

# Social Justice Watch 0625

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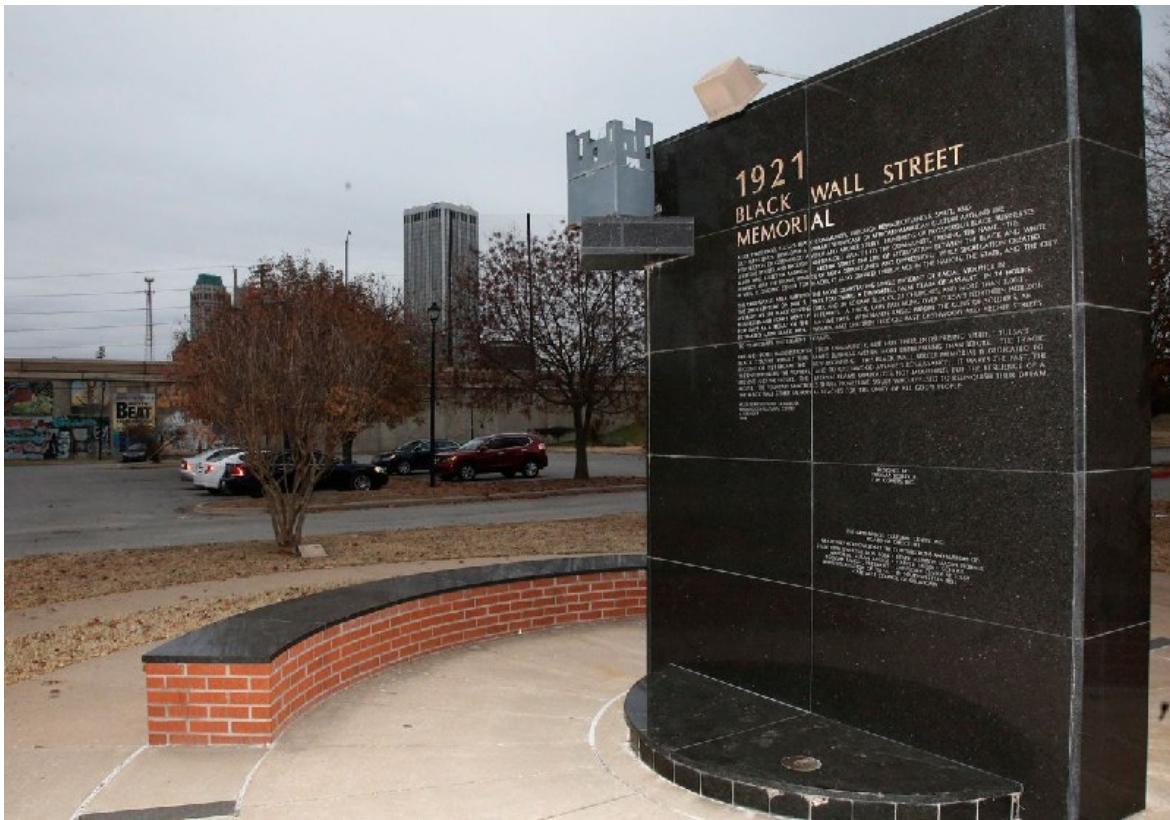
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# 图集精选

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Brianna Duarte  
@brriiduarte

Let's get this straight... even if you're doing something "you're not supposed to do," YOU DONT DESERVE TO DIE. Running away from police doesn't warrant death. Theft doesn't warrant death. Resisting arrest doesn't warrant death. Etc. Y'all forget the value of a person's life.



Because of "Watchmen." Decades of historians have been trying to let the world know about this massacre, and it took an alternate history comic book drama to break the wall of racism. IDK whether to laugh or cry, but let no one say fiction has no power in the real world. [link](#) [source](#) [wiki](#)

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justiceforgeorgefloyd

...





6,549 likes

**justiceforgeorgefloyd** This 27-years-old Muslim woman was forced to pull down her pants during a body check up at Boston airport. Her private parts were patted publicly.

Then, officers even removed her underwear. She told them she was on her period & was wearing a pad, but they threatened to arrest her. They pulled out her menstrual pad & thoroughly checked it. "It was really traumatic. They removed & opened up everything: my bra, my underwear. At that moment, I literally wanted to melt down due to humiliation." ~Zainab Merchant.

Zainab says she is a Muslim & wears hijab, so she faced this humiliation despite the fact that she is US CITIZEN!!

[View all 177 comments](#)

2 days ago

This is sexual harassment. Y'all just used a woman to do it that's the only difference. Until the laws and the system apply to everyone FUCK AMERICA.  
[source](#)

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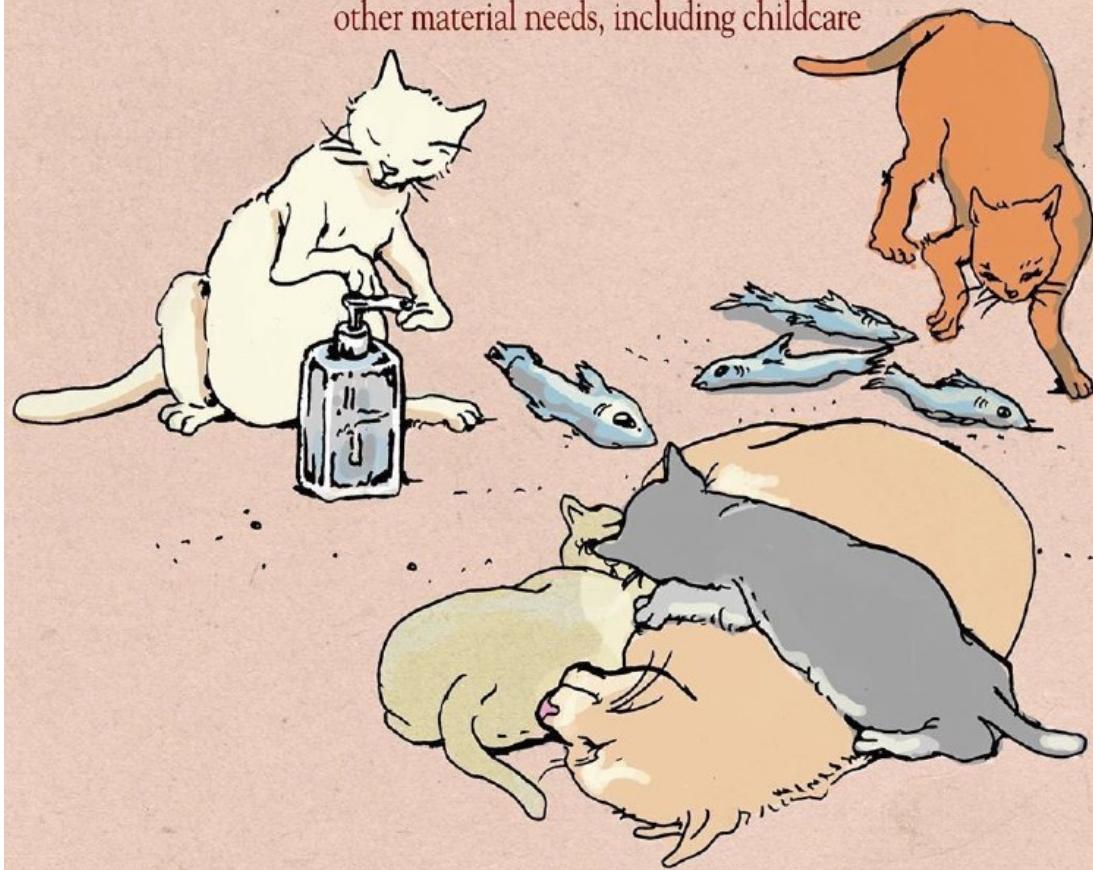


