Fear of Police

Reco Davis

Gunshots ringing out in the neighborhood! Another black person is dead!

When I was growing up, I remember nights that I couldn't sleep because of gunshots. One night, I heard gunshots ring out just two houses down from where I lived. I found out later that the gunshots were fired by a black policeman killing another black man, who turned out to be my cousin Tony Harris. He was 25 years old, and he was shot for not wanting to surrender while he was being arrested.

> **Really? I don't want to live in a world like that.**

Later that same night, a white policeman killed another black man for not wanting to pull over. He was shot three times, yet it was the first shot in the head that killed him.

I was scared to walk down the street because I thought somebody would pop up out of nowhere and try to shoot me, maybe mistaking me for someone else. When I was growing up, my feeling about the police was that they went around arresting and tasing people, sometimes just for wearing a hoodie, for having sagging pants, or even because of the people that we might hang around with. Really? I don't want to live in a world like that.

I want to live in a world where law enforcement tries to help the community and where police see everyone as a human being. For example, I would like for us all to come together and have a BBQ in the park. The police would see that we are all human and we'd learn to respect one another as human beings, and they would not assume we are criminals just because of the color of our skin, the clothes that we wear, or even who our friends are.
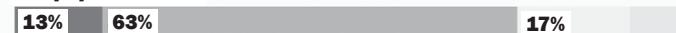
I want to live in a world where we could feel free to wear that hoodie and have no fear. Just to know that we are safe really would set us free.

Reco Davis is 18 years old. He is a student in the SSD program at Allen Correctional Center in Kinder, LA. He is originally from Abbeville, a small city in Vermilion Parish, LA. One day, he hopes to travel the world, and he wants to start with seeing Mt. Rushmore.

Deepen Your Understanding

Killed by police during arrest, by circumstance
2012 supplementary homicide report, FBI

■ *Black*   ▨ *White*   ☐ *Hispanic*

U.S. population
| 13% | 63% | 17% |

All victims
| 31% | 52% | 12% |

Not attacking when killed
| 39% | 46% | 12% |

Source: <www.vox.com/2015/4/10/8382457/police-shootings-racism>

Interpret the chart above. Write several true statements about what you see.

Infer means to judge that something is true based on evidence not on an explicit statement. Circle the best word in italics to complete this sentence: "After reading the text, I can infer that Reco felt *safe unsafe happy* when he was growing up." Now list three details that led you to make that inference.

WORLD EDUCATION