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Speech from Tribe X in Regards to Tamir Rice Solidarity/Rally STL

January 01, 2015

Ashe is an Yoruba word meaning power. I'm going to say a name or phrase and after it I want you all to say Ashe. Follow me:

Tamir Rice. Ashe! Aiyana Stanley-Jones. Ashe! MichaelBrown. Ashe! Kimberlee King. Ashe! VonDerritMyers. Ashe. EricGarner. Ashe. SandraBland. Ashe.

FergusontoCleveland. Ashe!
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By now we have all see the video of 12-year-old Tamir Rice being brutally murdered at the Cudell Recreation Center in Cleveland.

One year later, we are still in a long protracted multifaceted struggle. We are in a struggle that does not end with the spilling of blood of innocents conducted by state sanctioned death squads, "supposedly" hired to protect and serve but instead wield unbridled power to oppress and terminate. These same forces that operate under the guise that they are upholding the law but operate ABOVE the law. A force left unchecked, at large, free, unanswering to the people's cries for justice, and a system that is all too eager to ignore what's right in favor of power. While our eyes were averted they have chosen to occupy our communities and have passed laws and set up systems that allow them to continue to do so. However, we are beginning to see more clearly how these murderers in blue, and cowards with badges are not our sole issue. Our battle is bigger than trigger happy individual killers like the cop who killed Tamir Rice - but any and ALL of those malevolent forces that wrap around and shield them from being brought to justice.

Our struggle, Ashe!, is against an America that absolves officers like Tamir Rice's Killer. Our nation wants us to think long and hard about giving the benefit of doubt to killers with guns who make split-second decisions about black boys with toys. Our nation has a dangerous "John Wayne" fetish for unquestionable masculine authority, and white impunity. The very fetishes that tore apart a family tree and a child's future. They have eroded the trust of the people and their unwillingness to prosecute these criminals have left us no choice. We can no longer rely on 911, when that very phone call will sometimes lead to death. The people must choose an alternative to traditional policing and replace the current model. Community policing as an alternative is the new way.

Our struggle, Ashe!, is against law enforcement departments that produce officers like Tamir Rice's killer. The same agency that committed this, let's call it what it really was, drive-by shooting of a child was under investigation by the Department of Justice for use of excessive and unreasonably deadly force. According to the

report, the Cleveland PD's stops, searches, and seizures often violate the Fourth Amendment. Furthermore, their officers notoriously use unreasonable force against individuals...sounds eerily familiar to our condition in St. Louis. Good cops that witness bad cops mistreat our people without speaking out cease being good cops when witnessing injustice and rewarding it with silence. If there are any good cops left we need them to speak up against corrupt officers and we need police unions to either dissolve or stand with the people against rogue cops in their ranks.

Our struggle, Ashe!, is against politicians both local and national that strengthen officers like Tamir Rice's killer. There are legislators refusing to accept reform proposed by their colleagues. There are aging bills collecting dust that ban future sales of imitation firearms or require safe storage of guns in homes. Self defense is a good offense and gun safety laws are imperative to our defense. In opposition to these changes, one Republican Rep. Ron Maag stated that "Teaching a child about safety could save a life" - as if Tamir was responsible for his own death. We know that no law could have saved Tamir from a trigger happy cop but we also need to be sensible when choosing to arm ourselves for self defense. Tamir was killed in an open carry state and the law shields state sanctioned murder. Stand your ground laws are unevenly enforced. The murderer of Trayvon covered himself in that flawed law. Pay attention people Missouri is a Stand Your Ground State also. The people must elect better representatives to city hall. Even if you have given up on elected officials the fact that any one of them holds office should be a direct directive to us to show up in droves to vote them out if only to strike fear in their hearts and to make them scramble. The lines that we saw when Barack Obama was elected should be the lines we see at every election the condition of our people demand it.

Our struggle, Ashe!, is against the prosecutors and District Attorneys that protect officers like Tamir Rice's killer, who knowingly thwart justice by putting on weak cases or paneling secret grand juries. Timothy McGinty in Cleveland and locally Jennifer Joyce Hayes and Bob McCulloch, we see you hindering prosecutions and buying time so that the people's anger is quelled. These fools would rather forsake the integrity of their office to uphold these miscarriages of justice. They seem to care more about how they are viewed by the police than their relationship with the people, when they fail to fairly prosecute crimes. The people must put in office new prosecutors that won't have to be reminded of who they answer to. We must make them fear us they must believe that every decision they make will earn the people's wrath if unjust, and they must know that their job is at stake.

Our struggle, Ashe!, is against people that graduate from college, find religion, or accept a career offer then blame our people for their plight. Using 'black-on-black violence' rhetoric as a deflection or slogans. While prisons overflowing with black people who committed crimes against other blacks is problematic, finger wagging black youth for delinquency or sagging while refusing to assist, fund, organize, educate, and empower low-income communities with skill sets, scholarships, or job resources is just as problematic. Blaming all our ills and conditions on the very people who are the least capable to help themselves while the powerbase behaves with impunity is abhorrent. This collective excuses officers for their crimes for a modicum of ill perceived safety. The truth is none of us are safe unless all of us are safe. The people need our more privileged friends to cast aside their vestiges of comfort and stand with the poor and oppressed. Bullets don't check transcripts or FICO credit scores....they check for death so it could very well be you or your loved one at the unfortunate end of a traffic stop. We need you to step out of your comfort and imagine the person you most love at the receiving end of a bullet (painful thought?)...then join us.

Our struggle, Ashe!, is also within ourselves, the activist community, in a way we have lost our way a bit. We have let petty differences take us off our square. That does not serve Tamir, Mike Brown, Vonderrit Myers are the countless others. Dr. King was stabbed one inch from his heart by someone he perceived as an ally. He could have easily washed his hands of the movement. Not that we want you to endure any abuses...they SHOULD be checked. However this revolution is not one of convenience or comfort and sometimes even our

allies may seem like enemies. Malcolm X had his home firebombed he also continued on undeterred. The list goes on and on of those who gave their all for freedom.

The blood spilled by Tamir requests that we push through. That we make a concerted effort to see the bigger picture that just as Dr. King and Malcolm X exemplified that we not quit or give up on each other. That we not let the oppression that we have toiled under become the oppression that breaks us.

One year later, we know better. Our struggle is against the whole system because the whole damn system is literally - Guilty as hell.

By being here today, we are sending a message to Cleveland: We stand with you. System we are not done coming for you. We are tired but not as tired as we are of seeing our babies slaughtered. We will unify, we will reclaim our passion that brought us together in August. We will ride lockstep toward justice and we will use every tactic in our arsenal to do so. Nothing hurts as bad as seeing a child die without justice so we will strengthen our resolve and tell you to expect us...we will meet you in your places of comfort because we can't be comfortable with the death of children.

We will summon on all of our allies and we will unite to be a force much greater than the system you have put in place or the gatekeepers you have sent to uphold it. It is a new year and we are calling for all of the freedom fighters to tap into their reserves and find strength to persevere and push harder: our very lives depends on it and Tamir Rice deserves our all. New Year - New Level of Resistance! All Power to The People

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