

Name: _____ Mark: _____ /

Teacher or Date and Time: _____

Read Chapters 9-11 of *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone

In this week's homework, we will explore how black males become prey because of the superpredator myth. We will also look through the opposing viewpoint of racial profiling. That is, we will consider when, where, why, and how racial profiling is justifiable.

They Came and Went

Read the following article on perpetuation of the superpredator myth, and answer the questions in complete sentences.

**“The ‘superpredator’ myth was discredited
but it continues to ruin young black lives”**

by Rachel Leah

Vincent Thompson was first arrested when he was 14. It was a Friday night and Thompson and some friends in his neighborhood in Hempstead, Long Island, had just come home from a party. They were clustered outside their buildings not yet ready to call it a night, when the police "rushed" the group, he said, and searched them. Thompson had just started selling crack, and the police found it. He was handcuffed and stuffed into the back of a police car. "It was my first time ever being in that position," Thompson recalls. "I was young."

He was released into his mother's custody, but placed on juvenile probation — a label that would come to define his adolescence, as was the process of shuttling back and forth to court. By this point in his life, Thompson had already witnessed his older brother and sister get arrested; the images of them sitting in the back of a police car, handcuffed, were cemented in his conscience.

Thompson's home situation was loving. His mother was strong, stable and the sole provider for her three children. But the realities of the neighborhood were dominant. There were two

How are the lives of Vincent Thompson and Justyce McAllister similar?

constants for Thompson growing up in Hempstead: drugs and police. He described his community as swallowed by drugs. He often saw the buying and selling of it, but also a heavy, perpetual police presence. If a group of kids were hanging together outside, there was a significant possibility that they would be searched and harassed.

In the early 2000s when Thompson became a teenager, the "superpredator" myth was largely unquestioned. This was the theory that certain cohorts of young people in urban settings (and almost always black or Latino) are violent, terrifying and with "no conscience, no empathy," as Hillary Clinton famously said in 1996. Thompson experienced stop-and-frisk long before he even knew there was a name for it. And Thompson witnessed so many arrests, beyond his siblings, so many people leaving the neighborhood for stretches of time, so many people returning to the community, that incarceration became normalized.

The superpredator condemnation was conceived by John J. Dilulio Jr. in the mid-1990s. "A new generation of street criminals is upon us — the youngest, biggest and baddest generation any society has ever known," he said, and the term ushered in a methodology of putting violent teenagers in adult prisons with no thought given to intervention or rehabilitation. Dilulio's description of "brutally remorseless youngsters" won out against children's inexperience and suggestibility. William J. Bennett, with John P. Walter and Dilulio, penned "Body Count" in 1996 and promoted the theory that superpredators would skyrocket the level of teenage violence by the new millennium. But violent crime declined; what surged was the juvenile justice population.

The reality that the U.S. has the highest prison population in the world is both devastating and well-known. The U.S. also leads the world in youth incarceration. There are more than 850,000 juvenile arrests per year and nearly 50,000 young people sit in incarceration every day. And like the adult prison population, black and brown youths are disproportionately impacted. Black children are five times more likely to be held and detained than white children, according to data from the Department of Justice.

The superpredator theory has been disproved. Dilulio and Clinton have apologized for propagating it. But the policies that followed and the effects of this thinking are still very much in place. In California, people from as young as 14 years old can be transferred to adult courts and tried and sentenced as such. It is a proposition still on the books from 2000. And California is not alone. In a new VICE documentary called "Raised in the System," it says, "There are up to

How does specter of the superpredator haunt black teenagers in contemporary society and *Dear Martin*? Consider which characters could be profiled as a superpredator.

Is 14 an acceptable age to be tried as an adult? Explain.

200,000 youth, tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults annually."

"That superpredator myth really scared generations," Bahiyyah Muhammad, assistant professor of criminology at Howard University, said. "That myth is continuing to go on, even in the midst of the apology for it."

