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Southern Christian **Leadership** Conference
NATIONAL MAGAZINE



50th

ANNIVERSARY
Poor People's
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July 12-15, Renaissance Hotel, Washington, DC

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sclc president's corner

At this year's convention we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Poor People's Campaign of 1968. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Poverty is the worst form of violence".

50th ANNIVERSARY Poor People's Campaign

That's life...that's civil rights!

BY CHARLES STEELE JR., SCLC National President & CEO



Memphis, April 4, 2018: Children scrambled up walls or sat atop their fathers' shoulders to catch a glimpse of SCLC Pres. Charles Steele and other leaders speak during the 50th Anniversary Commemoration event of MLK Jr.'s assassination. Photo: Steven Easley

In 2016, I wrote a book entitled "Easier to Obtain than to Maintain: The Globalization of Civil Rights". I chose this title because throughout my life I have been privileged to experience life from many different walks. I was born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and grew up in an area of town that people called "Daily Bottom". Now you can only imagine why a part of town would be called Daily Bottom. I won't get into those specifics, but I will tell you that I had a mother and father who knew when you are at the bottom there is always a chance to climb up. They taught me how to be strong and overcome obstacles that will cross your path in this journey called life. However, no matter how much they taught me and my siblings we still knew that for some the chance to climb up would be a little more slippery and unjust. This started my itch for wanting to help others dry that slope so that they too could climb up a little easier. However, I quickly learned that just because the slope gets dry that doesn't mean that it will stay dry. When the rain comes there has to be people to help dry the slope again. See, you can't just obtain it, you have to maintain it. That's life...that's civil rights!

We have to understand that the slope won't always be dry and the climb won't always be easy. As a matter of fact we may lose some progress that we have gained, but we must stay focused and keep moving toward justice and equality, we must keep climbing. Here's the key, in order to continue progress we must have a dry incline! How will it get dry? Who's going to dry it? People like you and me who join forces together with civil rights organizations and other fair minded thinking people who push the government and put pressure on companies, corporations, etc. on behalf of those who are climbing. We are drying the slope of oppression, depression, hatred, racism, economic inequality and all those

things that wet the slope and make it hard to push forward. We must keep climbing.

I decided in the 60's that I was going to join the civil rights movement and in 1985 I decided I was going to get into politics and speak for those who did not have a voice. I was elected to the Tuscaloosa City council where I served two terms. In 1994, I was elected to the Alabama State Senate. My vision has always been to create a "national playing field". During my third term in the State Senate I decided to resign to become the National Vice President of the SCLC, the Atlanta based organization co-founded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This was a dream come true for a little country boy from "Daily Bottom".

In November 2004, I became President and CEO of SCLC, resigned in 2009 and in 2012 became the only President in SCLC history to hold the position twice. I am blessed to stand beside the likes of our chairman of the board, Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr. Dr. LaFayette is a man who knows the slippery slope and understands that it is easier to obtain it than to maintain it. I am so fortunate to know and work with so many people like Dr. LaFayette and others who unselfishly put others ahead of themselves. I am so privileged to work with people who understand that you CANNOT do anything in this world alone. You must join forces together in order to help others as they climb and we climb together.

Working together SCLC was able to make history by breaking ground on a new \$3.3 million SCLC international headquarters. This was so important because SCLC could

have a physical building that it owned and take steps to secure the organizations future. We wanted to ensure that our founder, Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy in SCLC remained alive and well. Why is this important to others? Well, it provides a headquarters for fair-minded thinking individuals all over the world to join forces in helping those climb up as we climb together. I guess you can say SCLC wants to provide the tools and aid to help dry the slippery uneven slope that so many face in this country and certainly around the world.

At this year's convention we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Poor People's Campaign of 1968. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Poverty is the worst form of violence". On January 18, 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and President Lyndon B. Johnson agreed to join forces to launch a "War on Poverty." The Poor People's Campaign was organized in 1968 by Dr. King and the SCLC. This campaign was organized as a civil and human rights agenda to ensure that poor people of all backgrounds would have a right to economic justice. As we convene our convention in Washington, DC, please remember that even today the climb to the top has remained somewhat steady and sometimes lost momentum. At times it seems we are losing our grip and we need dedicated people to help us maintain our progress and not lose the tight grasp they so many have fought so hard to obtain.

Please join us, the SCLC at our 60th anniversary as we hand out tools to help dry the slippery slope and create more traction as we pull each other up as a people, as a country as a world. sclc

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sclc from the chairman

Reflections on the Alabama Voter Registration Campaign

BY BERNARD LAFAYETTE JR., SCLC NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

To what do we attribute the political crises we are facing in this country today? One factor is the low turnout of voters in the last election. Democracy works best when many people let their opinions be known. When citizens vote, they are choosing the candidates they believe will most closely represent their views.

