The Forgotten Good Side of Cops

How Media Shaped The Publics Perception of Cops

By Elisbet Neri
Contribution Writer

There are two sides to a coin and, unfortunately in some cases, one side is more popular than the other.

Police officers are pigs. They do not serve, they do not protect. They abuse their authority and cannot be trusted. It is not hard to come to such conclusions when the media is constantly flooded with news about cops using excessive force and abusing their authority.

There is no denying that bad police officers are out there. Thank you media. But let us not assume that good police officers do not exist.

"Just the same as there are good and there are bad people, there are good and there are bad cops," says Bronx resident Jonathan Acosta, 28. "Good people make good cops."

But where are the stories about said good cops? Where are the stories about the police officers who wear their uniforms, not as a means to abuse their power but as a representation of their oath to serve and protect?

A young woman gets off from working the night shift and starts walking home when she realizes that a man is following her. She could be sexually assaulted, she could be robbed, and she could end up dead. But two cops take care of the situation and walk her home.

These are two cops serving and protecting, but we never got to know their names or their faces. Their heroic deed went unnoticed by the media, and by the world. But the officers were fine with that because the young woman made it home alive and unharmed.

That young woman, Bronx resident Gathy Matias, was no stranger to the good side of police officers that is often not shown in the media. One cold night, an officer helped Matias open her car after she had locked herself out. "That was nice," she said.

Similarly, Acosta recalls a time when a white cop became a good representative of the police force.

"When I worked in a grocery store there was a beat cop who would stop by every day. At first, it was scary, but over time we saw him as part of the community too," Acosta said. "Once a kid was stabbed from what we see in the news.

"We do not judge what you look like, your color, your ethnicity," said officer Ludvick, 23, of precinct 40. "You're blue. You're pretty much blue. That's how we think about it. I don't judge people on their background. I just judge their personality and how they act and if they follow the laws." Mr. Ludvick said. "But it's all part of the job"

While some cops may choose to ignore disrespectful remarks, other cops opt for a humorous outlet in order to alleviate tensions.

"People are very creative, which in an odd way I can appreciate if nothing else. If I think they came up with something good I'll tell them so." Officer Barth said. "That usually throws them off and deescalates the situation." Officer Barth also points out that the police officers who wear their uniform, are not as a means to abuse their power but as a representation of their oath to serve and protect.

A young woman made it home alive and unharmed.

There is no denying that bad police officers do not exist.

Excessive force, according to Officer Barth, is force, which is beyond that which is required. He argues that good police officers use a reasonable amount of force if it is required.

A suspect willing to fight it out with one officer would not do so as quickly if there were two or three officers. While on-lookers may be quick to criticize such "excessive force," Officer Barth points out that people fail to realize the person could be a gun point robbery suspect.

"What appears to be excessive force is almost without exception not so, and less [force] could endanger the public. That's the last thing we want," Officer Barth said.

Officer Barth also points out that the people who call police officers for help are probably going through some of the worst times of their lives and this always keeps officers on their toes, something that the public also fails to realize.

"People don't call for the police when things are going well, there is some kind of possible event taking place and it's not for the good." And, unfortunately, that is often the case. Officer Barth recalled a time when a couple lost their 11-month-old baby on Christmas Eve. The baby had passed away sometime during the night and when the parents woke up on Christmas morning to open presents with their baby, they came to the horrific realization of what had happened.

Imagine what the parents were going through as they removed the gifts, still wrapped, from under their tree with their baby's name on them," Officer Barth said. "That's tough on everyone involved."

On another occasion, recounted by Officer Ludvick, police officers received a call from a family whose baby was not breathing. Police officers blocked traffic to get to the scene as soon as possible.

"They stopped traffic and they saved the kid's life," Officer Ludvick said.

Officer Ludvick also recalled a time when a man's car was stolen from the Bronx. Some may think that the officers would have only written a report, but they tracked the thief down, drove all the way to Brooklyn, and they recovered the stolen car.

If the public was more aware of the good side of cops and the risks that police officers put themselves in everyday to keep everyone safe then there would be a broader awareness about what goes on in the process of keeping them safe influences the misconception they have about cops.

Often times, for instance, police officers are criticized for using excessive force.
By Nicholas Tejeda
Editor-in-Chief

Jeremy Travis’ last semester as John Jay College’s President is in its final stretch. The Presidential Search Committee has recently announced that Karol Mason will replace Travis when he steps down on August 1st.

Mason, a former Assistant Attorney General for the Obama administration, will be John Jay’s first female President, as well as the first African American woman to fill the position.

She was the first African American woman elected to chair a management committee at Alston & Bird LLP, one of the top law firms in Atlanta. She also served as part of the Board of Trustees at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for eight years.

Under former Attorneys General Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch, Mason advocated for a number of issues regarding justice, such as prisoner reentry, race and community policing. One of her initiatives under the Obama administration, the National Initiative for Community Trust and Justice, is currently housed at John Jay.

