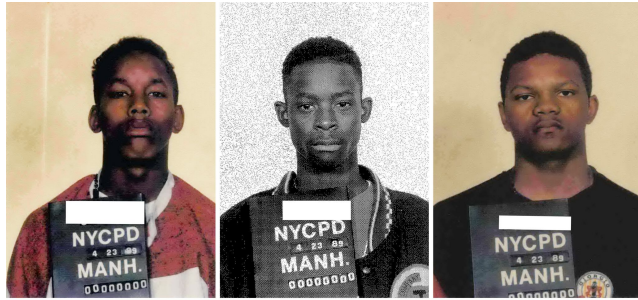


# Surveillance in America: A Case of the Central Park



Five

Rawan Al-Wakeal



# Disclaimer

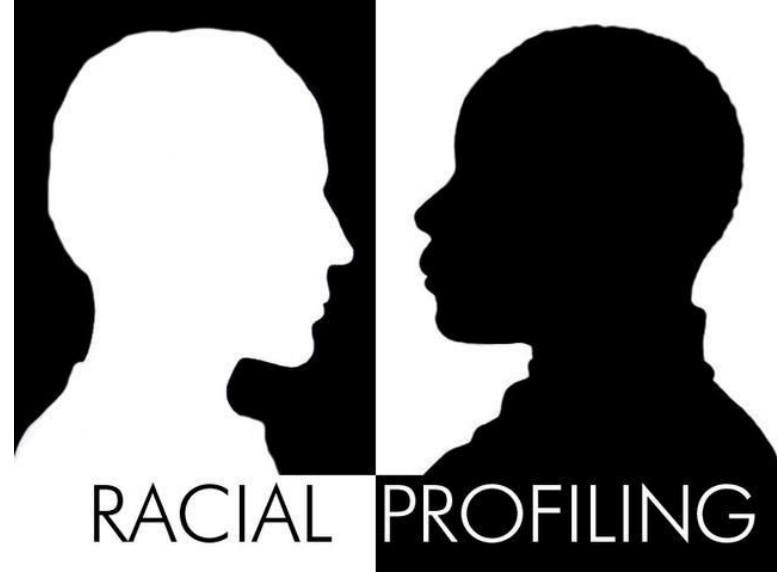
This presentation will contain stories of sexual assault and mistreatment



# Introduction

Recurring themes:

- Surveillance
- Racialized Male Bodies
- Central Park Five
- Race & Disability



- **Racial profiling:** a form of surveillance conducted by law enforcement officers who target people based on their racial, cultural and religious backgrounds instead of “objective evidence” (United Nations Publications V).

# History of Central Park and Surveillance

- A space of “community control’ since African American and Hispanics occupied the area of Harlem”

(Rosenzweig and Blackmar 471)

- Set to open in 1858 (Kang 2017) & be regulated by officers to discipline people
- **Discipline:** individuals are “trained, used, and, if need to be, punished” (Foucault 242)
- 80s = Media emphasized crimes in CP by black and Latino individuals against whites (Rosenzweig and Blackmar 476)
- Racialized individuals, was monitored/punished by white middle-class men (Taylor 450)
- Power, Race, Class and Gender division between the park’s visitors and the park’s surveillance systems



# Story of the Central Park Five

- Central Park, New York City, April 19, 1989
- 28-year-old Jogger was physically/sexually assaulted
- **Raymond Santana Jr., Kevin Richardson, Antron McCray, Yousef Salaam and Korey Wise** were arrested because they “fit the description” of a “rapist”
- Taken into custody without parental consent & forced to confess to the crime



- Detectives working on the case were all influenced by the head of the Manhattan District Attorney’s Sex Crimes Unit, Linda Fairstein
- **NO DNA**, or any physical evidence found, all boys were sentenced to serve 5-15 years in prison
- Boys were “convicted of rape in the first degree, sodomy in the first degree, sexual abuse in the first degree, attempted murder in the second degree” (Winfrey and DuVernay 2019)

