**Excerpt 1: From “**[**What Would Malcolm X Think**](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/21/opinion/ilyasah-shabazz-what-would-malcolm-x-think.html)**?” by Ilyasah Shabazz, Feb. 21, 2015**

Fifty years ago today my father, Malcolm X, was assassinated while speaking at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City. I think about him every day, but even more in the last year, with the renewed spirit of civil rights activism after the tragic events in Ferguson, Mo., on Staten Island and in countless other parts of the country. What would he have to say about it?

People still look to Malcolm X as a model for strident activism. They lament the lack of such a prominent, resonant voice in the modern dialogue about race. But they might not like some of the critical things he would have to say about the strategies of today’s activists.

Of course, my father would be heartened by the youth-led movement taking place across the nation, and abroad, in response to institutional brutality. And he would appreciate the protesters’ fervor and skillful use of social media to rapidly organize, galvanize and educate. In a sense, his ability to boil down hard truths into strong statements and catchy phrases presaged our era of hashtag activism.

But he would be the first to say that slogans aren’t action. They amount to nothing but a complaint filed against a system that does not care. In his speeches, he did not simply cry “Inequality!” — he demanded justice, and he laid out the steps necessary to achieve it.

He counseled smart action to circumvent the inevitable consequences of systemic injustice. When he spoke about “the ballot or the bullet,” America sat up and took notice as he articulated the searing reality that, if not granted the right to participate in the system, black citizens would have no recourse but to fight. The long-suppressed fury that was beginning to boil over in black communities lent credence to this warning. And when voting rights laws and practices changed, it was in no small part because of powerful white Americans’ fear of what could happen if they failed to act.

He would also critique the activists’ rhetoric itself. I imagine he would applaud the “Hands Up” gesture for its sheer dramatic effect, but also critique it as rank capitulation that ironically accommodates the very goal of police brutality — to intimidate and immobilize black citizens, forcing them into a defenseless posture if they hope to survive. He’d agree that “Black Lives Matter,” indeed — but also note that the uniformed police officers who disagree are not likely to be persuaded by a hashtag.

Above all, he would bemoan the lack of sustained, targeted activism. Yes, there are many people continuing the hard work that began after Ferguson. But far too many have moved on. Today when people speak about how we must fight racism, the “threat” feels empty. We have softened to the point of apathy, and everyone is so easily distracted from activism by pop culture and high-tech consumerism. How can we expect change when no one feels accountable to provide justice — including grand juries and district attorneys?

**Excerpt 2: From “**[**After the Bombing**](http://www.malcolm-x.org/speeches/spc_021465.htm)**” by Malcolm X, Feb. 14, 1965**

No, since the federal government has shown that it isn’t going to do anything about it but talk, it is a duty, it’s your and my duty as men, as human beings, it is our duty to our people, to organize ourselves and let the government know that if they don’t stop that Klan, we’ll stop it ourselves. And then you’ll see the government start doing something about it. But don’t ever think that they’re going to do it just on some kind of morality basis, no. So I don’t believe in violence — that’s why I want to stop it. And you can’t stop it with love, not love of those things down there, no. So, we only mean vigorous action in self-defense, and that vigorous action we feel we’re justified in initiating by any means necessary.

Now, the press, behind something like that, they call us racist and people who are “violent in reverse.” This is how they psycho you. They make you think that if you try to stop the Klan from lynching you, you’re practicing “violence in reverse.” Pick up on this, I hear a lot of you all parrot what the [white] man says. You say, “I don’t want to be a Ku Klux Klan in reverse.” Well, you — heh! — if a criminal comes around your house with his gun, brother, just because he’s got a gun and he’s robbing your house, brother, and he’s a robber, it doesn’t make you a robber because you grab your gun and run him out. No, see, the man is using some tricky logic on you. And he has absolutely got a Ku Klux Klan outfit that goes through the country frightening black people. Now, I say it is time for black people to put together the type of action, the unity, that is necessary to pull the sheet off of them so they won’t be frightening black people any longer. That’s all. And when we say this, the press calls us “racist in reverse.”

“Don’t struggle — only within the ground rules that the people you’re struggling against have laid down.” Why, this is insane. But it shows you how they can do it. With skillful manipulating of the press, they’re able to make the victim look like the criminal, and the criminal look like the victim.

Right now in New York we had a couple cases where police grabbed the brother and beat him unmercifully — and then charged him with assaulting them. They used the press to make it look like he’s the criminal and they’re the victim. This is how they do it, and if you study how they do it [t]here, then you’ll know how they do it over here. It’s the same game going all the time, and if you and I don’t awaken and see what this man is doing to us, then it’ll be too late. They may have the gas ovens already built before you realize that they’re hot.

One of the shrewd ways that they use the press to project us in the eye or image of a criminal: They take statistics. And with the press they feed these statistics to the public, primarily the white public. Because there are some well-meaning persons in the white public as well as bad-meaning persons in the white public. And whatever the government is going to do, it always wants the public on its side, whether it’s the local government, state government, federal government. So they use the press to create images. And at the local level, they’ll create an image by feeding statistics to the press — through the press showing the high crime rate in the Negro community. As soon as this high crime rate is emphasized through the press, then people begin to look upon the Negro community as a community of criminals.

And then any Negro in the community can be stopped in the street. “Put your hands up,” and they pat you down. You might be a doctor, a lawyer, a preacher, or some other kind of Uncle Tom. But despite your professional standing, you’ll find that you’re the same victim as the man who’s in the alley. Just because you’re Black and you live in a Black community, which has been projected as a community of criminals. This is done. And once the public accepts this image also, it paves the way for a police-state type of activity in the Negro community. They can use any kind of brutal methods to suppress Blacks because “they’re criminals anyway.” And what has given this image? The press again, by letting the power structure or the racist element in the power structure use them in that way.