As a woman, I just want the same rights as a rattlesnake. [source](#)

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# **REPRODUCTIVE LABORERS**

protest supporters who provide  
food, water, hand sanitizer and  
other material needs, including childcare



## FRONTLINERS

use umbrellas to guard against projectiles and cameras while keeping hands free for when help is needed

## SHIELD SOLDIERS

frontliners who use impromptu shields to form a first line of defense



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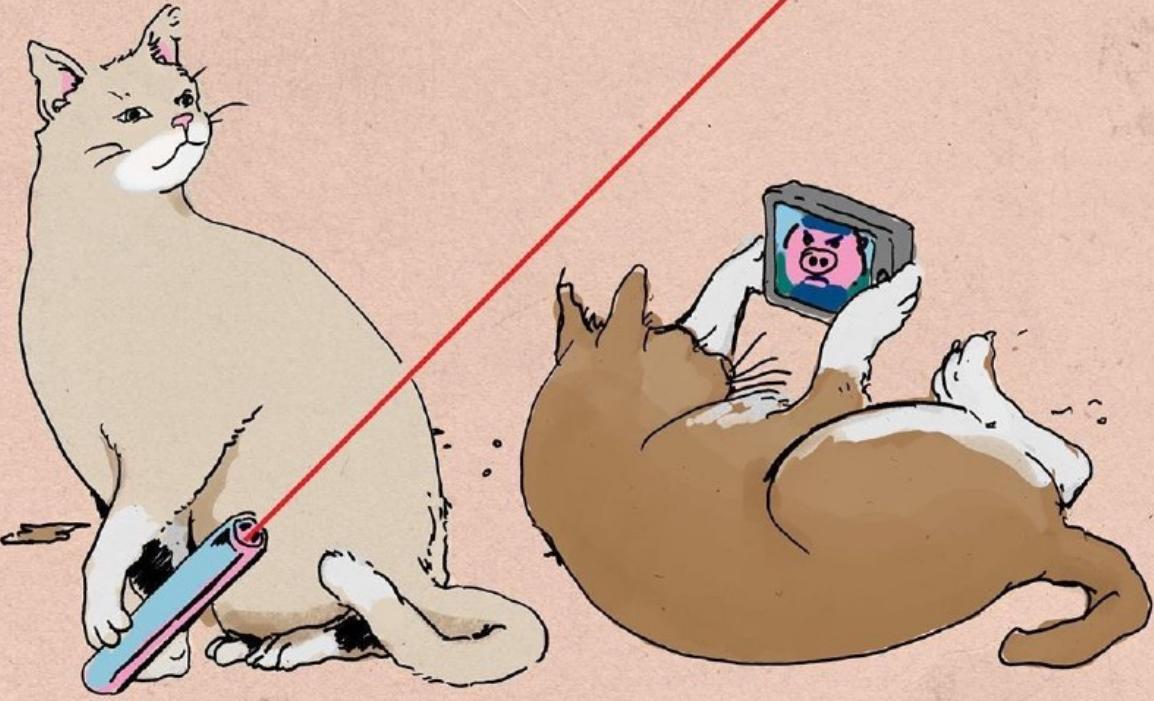
# FIRE SQUAD

protestors who use water and  
traffic cones to suppress  
and extinguish teargas containers



## **LIGHT MAGES**

protestors who use laser pointers to obstruct surveillance cameras, drones and police visors



## **COPWATCH**

protest supporters who use phones to record violent police and document police tactics and weaponry

# MEDICS

protest supporters who are able to treat injuries  
or have materials to treat teargas exposure



## ONLINE COMMS

online protestors who report on police strategies and provide protestors with real-time strategic updates using apps like Signal

## DESIGNERS

protest supporters who make inspiring images, infographics or banners for protestors



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# 消息精选

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[telegra.ph/White-Fragility-Why-Its-So-Hard-to-Talk-to-White-People-About-Racism-06-20](https://telegra.ph/White-Fragility-Why-Its-So-Hard-to-Talk-to-White-People-About-Racism-06-20)

Telegraph

White Fragility: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism

Editor's Note: As frequently mentioned here, global learning does not require crossing a national border. Indeed, engaging thoughtfully across cultures is sometimes even more challenging at home, where biases and assumptions are entrenched over lifetimes...