# Story of the Central Park Five

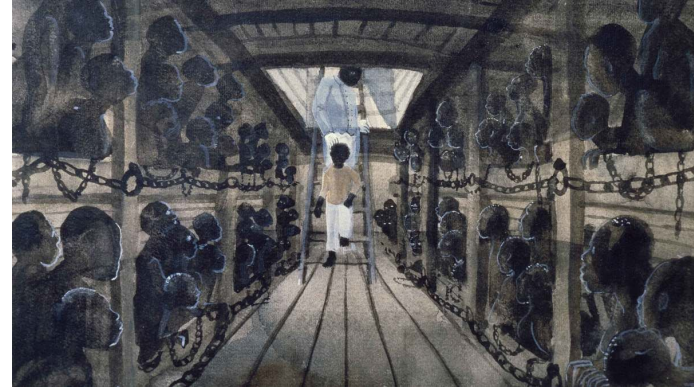
- In 2003, Matias Reyes confessed to the assault of Patricia Meili (Jogger)
- Five men sued New York State in 2003 and in 2014, received \$41 million dollars **collectively**
- Money was spent on lawyer fees and no apology was given by anyone in the case (Winfrey and DuVernay 2019)
- The public, the media, and the racial division pushed for this case to quickly be solved = incarcerating innocent boys in jail



- Oprah Winfrey asked, “What went through your mind when you heard the word guilty?” Raymond Santana Jr., expressed “Life was over. A 14-year-old boy couldn’t see past tomorrow” (Winfrey and DuVernay 2019)

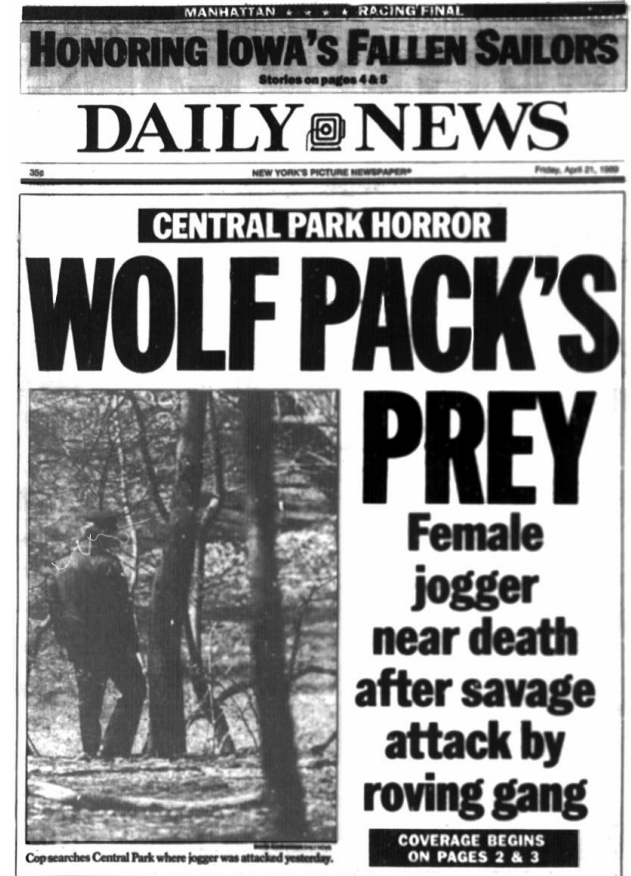
# Surveillance, Slavery and Black Bodies

- Surveillance of black bodies stems from slavery
- The Dolben Act (1788) permitted the use of slave ships, ships that carried slaves to and from a place (Browne 46)
- Racism is not singular, biological factor intertwines with racism
- Racism creates high incarceration rates in the US prison systems (Maynard 85)
- Central Park Jogger Case - Former NYC prosecutor, Fairstein, targeted the boys for their biological color of their skin (Winfrey and DuVernay 2019)



# Latinos, The US and Surveillance

- Americans from Latino descent - surveillance regarding their immigration and refugee history within the state
- Law enforcement officers mark Latino individuals in the US as 'illegal' (Villegas 232).
- Create surveillance through technology and/or practices
- For Ex: The state (police) permit the illegalization of individuals by collecting information (Villegas 233)
- Central Park Jogger Case - The media and newspapers labelled the 5 boys as the, "wolf packs," the "gang" and the "wilding teens" (IFC Films 2012)





