



# FERGUSON GRAND JURY DECISION RESPONSE

## OVERVIEW:

The eyes of the country will turn to Ferguson again, eager for drama and conflict. The challenge for organizers and activists is to control the local and national narrative, hour by hour, day to day, and for weeks to come.

This document outlines target audiences, talking points, example narratives, example reporter questions, and example tactics.

Throughout every tactic, every visual, every interview, there are two overriding frames that needs to win out: The humanity of young people of color and the moral outrage of the community.

## TARGET AUDIENCES:

Move communities of color locally and nationally toward supporting and joining the movement.

Move the persuadable / educable middle toward understanding and support of the cause.

Ignore the opposition. Haters hate. There is no need to engage them - our narrative will stand in strong contrast to the opposition's negativity and hatred.

## GOALS:

Introduce Choice: Everyone listening/watching has a choice to make--- which side are you on?

Invite: Disrupt the notion that there are 3 parties to the conversation: public, police and protesters.

Invite people in, address the issues at 10k feet and deliver opportunities to plug in.

**Humanize. Humanize. Humanize.**

## TALKING POINTS:

*Echo the voices of the people and articulate the meaning of the protest chants.*

### Humanity of Mike Brown & Young People of Color

- All of this has happened because a community and a family lost their unarmed child at the hands of a law enforcement officer. That is an inexcusable act. What comes after that is the measure of any society--- and in this case, the government responded with rubber bullets, tear gas and aspersions cast on a community in trauma. Our elected officials have to lead and finally deal with our broken policing system, if they want to fix this.
- We are all Mike Brown. What happened to Mike Brown and his family could happen to any one of us. Everyday, our children, our parents, even our grandparents get harassed, humiliated, or abused by the police. We cannot let Mike Brown be another tragic statistic.
- We have trained hundreds in non-violent civil disobedience tactics over the last few weeks. That's how we are responding to this moment, but not everyone deals with the events of the last 100+ days in the same way.
- Ferguson is everywhere. Police are killing unarmed people of color all across the country. (Give local examples: John Crawford, Eric Garner...) were all killed by the police. They don't "serve and protect" us, they are killing us.

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### Frustration and Moral Outrage of the Protesters

- Enough is enough. We can no longer tolerate a corrupted system that assaults our safety, our rights, and our dignity. We say no more. We have a moral obligation to stop the police from killing any more unarmed people in our communities.
- We are frustrated by the non-stop cycle of criminalization and violence against people of color by the police. We are human beings. Just walking, driving, or just being Black is not a crime. The daily harassment and humiliation that cops inflict on our families must stop. This is not a game.
- All we wanted was simple justice. Darren Wilson killed Mike Brown. Like anyone who takes a life, Wilson should face a trial by jury. There needs to be open and fair accountability for Mike Brown's death. With today's announcement, that justice was denied. Without justice, there can be no peace in our communities, or in our society.
- Too often cops who have beaten or killed unarmed people of color go free with no accountability. Police are paid by us to serve us and protect us, not kill us. Isn't the legal system supposed to provide equal justice to all?

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# TALKING POINTS:



## On Protest and Movement

- In America, good people must speak up against the failures of our government. We as Americans have a moral obligation to speak up and speak out. We must exercise our freedom to speech even if we have to resort to civil disobedience. This is what true American democracy looks like.
- This is bigger than one decision. Across this nation, communities are coming together to demand change. There is a national movement that goes far beyond this one moment. In America, the people, united, CAN win positive change.
- Today's decision is a start, not an end. We will direct our moral outrage into non-stop, nonviolent action to win meaningful change. Our goal is to end the fear and suffering of children, families, and entire communities that are targeted, harassed and gunned down by police.

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## On Police Violence and Accountability

- The police put on their badge that's paid for by our tax dollars. This badge should mean responsibility to serve us all, but instead they are using it as a shield to hide behind as they profile, harass and kill us. They think they have absolute power, and accountable to no one. The system has been corrupted, and needs to be overhauled.
- Racial bias has no place in policing. Civilian review boards & body cameras are starting points to catch bad actors. But, people are taking the streets because that bias thrives at the heart of our justice system—it's a scourge that must be eliminated. Too many lives have been lost, too many families are grieving and too many communities have been torn apart.
- The police chiefs and our elected officials would have you believe that they are protecting the first amendment rights of protesters, while also issuing a racist dog whistle that the 1st amendment is dangerous. "Don't forget to board your windows!"  
What's happened in Ferguson resonates across the country because the problem is everywhere. Racially biased policing and excessive force has become the status quo in this nation, and we must no longer accept police killings as "business as usual."
- We need a justice system that works to protect us all from murder without recourse. We also need a culture change to stop these acts of police brutality from happening ever again - and that starts with a basic standard of law enforcement recognizing and respecting our humanity.
- While we come together because we are worried about the lives and safety of young people, the police are stocking up on military weapons. Why are the police gearing up with military weapons against the people they are supposed to serve and protect?