

# UC Berkeley

## Recent Work

### Title

"Balancing the Black and Blue" & "Things to Remember"

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9s62w2f4>

### Author

Johnson, Brittany Lauren

### Publication Date

2016-02-22

### Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9s62w2f4#supplemental>

## Abstracts

### **Balancing The Black & Blue**

For Lt. Leronne Armstrong, being a police officer comes with the struggle of reconciling his identity as a black male with his commitment to a job that he loves and believes in. An Oakland native who grew up in the shadow of police brutality and whose family was torn apart by violence, Armstrong is well aware of the history of mistrust between the African American community and law enforcement. With the recent incidents of officer-involved shootings of black men and women, he strives to be a bridge between the black community of Oakland and the Oakland Police department.

### **Things to Remember**

My grandparents, George and Mary Helen Sampson were born in North Carolina in 1924. They married at 19 years old. 12 children (10 of whom are still living) and seven decades later they reflect on their legacy and how my grandma's worsening dementia has revealed the strength of their marriage and family.

## Source List

Lt. Leronne Armstrong of the Oakland Police Department  
George Sampson  
Mary Helen Sampson

## Script

### **Balancing the Black and Blue** **Brittany Johnson**

Tracking shots his west Oakland neighborhood, scene in front of his home, shoes hanging from wires, etc.)

*Lt. Armstrong: I grew up in Oakland, California. In the west side of Oakland. I grew up in very violent area. As a young boy we would often just run from law enforcement because we would just believe that they were gonna harass us or do something to us. I was taught to not trust police and not to look to police to protect me or protect my community.*

*(PF shoot of badge, PF shoot in front of house)*

*Lt. Armstrong: When I say the phrase balancing the black and the blue, I think that I have a different responsible then some. My responsibility to my community is to not only be a professional police officer but to also be empathic to the issues that the community face, that these issues are real to me.*

*I put this uniform, but it doesn't make who I am. I'm still a black man, I'm still proud of who I am even when I put the uniform on.*

*Lt Armstrong: I came from a family, there was single mother, no dad in the house.*

*I had an older brother and I had a young sister. Well my older brother, he was three years older than me when I was 13, he was killed. He had an altercation at school and that altercation led to that individual retrieving a gun and killing him in the hallway. At 13 years old I was devastated by the lose of my only brother. The person who helped influenced me.*

*Lt. Armstrong: I knew that when I lost my brother, I felt that there is something I can do to bring something positive to this community.*

*Lt. Armstrong: I initially started my career off in the Alameda county probation department. Everyday in that unit I would sit down with young men from communities just like me. They would often say to me that they didn't see police as you know people that they respected in their communities.*

*My positive interactions at the probation department made me believe that I could be a difference. It made me believe that I could be the police officer that I wish I would have known when I was young.*

*VO Intro (Armstrong): I teach a course called procedural justice and police legitimacy. It is a class that provides officers information regarding how we treat*

citizens.

*Lt. Armstrong (in class): We often in this class are telling you what true legitimacy is. It is not that fact that what you do, how you behave when I am pointing the camera at you. It is how you behave when I am sleep at two in the morning. Can I rest because I have confidence in my police department that my police officers are doing the right thing?*

*Lt. Armstrong: In my community you fear law enforcement. But I don't think fear is the way you keep a community safe. I think you keep a community safe by having a partnership.*

*People trust me. And they have a different expectation for me. The expectation is that I communicate with them. The expectation is that I do things the right way.*

*It is hard to believe that a profession is ethical when you see them behaving in a violent manner*

*Protest lady: Don't think that they won't do whatever they will do. I may stand for peace and love, you may stand for peace and love. But they don't!*

*Lt. Armstrong: If you don't trust something. If you don't believe in a system. maybe you should be a part of the change in that system. Especially as African-Americans we have to prepare our young people to become a part of law enforcement. We have to put people that we trust in place.*

*So I think people can't just stand by and say I hate something, I hate something. I think for those that feel like those who feel like they could be that positive force that law enforcement needs then they should get involved.*