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Planned parenthood offers STD testing/treatment, cancer screening, infertility services etc. not only abortions. Even if they did only offer abortion services WHY DO YALL CARE. If a woman wants an abortion that is no ones business but theirs. [source](#)

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"In a racist society it is not enough to be non-racist. We must be anti-racist." - Angela Davis

Nothing but RESPECT to this KING      [source](#)

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"After being slapped in the face for hours, he was compelled to accept an affidavit stating that he tried to subvert the gov by receiving funds from abroad"

[english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/6181e6aa2317-breaking-news-lawyer-accuses-china-of-extracting-confession-by-torture.html](https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/6181e6aa2317-breaking-news-lawyer-accuses-china-of-extracting-confession-by-torture.html)

Kyodo News+

Human rights lawyer accuses China of extracting confession by torture  
Chinese lawyer Wang Quanzhang, who was jailed for subversion as part of a nationwide crackdown on legal rights activists, says he was tortured by hitting and kicking during interrogations as well as forced to plead guilty by authorities

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[telegra.ph/In-China-a-Lawsuit-Galvanizes-the-Transgender-Rights-Movement-06-22](#)

Telegraph

In China, a Lawsuit Galvanizes the Transgender Rights Movement  
Days before starting his new job at an events company in the southern city of Guangzhou in February, Eddy decided it was time to have “the talk” with his boss. The 25-year-old — whose name has been changed for privacy reasons — is transgender, and he’d learned...

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[telegra.ph/Nobody-Ever-Says-You-Only-Got-Into-MIT-Because-Youre-an-Asian-Man-06-23](#)

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Imagine someone u love is fast asleep in bed after a long day of working to help others. Imagine that while she is asleep armed strangers break down her door & shoot her in her bed 8 times. If this was ur daughter or sister, u would want justice. [#BreonnaTalyor](#) deserves the same. [source](#)

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cop finds a tampon in their frappuccino: investigation is opened immediately

cops murder a black woman in her own home while she's asleep: no investigation, one of three officers involved is fired months later only due to national outrage [source](#)

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# In China, a Lawsuit Galvanizes the Transgender Rights Movement

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Days before starting his new job at an events company in the southern city of Guangzhou in February, Eddy decided it was time to have “the talk” with his boss.

The 25-year-old — whose name has been changed for privacy reasons — is transgender, and he’d learned through experience that his gender identity might cause issues with his new manager, a married woman in her 40s. He felt it would be better to be open from the beginning.

To his relief, the woman responded positively to their initial chat. “She said she was OK with it and emphasized she accepted and respected her sexual minority colleagues,” Eddy tells Sixth Tone.

But once Eddy started work, he quickly realized his boss’s acceptance only stretched so far.

When assigning tasks in the staff work group on social app WeChat, the woman

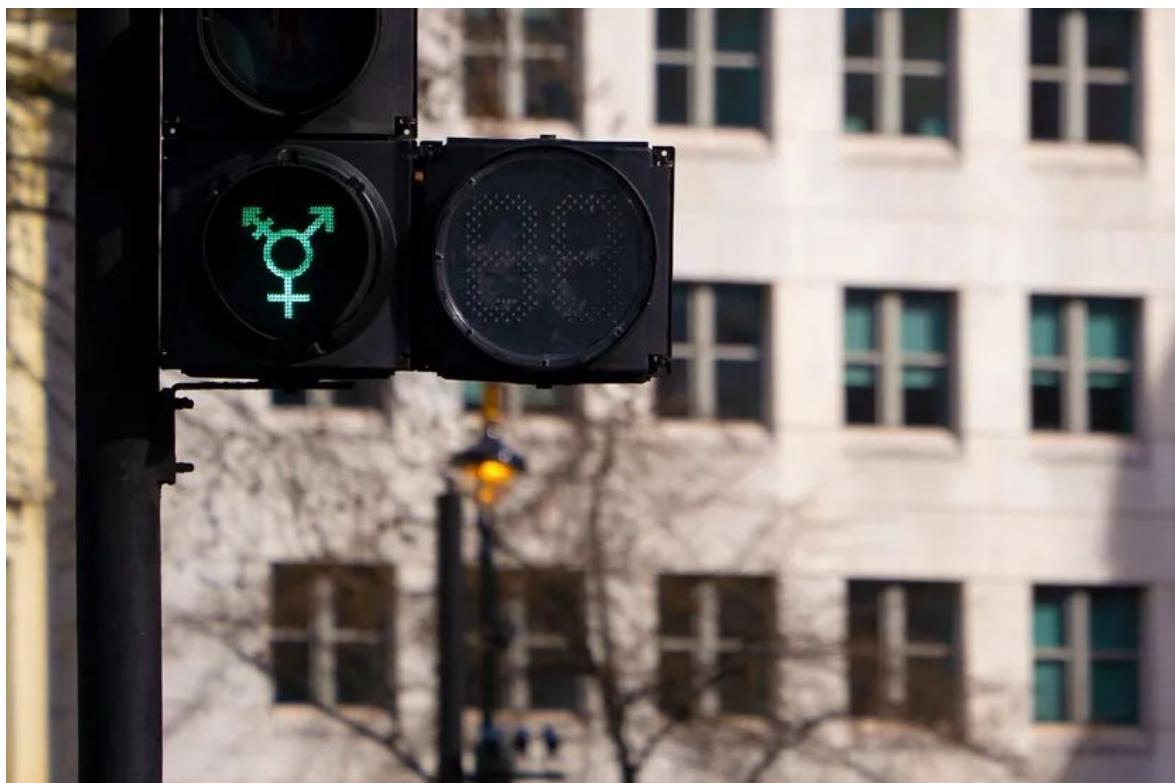
referred to Eddy as “she.” Eddy messaged her privately, asking if she could use the male pronoun in the future. This time, however, she was less understanding.

“She withdrew the message, but claimed I was asking for special treatment,” Eddy says.

Over the following week, Eddy tried to smooth things over with his boss. She asked him to make a list of issues to which she should pay attention, which he did. But when Eddy requested to have a single room or share with a male colleague on business trips, the boss refused, asserting it was “impossible” for anyone to see him as a man.

By May, Eddy felt so uncomfortable he decided to quit.

“It got awkward and affected my enthusiasm for my work,” he says. “I chose this job because I thought I wouldn’t have to handle this kind of issue here, but it still happened.”



Ross Deane/500px/People Visual

Eddy’s experience may be familiar to many of China’s estimated 4 million

transgender individuals. The Chinese public has become more tolerant toward sexual minorities over recent years, but not all LGBT groups have benefitted equally: The trans community remains largely invisible in society, with members consistently reporting they face barriers at home and at work.