The following is an excerpt from my recent book, In Peace and Freedom: My Journey in Selma:

The most significant outcome of the Alabama Voter Registration Campaign was the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on August 6, which banned racial discrimination and secured equal voting rights for black citizens. This resulted in a dramatic increase in voter registration for African Americans. The Voting Rights Act is considered by many people to be the single most important legislation for civil rights. It restored the right to vote guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, which stated that no individual should be denied the right to vote because of race. In addition, it eliminated the use of the unfair literacy tests, poll taxes, and other discriminatory practices to prohibit people of the Alabama Voter Registration Campaign. I'm proud to say that the work that was done in Dallas County and surrounding counties began a positive change throughout the southern states. By the summer following the signing of the Voting Rights Act, more than nine thousand black voters were registered, giving them back the voice that had been oppressed.

I learned from Dr. King the importance of transforming the way people think, not just changing the laws. At the end of the march we never boasted "We won!" as if we had defeated an enemy. Even when the laws change, it is necessary to win



Bernard LaFayette Jr.

the hearts of the opposing people to be truly effective. You can smile at your adversaries but not stick out your tongue. When the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed, it was critical for people's thinking to have changed so that the laws could actually work. Dr. King once told me that laws could regulate people's behavior but not necessarily their hearts.

When people's thinking changes, it affects how they view other issues of injustice. Once they have a change of heart, they may not accept other unjust conditions. It's not the people in the movement that's important; it's the movement in the people that counts. I'm certain that the way the Selma community thought about themselves was revolutionized. Changing a law will make a difference only if people have changed inside.

I believe that a secondary result, but nevertheless an important one, was that people saw the power of nonviolence and recognized that they had the ability to stand up for their beliefs. Their actions of protesting injustices could bring about transformation. Blacks realized that they had the capacity to change unfair and oppressive conditions. They grasped the idea that they, as ordinary individuals, had a role to play. When they combined their individual strengths with strengths of others, they multiplied many times their reservoir of resources.

Going through the experience of Selma gave me a new set of skills and enriched the skills I had already acquired. I felt ready to take on Chicago, applying the principles, steps and philosophy that I had embraced from the early days in Nashville and the Freedom Rides, and that I had continued through Selma. I also recalled some of my narrow escapes, and friends who weren't as fortunate. That responsibility weighed heavy on me, and I vowed to make sure that those who sacrificed their lives did not give them in vain. The road that led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was drenched with blood: not necessarily the blood of our resisters or our opponents, but the blood of advocates and supporters. I wanted to share these experiences not simply for them to be clarified in the minds of researchers, but to be lessons for those who want to apply these nonviolent approaches to dealing with current problems in their lives and communities on national and global levels.

I'm often asked whether I ever got depressed or lost hope through the years of struggle. Honestly, I can say that I never

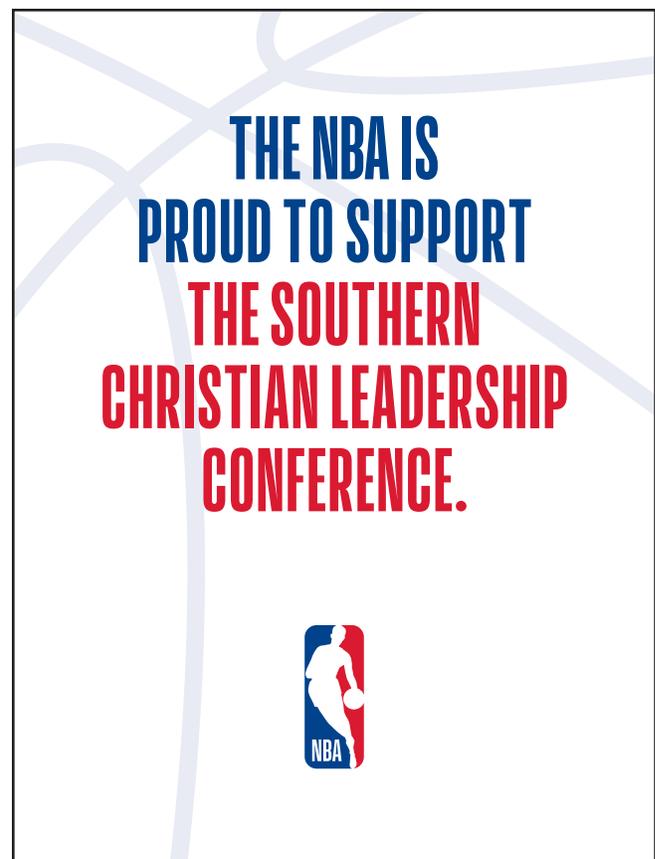
experienced the down moments that some leaders have. Some of the aggravation for Dr. King came from a few of the people who were supposed to back him, and it wore him down. I never had that dissension around me but was always bolstered by individuals with high spirits. In Selma I never had to stand alone, with key supporters such as Mrs. Boynton, Rev. Anderson, Rev. Reese, Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Moore, Mr. Moss, Mr. Gildersleeve, and Father Ouellet. The students who surrounded me gave me so much inspiration and hope for the future. I felt a protective shield with Attorney Chestnut by my side, knowing that a belligerent sheriff or oppressive town leaders weren't going to be able to trap me in legal entanglements. These colleagues were giants who acted without fear. I never received death threats over the phone, as Dr. King did. Any setbacks we had, I didn't worry because I knew these friends would be right there standing beside me, giving me the confidence and courage to carry on, no matter what happened. I tried to view each small step as a success. Most important, my faith always sustained me through many difficult times.

