

Interracial conflicts

Aufgaben

Der vorliegende Vorschlag enthält in Aufgabe 3 alternative Arbeitsanweisungen.

- 1 Outline the events of the shooting and the information about the victim. (Material) **(25 BE)**

- 2 Analyze how Kevin and the reaction of his wife are presented. Refer to language and narrative technique. (Material) **(40 BE)**

- 3 Choose one of the following tasks:

- 3.1 *“Was the guy Black? Did you shoot an unarmed Black guy? Is this going to be the headline?”*
(Material)

Taking the quotation as a starting point, comment on the positive and negative impacts different types of media coverage could have on the individual and society when dealing with the incident.

or

- 3.2 Institutional racism is “[t]he collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.”
(Definition of institutional racism as used by the UK government)

You are working as an intern for a quality newspaper. Due to the recent news about police violence, you have done research on different forms of institutional racism in the USA and the UK.

Taking the definition as a starting point, write a newspaper article assessing different measures to tackle institutional racism.

(35 BE)

Material

Christine Pride, Jo Piazza: Not every story is black and white (novel, 2021)

After Kevin, a police officer, has shot a black teenager called Justin, he talks to his wife about the incident.

[...] “We got a call for an armed robbery, guy shot a convenience store clerk when he wouldn’t open the register. Plugged him point-blank in the chest. From the description it was this guy Rick, who robbed another bodega¹ last week. Cameron and I were first on the scene, and we saw him running down the street. We started pursuit in the car. When he pulled up on Ridge, we got out and ran after him. Cameron is hella² fast – he actually ran track at Kutztown³ – so he’s a few yards ahead, turning into an alley. I hear him yell, ‘Police stop!’ and I’m there at his heels when he yells, ‘GUN!’ and fires. I stop and fire too and the guy goes down.” Kevin suddenly stops talking and stares into the empty fireplace across the room, like he’s watching the scene play out on an invisible screen.

“It was so fast. I didn’t have time to think. I should have – FUCK.” He’s digging his nails into my thigh so hard they leave a mark.

I don’t even feel the pain because I can only focus on one thing: My husband is alive. All the talk about armed robbery, chases, and gunshots, and Kevin is still here, right here with me. [...]

I reach for him with both hands, desperate for the reassurance of his body, his breath, his presence here before me. *You’re alive*. The fact of it makes me weak with relief.

“He was a bad guy. You did the right thing. He’s in the hospital? I heard you tell Matt⁴. He’ll recover?”

Kevin stands so quickly he almost knocks me off the couch. He paces the room without answering, a wild, terrified look on his face, like a scrawny cheetah I once saw in a cramped cage at some janky⁵ wildlife park in Poconos. That’s what Kevin reminds me of now, a caged animal. In nine years of marriage, I’ve never seen him like this.

“He’s alive, yeah, but ...”

“But what?” I want to go to him but I’m rooted to the couch, paralyzed with the dread, just like in my nightmares.

Kevin talks to the wall instead of to me. “It wasn’t our suspect – it wasn’t Rick. He didn’t even match the description. Rick was tall, like six foot three and wearing a dark jacket. Cameron never should have ...” His voice trails off. “Christ, Jen, this is bad.”

How bad? A question forms. I can’t make my mouth produce the words though; something about the look on my husband’s face stops me. *Was there even a gun?* This opens the door to other questions I’m also too scared to ask. *Was the guy Black? Did you shoot an unarmed Black guy? Is this going to be the headline?* [...]

“Kevin is a good cop.” I whisper this out loud, trying to reassure myself. I remind myself of his commendations. Two of them so far – a medal of valor and one for bravery. And that time he was called in to arrest a woman for shoplifting in the Walmart. At the hearing she struggled through broken English and hiccupping sobs to explain to the judge that she was stealing food because she was

¹ bodega – a small shop that sells things that are often needed

² hella – *slang*: very

³ Kutztown – university in Pennsylvania

⁴ Matt – Kevin’s brother whom he talked to earlier on

⁵ janky – very bad in quality and condition

35 desperate to feed her kids. When the woman was let off on a misdemeanor, Kevin bought her a pantry full of groceries and quietly left them on her stoop.

People know his name in the neighborhoods where he does his foot patrols. He carries treats for their dogs for Christ's sake. And talk about dogs. What about smelly, snaggletoothed⁶ Fred, whom Kevin rescued from Philly Salvage last winter, where she had been left padlocked to a chain-link fence in
40 below-zero temperatures? I reach for her now, curled up as usual in the tangle of our feet, and remind myself: *My husband is a good man.* [...]

[Some time later, the victim's mother is interviewed on TV.]

"Thank you for being with us this evening, Mrs. Dwyer. We appreciate you doing it today, so soon after losing Justin. How are you doing?"

45 "As best as I can be, I guess. It's a hard day. It helps that so many people marched for Justin today. That makes me feel good, to know people want justice for my son."

"And justice, what does that look like to you? The statistics and precedents show that cops are rarely prosecuted for these types of incidents."

"That's not right. They should be punished. They have to be. My boy did nothing wrong. Nothing. And he was murdered. Something has to be done, or this is gonna happen again and again." [...]

50 "Tell me more about your boy. What was he like?"

"He was a good boy. I know people want him to either be some sort of druggie thug or a perfect kid. Justin was an excellent student and rarely got into trouble. But all this talk about him being on the honor roll⁷ – it seems like they mean he was one of the 'good' ones when they keep saying that. His death would be just as unfair if he was flunking out of school. Or yeah, if he did smoke weed once or
55 twice, then he's a bad kid who deserved to die? [...O]ne thing is that he never killed ants. Wouldn't even step on them. Would go out of his way to let the ants cross in a line on the sidewalk. And chicken tenders were his favorite food. He had these stinky little feet as a baby. I used to put them right in my mouth and kiss his little toes. His first word was 'duck.' He called pigeons ducks, and we let him do it. How'd he know any better, growing up in the city the way he did?" [...]

(951 Wörter)

Christine Pride, Jo Piazza: *We Are Not Like Them*, London 2022, S. 35–38, 139–140.

⁶ snaggletoothed – having a tooth or a set of teeth that is not straight or regular or that sticks out

⁷ honor roll – a list of students who have received good grades in school