Workplace discrimination is one of the most severe issues. According to a 2017 report, the unemployment rate among transgender Chinese is nearly 12% — three times higher than the official national rate at the time. Over 40% choose not to express their gender identity at work.

The pressure to conform to gender norms in the office — and fear of the consequences for not doing so — takes a severe toll on the mental health of China's trans workers, according to Huang Xi, founder of the Psychological Team for Trans People, a Guangzhou-based nonprofit that offers psychological support to transgender individuals.

"Trans people experience high levels of social and workplace discrimination and low levels of support, which leads to depression and anxiety," says Huang.

According to Huang, it's still common for trans people who come out at work to be discriminated against, fired, or demoted, which leads many to conceal their gender identities. Those working in state-owned enterprises and government units tend to be especially fearful, she says.

"Getting a promotion is hard for them, because employers might feel their mental state isn't stable, or they'll have surgery in the future, which they (employers) consider very troublesome," says Huang.

Now, however, transgender Chinese are starting to push back.

This past December, a court in the eastern city of Hangzhou heard one of China's first employment rights lawsuits involving discrimination against a transgender individual. The plaintiff, 31-year-old Jessy Ma, sued her former employer for unfair dismissal, having been fired shortly after undergoing gender confirmation surgery in October 2018.

Ma, who identifies and dresses as a woman, had been open about her gender identity since joining the cultural promotion agency in 2015. After she returned to work two months after her surgery, however, she says the company's human resources manager asked her to resign, since the firm was uncertain whether to

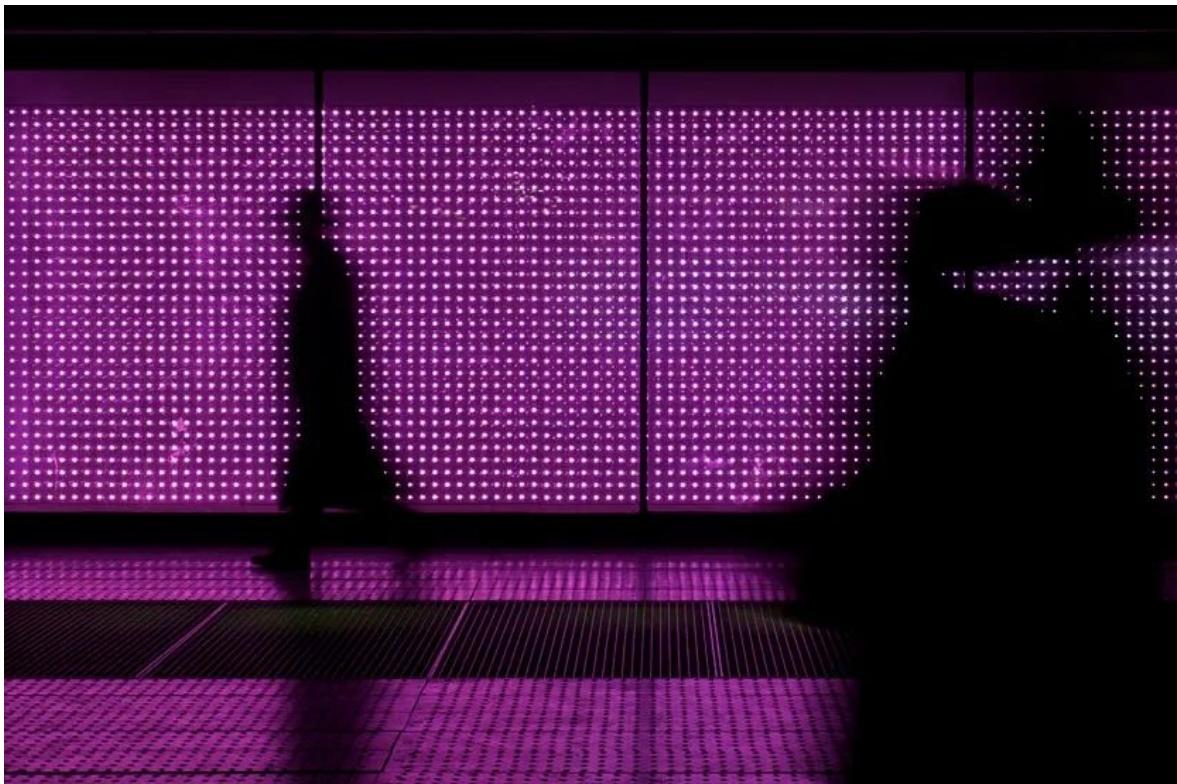
assign her a male or female role.

When Ma refused, the company terminated her contract on grounds of “excessive lateness.” Ma disputed this, arguing the firm had a flexible working culture and that she was the only person fired despite arriving at the same time as several other colleagues.

The case has triggered widespread discussion on Chinese social media, bringing issues such as gender reassignment and transgender rights further into the public consciousness than ever before. Ma, who sued for 10,000 yuan (\$1,400) in compensation and a public apology from her former company, tells Sixth Tone she hopes to inspire others to stand up and demand equal treatment.

“What I want is not just a winning outcome, but to help the general population know more about the transgender community and encourage more trans people to be who they really are,” says Ma.

In January, the court ruled against Ma, concluding there was insufficient evidence that her dismissal was related to her transgender identity. But Ma appealed soon after, and a second hearing took place in Hangzhou May 28. The verdict of this second hearing has yet to be announced.



## E+/People Visual

Zhang Jinghui, head attorney at Beijing Juan-Yong Law Firm, says workplace discrimination cases are difficult for former employees to win, unless they're meticulous in collecting evidence. But if Ma does emerge victorious, it would give other transgender people more confidence that China's legal system will give them a fair hearing, he adds.

"Pluralism is a future trend that needs to be propelled by some landmark, ground-breaking cases," says Zhang.

For Zhang, the courts offer the best avenue for the transgender community to assert their rights for equal treatment. Given the group's relatively small size compared to other social minorities, the lawyer believes it's unrealistic to expect the government to pass legislation focusing on transgender issues at this stage.

The Supreme People's Court, however, might be more easily persuaded to act, according to Zhang. If there are dozens of employment rights lawsuits involving transgender individuals and the cases attract public attention, he says the court may issue judicial interpretations and documents specifying under what conditions employers may legally terminate contracts with members of sexual minority groups.