Besides her unquestionable experience, Mason’s presence on the national stage as an advocate for justice will expand John Jay’s reputation and reach.

Fatime Uruci, John Jay’s newly elected Student Council President, is excited to work with Mason on addressing student concerns. “It is Student Council’s job to help the college’s new President and her staff become familiar with the culture of the college and to keep them abreast of students’ needs and concerns, which becomes especially crucial considering the fact that along with a new President will be coming other new administrators, like the Provost.” Uruci is also optimistic about Mason’s role as an advocate for justice throughout her career as a lawyer and that her prior work with Jeremy Travis will only benefit the John Jay community.

“Karol Mason is a reflection of the diverse and passionate student body that makes John Jay what it is, and I anticipate the fresh ideas and new insight into how we can improve the higher education experience for our students that she will be bringing to the table.”

CUNY Chancellor James Malikten welcomed Karol Mason in a newsletter to the CUNY system: “Karol Mason has established herself as a bold, visionary leader in the fields of law and criminal justice reform, and she will be ideal for continuing the history of excellence and inspiration at John Jay College.”

In his letter to the college, Jeremy Travis regarded Mason as a friend and colleague. He expressed excitement for John Jay’s next chapter under new leadership, and agrees with the Presidential Selection Committee’s choice.

“anyone interested in working alongside the new President can sign up to be an intern at the President’s office. The internship runs from Mason’s first day on August 1st to the end of the school year on May 31st.”

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The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was signed by 189 countries in New York City on December 18th, 1979.

“CEDAW is a UN [United Nations] convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women,” Luke said. “It was approved in every single country except for 7: Iran, Palau, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga, and the United States of America.”

Audience members collectively expressed shock as the United States appeared on that list, to which Luke responded with, “Shameful, right!”

Mary Luke has over 35 years of experience as she worked in leadership positions for women’s rights programs and reproductive health. She worked for the rights of women in over 30 countries around the world.

“One of the biggest challenges I think is to find the right people,” said Luke. “We are foreigners, and we have to understand culture and accept it.”

Luke’s organizations tries to hire local workers to work instead of foreigners, like

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Meet Your Chakra and Get Your GPA Together
Relaxing Away the Struggle of Keeping a Good GPA

By Giulia Puglisi
Contributing Writer

The smell of sweat and hard work intensifies in the John Jay gym on the third floor of the Haaren Hall building, while a group of students lie on their mats, barefoot, in comfortable clothes with eyes half-closed. Soft rock is playing in the background—ones of those songs that everybody knows, but nobody seems to remember.

There is silence, not an uncomfortable one, but a conscious one, almost as if the students know they are there to put every worry, every mistake, every deadline on hold outside the door. The instructor is curled up on a small, pink brick as she waits to begin the class.

“Yoga makes me more calm and less anxious towards assignments, I feel more relaxed,” said Natalia Olszak, senior student at John Jay, as she positioned her purple mat and brick on the floor.

Krystel Salandanana, a Psychology Professor at John Jay College, talked about how she integrates mindfulness in her professional practice. “Eastern practices didn’t come into yoga until some research about chronic pain,” said Salandanana. It was from these first attempts in the ‘90s to connect meditation practices and mental health that Western medicine began to incorporate Eastern philosophy.

Naike Negretti, dance teacher and certified yoga instructor said, “before creating relationships with others, it is important to establish a positive and harmonic one with and within ourselves.” She brings attention to the importance of the few, almost ritualistic words, that are used throughout a yoga session.

Negretti said, “the final OM we chant at the end of every yoga class is a mantra that refers to our cosmic divine self,” it helps bring the focus back to the present and, “makes us ready to deal with whatever worries and stresses us in our frantic life.”

Olszak, who is loyal to Yoga Wednesdays, shared her experience on why she joined the practice: “I have circulation problems [and yoga] is beneficial for that, and it makes me want to exercise more. The moves make me feel more in tune with myself.”

Negretti explained that the occasional extreme poses instructors make available to the yogis are a way to fully purify the body and the mind because of the high level of concentration required to achieve balance.

Furthermore, Salandanana advocated for the use of mindfulness as a tool to help clients diagnosed with schizophrenia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety.

Everybody experiences moments throughout the day or week when they just feel overwhelmed, and finding a moment to breathe during the day can be challenging. This idea is why, “Yoga classes at John Jay are open to students and faculty,” said Greenfield, “because it creates a community of people, and puts all of us on the same level.”

The classes are available at John Jay during community hour, in the gym on Wednesdays and in the dance studio on Thursdays located in the C level of Haaren Hall. The meditation and yoga practice is another opportunity for students to freely unplug during the day. It is located in the Wellness Center, room L68.00 of the New Building, and it is available with a specific schedule.

Greenfield encouraged students to use the resources because “if there’s one thing we know it is that, anecdotally, yoga class and meditation are really effective in creating better health, both mentally and physically.”

