

A Night in Delaware: The African Diaspora post 21<sup>st</sup> century.  
(Black History Month 2012)

***"We find evidence that juvenile justice today clearly represents a mix of punitive and rehabilitative approaches and that states vary dramatically in the extent to which they lean toward greater punitiveness or rehabilitation. The results underscore the importance of providing more balanced assessments of the state of juvenile justice by examining a broad spectrum of policies. They also underscore the importance of recognizing that juvenile justice is not monolithic—it varies greatly from state to state and even within states."***

**The U.S. Juvenile Justice Policy Landscape**(publication)

This critical essay opens in the wake of Black history month, 2012. It opens as a narrative of an actual event, carries as an outlook, and a hopeful premonition of the African diaspora's, American state of being in the future. The above reference is another institutional approach to urban social issues, a reflection of study upon study, Past and present of the diaspora's relationship with law, community and family dynamic, politics and generational standard. I share an account that some would share as the hopelessness of black youth, that some easily incorporate into the statistics and traditional stereotypes, and loathe the elements of a diaspora oppressed and misunderstood for its ultimate duration in American life. One night in 2011 I traveled with family from New Jersey to Maryland. En route we stopped in a crowded service area, filled with youth from Delaware. It seemed the crowd were a crew of many returning for after hour nightclub circuits, or en route to a host of them. As my sister stepped out to the service area station she was initially pre-cautious of her children's safety as she proceeded to the store. Within the store she saw multiples of the same crowd inside, witnessing them shoplift openly in front of the store owner. In conversing with the store owner my sister noticed she was afraid, and apprehensive to the scene formed in the store. After purchasing what she needed she proceeded back to the car. During this time I surveyed the scene, standing beside the car. Sizing the scene I noticed there was only a certain percentage of young adults in the lot that engaged in revelerie, including "flashing"(brandishing firearms), while most our side of the lot were parked and waiting for other people. Among some of the young adults on that side I spoke to in mutual conversation, but mindful of any potential danger, as my sister, close to our family. As my sister returned to the car we settled, and pulled off onto the interstate slowly back on the road. On the road she lamented about the "low-life" behavior we witnessed, how this behavior reflected, and has reflected upon people of color as a whole. I thought of this episode through the channel of my own experience, being a New York native, and spending a quarter of my life in Philadelphia. Urban America, by far is one of my greatest concerns. One acknowledgement surely is this group

Within the state of Delaware were potentially violent, and whatever region/communities they originated from most likely holds the same social culture. Another is the percentage among at-risk youth within the African American community is high, and has been high, as well as repeat offenders.

- ***Nationally, Black youth under age 18 represent 15 percent of the juvenile population but make up 26 percent of juvenile arrests, 31 percent of referrals to juvenile court, 44 percent of the detained population, 34 percent of youth formally processed by the juvenile court, 46 percent of youth sent to adult court, 32 percent of youth adjudicated delinquent, 40 percent of youth in residential placement, and 58 percent of youth in state adult prisons.-***

***[youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu](http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu)***

A reflection of judicial processing of black youth within the penal system, and the general processing of black minorities within the system. Apart from that, my mind retracts to history. I found Delaware is one of the states where the most brutality was inflicted among the African Atlantic slave trade, and one of the highest states in lynchings of blacks post reconstruction and the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among that I looked at the spirit of “Jim crow”, among southern states as Virginia and further south, and the ultimate regions of intense racial struggle through the years. In the study I made a general connection of the historic presence of the diaspora, to the present. Even now post 21<sup>st</sup> century, if there are few to no positive African American role models amongst our generation, (as African American figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who were activists, and made accomplishments) the greater percentage are left only to “cultural devices of their own communities”. In essence a black society/community without positive guidance, a restoring family/community structure, and concern for the next generation, that generation will seek collective empowerment in anti-social behavior; due to the fact that Criminal enterprise in urban America is, and has been prevalent. And the protocols of criminal enterprise in any location of urban America is generally the same. The Urban Cry LLC Acknowledges Black history month as a whole; monuments, accomplishments. And the presence of the African diaspora in America, down to its social demographics. As a black man, I hold direct relation to social, economic, and ethnic issues of my race, and nationality; therefore as a freelance journalist/essayist i desire the understanding, and healing of a people. To encourage them to understand protocols of socio-politics, and value fundamentals. As I expressed in time before, the general clarity in media is 100% imperative. As an essayist I publish in the spirit of journalist Ida b. wells, who from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> internationally exposed life in the south for people of color. The clearest form of media is the best understanding to the rest of the world that witnesses. Post 21<sup>st</sup> century, a percentage of black urban America still rests under a hangar of a corporate, digital lynching. Scholars, historians, activists and politicians would

agree, as it was in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when Africans first arrived on American shores, the general survival of the diaspora is still vital. In the case of Community, a conscious return to fundamentals is one start; if one institution within the black community is vital, it is the institution of family. In any consideration of restoration, this *has* to be considered.

In regards to social matters, in a changing economy, economic opportunity, will play a huge part in urban America, and generally the middle and lower class. Among the lower classes of black America, one part of social change is a stream; a consistent one of Socio-political consciousness. To a population that has suffered from poverty, played a major part in crime statistics, and major factions of disunity, the intake of greater knowledge would hold impact to a percentage of lower class black communities. Part of which is understanding the economy, targeting social issues, and community developing as to not allow the blights which trapped black communities before, to not have a foothold. A night in Delaware is another picture, another true to life narrative of black America's urban sociology. An acknowledgement of black America's social issues. Solidarity in urban America is a progressive process. In a reflective critical view, the general presence of the African diaspora in America, in every generation is in need of social restoration. In 2012, even now, among the black community, its good for community leaders, and to whom it may concern, to consider the future of black urban America for what its worth, and that is the future.

Consciously Yours,

Z.A