Transgender Chinese have already scored some notable legal victories. In 2017, a plaintiff from the southwestern city of Guiyang filed a personality infringement lawsuit under China's tort law, alleging a company had fired him because of his gender expression.

The court was in favor of the plaintiff, concluding "the individual's gender identity and gender expression fall under the scope of protection of general personality rights" — the first time the terms "gender identity" and "gender expression" had been used in a Chinese legal judgment.

In another similar case in January, the judge recognized the importance of sex reassignment surgery and called on employers and their staff to treat transgender colleagues with tolerance.

Ma's willingness to fight back against her employer has made a deep impression on Eddy, the former music events company employee. He admits that if he'd been in her situation, he probably would have resigned to avoid trouble. But he

realizes that attitude can be self-defeating.

“After a while, I might find I have nowhere left to go,” he says.

Years of worrying about fitting in have worn Eddy down. As a cognitive science student in the United States, he lived as a woman for four years, fearing that coming out as transgender would condemn him to a lifetime of misery and marginalization. His struggles with his gender identity caused him to become depressed.

In 2017, Eddy moved back to China and started a 10-month internship in the southern city of Shenzhen. He earned the respect of his boss and was well liked by his colleagues, who assumed he was a lesbian because of his masculine gender expression. But he kept everyone at a distance, feeling it’d be unsafe to come out as transgender.

“I wish I could have lived as my authentic self and connected with my colleagues on a deeper level,” Eddy says. “But if I had come out, I knew I would’ve been treated differently, and it wasn’t a risk I could afford to take.”



Adriana Duduleanu/EyeEm/Getty Creative/People Visual

Huang, the nonprofit founder, says Chinese companies are gradually becoming more welcoming toward LGBT employees. But few employers take steps to accommodate the needs of trans individuals, leaving many employees feeling alienated.

“Driven by the pink economy, companies want to establish a diverse and inclusive corporate image and culture,” says Huang. “But their friendship is mainly aimed at the ‘LGB’ group. The ‘T’ is often ignored.”

Huang hopes domestic firms will eventually emulate multinational companies like Goldman Sachs and Lloyds Bank, which provide transgender employees undergoing gender confirmation surgery with financial support and paid vacation.

“It’ll take a long time for domestic enterprises to achieve that,” says Huang. “But if some multinational firms are willing to bring these policies to China, then it’ll show it’s possible to implement them here as well.”

There are some signs good practices are starting to spread. When Zx Ventures, part of global brewing conglomerate Anheuser-Busch InBev, opened offices in Shanghai three years ago, the firm provided male, female, and gender-neutral bathrooms throughout the building.



But for now, many transgender workers continue to live in fear. Kim, a 30-year-old who works as a mechanical engineer at a state-owned enterprise in Shanghai, had sex reassignment surgery in 2018, but told colleagues the operation was for prostatitis.

“Since the surgery, I’ve been constantly worried about being caught and fired,” says Kim, whose name has also been changed for privacy reasons.

As genderqueer, Kim’s gender expression shifts between masculine and feminine. Inside the company, however, Kim is simply perceived as a man who sometimes wears pink outfits and talks in a woman’s voice. These days, Kim keeps their hair short and tries not to stand out.

“They thought I was weird, and my boss asked me to consider other colleagues’ feelings and wear men’s clothes,” says Kim. “When they laugh at me, I just laugh with them.”

Jude Xiao, a 25-year-old transgender man, feels he’s paid a price for expressing his gender identity. After quitting his sales job in 2018, he applied for more than 300 jobs in Beijing and went on over 20 interviews, but didn’t get a single offer.

One rejection was particularly hard to take. A friend helped Xiao secure an interview at a publishing firm, and he felt the discussion went well, but he didn’t get the job. Later, his friend told him the HR manager had called Xiao “excellent in every way,” but said Xiao’s short undercut hairstyle wasn’t appropriate for a woman.

“I was shocked,” says Xiao. “I couldn’t help wondering if that was the reason I’d failed the other interviews, too.”

Eventually, economic pressures forced Xiao to lower his expectations and apply for less attractive jobs. He ended up taking a job at a movie theater owned by a film group, checking tickets and selling popcorn.

“HR thought it was great to find a graduate like me for such a position,” he says. “I started the day after the interview.”

Xiao now works for the film group’s online platform. His salary has been cut in half since the pandemic emerged, but he’s scared of leaving and being unable to find another job.

“I know it’ll be difficult to do it all over again,” says Xiao. “It makes me anxious.”

After his discouraging experience at the events company, Eddy isn’t sure when he’ll start looking for work. He’s currently helping out at a transgender nonprofit, writing music, translating texts, and organizing events.

“My parents support me financially,” he says. “I have the privilege to avoid working right now. But they don’t know I’m trans yet, so I don’t know how long this can last.”

*Additional reporting: Luo Meihan and Wu Ziyi; editor: Dominic Morgan.*

*(Header image: Falko Mueller Fotodesign/IC)*

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# Nobody Ever Says “You Only Got Into MIT Because You’re an Asian Man”

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Photo courtesy Philip Guo

I started programming when I was 5, first with Logo and then BASIC. The picture above is me, age 9 (with horrible posture). By the time this photo was taken, I had already written several BASIC games that I distributed as shareware on our local BBS. I was fast growing bored, so my parents (both software engineers) gave me the original dragon compiler textbook from their grad school days. That’s when I started learning C and writing my own simple interpreters and compilers. My early interpreters were for BASIC, but by the time I entered high school I had already created a self-hosting compiler for a nontrivial subset

of C. Throughout most of high school, I spent weekends coding in x86 assembly, obsessed with hand-tuning code for the newly released Pentium II chips. When I started my freshman year at MIT as a computer science major, I already had over 10 years of programming experience. So I felt right at home there.

OK, all of the above was a lie. With one exception: That is me in the photo. When it was taken, I didn't even know how to touch-type. My parents were just like, "Quick, pose in front of our new computer!" (Look closely. My fingers aren't even in the right position.) My parents were both humanities majors, and there wasn't a single programming book in my house. In sixth grade I tried teaching myself BASIC for a few weeks, but quit because it was too hard. The only real exposure I had to programming prior to college was taking AP computer science in 11 grade, taught by a math teacher who had learned the material only a month before class started. Despite its shortcomings, that class inspired me to major in computer science in college. But when I started freshman year at MIT, I felt a bit anxious because many of my classmates actually *did* have over 10 years of childhood programming experience; I had less than one.