Greenfield stated that yoga is opened and welcomes everyone: “All you have...
**Beyond John Jay**

**Slow, and Controversial Changes Coming to the Bronx**

**Is Chipotle Worth the Transformations?**

By Oscar Polanco
Contributing Writer

The Bronx is deemed New York City’s ugly duckling, as the average citizen perceives the borough as dangerous, dirty, and overrun by junkies. Over the past few years, the Bronx has demonstrated that it is capable of changing its reputation and creating a Cinderella story of its own.

A 45-minute train ride from 42nd Street on the northbound 1 train will take you to 231st Street, the second stop in the Bronx. Once there, any notions of danger and filth will be overshadowed by the new and trendy.

Once desolate streets have become the epicenter for local business. Adding to already established stores like Target, Marshalls, and Walgreens, are new restaurants, stores, and even fitness centers such as Chipotle, Oshkosh B’Gosh, and Blink Fitness. People are opting to stay local as the options for recreation broaden.

“This area has changed a lot in the past couple of years,” said long-time Marble Hill resident, Oscar Balbuena. “I can tell it is going to keep changing, too.”

The Bronx has been subject to a re-vitalization of sorts in the last few years. Whether it’s new developments through the creation of shopping centers and eateries, or the renovation of aging housing complexes and parks, the Bronx is currently undergoing a rise in appeal. This is especially true for the northwestern neighborhoods of Kingsbridge and Marble Hill.

Many residents of the area are pleased with the direction the neighborhood appears to be going in. In 2014, Kingsbridge saw the opening of the Broadway Plaza mall, which was built on Broadway and 230th street, land formerly used as a parking lot. The two-floor strip mall contains five stores and three food establishments, with more on the way.

The Broadway Plaza mall houses various stores such as Sports Authority, Party City, Aldi, and a couple of food establishments. There’s also a Starbucks, and an Auntie Anne’s. A Boston Market and a Forever 21 will also be opening soon.

“These kinds of things make the neighborhood better,” said Jennith Patel, who has worked in the area for years.

“It makes more people want to stay in the area instead of going downtown.”

While most of the local residents appear pleased with the direction the borough is headed, some would argue against such drastic changes.

“I feel like rent is going to go up because of this,” said Jaspreet Bhullar, a long-time resident of the area. “My parents are homeowners so I hope mortgages won’t go up because of these new malls.”

Less than a mile north and only a five-minute train ride away, a new strip mall was opened in October 2015. The Riverdale Crossing strip mall, located on 237th Street and Broadway continued the North Bronx’s ascension from anonymity. The mall was built on land previously occupied by a cookie and breadstick factory, Stella D’Oro.

Popular restaurants like Chipotle, Buffalo Wild Wings, and Smashburger make the mall appealing, while stores such as BJ’s Wholesale Club and Petco make the strip mall practical.

Local resident and college student, Ana Christopher, said, “This is great for the neighborhood. We have a lot of the things we used to have to travel for only a couple of blocks away.”

Her sister, Lia Christopher, a resident of the area for over ten years said, “We now have a place we can go on the weekends without having to take a long train ride or bus to get to.”

Shopping and other recreational activities were not readily available in the borough forcing Bronsates to travel to other boroughs or counties for entertainment. This does not mean all were ready to embrace the new options.

“I don’t see myself going to any of these stores, to be honest,” said Kingsbridge resident, Camila Thomas. “I’ll want to waste lots of money on food and clothes, I’ll just go downtown.”

Apart from entertainment, the Riverdale Crossing mall appears to be convenient for those seeking to complete day-to-day tasks, as well.

“I love having stores like BJ’s, Petco and even T-Mobile so close to home,” said Nayali Quezada, a native Bronxite. “My family and I used to have to drive up to Cross County, but now we can just walk or

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**Being Homeless in The Big Apple**

By Tiara Williamson
Contributing Writer

They say if you can make it in New York you can make it anywhere, but many of us have the opportunity to endure these hardships from our homes. It is a city full of bright lights and fast walkers, but do we actually see what we are walking past on a daily basis?

For tourists, seeing a homeless person panhandling on the trains may seem out of the ordinary, but to your average New York commuter, this is something that we know all too well.

New Yorkers are not known to be the most sensitive people, but there is a little something that warns everyone’s heart every now and then. What exactly determines whether or not a New Yorker decides to show their sensitive side toward another person who is enduring all of New York’s conditions while living on the street?

James Knott, a 42-year-old homeless man from Flatbush, Brooklyn, said, “I’ve met some of the kindest people. They gave me pep talks, prayed for me and showed generosity.” James is very grateful and appreciative of the people who do offer him something, but that is not always the case.

When people see things too frequently, they almost become immune to it. From observation, it seems like most people are just not phased by seeing someone in need on the street. Some people will walk by fast, avoid eye contact or just completely ignore them.

James went on to say, “Most will just ignore or put the volume up on their music players.” But he does not let that get him down or discouraged, “it’s to be expected. It doesn’t bother me.”