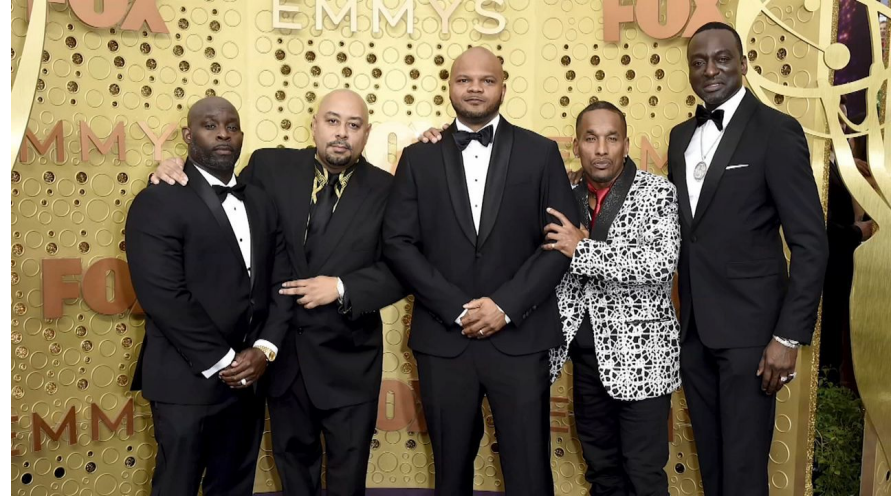
# Surveillance, Race and Disability

- People with disabilities - under researched, discarded or not taken seriously.
- **Disability Surveillance** - monitoring individuals that don't fit the norm (Saltes 56)
- Korey Wise: has a learning disability, is hard of hearing (Thompson 2019)
- His disability impeded his ability to articulate himself at his arrest in 1989
- Students aged 12-14, racialized w/ a disability are 4 times likely to be incarcerated than white students  
(Thompson 2019)
- Surveillance of racialized bodies by the law enforcement occurs in many ways through punishment in prisons and racial profiling



# Conclusion

- Case of Central Park: Exonerated 5 was assumed guilty because of race/gender
- Surveillance tactics used by law enforcement officers allowed/justified imprisonment
- Surveillance, Race & Power = Incarcerated 5 innocent racialized boys
- Power = Used to control & oppress racialized people, people with disabilities and immigrant bodies
- The exonerated men were **not** isolated incidents but reflected on a racial and historical prejudice



# Works Cited

- Browne, S. (2015). 'Notes on Surveillance Studies,' in *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*.
- Foucault, M. (March 1976). Excerpt from "*Society Must Be Defended*": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, trans. David Macey.
- IFC Films. (2012, October 23). *The Central Park Five* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7XX6GgI5SU>
- Kang, T. (2017, June 01). *160 Years of Central Park: A Brief History*. Retrieved from <https://www.centralparknyc.org/blog/central-park-history>
- Maynard, R. (2017). *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present* Fernwood Publishing.
- Winfrey, O., (Host) and DuVernay, A., (Filmmaker). (2019). *Oprah Winfrey Presents: When They See Us* [Docuseries]. Retrieved from <https://www.netflix.com/ca/title/81147766>
- Rosenzweig, R., & Blackmar, E. (1992). *The park and the people: A history of Central Park*. Cornell University Press.

# Works Cited

- Saltes, N. (2013). 'Abnormal' bodies on the borders of inclusion: Biopolitics and the paradox of disability surveillance. *Surveillance & Society*, 11(1/2), 55-73.
- Taylor, D. E. (1999). Central Park as a model for social control: urban parks, social class and leisure behavior in nineteenth-century America. *Journal of leisure research*, 31(4), 420-477.
- Thompson, K. V. (2019, July 10). *Korey Wise Represents So Much More in "When They See Us."* Retrieved from <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2019/07/10/korey-wise-represents-so-much-more-in-when-they-see-us/>
- United Nations Publications. (2019). *Preventing and Countering Racial Profiling of People of African Descent: Good Practices and Challenges* [PDF File].  
Published by the Department of Global Communications and the Office  
of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/preventracialprofiling-en.pdf>
- Villegas, P. (2015), 'Fishing for Precarious Status Migrants: Surveillant Assemblages of Migrant Illegalization in Toronto,' in *Journal of Law and Society* 42(2)