Even though I didn't grow up in a tech-savvy household and couldn't code my way out of a paper bag, I had one big thing going for me: I *looked like* I was good at programming. Here's me during freshman year of college:



Photo courtesy Philip Guo

As an Asian male student at MIT, I fit society's image of a young programmer. Thus, throughout college, nobody ever said to me (as they said to some other CS students I knew):

- “Well, you only got into MIT because you’re an Asian boy.”
- (*while struggling with a problem set*) “Well, not everyone is cut out for computer science; have you considered majoring in bio?”
- (*after being assigned to a class project team*) “How about you just design the graphics while we handle the backend? It’ll be easier for everyone that way.”
- “Are you sure you know how to do this?”

Although I started off as a complete novice (like everyone once was), I never faced any micro-inequities that impeded my intellectual growth. Throughout college and grad school, I gradually learned more and more via classes, research, and internships, incrementally taking on harder and harder projects, and getting better and better at programming while falling deeper and deeper in love with it. Instead of doing my 10 years of deliberate practice from ages 8 to 18, I did mine

from ages 18 to 28. And nobody ever got in the way of my learning—not even inadvertently—probably because I looked like the sort of person who would be good at such things. (The software engineer Tess Rinearson writes about this dynamic from a different perspective in her essay “On Technical Entitlement.”)

Instead of facing implicit bias or stereotype threat, I had the privilege of implicit endorsement. For instance, whenever I attended technical meetings, people would assume that I knew what I was doing (regardless of whether I did or not) and treat me accordingly. If I stared at someone in silence and nodded as they were talking, they would assume that I understood, not that I was clueless. Nobody ever talked down to me, and I always got the benefit of the doubt in technical settings.

As a result, I was able to fake it till I made it, often landing jobs whose postings required skills I hadn’t yet learned but knew that I could pick up on the spot. Most of my interviews for research assistantships and summer internships were quite casual—people just gave me the chance to try. And after enough rounds of practice, I actually did start knowing what I was doing. As I gained experience, I was able to land more meaningful programming jobs, which led to a virtuous cycle of further improvement.

This kind of privilege that I and other people who looked like me possessed was silent, manifested not in what people said to us, but rather in what they didn’t say. We had the privilege to spend enormous amounts of time developing technical expertise without anyone’s interference or implicit discouragement. Sure, we worked really hard, but our efforts directly translated into skill improvements without much loss due to interpersonal friction. Because we looked the part.

In contrast, ask any computer science major who isn’t from a majority demographic (i.e., white or Asian male), and I guarantee that he or she has encountered discouraging comments such as “You know, not everyone is cut out for computer science.” They probably still remember the words and actions that have hurt the most, even though those making the remarks often aren’t trying to harm.

For example, one of my good friends took the Intro to Java course during freshman year and enjoyed it. She wanted to get better at Java GUI programming, so she got a summer research assistantship at the MIT Media Lab.

However, instead of letting her build the GUI (like the job ad described), the supervisor assigned her the mind-numbing task of hand-transcribing audio clips all summer long. He assigned a new male student to build the GUI application. And it wasn't like that student was a programming prodigy—he was also a freshman with the same amount of (limited) experience that she had. The other student spent the summer getting better at GUI programming while she just grinded away mindlessly transcribing audio. As a result, she grew resentful and shied away from learning more CS.

Thinking about this story always angers me. Here was someone with a natural interest who took the initiative to learn more and was denied the opportunity to do so. I have no doubt that my friend could have gotten good at programming—and really enjoyed it—if she had the same opportunities as I did. (It didn't help that when she was accepted to MIT, her aunt—whose son had been rejected—congratulated her by saying, "Well, you only got into MIT because you're a girl.")

Over a decade later, she now does some programming at her research job, but wishes that she had learned more back in college. However, she had such a negative association with everything CS-related that it was hard to motivate herself to do so for fear of being shot down again.

One trite retort is "Well, your friend should've been tougher and not given up so easily. If she wanted it badly enough, she should've tried again, even knowing that she might face resistance." These sorts of remarks aggravate me. Writing code for a living isn't like being a Navy SEAL sharpshooter. Programming is seriously *not* that demanding, so you shouldn't need to be a tough-as-nails superhero to enter this profession.

Just look at this photo of me from a software engineering summer internship:



Photo courtesy Philip Guo

Even though I was hacking on a hardware simulator in C++, which sounds mildly hard-core, I was actually pretty squishy, chillin' in my cubicle and often taking extended lunch breaks. All of the guys around me (yes, the programmers were all men, with the exception of one older woman who didn't hang out with us) were also fairly squishy. These guys made a fine living and were good at what they did; but they weren't superheroes. The most hardship that one of the guys faced all summer was staying up late playing *Doom 3* and then rolling into the office dead-tired the next morning. Anyone with enough practice and motivation could have done our jobs, and most other programming and CS-related jobs as well. Seriously, companies aren't looking to hire the next Steve Wozniak—they just want to ship code that works.

It frustrates me that people not in the majority demographic often need to be tough as nails to succeed in this field, constantly bearing the lasting effects of thousands of micro-inequities. *Psychology Today* notes that according to one researcher, Mary Rowe:

[M]icro-inequities often had serious cumulative, harmful effects, resulting in hostile work environments and continued minority discrimination in

public and private workplaces and organizations. What makes micro-inequities particularly problematic is that they consist in micro-messages that are hard to recognize for victims, bystanders and perpetrators alike. When victims of micro-inequities do recognize the micro-messages ... it is exceedingly hard to explain to others why these small behaviors can be a huge problem.

In contrast, people who look like me can just kinda do programming for work if we want, or not do it, or switch into it later, or out of it again, or work quietly, or nerd-rant on how Ruby sucks or rocks or whatever, or name-drop monads. And nobody will make remarks about our appearance, about whether we're truly dedicated hackers, or how our behavior might reflect badly on "our kind" of people. *That's* silent technical privilege.