Aside from how onlookers feel, pan-handling can be very hard for the person who is left with no other choice. “Clearly it’s degrading. It really messes with your pride at first, but that quickly goes away when you’re in desperate need,” said James.

This can be especially difficult for those who have absolutely no place to store their things and are forced to carry everything with them at all times. Often, we see homeless men with carts or bags filled with things and this can make someone very nervous, but James said, “I carry all my belongings with me at all times, so I don’t know. It might scare people off, but I have no choice. There’s nowhere to leave it.”

There is no doubt that many New Yorkers may turn their noses up to homeless men, become frightened or completely ignore their existence, but some people seem to show more compassion toward a woman in need.

Candy, a 35-year-old woman, also from Brooklyn, has been homeless for a few years now. She travels from train to train every day hoping people will listen to her story and show sympathy to her. Her life spiraled out of control, and she was not able to find her way back or regain custody of her children, but she has noticed that people are more sympathetic toward her than they are to some men.

“Being a girl, yea, I would say people are a little more sensitive,” said Candy. She talked about how people want to know a story and how exactly homeless people were put into their situation.

Candy stated, “I carry this sign around. One side’s Spanish, and the other is English. I like people to know how hard life has been for me and hear my story, see my kids.”

Aracelis Perez, an 18 year old New Yorker, feels nothing but sympathy for those in need. “It breaks my heart to see homeless people in the street, knowing that I have a nice warm bed to go home to every night.”

Aracelis is one of the New Yorkers with a heart of gold, who wants to help everyone. “If I could, I would put them all

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BEYOND JOHN JAY

Yemeni Americans Lament For Their Homeland

By Zaid Abdullah
Contributing Writer

Already wary of United States involvement with the civil war in Yemen, many Yemeni New Yorkers worry that the U.S. foreign policy, including on immigration, toward the Middle East could get worse, further complicating their relationship and alienating them both in the United States and abroad.

The proxy civil war in Yemen is in complete disarray with outside factions directly and indirectly involved. While the antigovernment opposition known as the Houthis receives aid from Iran, Saudi Arabia is fighting alongside the Yemeni government with the help of U.S. bought weaponry and logistical coordination of targets and strikes.

With different foreign factions and interests involved, the war in Yemen remains an imminent threat to civilians and the infrastructure of Yemen. According to the United Nations, Yemen alongside Syria, faces one of the worst humanitarian crises since World War II.

Many Yemeni Muslims living in the United States watch from a distant eye, jettison over the unpredictable circumstances of their families’ wellbeing in Yemen.

Anwar Ameen, a deli worker and immigrant from Yemen, went to New York in 1978 for better work and make a living for himself, but I worked many international organizations do. Luke's favorite part about her work is meeting new people and to learn about their culture. One audience member, Dolapo Oyene, asked a question about Luke’s organization’s work and specifically how about others left behind in the jungle,” he said, speaking in Arabic.

Ameen recognizes that the problem is complex, and that the United States’ response should not only be strategic, but appropriate. In doing so, he believes that the United States should adopt a less hostile approach as the American embassy in Yemen is shut down amidst the turbulent war. Fahd Mohammed recently arrived to the U.S to reunite with his Yemeni American wife after spending months in Djibouti, because the American embassy in Yemen is shut down amidst the turbulent war.

“I had to flee Yemen for two reasons, one because of the war, the second to be with my wife,” said Mohammed. Mohammed was one of the Yemeni men who was issued an email by the State’s Department late January informing him that his visa interview appointment, which was scheduled in March, was canceled following the travel ban. "When I seen the email I could not make sense of it. Honestly, people told me Trump hated Muslims, but I didn’t think it would one day affect me in that way."

After the Washington District judge placed a preliminary injunction on Trump’s ban, Fahd received another appointment to keep his dream alive. "With all that’s going on in Yemen, I think the U.S should not disapprove at Yemenis for wanting to come to the United States. I mean we’re directly involved in the war, but I do believe in strong screening process,” he said.

"I'm here to make a living and to contribute to American prosperity, but it gets harder everyday with each policy put forward,” he continued. "To no longer have a country back home and to be alienated when you get to the States, it certainly makes you feel unwanted. Without a home.”

A Yemeni woman in Brooklyn, speaking on the condition of anonymity in Arabic, is currently living in the United States with her newly born daughter as she waits for her husband and children’s application process after being denied entry. Their home in Taiz Yemen, where her husband resides, was destroyed in the crossfire of the civil war. Her denial, she states, was because of unintentional contradictory statements in the application when she misunderstood the questions.

"The application process and rigorous questioning in addition to my lack of understanding English made it very hard very hard dealing with the bureaucracies of immigration procedures that are now even more complex,” she says, speaking in Arabic.

The woman does not see a possibility of returning home, “I honestly don’t have an option. Yemen has been destroyed, and at the same time, I’ve always loved the United States. There’s no opportunities for education and employment for my kids in the same way I didn’t have.”

She acknowledges that the political climate right now makes Yemenis and other groups deemed “threats”, feel as they are not wanted.

