



REFLECTIONS AFTER THE DEATH OF GEORGE FLOYD

Jonathan Foster
Angeles Wealth Management, LLC
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It has now been two weeks since the murder of George Floyd by a Minnesota police officer, and one day after he was laid to rest in Houston. I have spent this time watching, reading, learning, and reflecting, as I often do on matters of great importance.

It is impossible to properly express my shock, outrage and anger after watching George Floyd choked to death by a veteran law enforcement officer. This follows on the heels of other acts of senseless police brutality directed at Breonna Taylor and Eric Garner, and the civilian racist attack on Ahmaud Arbery, who's only offense was to be "black while jogging."

Black Lives Matter. It's time for everyone to say this and mean it. This moment in time is about confronting our long history of societal racism against black people in America. Many of us (including me) have self-righteously defended ourselves saying "I'm not prejudiced, it's not my fault!" However, I think the time has come for us all to realize that **if we are not part of the solution, we are indeed part of the problem.**

To use a baseball analogy, many white people grew up on 2nd base and think they hit a double. I'm totally cognizant of my personal free pass into scoring position. Many white people may get offended by this analogy. "I've earned everything I got in life!" or "I have experienced struggle" are common outcries. This might be true, but it needs to be put into perspective.



We have never been followed around by security while shopping. We have never seen an elderly woman clutch her purse tightly while we walk by. We have never worried about where to put our hands after being pulled over by a police car. We have never gone to a job interview where we were the only person of our race in the room. We have never had to ask a friend to hail a cab because they might not stop for us. We have never been asked by a shopkeeper if we can afford the item of clothing we asked to try on. We have never been referred to as “well-spoken.”

Is there a reason for optimism that this can be fixed? I honestly don't know, but we should certainly try to do something. A wise man told me 20 years ago that, **“No great change happens until you reach a moment of great crisis.”** Let us hope that the murder of George Floyd and the groundswell of national protest is this moment of great crisis, the pivotal moment.

“The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference,” was written by Malcom Gladwell in 2000. In his book, Gladwell defines the “Tipping Point” as “...the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point.” He further states that, “Ideas and products and messages and behaviors spread like viruses do.” How apropos for the current collision of the Black Lives Matter protests and the Coronavirus.

In 1971, Gil Scott-Heron released a song entitled ‘The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.’ Excerpts of the lyrics are below;

*“You will not be able to stay home, brother,
You will not be able to plug in, turn on and cop-out.
The Revolution will not go better with Coke,
The Revolution will not fight germs that cause bad breath,
The Revolution will not be televised,
There will be no re-run, brothers,
The revolution will be live.”*

Gil Scott-Heron was right...the revolution is “live,” but it is also on television, computers, smart phones as well as on the streets. We will not be able to look away.

In conclusion, this is a time to reflect and address a single, yet monumental problem in our society...our long history of systemic racism against black people in America. This is a problem of epic proportion, but if we can fix this, a lot of other problems in our society may well fall into place in its wake. I repeat what I said before, **if we are not part of the solution, we are indeed part of the problem.**



"There are decades where nothing happens, and weeks where decades happen."

– Vladimir Lenin (a great quote, though not from a great person)

Sincerely,

Jon

Jonathan R. Foster

President & CEO

Angeles Wealth Management, LLC

429 Santa Monica Blvd. Suite 650

Santa Monica, CA 90401

(310) 857-5840 Office

(310) 776-0200 Cell

JFoster@angeleswealth.com

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For more information please visit our website at:

www.angelesinvestments.com

Santa Monica

429 Santa Monica Blvd, Suite 650

Santa Monica, CA 90401

310.857.5832

New York

375 Park Avenue, Suite 2209

New York, NY 10152

212.451.9290