The riots started Sunday, August 6 and continued until the early hours of the following Wednesday morning, covering many states in the UK such as London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Gloucester, Bristol and Cornwall.

By ANNIKA NATION-REID

Contributing Writer

When I was invited to attend the “One Love Peace Festival” at Wembley Arena in London, I was blown away by the line-up that included Shaggy, Sean Paul, Busta Rhymes, Gyptian, Etana, Levi Roots, Skepta, Princess Nyah and many more.

But little did I know that, less than a week later, the United Kingdom would be turned upside down by riots accompanied by looting, following an attempted peaceful protest in Tottenham, London.

The protest was organised to support the family of Mark Duggan, a 29 year old Black British man. His death came about whilst being pursued in a taxi by Trident Police, a specialist unit within the UK Police Force responsible for investigating gun crime within the African Caribbean Community.

Numerous shots were allegedly fired between Duggan and the unit. However, an inquest revealed Duggan’s death to be the result of a single shot to the chest.

Questions arose after the bullet found in an officer’s police radio was police issue and the firearm recovered from the taxi had no evidence of gunshot residue or of it being discharged.

There are many different portrayals being made within the media about Duggan’s character. Some claim he was a north London gangster who was a part of a local gang. Others portray him as a loving, family man who would never seek out confrontation.

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The Prime Minister, David Cameron, and Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, had to cut their holidays short to return to the UK to try and resolve the issue.

The family of Duggan are not condoning the riots stating, “This is not what Mark would have wanted!”

Indeed, it is not want many businesses like ‘Rees’ furniture store located in London, which has survived five generations of family – now burned to dust in the ground – would have wanted either.

The owner recalled calling the police immediately as he witnessed the youths leaving the furniture store and setting it alight but, due to their late arrival and a no show by the fire brigade, all he could do was watch his business burn down along with many family memories.

Questions within the community are being raised, asking “why are [rioters] doing this to us?”

The targeted stores seem to be electrical goods stores, cellular phone shops, designer outlet stores, and sports shops.

Speaking with one of the reggae artists Gyptian at the “One Love Peace Festival,” his words really stand predominantly in my mind. When asked if he could give a message to the youths of today about ending the violence he said, “Things start from the home because, if there is no love in the home, there will be no love on the street. Parents need to be more caring to the kids, not just having them and giving them food and shelter only. Give them what they really deserve and spend more time with the kids even myself too. The younger generation is growing up to become destructive. Start teaching them from when they are young. Try to bend them or they are gonna break!”

I had not heard that Jamaican saying since I was a child with my Mum at home, “try to bend them before they break” is similar to the bible quote “Don’t spare the rod and spoil the child.”

The rod metaphorically means the rod of correction in love.

When a child does something wrong, don't be fearful to put them back on the right path, "...before they break" before they end up in a situation that will have dire consequences to their lives.

Whilst at the festival, I also got the opportunity to have a chat with Jasmine Dotiwala, one of the leading Black Women in UK Media currently being featured among others on 'OHTV' and 'Pride Magazine' for her various achievements within the industry and currently writing for the only Black British Newspaper 'The Voice.'

She also had many concerns for the youth of today, reminiscing on her upbringing and what was acceptable at home and what was not. Being of African and Mauritian, heritage she was expected to become an academic and study at university.

She believes "young people expect life to be very easy now because we are in a reality television generation with gossip taking the front page rather than the main tabloid newspapers covering news on their front pages, women like Jordan [Katie Price] with open sexual connotations lead to young women flaunting themselves… parents need to bring up their children and not expect Playstation and MTV to do it."

I had the opportunity to interview some young people who gave insight as to why they believed this was happening, they said, "Since the new government took over 'Education Maintenance, Allowance,' (financial support for young people in education) has been stopped, there are no jobs, university fees have been raised and more stop and searches are happening with the police taking liberties with us. We want payback and the goods are our compensation and the police can't do anything to us anymore!"

Whatever the reason David Cameron has stated that persons will "feel the full force of the law. And, if you are old enough to commit these crimes, you are old enough to face the punishment."

He assured the public that an added 10,000 strong police force will be circulating the streets of London to prevent further carnage and destruction.

As of today, 2000 arrests have been made while people assumed to be involved in the riots are

being evicted from their homes although yet to be found guilt in a court of law.

Currently, there are no exact figures for cost of damages since claims are still being filed. Official believes it’s currently somewhere in the millions.

It is also predicted that another riot will erupt on Monday during the Notting Hill Carnival in London.

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