Many believe that the United States’ approach to foreign policy in Yemen needs to be reexamined. The political rhetoric in blanket banning Muslims, deeming them all terrorists, does not help in the fight against terror nor is it based on joint intelligence reporting.

Yemenis also believe that combating terrorism is a priority, and great stringent vetting procedures are necessary. They also believe that strong vetting must not be carried out in a way that makes them feel like their rights are not being infringed upon.

Ladies Get in Formation

Continued from Page 2

many international organizations do. Luke’s favorite part about her work is meeting new people and to learn about their culture. One audience member, Dolapo Oyene, asked a question about Luke’s organization’s work and specifically how about others left behind in the jungle,” he said, speaking in Arabic.

Ameen recognizes that the problem is complex, and that the United States’ response should not only be strategic, but appropriate. In doing so, he believes that the United States should adopt a less hostile approach when it comes to anti-Muslim rhetoric and immigration from the Middle East.

"The United States is the leader of the world, and the way it conducts itself sets a precedent for the rest of the world,” he says. Ameen’s co-worker, Omar, has also been attentive to the growing Islamophobia in recent years. Omar has been in the United States for 7 years since he immigrated with his father and grandfather.

When asked about the possibility of ever returning he says, “It’s just hard right now. If I travel, I’m sure my complexion and religion will give me travel problems and going to Yemen is no longer a viable option for me.”

Omar is increasingly worried that President Trump will loosen the rules of engagement when it comes to fighting terrorism in Yemen. “Look we all want to defeat terrorism. but we have to be careful and specific about who we target,” Omar was referring to the U.S. battlefront mission launched by President Trump in late January 2017, in which Ryan Owens, an American soldier alongside dozens of Yemeni civilians lost their life.

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content/uploads/2017/04/IMG_3021.jpg migrant who recently came to America on a lottery visa, is among those people. "I’m so glad I’ve been able to escape Yemen to come to work to fight Boko Haram, a group that has captured many female children in Nigeria.

Luke responded that the UN is approaching the situation with care. They put pressure on the Nigerian government to take action, while verbally denouncing the actions of Boko Haram.

Oyene, a senior majoring in Public Administration, said that she was satisfied with Luke’s answer.

"I'm from Nigeria, and I wanted to know what these types of organizations are doing to help the women and children kidnapped by Boko Haram," said Oyene.

Another audience member, Qingzhen Meng, a Forensic Science Professor, visiting from Beijing, said that he found out about this event on the John Jay calendar.

"I did not know much about this event, but I learned a lot today,” Meng said.

Nicole Elias and Maria D’Agostino established the Women in the Public Sector in 2012 to help women in public service within and beyond John Jay.

One of the organizers, Zoë Adel, a Graduate Student and a volunteer assistant for WPS, said that the International Women’s Day was approaching so, they invited Luke and her organization to John Jay.

"I'm very satisfied with the outcome of the event and people seem to be happy,” said Adel.

Greek Life: A Culture Lacking Recognition

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ternity were the opportunities that came from joining. Whether it was making new friendships or building new connections toward my professional career. I believe that joining this fraternity was an opportunity of a lifetime, furthering my growth as a person.”

Before joining, Cardoso had different expectations of what belonging to such a group would be like.

"Going into the frat, I believed it was going to be wild, you know parties non-stop, basically what mainstream media portrays what being in a frat is like. After joining, it was anything but wild. There’s a lot of work that goes into being in a fraternity,” Cardoso said.

"We give back to the community, working with charities such as Habitat for Humanity and New York Cares, participating in different projects for the benefit of those charities. It’s more than the parties, it’s growing as a man, working in a group, and especially belonging to a brotherhood.”

Whether it is planning events, orchestrating the next charity project, or building connections toward their careers, John Jay students who are in either a sorority or a fraternity have to do the majority of their work off campus.

"I think John Jay should make sororities official because it will help us raise even more money for our charities thanks to the school’s influence,” Santiago said.

Cardoso said, “I don’t think John Jay needs to make fraternities official because we’ve done well without their influence. If it isn’t broke you shouldn’t fix it.”

For Santiago and Cardoso, the benefits of being a part of Greek Life are greater than the stigma that surrounds it. Sororities and fraternities represent something more than just some big party; they are furthering their brothers and sisters’ growth as members of society and giving students the chance to belong to an organization greater than themselves.

Santiago from Kappa Phi Chi, urged John Jay students who are interested in joining a sorority to come up and approach those who are wearing their Greek letters for info on how to join.

Students can also look on social media because there are accounts for the sororities and fraternities. Students can also refer to Student Council members to point them in the right direction.

Cardoso from Alpha Phi Delta said John Jay students who are interested in joining a fraternity can contact him or any other brother by keeping a look out for their Greek letters. They are usually located by the couches between the lobby and the 1st floor.
By Natalie Segev
Contributing Writer

Growing up I have always been a proud Zionist. I am the granddaughter of two of the 850,000 Arab Jewish refugees who fled Syria and Egypt specifically to avoid religious persecution. Since my grandparents were Jewish, they were constantly under attack, subjected to verbal and physical attacks, denied basic rights, and were victims of anti-Semitism.

