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“A time comes when silence is betrayal,” as said once by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. This quote may seem contradictory, but in reality is a paradox. At a point, silence is complicitness. This fact can be seen in segregation and the murder of George Floyd.

Has there never been a time when we, as human beings, have been silent and complicit in something to the point that it became harmful to another? The answer to this question, although admittedly rhetorical, is in fact yes. As a witness of mistreatment, of abuse, of harm to another, we have a responsibility to adamantly defend the victim. It is easy to pass off the harm, be it systemic or ephemeral, as ‘none of my business,’ but it is just to do otherwise. Think of segregation in the United States. Were there whites who, although not actively enforcing the laws or otherwise being discriminatory, were silent and thus allowed it to happen? Of course there was. And we would still believe that, although they didn’t necessarily do it themselves, they betrayed those who were betrayed by the system by not actively advocating against it. As the late Georgia representative John Lewis once famously said, “When you see something that is not right, not just, not fair, you have a moral obligation to say something. To do something. Our children and their children will ask us, ‘What did you do? What did you say?’ For some, this may be hard. But we have a mission and a mandate to be on the right side of history.”

Millions upon Millions of human beings take the streets of every single major city in the entire country. It was the largest protest in our nation’s history. People of each and every race march side by side, united together against a common foe: systemic police brutality. It was in the weeks, months, and years following the murder of George Floyd that we saw these protests occur across over 2,000 cities and 60 countries around the world. Many were disturbed by the acts of police officers like Derek Chauvin that killed people like Floyd. While many believe that the life was taken by Chauvin, the two men, both police officers, who stood next to him, watching him, listening to Floyd’s calls for help, are just as responsible. In possibly the most critical point in their lives, and certainly the life of Floyd, they neglected to do what they had the responsibility

to do. It is the job of a police officer to protect citizens. It is the responsibility of citizens to protect one another. US attorney in the prosecution of the three officers involved, Charles Kovats, said, "these officers had a moral responsibility, a legal obligation and a duty to intervene. By failing to do so, they committed a crime." By not intervening, by being silent, they betrayed not only their job and the law, but the life of another human being.