The next year, Thompson was arrested again. This time, the police observed him making a drug sale. They chased him into his apartment and "put the guns to me and all that," he said. They thought he broke into someone's home. "I'm 15 years old," he added. For this charge, he spent 60 days in the Nassau County Juvenile Detention Center. Thompson's major takeaway from the center was, "it really got you ready for prison."

"They make very little even pretense at rehabilitation at this point anywhere," said WNYC reporter Kai Wright. He takes an in-depth look into the juvenile justice system in a new podcast series "Caught." He added, "Coming out of, again, the politics of the '90s ... it really started to crowd out the idea that we would be rehabilitating people instead of punishing them."

Thompson remembers that when he was incarcerated there, the detention center held about 60 young people from all over Long Island. But at least one-third were from his same neighborhood. That's because juvenile justice is local and incarceration overwhelmingly cripples distinct geographic areas, but research by Harvard sociologists shows that when law enforcement finds its focus, entire neighborhoods in major cities — mostly poor, and black and brown — can be swept up by the prosecutorial zeal.

When it comes to youth incarceration and one's ZIP code, "it's an immediate correlation," Muhammad said. "That really is the bread and butter of the entire juvenile justice system." Wright added, "The sorting of innocence from irredeemable guilt starts young. And more often than not, that stark divide depends on what you look like and where you live."

Researchers labeled areas with high concentration of crime and plagued by mass incarceration as "hot spots." Informally, they have been dubbed "'million-dollar blocks' to reflect that spending on incarceration was the predominant public sector investment in these neighborhoods," the American Prospect magazine reported.

Although it is not explicitly stated, we can infer that Justyce's neighborhood is...

This means mass incarceration can be totally invisible to some Americans or ever present for others. The same is true for youth incarceration. Muhammad says that like the criminal justice system, "the doors revolve" in the juvenile justice system and "the majority of people incarcerated have a juvenile record. So it's clear that there is this pathway." One common denominator is the lowest-performing schools — those that are the most underfunded and underresourced — are often in areas where incarceration rates are the highest.

Eighth grade was the last grade Thompson completed as a teenager. He started at Hempstead High School, but was kicked out for truancy, and was officially expelled his second year for the same thing. "I didn't need to be pushed out of school," he said. "I needed to be inside a school." Thompson felt his expulsion drove him right into the juvenile justice system.

It didn't help either that his high school already resembled a place of lockup. It had metal detectors; police patrolled the halls; status offenses, misbehavior or fistfights meant you could leave handcuffed in the back of a police car. Thompson thought school was supposed to be a "safe haven," but with his expulsion, his problems spiraled. "It doesn't help living in highly criminal areas and the school system just pushes you back into that area," he said.

The superpredator myth didn't just infect courtrooms. Schools became these militarized "zero-tolerance" zones, where childish behavior was criminalized, and schools, in specific underresourced neighborhoods, became gateways to youth incarceration. It is a phenomenon known as the school-to-prison pipeline.

Muhammad described the pipeline as:

Individuals in certain schools are being pushed out and being disciplined in a way that's very vicious, that's disrespectful and is a disregard for young black bodies within schools. You started to see metal detectors popping up in these different schools and it was connected to zip code. So if it was a zip code that was plagued by mass incarceration — connected to the statistics that come out of the Bureau of Justice highlighting the different communities and city that individuals are returning home to — their children started to get targeted within the schools that they are attending. And not reaching out to help them, but creating an environment where the school is almost just like a prison.

In WNYC's "Caught," Judith Browne Dianis, executive director of a civil rights organization,

How does Justyce's school, Braselton Prep differ from Vincent Thompson's? You are encouraged to review previous chapters of *Dear Martin*.

explained that in schools, talking back became disorderly conduct; writing on desks became vandalism. In some states, schools have to alert the courts if a student is cutting class, and fights at school became felonies. So instead of providing social services in schools, children as young as elementary and secondary are facing draconian-style laws and are shifted into the juvenile justice system, which VICE estimates makes a young person 38 times more likely to enter the criminal justice system as an adult.