My grandmother recalls stories of Jews, family members, and close friends being thrown into jail cells with no windows, starved and beaten just because of the God they believed in. Therefore, due to actual life-threatening danger, my grandparents were forced to escape.

My grandparents sought asylum in the Jewish State of Israel, the only place that would take them. In its Declaration as a state in 1948, Israel promised up to 650,000 people. Among them were Holocaust survivors and Jews fleeing Arab countries. They had nowhere else to turn and were finally coming home. Since 1948, Israel has thrived as the only successful democracy in the Middle East.

As I sit here on the country’s 69th Independence Day, I am obligated to defend its right to exist against those who wish to destroy it.

This pattern can be applied to any time and any place: the Ancient Greeks, Romans, Persians, and Babylonians, as well as modern-day Spain, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. It is imperative that there be a Jewish state so the Jewish people can continue to exist. History proves that.

So why is it that Israel, the only Jewish state, receives so much negative attention for being a religious state when there are 67 Roman Catholic countries, 49 Islamic countries, 49 Protestant countries, 14 Eastern Orthodox countries, and 3 Hindu countries?

It is bewildering that Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, receives such negative attention. People call the system an apartheid or inhumane, yet Israel has free and fair elections where Muslim parliament members hold office. People say Israel is discriminatory, yet same-sex marriage is legal, and it offers legal protection against discrimination and hate crimes. It also hosts one of the biggest gay parades in Tel-Aviv. People say Israel is sexist, yet women’s rights are at their finest in Israel. In comparison to its neighbors, whose illiteracy rates range from 11% to 36.5%, Israel’s illiteracy rate is 4.1%. Women are educated in Israel and have citizenship. All of Israel’s citizens are treated as such.

I have always been, and I will always be a Zionist. A Zionist is a person who believes in the development and protection of a Jewish nation in Israel. But I am not, nor will I ever be, xenophobic, islamophobic, racist, anti-humanitarian, or an anti-feminist. Israel is a diverse state that promotes life, diversity, and progress.

By Izabela Qafa
Staff Writer

If you, as a John Jay student, have been politically involved at any time on campus, you know one issue that has been emphasized and reemphasized by either the administration or other parties is the “need for coexistence on campus between student organizations.” In other words, the need for collaboration between John Jay Hillel and John Jay Students for Justice in Palestine.

While the issue is much more complicated at large, these two organizations have always created a political dilemma on campus that everyone wants to resolve.

Jon Jay Students for Justice in Palestine “is a diverse group of students, faculty, staff, and community members at John Jay College, organized on democratic principles to raise awareness about the human rights violations committed by Israel against the Palestinian people, as well as to build solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for human rights, justice, freedom, self-determination and the right of return…”

“Just as SJP condemns the racism and discrimination underlying the policies and laws of the state of Israel, SJP rejects any form of hatred or discrimination against any religious or ethnic group. SJP’s strength is in the great diversity of its membership. SJP welcomes individuals of all backgrounds to join in solidarity with the struggle for justice in Palestine.”

According to Hillel’s mission statement, it is an organization that brings “the foundation for Jewish life on campus.” Almost always, John Jay Hillel has been an avid supporter of the state of Israel and its actions. Many of these actions have fueled the controversies between these two organizations, and often times, they have been talked about from one side only.

John Jay SJP and its members have been accused of anti-Semitism by Hillel and its supporters for speaking out against the crimes that the state of Israel commits against the Palestinian people. John Jay SJP has received backlash from the President of John Jay, members of the administration, CUNY’s Chancellor Milliken, and Zionist organizations off campus.

However, multiple independent CUNY investigations have confirmed that SJP has never been involved in any forms of anti-Semitism.

So why is Hillel always doing the impossible to collaborate with SJP, and why is SJP always refusing to do so on grounds of anti-normalization? Palestinians have asked their global supporters to undertake BDS movement, a tenant of which is get the other side of the issue.

First of all, let me explain certain terms and ideas. Zionism is the belief that Jews have the right to exist on Palestinian land, as a Jewish state, because the Jewish people lived there two thousand years ago, and because that’s what the Western powers of the UN decided 69 years ago. Anti-normalization rejects the idea that a pro-Palestinian and a pro-Israeli can sit down and have “peace talks” while completely disregarding the current occupation and Israeli settler-colonial violence.

This violence is necessary to Israel’s existence as a racist, religious supremacist state, and if our counterparts are unwilling to admit this, then any discussions with them essentially “normalize” the situation. Israel is in no way normal. This “conflict” is in no way normal, and therefore, acquiescing to discussions as if the issue is a minor political disagreement is disingenuous to the Palestinian people who suffer under Israeli violence every day. A commonly used analogy to better explain this situation is that it is akin to asking a black person to sit down with a KKK supporter to make peace. Doesn’t really make sense, does it?