Ideally, we want to spur interest in young people from underrepresented demographics who might never otherwise think to pursue CS or STEM studies. There are great people and organizations working toward this goal. Although I think that increased and broader participation is critical, a more immediate concern is reducing attrition of those already in the field. For instance, according to a 2012 STEM education report to the president:

[E]conomic forecasts point to a need for producing, over the next decade, approximately 1 million more college graduates in STEM fields than expected under current assumptions. Fewer than 40% of students who enter college intending to major in a STEM field complete a STEM degree. Merely increasing the retention of STEM majors from 40% to 50% would generate three quarters of the targeted 1 million additional STEM degrees over the next decade.

That's why I plan to start by taking steps to encourage and retain those who already want to learn. So here's a thought experiment: For every white or Asian male expert programmer you know, imagine a parallel universe where they were of another ethnicity and/or gender but had the exact same initial interest and aptitude levels. Would they still have been willing to devote the 10,000-plus hours of deliberate practice to achieve mastery in the face of dozens or hundreds of instances of implicit discouragement they would inevitably encounter over the years? Sure, some super-resilient outliers would, but many wouldn't. Many of us would quit, even though we had the potential and interest to thrive in this field.

I hope to live in a future where people who already have the interest to pursue CS or programming don't self-select themselves out of the field. I want those people to experience what I was privileged enough to have gotten in college and beyond: unimpeded opportunities to develop expertise in something that they find beautiful, practical, and fulfilling.

*This piece is adapted from Guo's blog.*

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# White Fragility: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism

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**Editor's Note:** As frequently mentioned here, global learning does not require crossing a national border. Indeed, engaging thoughtfully across cultures is sometimes even more challenging at home, where biases and assumptions are entrenched over lifetimes and generations. The 2014-15 academic year began with Ferguson and ended with Baltimore; now we have Charleston. At globalsl, we find it more important than ever to include a focus on *domestic* cross-cultural cooperation, learning, and community-driven development. With the permission of the Editor at The Good Men Project, where this content first appeared, we begin with a post that may support educators' and community organizers' efforts to make progress in respect to conversations on race. – EH

## White Fragility: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism

*Dr. Robin DiAngelo explains why white people implode when talking about race.*

I am white. I have spent years studying what it means to be white in a society that proclaims race meaningless, yet is deeply divided by race. This is what I have learned: Any white person living in the United States will develop opinions about race simply by swimming in the water of our culture. But mainstream sources—schools, textbooks, media—don't provide us with the multiple perspectives we need.

Yes, we will develop strong emotionally laden opinions, but they will not be informed opinions. Our socialization renders us racially illiterate. When you add a lack of humility to that illiteracy (because we don't know what we don't

know), you get the break-down we so often see when trying to engage white people in meaningful conversations about race.

Mainstream dictionary definitions reduce racism to individual racial prejudice and the intentional actions that result. The people that commit these intentional acts are deemed bad, and those that don't are good. If we are against racism and unaware of committing racist acts, we can't be racist; racism and being a good person have become mutually exclusive. But this definition does little to explain how racial hierarchies are consistently reproduced.

***Yes, we will develop strong emotionally laden opinions, but they will not be informed opinions. Our socialization renders us racially illiterate.***

Social scientists understand racism as a multidimensional and highly adaptive system—a system that ensures an unequal distribution of resources between racial groups. Because whites built and dominate all significant institutions, (often at the expense of and on the uncompensated labor of other groups), their interests are embedded in the foundation of U.S. society.

While individual whites may be against racism, they still benefit from the distribution of resources controlled by their group. Yes, an individual person of color can sit at the tables of power, but the overwhelming majority of decision-makers will be white. Yes, white people can have problems and face barriers, but systematic racism won't be one of them. This distinction—between individual prejudice and a system of unequal institutionalized racial power—is fundamental. One cannot understand how racism functions in the U.S. today if one ignores group power relations.

This systemic and institutional control allows those of us who are white in North America to live in a social environment that protects and insulates us from race-based stress. We have organized society to reproduce and reinforce our racial interests and perspectives. Further, we are centered in all matters deemed normal, universal, benign, neutral and good. Thus, we move through a wholly racialized world with an unracialized identity (e.g. white people can represent all of humanity, people of color can only represent their racial selves).

***We have organized society to reproduce and reinforce our racial interests and perspectives. Further, we are centered in all matters deemed normal, universal, benign, neutral and good.***

Challenges to this identity become highly stressful and even intolerable. The following are examples of the kinds of challenges that trigger racial stress for white people:

- Suggesting that a white person's viewpoint comes from a racialized frame of reference (challenge to objectivity);
- People of color talking directly about their own racial perspectives (challenge to white taboos on talking openly about race);
- People of color choosing not to protect the racial feelings of white people in regards to race (challenge to white racial expectations and need/entitlement to racial comfort);
- People of color not being willing to tell their stories or answer questions about their racial experiences (challenge to the expectation that people of color will serve us);
- A fellow white not providing agreement with one's racial perspective (challenge to white solidarity);
- Receiving feedback that one's behavior had a racist impact (challenge to white racial innocence);
- Suggesting that group membership is significant (challenge to individualism);
- An acknowledgment that access is unequal between racial groups (challenge to meritocracy);
- Being presented with a person of color in a position of leadership (challenge to white authority);
- Being presented with information about other racial groups through, for example, movies in which people of color drive the action but are not in stereotypical roles, or multicultural education (challenge to white centrality).

Not often encountering these challenges, we withdraw, defend, cry, argue, minimize, ignore, and in other ways push back to regain our racial position and equilibrium. I term that push back *white fragility*.

This concept came out of my on-going experience leading discussions on race, racism, white privilege and white supremacy with primarily white audiences. It became clear over time that white people have extremely low thresholds for enduring any discomfort associated with challenges to our racial worldviews.

We can manage the first round of challenge by ending the discussion through

platitudes—usually something that starts with “People just need to,” or “Race doesn’t really have any meaning to me,” or “Everybody’s racist.” Scratch any further on that surface, however, and we fall apart.

