ineffective.

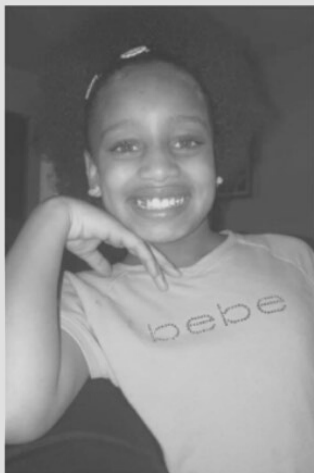


M

AMBER ALERT



Breasia Terrell - Age 10 - Davenport, Iowa



Breasia Terrell, age 10, was last known to be in the 2700 block of E 53rd Street in Davenport, Iowa on the night of Thursday, July 9, 2020.

She was with her half-brother visiting his biological father, Henry E. Dinkins, age 47. Breasia was reported missing Friday. Dinkins has been named a person of interest in her disappearance.

Breasia is 4'5", 75 lbs., with black hair and brown eyes. She was last seen wearing a white shirt, shorts and pink flip-flops.

POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON DINKINS' WHEREABOUTS DURING THE TIMEFRAME OF THURSDAY, JULY 9, FROM 10 P.M. TO FRIDAY, JULY 10 AT 12 P.M. IN THE QUAD-CITIES AREA.



DAVENPORT POLICE ASK ANYONE WHO SAW HENRY DINKINS OR THIS 2007 MAROON CHEVY IMPALA BETWEEN 10 P.M. THURSDAY, JULY 9 TO NOON, FRIDAY, JULY 10, TO CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

MissingPiecesNetwork.org

Facebook.com/MissingPiecesNetwork



I S S I N G