Back in November of 2015 the former advisors of a club, that will remain anonymous, entered the SJJP clubroom and threatened that if John Jay SJJP did not collaborate with Hillel, they would report the organization to NYPD Hate Crimes Unit. SJJP members have been and continue to be blacklisted by Zionist organizations for their activism. These are only two small examples of the backlash that John Jay SJJP members have received in the past five years, since its foundation in 2012. It is only right and just that John Jay students get the other side of the issue.
**The Food Deserts of the Bronx**

By Chaiti Shaha  
Contributing Writer

Food deserts are ruining the lives of many people in the South Bronx. Most neighborhoods do not have the luxury to eat well and maintain a healthy diet.

A food desert is a neighborhood that does not supply the people with fresh healthy food options. People in low-income neighborhoods neglect how important a healthy diet is. Some do not have the sufficient knowledge on nutrition, while others do not have the resources.

Parkchester, for example, is a neighborhood in the south Bronx that is faced with this issue. It is a very diverse community where the population largely consists of African Americans, Hispanics and South Asians.

In a neighborhood where the people are surrounded by fast food establishments and your average supermarket, fresh markets are scarce, and organic produce are hard to come by.

A woman named Jennifer Sanchez who lives in the Bronx spoke about the devastation the people are blindly living in and she said, “I wish we had fresh apple trees and pear trees. We the people deserve fresh fruits. When we go out, we should have the right to pick fruit from trees.” Sanchez stated.

“In some places, buildings have gardens on the rooftop. All of these buildings need a garden so the people can eat better.”

She seemed to be very aware of the issues people were facing around her when it came to the food people were consuming, and how it affected their bodies.

Unhealthy food is proven to be detrimental to one’s physical body and state of mind. Since people in Parkchester do not have much access to fresh food, most people are either sick, stressed out, or overweight, and believe the problem lies elsewhere.

Many believe that stress and illness come from the weather, from family/workplace situations. While these do play a part, their diet plays a huge factor in their overall well-being and how they deal with situations around them.

“Low-income neighborhoods can strive with community garden.” If the trees role on their everyday diet like it did for this little girl.

One way the community is improving is by incorporating farmer’s markets which comes to the Bronx twice a week. Most people that attend the markets are of South Asian descent. All of the produce is organic, however the farmers cannot afford to get a certificate that gives proof to verify this.

The workers have a seminar that teach the customers about different fruits and vegetables. If people stayed for the whole lesson, the farmers gave the attendees a two dollar coupon for available produce.

Tahmina Karim who stood on the line for two dollar coupon said, “I already have ways to cook the veggies but it is nice to learn new techniques to incorporate with veggies I normally make for my family… I mostly cook traditional Bangladeshi food.”

The Bronx is enriched by many different cultural backgrounds, and many diets that people practice are a reflection of their native cuisine.

Jhuzo, a butcher at a convenience store said “Mexicans buy the most corns and beans, Bengalis purchase the most fishes and greens, and the Dominicans come here for the plantains.” His response proved that even if people live in the same neighborhood the culture they were brought up in heavily influences how they eat.

Bodegas are very popular in the urban community. A worker in a local deli named Muhammad said to me, “only meat and alcohol sell, sometimes, I know a kid is too young to be drinking, but I also have to run a business and have a family to provide for… we have some healthy snacks now but the kids want meaty sandwiches and fries, and their parents give them money for this.”

When asked why he doesn’t incorporate healthier options or have vegan meat as an option, his response was, “Very few people eat healthy around here and my business won’t run with only healthy products. If more people requested it then yes I will provide healthy products, but right now I can’t run a business with healthy products… I will not have good business here since the kids want meaty sandwiches.”

Bodegas refuse to change unless the people demand healthier options. People are okay with the unhealthy food institution and stores will make changes if people do not accept the status quo.

The food desert will change if there is a demand for change. When people request better food from their community on a massive scale, only then will we begin to see improvements in the system.

This transformation will become possible when the people are properly informed and educated on the importance of practicing a healthy eating habit and what it means to be healthy. For now people in low-income neighborhoods have to face the inequality in the food system.

Meet Your Chakra and Get Your GPA Together

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to do is show up and breathe. If you are breathing, you are doing yoga.”

Salandanove into the topic to tell how “breathing in the moment is a pillar, because it’s something we always have with us. Breathing grounds us.” Here is where nose and mouth come into play to stop the trick brains play on students: simple, long breaths are all it takes to understand that a slightly lower grade does not deserve a heart attack or several all-nighters.

The main purpose of the practice of mindfulness is to remove stickiness from judgement, and to learn how to “be in the moment,” said Salandanove.

Meditation is yoga’s bff. Salandanove tells her clients to “challenge [themselves] every day to take three breaths when [they] wake up. Developing awareness of where we are and how our body feels and just being in the moment” is the central focus of mindfulness.