From the beginning, I didn't really expect to survive the movement. I was actually surprised that I made it through two years in Selma relatively unscathed. The most down period I have ever had in my life was when Dr. King was assassinated. The question lingered in my mind why more of us weren't assassinated. I thought we might be picked off one by one. But we weren't. When Dr. King was killed it was a time of transition and rethinking, knowing everything would change. I thought long and hard about how I could serve most effectively, and I deeply felt that I needed to complete my college education. I returned to school, this time with a serious commitment, and not only received a bachelor's degree from American Baptist Theological Seminary but went on to earn a master's degree and doctorate from Harvard in a period of five years. I've tried to use my education in a way Dr. King would have wanted, to continue to train others to use nonviolent direct action as a positive force in bringing about needed change.

It was inconceivable when I was in Selma that we'd ever have a black president during my lifetime, especially the caliber of person who won the confidence of the voters as President Obama did. I don't think he was elected solely because he was black, but because he was someone who assured the American public that he could provide the most effective leadership that was needed at the time. He just happened to be black. The fact that President Obama was elected renews my confidence in our country. That it is possible for us to put race aside and choose the finest candidate based on our best judgement is exhilarating. We have to recognize that the large number of blacks who voted was no small factor in electing President Obama. Before the Voting Rights Act of 1965, I recall such small numbers of blacks in the South being able to vote because blacks were denied the opportunity. Removing the barriers inspired blacks to participate in government not only by voting in their community, state and country but by becoming candidates for office and being elected to the Congress and Senate, and now the presidency. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 didn't just favor the southern states by enfranchising the black community; it helped the entire nation.

I love to go back to Selma in March every year when the town celebrates that historic march with a jubilee. I want everyone to see the physical scene and to walk on the ground where courageous people made their statement to the world, to revisit that pivotal moment in history. My visits have more to do with helping others understand the significance of what happened and how it succeeded, rather than just reliving it myself. It's of great consequence for the young people to meet some of the key players who made it happen, to bring those events alive that they have only read about. Mostly, I want all who visit the Selma Museum and walk across the Edmond Pettus Bridge to understand that the philosophy of nonviolence can help them cross many bridges in their own lives.

My mission was accomplished during the two years of working in Selma. I felt that the part I played in getting things started then fading back and allowing the natural leadership of the community to emerge was not only strategically correct; it was my personal design to push that leadership forward. I was proud that I was able to work effectively within the community to bring about specific changes in the voter registration process. Equally important, I was honored to have worked closely with such an amazing group of individuals who helped the people in the Black Belt of Alabama transform internally. They also realized that they had the power to effect change when they worked together toward a common goal. Although it was just one campaign, I believe that the lessons learned from Selma can generalize to other movements. It was a huge national triumph that began in one small Alabama town. sclc





April 11, 2018, Oval Office, President Trump signed a set of controversial laws enabling state and federal authorities to pursue websites that host sex trafficking ads. Yvonne Ambrose of Chicago (left) was in attendance. Her 16-year-old daughter was killed after being prostituted on Backpage.com. Photo: Ricky Carioti, Getty Images

Can Sweden's sex trafficking law be a model for the U.S.?

BY CATHELEAN STEELE, Founder, Justice for Girls

During a discussion with a friend about the Online Sex Trafficking Act, which President Trump recently signed into law, my friend responded that the law doesn't go far enough. The Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) bill allows states and victims to pursue websites that host sex trafficking ads. The bill also allows state attorneys and victims to file lawsuits against those sites. My thought was that the signing of this bill was great progress in the preventions of a multitude of children and women being forced into this horrible industry.