A horrific video surfaced from a South Carolina high school in 2015, when a school police officer wrapped his arm around a 16-year-old black girl's neck to forcibly remove her from her desk. The desk flipped over and he proceeded to drag her and throw her across the floor before arresting her. Classmates said the teenager used a cellphone in math class and then refused to leave the classroom. For this, she faced a misdemeanor charge for "disturbing schools." Wright worries that even as we are in a political moment where the school-to-prison pipeline is named and known, which he says is progress — as a society, we have yet to wrestle with the long-term effects of these zero-tolerance policies.

With no school to attend, Thompson spent more time on the streets, more time selling drugs and more time face to face with what he says were "the hardships of the neighborhood." Thompson was arrested again for a drug sale at 17 and sent to Nassau County jail — an adult jail, but he was housed in the adolescent block for one year. There, he turned 18 and got his GED. And five months after his release from jail, Thompson was arrested for manslaughter and sentenced to 12 years in prison.

"Very few people would look at this and say this works," Wright said of the juvenile justice system. "It is almost unanimous that this does not work. The debates are really about how much harm does it do."

It is no accident. "The teenage brain is like a sports car," is the title of "Caught's" fifth episode. It follows the scientific brain research that demonstrates how teenagers are unpredictable and how brains do not mature fully until young people are in their 20s. (This adds to the long-established research of how most people age out of crime.)

In 2002, the Supreme Court deemed it unconstitutional to execute mentally disabled people, because they lack culpability, judgment and impulse control. Wright shows how this opened the door for lawyers to argue for the same treatment for youth — that a teenager is just

How is your school similar or different from the schools described in this article?

If you were a judge, would you accept said lawyers arguments? Why or why not?

as impulsive as someone with intellectual disabilities.

In 2005, the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional for a teenager under the age of 18 to be sentenced to death. Then, in 2010, the Supreme Court ruled that a juvenile could not be sentenced to life without parole for a non-homicidal crime. And in 2012, the Supreme Court ruled that a juvenile could not be sentenced to mandatory life without parole. (This does not bar life sentences for youth, just mandatory ones.)

"Brain science, and juvenile life without parole, I think that's a perfect example of where the conversation around youth incarceration and youth criminalization is driving us into a space to think newly about what is justice," Wright said. "We've done this before, because we've thought newly about what is justice and made it a more punitive and more avenging space. We can think newly about justice and make it more about reform."

Reforms are happening. In Tuleo, Ohio, the documentary "Raised in the System" shows how juvenile court administrator Deborah Hodges has diverted a significant portion of juvenile offenders from detention to a youth assessment center. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative is another well-known project that reduces juvenile detention populations. What began as a pilot project in the 1990s is now present in 300 counties. And in Illinois, youth under 18 are no longer tried as adults, but now automatically sent to juvenile court. Other nationwide programs like Models for Change incorporate mental health and community-based alternatives to youth incarceration.

"There are efforts inside the system and around the system to figure out how can we put rehabilitation back on the table and find ways to intervene with mental health," Wright said. "They are swimming against the tide of what the system is built to do at this moment."

Muhammad says to upend the superpredator myth, what's needed is a cultural upheaval for how we treat juvenile offenders. She added that it is crucial to keep youth in their communities, to connect them with mental health and other social services, to include their families in the reentry process and to provide young people with employment. Beyond the structural reforms, Muhammad stresses that, most important, young people need to be listened to and forgiven.

Thompson served just under 10 years in Sing Sing, Attica, Coxsackie, Eastern and Wallkill Correctional Facility. He tried three different times to enter college programs, but either did not

What else can we do to rehabilitate juveniles? You are encouraged to do research.

qualify or did not make the cut. "It's so hard to get into a college program inside prison, so it took me about eight years to qualify," he said. "It's highly competitive."