Yoga apparently influences our eating habits as well, and as Olaszak said, “after I take yoga I feel more relaxed, and I’m not craving junk food. I want to eat healthier.”

Well, Namaste to that.

One last bit of advice Salandanove shared before running to class was: “The biggest thing is that [yoga] is a practice. You can walk mindfully. You can eat mindfully. By practicing mindfulness you are more aware of your emotions and feelings.” By being in the moment, a person can live his or her life more fully and appreciate all the little moments that led to that exact second—that now.

Negretti added to that, affirming that one of the reasons she joined the practice was because yoga is something that can be shared and taught to people of all ages, as long as they are ready to be mentally, physically and emotionally present.

The positive shift that takes place once people start to practice mindfulness is called Parinamavada, said Negretti. This Hindu thought refers to, “the acceptance of the constant change of the life around us,” and is the first step in entering the purification process of yoga.

Greenfield noted that one of the beauties of this Hindu practice is that everyone has a different approach to it, and even instructors experience it and express the teachings in different ways and words.

She ended by saying, “The light in me sees and honors the light in you. It’s a privilege to spend this time with you all, and I encourage you to embrace the peace found in class and bring it into the rest of the day. Namaste.”
A Rising Star in the Mayoral Race
Democratic Competitor Robert Gangi Speaks on De Blasio

By Asia Boodoo
Contributing Writer

The 2017 mayoral race is already getting started. Candidates for both the Democratic and Republican parties are currently raising funds and conducting meet and greets for the fall election.

Mayor De Blasio, who has been the City’s mayor since 2014, has seen his highest approval rating this year at fifty percent, according to the New York Times.

He has seen a growing economy, is pushing for universal Pre-Kindergarten, and openly supports the immigrant and transgender communities. And although he faces criticism for his response to the recent controversy surrounding police and civilian interactions, the city has seen a reduction in crime.

Yet, as stated by the New York Times, “The mayor’s critics on the right contend that City Hall is awash in corruption and mismanagement. On the left, he is attacked as acting too slowly or not aggressively enough on housing and policing.”

De Blasio faces a set of candidates ready and willing to fight for a chance at the mayoral position this fall. One of the Democratic candidates is a long time advocate for police and criminal justice reform, Robert Gangi.

Gangi, a Brooklyn native, is an activist and community organizer and has dedicated his time and efforts to combat the issues facing the criminal justice system.

According to the Huffington Post, Gangi founded PROP (The Police Reform Organizing Project) in 2011 and has spent almost 30 years as the Executive Director of the Correctional Association (CA) fighting for New York City’s most vulnerable populations. His dedication to police and prison reform is essential in his plans if he is elected mayor.

Gangi hopes to be elected in order to implement social, racial and economic equality for all New Yorkers.

He wants to create a city that “adheres to the great American ideals, is more just, more safe, inclusive and affordable for all New Yorkers, especially low income people of color that are in different ways by different government policies discriminated against and have a hard time leading fulfilling lives like well do to people in the city.”

Gangi, who is critical of the mayor’s social justice practices, says that “De Blasio has failed on a number of different issues. He has failed to address the social, racial and economic inequalities that plague our city. His platform in 2013, when he ran for mayor, was these issues. That was going to be the fundamental purpose of his candidacy.”

“He was going to take on MTA issues, public education issues, homelessness issues, and higher education issues. He has failed to follow through. He has not been the progressive champion that we have voted for. I voted for him in 2013.”

Gangi also focused on De Blasio’s response to his promises of police reform. Critics like Gangi do not think De Blasio has made enough of an impact on the NYPD’s policing tactics.

Gangi holds that while De Blasio has denounced the use of Stop and Frisk, he has fallen short in other areas. De Blasio’s plan to shut down Riker’s Island has received criticism from both the left and the right wing.

Gangi sighed before replying to his thoughts on De Blasio’s Riker’s plan: “It’s an aspirational goal he will not be around to put into effect. Even if he is reelected, the future mayor will feel no obligation to implement his plan. He is supporting the plan to build new jails around the city at the cost of 10.6 billion dollars.”

Gangi continue on to say, “That money could be much better spent providing supportive services to disadvantaged people in our inner city communities to help them lead more stable and productive lives. If he ended broken windows policing, quota driven policing which is the single most significant government malpractice which causes the unnecessary confinement of people in Rikers, he’d be able to reduce prison populations and transfer remaining inmates to local facilities that already exist in the city.”

Gangi’s plans as mayor include stop-and-frisk: “Our city is good, but it could be better. I hope that whoever wins and becomes mayor is trying to make a difference for our city by making sure immigration, policing, and helping public schools their top priority.”

Gangi hopes to win the election in order to focus on the issues that are plaguing our city.

“My advice for young people,” he said with enthusiasm “is to educate yourselves about the issues and the campaign. Listen to the changes we are promoting to make our city more inclusive, fair and affordable.”

The Sentinel Is Always Looking For New Members! Email Us at JohnJaySentinel@gmail.com