

**Handout**

# Darnella Frazier's Tribute to George Floyd

*Seventeen-year-old Darnella Frazier witnessed and recorded the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020. Her video of the murder went viral and sparked protests around the world. Her video and testimony in the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin played a key role in securing a conviction. On the one-year anniversary of Floyd's death, Frazier posted the following statement on Facebook.*

## 1 year anniversary

A year ago, today I witnessed a murder. The victim's name was George Floyd. Although this wasn't the first time I've seen a black man get killed at the hands of the police, this is the first time I witnessed it happen in front of me. Right in front of my eyes, a few feet away. I didn't know this man from a can of paint, but I knew his life mattered. I knew that he was in pain. I knew that he was another black man in danger with no power. I was only 17 at the time, just a normal day for me walking my 9-year-old cousin to the corner store, not even prepared for what I was about to see, not even knowing my life was going to change on this exact day in those exact moments . . . it did. It changed me. It changed how I viewed life. It made me realize how dangerous it is to be Black in America. We shouldn't have to walk on eggshells around police officers, the same people that are supposed to protect and serve. We are looked at as thugs, animals, and criminals, all because of the color of our skin. Why are Black people the only ones viewed this way when every race has some type of wrongdoing? None of us are to judge. We are all human. I am 18 now and I still hold the weight and trauma of what I witnessed a year ago. It's a little easier now, but I'm not who I used to be. A part of my childhood was taken from me. My 9-year-old cousin who witnessed the same thing I did got a part of her childhood taken from her. Having to up and leave because my home was no longer safe, waking up to reporters at my door, closing my eyes at night only to see a man who is brown like me, lifeless on the ground. I couldn't sleep properly for weeks. I used to shake so bad at night my mom had to rock me to sleep. Hopping from hotel to hotel because we didn't have a home and looking over our back every day in the process. Having panic and anxiety attacks every time I see a police car, not knowing who to trust because a lot of people are evil with bad intentions. I hold that weight. A lot of people call me a hero even though I don't see myself as one. I was just in the right place at the right time. Behind this smile, behind these awards, behind the publicity, I'm a girl trying to heal from something I am reminded of every day. Everyone talks about the girl who recorded George Floyd's death, but to actually be her is a different story. Not only did this affect me, my family too. We all experienced change. My mom the most. I strive every day to be strong for her because she was strong for me when I couldn't be strong for myself. Even though this was a traumatic life-changing experience for me, I'm proud of myself. If it weren't for my video, the world wouldn't have known the truth. I own that. My video didn't save George Floyd, but it put his murderer away and off the streets.

You can view George Floyd anyway you choose to view him, despite his past, because don't we all have one? He was a loved one, someone's son, someone's father, someone's brother, and someone's friend. We the people won't take the blame, you won't keep pointing fingers at us as if it's our fault, as if we are criminals. I don't think people understand how serious death is...that person is never coming back. These officers shouldn't get to decide if someone gets to live or not. It's time these officers start getting held accountable. Murdering people and abusing your power while doing it is not doing your job. It shouldn't have to take people to actually go through something to understand it's not ok. It's called having a heart and understanding right from wrong. George Floyd, I can't express enough how I wish things could have went different, but I want you to know you will always be in my heart. I'll always remember this day because of you. May your soul rest in peace. 🙏❤️  
 May you rest in the most beautiful roses. 🌹 —Darnella Frazier



Lorie Shaull

## Discussion Questions

- Frazier said that witnessing the murder of George Floyd changed her. In what ways? How? Why?
- How did Frazier's experience witnessing Floyd's murder echo the experience of those who witnessed the Jet magazine photo of Emmett Till?
- How does Darnella Frazier's decision to film George Floyd's murder and post the video compare with the choices made by Mamie Till-Mobley? How are these acts similar? How are they different?
- What would achieving justice for George Floyd look like? What would need to happen to prevent such murders?