Socialized into a deeply internalized sense of superiority and entitlement that we are either not consciously aware of or can never admit to ourselves, we become highly fragile in conversations about race. We experience a challenge to our racial worldview as a challenge to our very identities as good, moral people. It also challenges our sense of rightful place in the hierarchy. Thus, we perceive any attempt to connect us to the system of racism as a very unsettling and unfair moral offense.

***It became clear over time that white people have extremely low thresholds for enduring any discomfort associated with challenges to our racial worldviews.***

The following patterns make it difficult for white people to understand racism as a *system* and lead to the dynamics of white fragility. While they do not apply to every white person, they are well-documented overall:

***Segregation:*** Most whites live, grow, play, learn, love, work and die primarily in social and geographic racial segregation. Yet, our society does not teach us to see this as a loss. Pause for a moment and consider the magnitude of this message: We lose nothing of value by having no cross-racial relationships. In fact, the whiter our schools and neighborhoods are, the more likely they are to be seen as “good.” The implicit message is that there is no inherent value in the presence or perspectives of people of Color. This is an example of the relentless messages of white superiority that circulate all around us, shaping our identities and worldviews.

***The Good/Bad Binary:*** The most effective adaptation of racism over time is the idea that racism is conscious bias held by mean people. If we are not aware of having negative thoughts about people of color, don’t tell racist jokes, are nice people, and even have friends of color, then we cannot be racist. Thus, a person is either racist or not racist; if a person is racist, that person is bad; if a person is not racist, that person is good. Although racism does of course occur in individual acts, these acts are part of a larger system that we all participate in. The focus on individual incidences prevents the analysis that is necessary in order to challenge this larger system. The good/bad binary is the fundamental misunderstanding driving white defensiveness about being connected to racism.

We simply do not understand how socialization and implicit bias work.

**Individualism:** Whites are taught to see themselves as individuals, rather than as part of a racial group. Individualism enables us to deny that racism is structured into the fabric of society. This erases our history and hides the way in which wealth has accumulated over generations and benefits us, *as a group*, today. It also allows us to distance ourselves from the history and actions of our group. Thus we get very irate when we are “accused” of racism, because as individuals, we are “different” from other white people and expect to be seen as such; we find intolerable any suggestion that our behavior or perspectives are typical of our group as a whole.

**Entitlement to racial comfort:** In the dominant position, whites are almost always racially comfortable and thus have developed unchallenged expectations to remain so. We have not had to build tolerance for racial discomfort and thus when racial discomfort arises, whites typically respond as if something is “wrong,” and blame the person or event that triggered the discomfort (usually a person of color). This blame results in a socially-sanctioned array of responses towards the perceived source of the discomfort, including: penalization; retaliation; isolation and refusal to continue engagement. Since racism is necessarily uncomfortable in that it is oppressive, white insistence on racial comfort guarantees racism will not be faced except in the most superficial of ways.

***In fact, the whiter our schools and neighborhoods are, the more likely they are to be seen as “good.” The implicit message is that there is no inherent value in the presence or perspectives of people of Color.***

**Racial Arrogance:** Most whites have a very limited understanding of racism because we have not been trained to think in complex ways about it and because it benefits white dominance not to do so. Yet, we have no compunction about debating the knowledge of people who have thought complexly about race. Whites generally feel free to dismiss these informed perspectives rather than have the humility to acknowledge that they are unfamiliar, reflect on them further, or seek more information.

**Racial Belonging:** White people enjoy a deeply internalized, largely unconscious sense of racial belonging in U.S. society. In virtually any situation or image deemed valuable in dominant society, whites belong. The interruption

of racial belonging is rare and thus destabilizing and frightening to whites and usually avoided.

**Psychic freedom:** Because race is constructed as residing in people of color, whites don't bear the social burden of race. We move easily through our society without a sense of ourselves as racialized. Race is for people of color to think about—it is what happens to “them”—they can bring it up if it is an issue for them (although if they do, we can dismiss it as a personal problem, the race card, or the reason for their problems). This allows whites much more psychological energy to devote to other issues and prevents us from developing the stamina to sustain attention on an issue as charged and uncomfortable as race.

**Constant messages that we are more valuable:** Living in a white dominant context, we receive constant messages that we are better and more important than people of color. For example: our centrality in history textbooks, historical representations and perspectives; our centrality in media and advertising; our teachers, role-models, heroes and heroines; everyday discourse on “good” neighborhoods and schools and who is in them; popular TV shows centered around friendship circles that are all white; religious iconography that depicts God, Adam and Eve, and other key figures as white. While one may explicitly reject the notion that one is inherently better than another, one cannot avoid internalizing the message of white superiority, as it is ubiquitous in mainstream culture.

***Because race is constructed as residing in people of color, whites don't bear the social burden of race. We move easily through our society without a sense of ourselves as racialized.***

These privileges and the white fragility that results prevent us from listening to or comprehending the perspectives of people of color and bridging cross-racial divides. The antidote to white fragility is on-going and life-long, and includes sustained engagement, humility, and education. We can begin by:

- Being willing to tolerate the discomfort associated with an honest appraisal and discussion of our internalized superiority and racial privilege.
- Challenging our own racial reality by acknowledging ourselves as racial beings with a particular and limited perspective on race.
- Attempting to understand the racial realities of people of color through authentic interaction rather than through the media or unequal relationships.

- Taking action to address our own racism, the racism of other whites, and the racism embedded in our institutions—e.g., get educated and act.

***The antidote to white fragility is on-going and life-long, and includes sustained engagement, humility, and education.***

“Getting it” when it comes to race and racism challenges our very identities as good white people. It’s an ongoing and often painful process of seeking to uncover our socialization at its very roots. It asks us to rebuild this identity in new and often uncomfortable ways. But I can testify that it is also the most exciting, powerful, intellectually stimulating and emotionally fulfilling journey I have ever undertaken. It has impacted every aspect of my life—personal and professional.

I have a much deeper and more complex understanding of how society works. I can challenge much more racism in my daily life, and I have developed cherished and fulfilling cross-racial friendships I did not have before.

I do not expect racism to end in my lifetime, and I know that I continue to have problematic racist patterns and perspectives. Yet, I am also confident that I do less harm to people of color than I used to. This is not a minor point of growth, for it impacts my lived experience and that of the people of color who interact with me. If you are white I urge you to take the first step—let go of your racial certitude and reach for humility.