However, during our discussion—my friend pointed out that as long as there are buyers and the buyers do not face consequences, the sellers will find a way around the law. My interest was sparked and I began researching the laws in other countries and found that in 1999, Sweden passed a law criminalizing the buying of sex but not the selling of sex. Norway adopted this model in 2008 and Iceland followed in 2009. Canada has also adopted a version of it.

The goal was to put “blame and shame” on the person who's using the vulnerable person. The country of Sweden



Cathelean Steele
Photo: John Glenn

then launched a campaign that read “Real Men Don't Buy Sex.” Before the law passed there was a 50-50 split over the idea of criminalizing the buyer. However, after the law went into effect and became so successful the approval rating has jumped to an 85% approval.

According to my research some of the benefits of the law are: allowing men to see women as equal, lowering the demand for girls and women in the sex trafficking industry and the consequence of buyers losing their jobs and respect in the community if arrested. In an interview conducted by Paul Strand from CNNNews.com with Swedish Ambassador Per-Anders Sunesson the results speak for themselves. Sweden is pretty much a “dead market for human trafficking and sexual exploitation.”

In conclusion, my friend believes criminalizing the buyers will work in America since it has had such a positive effective in Sweden. I am not sure since our population is so much larger than Sweden's. We also have to consider the mindset of our Congress. Oh yes, would the explosion of the Me Too Movement, and its successes with holding men accountable, help to pass or hinder a similar law as in Sweden for sex trafficking individuals in the United States? I say, nothing fails but a try! sclc

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Museum photos pages 14-15 courtesy of the Equal Justice Initiative

Eclectic Emotions:

A Personal Perspective on the Historic Opening of the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice

BY DEMARK LIGGINS, SCLC CFO & Chief of Staff

There has always been something special about Alabama, especially its capital city of Montgomery. Perhaps it's Montgomery's polarized legacy of being both the "Cradle of the Confederacy" and the "Birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement, both of which appear on the city seal. How could such disparate yet relevant moments in our country's history have been born from the same soil and city? That answer is simple; slavery. The buying and selling of human beings as chattel as well as the abuse, torture and indignant treatment of black people not only created a second class of citizen, but indeed created a second class of humanity. Montgomery was at the epicenter of this "trade", and the complicated and ugly under belly of our great country.



DeMark Liggins

The viciousness and inhumanity of slavery has always been a stark juxtaposition to the promise of freedom and individual dignity of our great nation. Our inability to reconcile these two sides has reverberated in virtually every aspect of our country. Our judicial system, economics, and social institutions are still tainted with the vestiges of this dark part of our history. It is only fitting that Montgomery is the home of two new museums dedicated to shining light on slavery and its effects on our nation.

The Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice are both projects of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI). Led by Attorney Brian Stevenson, EJI is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States and challenging racial and economic disparities in society. This work in the justice system gave him a front row system to America's most obvious but quiet secret. The social morals and indignities of slavery have never been

removed from our social constructs, and it is causing painful and unjust disparities in every level of our justice system. The Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice were born out of trying to right this wrong.

I was humbled and privileged to attend the opening ceremonies of these two historic monuments this past April. As a native to Montgomery, I immediately felt a new energy in my hometown. It seemed to be a strange blend of optimism and sadness. An excitement that was tempered by the somberness of the museum's actual content and purpose.

Walking into the museum, I was able to fully understand this eclectic blend of emotions. The Legacy Museum is set in an actual slave trading warehouse, mere yards away from where so many of my ancestors were bought, sold, and torn from their families into the horrid reality of American slavery. Immediately, you are confronted with an actor's dramatic reprisals of the oral history of slave narratives. The rawness of the stories is hard to confront. Tears filled my eyes listening to the story of a mother begging to not be separated from her children, only to be kicked by an auc-



tioner. As she saw the disgust in his eyes, the anguished mother realized she could not appeal to the humanity of a man who chooses to not acknowledge that you are even a human. From these gut wrenching re-enactments, the museum walks you through how the basic distinction of not acknowledging our humanity as black people has served as the catalyst for continued suffering in the form of police assassinations, police brutality, and incarceration levels at rates that far out number our percentage of the population.