At Wallkill, Thompson was accepted into New York University's Prison Education Program and earned his associate's. Now free, Thompson is at NYU working toward his bachelor's in American Studies. In his spare time, he works with Just Leadership, an organization that empowers formerly incarcerated individuals and others most affected by incarceration to craft prison reform through policy. Thompson is helping to create a Just Leadership branch in his hometown, Long Island. For the long term, he plans to start his own organization, "to provide mentorship to the youth and the support that I felt I should have gotten at that age," he said.

"No longer is the criminal justice system swallowing the juvenile justice system," Muhammad said of the research and reform dedicated to youth incarceration. Formerly incarcerated individuals like Thompson are increasingly leaders in this work. And since the juvenile justice system is the starting point of criminalization and incarceration for so many adults in prison, juvenile justice reform is integral to repairing the criminal justice system.

A nationwide cultural shift is still needed, but "you're starting to see a drive for juvenile justice," Muhammad continued. "And by looking at these children, this is the way that we're beginning to free them. And I feel like it's allowing us to humanize these children that should have never been animalized or dehumanized in the first place."

_____ / 8 (1 mark each)

Dear Martin

Answer the following questions of chapters 9-11 of *Dear Martin*.

1. Why was Justyce apprehensive about debating racial profiling?

Content ____ / 1.5 Grammar ____ / 0.5

2. Why is Justyce drinking alcohol?

Content ____ / 1.5 Grammar ____ / 0.5

3. Is Blake's use of the n-word justified? Why or why not?

Content ____ / 1.5 Grammar ____ / 0.5

4. Is Justyce's use of the n-word justified? Why or why not?

Content ____ / 1.5 Grammar ____ / 0.5

5. Why does Doc empathize with Manny?

Content _____ / 1.5 Grammar _____ / 0.5

6. When Doc's peers expected him to 'act' black, how did they expect him to act?

Content _____ / 1.5 Grammar _____ / 0.5

Racial Profiling

In this week's class, we were introduced to racial profiling and arguments against it. Now you will learn and articulate that the arguments for racial profiling. To this end, you will complete independent research and an essay outline. Additionally, you will write an introduction for an essay that is based on the essay outline. To be clear, the essay outline and essay will make a case for racial profiling.

Note: You may use any definition of racial profiling. What follows is the Supreme Court of Canada's:

Racial profiling is *any action taken by one or more people in authority* with respect to a person or group of persons, *for reasons of safety, security, or public order*, that is based on actual or presumed membership in a group defined by race, colour, ethnic or national origin or religion, without factual grounds or reasonable suspicion, that results in the person or group being exposed to differential treatment or scrutiny.

You do not have to limit your essay to the law enforcement's use of racial profiling.

Complete an essay outline (in point form or complete sentences) that argues for racial profiling.

Title of Essay

I. Introduction

A. Background information (definitions, facts, issues, questions, statistics):

B. Thesis Statement (argument or opinion and **2** points, proofs, or supporting ideas):

II. Body Paragraph #1

- A.

 (Supporting idea #1)
1.

 (Example)
2.

 (Details)

- B. _____
(Supporting idea #2)
- I. _____
(Example)
2. _____
(Details)

II. Body Paragraph #2

- A. _____
(Supporting idea #1)
- I. _____
(Example)
2. _____
(Details)
- B. _____
(Supporting idea #2)
- I. _____
(Example)
2. _____
(Details)

V. Conclusion

- A. _____
(Restatement of the thesis/summary of aspects)
- B. _____
(Memorable thought or question)

Olympiads School/II English/Homework 5

Write an introduction for your essay outline.

Opening: The first sentence “hooks” the reader with an engaging statement or question.	0.25 0.5 0.75 1
Background Information: There is a clear and concise introduction to the topic.	0.25 0.5 0.75 1
Thesis Statement: There is a clear, focused, and tenable argument with 2 supporting ideas.	0.25 0.5 0.75 1
Style: There is strong diction and a variety of sentence structures.	0.25 0.5 0.75 1
Grammar: There are no grammatical errors.	0.25 0.5 0.75 1