

# EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE [EJI]

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The Equal Justice Initiative is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society.



- EJI is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
- Founded in 1989 by Bryan Stevenson, a widely acclaimed public interest lawyer and bestselling author of Just Mercy
- EJI provides legal representation to people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced, or abused in state jails and prisons
- Challenges the death penalty and excessive punishment and provide re-entry assistance to formerly incarcerated people.

# 365 Days Ago





- ⌘ The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, opening to the public on April 26, 2018,
- ⌘ Will become the nation's first memorial dedicated to the legacy of enslaved black people, people terrorized by lynching, African Americans humiliated by racial segregation and Jim Crow, and people of color burdened with contemporary presumptions of guilt and police violence.

# Personal Connection

⌘ I feel personally connected to the material because I have experienced racial profiling first hand. When I was jogging by in 2012, I was rushed to the floor by police. They said it was because I fit the profile of the suspect in the area who they were searching for. This is just one of the three times this has happened to me during my teenage years. These incidences shaped the way I view police and law enforcers in the society of the United States. It made me look at all the many broken aspects of the criminal justice system and motivated me to pursue a major in political science. I want to make in change in the lives of people that were not as fortunate as me to escape the claws of the criminal justice system.

# References

Link for Lynch Memorial

& <https://eji.org/national-lynching-memorial>

Website for Equal Justice Initiative

& <https://eji.org/about-eji>

Info about Walter McMillian

Best Selling Book “Just Mercy” by Bryan Stevenson



# Summary

There is a school of thought in philosophy called Distributive Justice. One subcomponent of distributive justice is justice as equality. This utilitarian view of a society provides all of its citizens with the basic/equal amount of “stuff.” A society where everyone has equal opportunities and equal rights, speaks to America's philosophy on the idea of all people being created equal. However, there would never be a general consensus on what true equality is. Citizens of other races and ethnicities were denied the right to vote. Disenfranchisement was also extended to those of the opposite sex. White women also held a second-class status to their white male counterparts. Laws were created to subdue African-Americans to a life that was anything but equal to that of whites. It was the egocentric superiority complex of the white male that made it nearly impossible, for anyone different, to be seen as equal.

I chose the Equal justice initiative to study because they are on the front lines fighting the equality that is denied many American citizens, especially those that have been wrongfully convicted. The mission of Bryan Stevenson, the leader of EJI, covers many aspects of gaining equality for many that have fall victim to the criminal justice system and the prison system. EJI cover cases involving minors being sent to adult prisons, the death penalty, underage prosecution, death in prison sentencing, unreliable convictions, excessive punishments, the list goes on... Although I wasn't able the visit the office of EJI, I attend a talk last year at the Brooklyn Museum by Bryan Stevenson. Although I was already aware of the mission of EJI and Bryan Stevenson prior to this talk, I became even more convicted to pursue a degree in political science. During his panel discussion, Stevenson unveils his plans to open a lynch memorial in Montgomery, Alabama in April 2018. This is what influenced me to do my presentation on EJI.

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The mission to fight for equality in one that has been fought for centuries by members of society who faces the same conviction. They have refused to accept things the way they are and have dedicated their lives to fight for a change, a change for the future generation. They are fighting for a society that is truly equal. Bryan Stevenson and EJI are paving the way to that future. I believe it is our duty to offer this organization and others like it, our full support. It is only by coming together that we can stand a chance at societal equality.