

Title: Justice As Defined By... (Speech)

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Justice as defined by Merriam Webster is “the maintenance or administration of what is just, especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments.” But why don’t we take this definition into our own hands and reconsider what justice means today. February 23rd, March 13th, May 25th—three unforgettable dates in the cruel history of the United States. Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. While these names have garnered significant attention in the media, there are countless other deaths that have fallen under the radar—this selective activism is not justice. Nor should it shape our perceptions of a just society. Over the past 8 months, COVID-19 has severely halted our progress as a country. But terminating our efforts now will undo all of the hard work we have put in. Our country was not formed to mimic Orwell’s dystopian *Animal Farm*, wherein the pigs, the oppressors, are white people and the oppressed—the racial minorities—are demeaned like the rest of the animals. No matter how many movements or protests are held, violence or marching will only result in increasing the strife in our country. In the long run, it will not help in creating a more just society or increasing a safe haven for those who do not receive their due justice. What we need, instead, is a change in mindset to contribute to our overall prosperity. Currently, we laud the idea that “all men are created equal,” everyone is free, but if you take a moment to reflect on the world around you—are we *really* equal, are we *really* free? Our own police, those who claim to be the protectors of justice and society, are killing people. Eric Garner strangled by a policeman in New York? George Floyd brutally murdered by policemen who suffocated him? People of color deserve justice from the maltreatment and violation of their right to life. Even though we may not ever be able to achieve a completely perfect society, we can have one where a person is not defined by their skin tone or their native language. Systemic racism has been a part of our history for far too long, and at this point, it is imperative that we provide people of color with the platforms of inclusion and diversity that have prior only existed in concept. Our country was built upon four main pillars—hope, equality, love, and justice. However, the fourth pillar seems to have disappeared from the home that America was created to be. But, with hope, equality and love, we can work towards a place more just. The United States needs to remain united and protect its citizens. It is time to undo the damage we have done as

a country, and instead incorporate justice into our society. In the end, you may wonder: what *is* that perfect definition of justice promised at the beginning? “Justice is conscience, not a personal conscience but the conscience of the whole of humanity.”