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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

black lives matter, gaslighting, government, surveillance, abuser, protesters, race, movement, requesters, paper, ernst, protect, information, redaction, abuse, fbi, black, question, paranoid, argue

## SPEAKERS

Jordan Auzenne



Jordan Auzenne 00:12

After months of feeling paranoid, Brandy Collins was convinced, black protesters were being watched by the government. So, a civil rights organizer for Color of Change. She did what she was supposed to do. File a Freedom of Information request surrounding the surveillance of Black Lives Matter. What followed were months of email exchanges and radio silence but still she was hopeful. So when a file finally landed on her desk in late 2017. She didn't anticipate the pit that would form in her stomach because what she received was nine pages of this:



Jordan Auzenne 00:53

On March 19 2018, the Center for Constitutional Rights responded with a lawsuit against the DHS and the FBI to release the contents of an unprecedented redaction. A completely blacked out memo referred to in government emails only as, "The Race Paper." The Root clarifies on March 20, 2018. We know it's nine pages long. We know what it's called. We know that it exists. From the request, we can infer that it's about black surveillance, but no one knows what it says, why it exists, or what it's possibly being used for and the lawsuit. So on May 22, 2018 makes it clear. We probably never will. If this lack of description is frustrating, it should be the race papers manipulate black protesters to the point where






they're left questioning their realities. So we ask how does The American government use gaslighting through "The Race Paper" to delegitimize black movements. To answer we'll turn to "Racial Gaslighting" published by Angelique Davis and Rose Ernst and the 2017 Politics Groups and Identities. Davis and Ernst argue that information manipulation is a form of gaslighting with the potential to distort entire movements. So let's first understand their model, then apply it to the release of the race paper before finally deriving implications. It was 1944 when the term gaslighting was coined as a type of abuse in which the perpetrator convinces the victim, they are being abused at all Davis and Ernst analyzed multiple forms of gaslighting use against the Black community, honing in on Black Lives Matter where the government gaslit women through three actions; distortion, dependency and reversal. First distortion. The words Black Lives Matter aren't meant to argue that other lives aren't important. But the government bolsters All Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter, confusing the audience about Black Lives Matter's actual mission. And the audience isn't going to support a movement they don't understand. The Gaslighter takes the identity of the movement and distorts it, turning their audience against them. Second, dependency, the gas lighter forces the movement to be dependent on the very power structure maker. Black Lives Matter can protest through the First Amendment push for legislative change, even try police in court, but they'll still be silenced. Because the only way to challenge the government is through avenues of the government the people deem credible. The only entity that can justify the victims of abuse is their abuser. Finally, reversal, the gaslighter reverses the roles of abuser and abused. The purpose of Black Lives Matter is to critique the police state, and its centuries long history of brutalizing black bodies. But the police are supposed to protect the people from criminals by calling protests riots, bolstering good guys with guns and moving prominent leaders of BLM onto terror watch list. The government portrayed Black Lives Matter as this paranoid antagonist reframing the victim as the real abuser.



Jordan Auzenne 04:48

As of March 1, 2019, 42 organizations have petitioned for The Race Paper to be unredacted, 42 organizations leaving empty handed. Let's understand color changes request for the release of the race paper through racial gaslighting, where the government ultimately decides the race paper will be redacted. First distortion: The requestors have a specific purpose to protect protesters from surveillance. However, Color of Change explained on October 31 of 2018. The FBI argued redaction is protecting the names of protesters, because release of information would be more threatening than surveillance itself. This justifies the censorship, causing the audience to question if requestors are protecting anyone at all. And the audience isn't going to support the movement they don't understand. The Gaslighter took the identity of the requestors and distorted it, turning their audience against them. Second, dependency: The purpose of the FOIA

request was to receive unbiased reporting yet the FBI moved the conversation to the court, and the New York Times reveals on September 13, 2018, appointed William Pauley the III, a judge reprimanded by the Supreme Court for his history of ruling in favor of black surveillance. But the only way to challenge the government is through the avenues of the government that people deem credible, meaning the only entity that could justify the victims abuse was their abuser. Finally, reversal: the FBI argues in the case that if the requesters are critiquing their methods of counter-terror they're inherently impeding those methods. And McGregor Law Center remembers on September 28, 2018, the Justice Department post this the only people who would be worried about terrorist surveillance are terrorists. By seeking justice the requesters become paranoid antagonist actors of terror. reframing the victim as the real abuser. So, how does the American government use gaslighting through "The Race Paper," to delegitimize black movements?

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Gaslighting isn't only about the abuser and the abused but also beyond it, because black protesters don't question the reality of racism.
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This manipulation is meant to confuse the white allies who need proof that racism still exists, making it impossible for us to ever escape our abuser. So, implications
-  Jordan Auzenne 07:39  
First, the government isn't only the only one doing the gaslighting.
-  Jordan Auzenne 07:43  
The 2018 Journal of Critical Cultural Studies explains while people of color have a tendency to racialize their realities, our white counterparts don't. So when white allies tell Black Lives Matter to be quiet or or question the maliciousness of The Race Paper, they aren't just complicit. No, they become the gas lighters. Gaslighting isn't prevalent because people like Donald Trump blatantly lie, but when the white friends we confide in professors we trust when the white coaches we work with push for us to be racialized.
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This only makes us more palatable to whiteness, turning allies into abusers. But second, we need to ask the right questions. What's ironic about The Race Paper, is that it basically

confirmed the surveillance it just didn't tell us who. Because we learned about the surveillance not from the paper we received but from the question we asked. The request itself. In a system of information manipulation. The question is the only rhetoric we can control. In fact, the foia.gov last accessed March 31, 2019 makes it clear. If the government doesn't have information, they explicitly tell us that, so let's get as specific as possible. If I were to request the surveillance of Jordan Auzenne, would I receive no information or a blacked out sheet of paper.



Jordan Auzenne 09:18

After analyzing Davis and Ernst's model and applying it to the release of The Race Paper, it's clear, this form of manipulation started here. But it doesn't end with this redaction. To my black communicators protect each other. Black Lives Matter is a movement of martyrs built on the backs of people that didn't even know they were dying for a cause. So take a step back from the rhetoric. And remember what the front lines of Ferguson really looked like. Our role in these movements is to break down this complex rhetoric for people that don't have the textbooks to understand. Protect each other because The Race Paper already says everything we know about our government



Jordan Auzenne 10:03

by saying absolutely nothing.