

# The '19 stages of Mercury

Written by Ashley Sanders

*'A riot is the language of the unheard,' Martin Luther King Jr*

5/29/2020

I grabbed my mask as I headed towards my front door. I needed to be at work before 8:00AM and it was already 7:50. Once I made it out I got in my car to go, not realizing the radio would be on a certain station. They have been talking about the same incidents since the beginning of this month, leaving me no choice but to listen. Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd are only a few of the names constantly being mentioned on the news reports. My heart sank further down my chest every time something new was revealed about their cases.

My blood was already boiling by the time I had made it to work. My anger was becoming harder for me to control as days went on and I was ready to do something about it. I never thought we were being heard. All these years, yet barely any change in the way we are viewed. I started to become hungry. This was the type of hunger that made you do anything to satisfy it. I wanted something better for my future kids, I had vowed to myself on this day that I would do anything to make sure they don't have to feel this hunger. So before I went in I said my daily prayers and exited my vehicle. People were all around me frantically trying to get into the grocery store. There have not been enough supplies to feed the families in my area for weeks and they were becoming more uneasy as time passed. I clocked in to start my shift and walked to the register I was assigned to for the day. My friend, Jalen, had already been clocked in and was preparing to stock some shelves, but he made time to come over and speak to me first.

"We still doin' this Lee?" He asked me.

I side eyed him because he knew we weren't supposed to be talking about such plans at work. He took my hint and walked off, but I couldn't help but think about what we were going to do in just a few hours.

My shift had gone by quicker than expected, spreading relief all throughout my bones. I was tired but still ready to give my all. I had a change of clothes in my car so I quickly switched into casual clothing and made my way to Jalen's car. He handed me a ski mask and a bat as I got into the passenger seat. The car started up and we began our trip to Atlanta.

“How long are you tryna stay out here?” He asked me. I shrugged my shoulders as I watched the clock. It was only 7:00PM, we had a lot of time to spare.

“We gonna stay out for as long as they allow us to Jay.” I told him.

My face was stone cold due to the fact I could not stop thinking about how angry I was. Something as vile as the murders of George, Breonna, or Ahmaud could easily happen to my cousins, brothers, or even Jalen. I no longer have the patience to play nice.

We arrived in the city and Jalen found a random spot to park. We got out and already smelled the smoke of a nearby fire. People are yelling, protesting, all around us. We put on our masks and grabbed our bats. I looked around to see we aren't the only ones that caught the drift. People from all over had rocks, bats, skateboards, anything that would cause some damage in their hands. I can't lie and say that sight didn't put a smile on my face. I was angry, no lie. I wanted to let my anger out on any and everyone that came close to the description of a blue. I was *mad*.

One thing led to another and I blacked out. All I could see was red as I smashed windows and screamed out the names of the lost. I wanted justice for them and for the ones that didn't gain the same media coverage. I was not only screaming for justice, but I was screaming because I was scared. I was scared the ones closest to me could be snatched from me within a blink of an eye, and there would be nothing I could do to bring them back. The screams turned into sobs as I began to beat a building near the CNN building. Jalen had to pull me away from it once he heard a loud eruption come out of the CNN building. Was it a bomb? I knew we needed to go, but a part of me wanted to stay and watch the city burn. It's a dark side of me that I would love to bury. But, I know this story needs to be heard. People must understand the ones that have gone *mad*.