

# Defending Myself against Racism

Chrislucia Brown

One day my oldest son got picked up by the police by mistake. He was picked up because the police thought he matched the description of someone

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they were looking for. In the neighborhood, the men dress alike, so the police often detain the wrong person. A friend stopped by my house and told me

that my son was in the police car up the street, so I went to see what was happening.

When I got there, I saw my son in the police car. I walked over to ask him what happened, and one of the male officers said, "If you don't move, I will slap the [expletive] out of you." I responded

loudly, saying, "What kind of man, who is six-feet-two and 220 pounds, would slap the [expletive] out of a woman who is 120 pounds?" Everyone, including the other officers, watched this exchange. The neighbors who lived in the community were looking on. I told him that if he put his hands on me, I would sue him.



I felt he treated me that way because of the area I live in and the color of my skin. He took advantage of his authority as a police officer. I felt disrespected, but I decided to stand up to him. He needed to know that just because I am a single black parent, who stays in a not-so-rich neighborhood, that doesn't mean that I don't know my rights or that I'm not an intelligent individual. Next time he'll know not to judge a book by its cover.

Chrislucia Brown is a student at Next Step Learning Center in Oakland, CA, and she is a parent of ten kids.

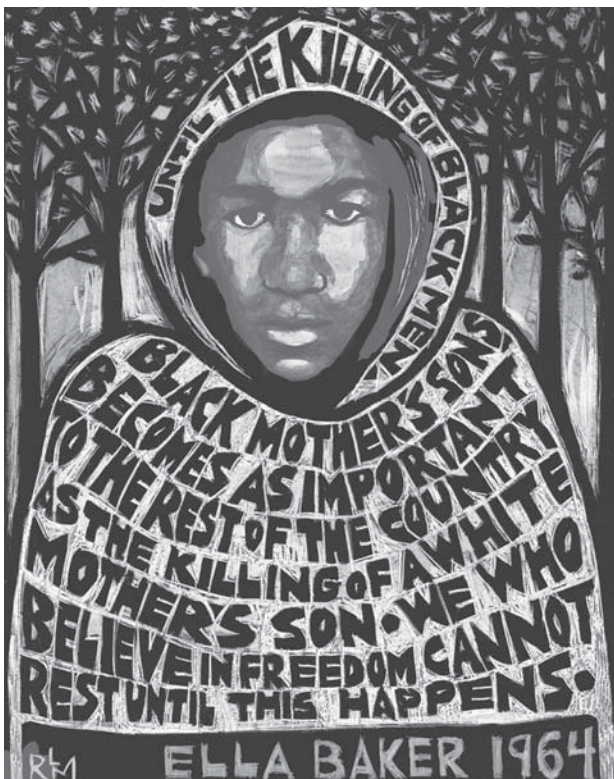


Image of Trayvon Martin by Ricardo Levins Morales. <[www.rlmartstudio.com](http://www.rlmartstudio.com)>

## Take it Further

**Read the definitions of racism** on p. 15. Which ones can you identify in this article?

**Interpret the quote** by Ella Baker in the image on the left. What does it mean?

**Who was Trayvon Martin?** Find several sources and write a short piece about him.

**Who was Ella Baker?** Find several sources and write a short piece about her.