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice is an outdoor memorial to the victims of lynching in counties throughout the country. Again, the jarring dichotomy of the beautiful grounds with the wretchedness of what we were memorializing was a difficult to experience. Seeing the slaves in chains, with mothers holding their babies, is a visual image that still sears my thoughts. As you move from the statues to the outdoor caskets the feeling is surreal. The sheer number of names and places where there were recorded lynching's is numbing. As you listen to the tranquil sound of the water rushing along the wall dedicated to the unknown victims, it is hard not to also imagine with horror the moments that



led to these deaths. Candidly, it is hard to not carry an anger toward a society that would allow this to happen, much less our own country. That difficult reality is the point of the experience. What should we do with our anger? Our outrage?

EJI compiled a great starting point to deal with these questions through powerful, poignant workshops and town hall sessions on criminal justice, poverty, classism, civil rights, history, and the intersection of art and social justice. They were led by such noted names as Children Defense Fund activist Marian Wright Edelman; film director Ava DuVernay; civil rights activist and author Michelle Alexander, and, of course, attorney Brian Stevenson himself. It made me smile to see the passion and deliberate attention the crowd gave to topics we to often struggle to speak about as a country. Participants came from all walks of life and parts of the country. I met people living in the Alabama's Black Belt which, even today, suffers from crippling poverty and too few opportunities for social mobility. I met death row attorneys from California who have freed over 150 inmates from death sentences. I met public defenders, sympathetic citizens, elected officials and so many others.

Perhaps the most telling moment of my visit to the museum was sitting with a white gentleman from Georgia. We were nearing the end of the museum and he asked my opinion on everything I had just experienced. "I am so proud of my ancestors," was my reply. His eyes were perplexed and he seemed to struggle with asking the obvious question of how I could be proud after seeing the ugly and depressing reality of slavery.

"I could not be prouder of their faith and persistence. The faith in knowing that one day God would allow me to live and not just to live but to sit here in this museum, talking to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama with everyone acknowledging that we are equal." sclc

DEMARK LIGGINS is the Chief of Staff and CFO for the National Office of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He has had the distinction of working for three SCLC presidents, Rev. C.T. Vivian; the late Rev. Howard Creecy Jr., as well as Dr. Charles Steele Jr. Prior to joining SCLC, Liggins was a successful securities broker, Commercial Credit Analyst and Regional CRA lender. He is a graduate of Alabama State University.

50th ANNIVERSARY Poor People's Campaign

“Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity to make America a better nation.”

— MLK Jr., April 3, 1968, Memphis



1963: Martin Luther King leading the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Photo: Robert W. Kelly, Getty Images

King's Poor People's Campaign

BY HEATHER GRAY

The day after King made the above profound statement he was assassinated in Memphis. Also, regarding making America a better nation, at a Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) staff retreat in May 1967, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said:

“I think it is necessary for us to realize that we have moved from the era of civil rights to the era of human rights...when we see that there must be a radical redistribution of economic and political power, then we see that for the last twelve years we have been in a reform movement...That after Selma and the Voting Rights

Bill, we moved into a new era, which must be an era of revolution...In short, we have moved into an era where we are called upon to raise certain basic questions about the whole society.” The Griot

It was, in fact, in 1967 that King and others in SCLC planned the “Poor People's Campaign” to signify the move from civil rights to human rights and for its launching to take place in Washington, DC in 1968.

Regarding King's and others remarkable civil rights work and demands leading to the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Dr. King had questioned that

while these achievements were significant, still, what good was it to be able to get on a bus or into a hotel room if you couldn't afford to pay for it. So, in addition to the inequities in civil rights, the human rights demands of economic justice became paramount for him and, as he said, "to raise certain basic questions about the whole society."

In Mississippi in 1968, just a few weeks before he was assassinated, he spoke of the opportunities for whites that, by comparison, had been denied blacks in America and the hypocrisy surrounding this. Whites say black folks should pick themselves up by their bootstraps? Yet, he notes that around the time of the Civil War Congress passed the Homestead Act essentially giving millions of free land to whites, as well as developing land grant colleges to teach whites how to farm, and more. Here are his comments at this Mississippi gathering:

"At the very same time that America refused to give the Negro any land, through an act of Congress our government was giving away millions of acres of land in the west and the mid-west which meant that it was willing to undergird its white peasants from Europe with an economic floor. But not only did they give the land, they built land grant colleges with government money to teach them how to farm. Not only that, they provided county agents to further their expertise in farming. Not only that, they provided low-interest rates in order that they could mechanize their farms. Not only that, today many of these people are receiving millions of dollars in subsidies not to farm and they are the very people telling the black man that he should lift himself up by his own bootstraps. And this is what we are faced with. And this is a reality. Now when we come to Washington in this campaign, we are coming to get our check!" Federal Subsidies for White Land

The Poor People's Campaign Analysis:

While the American elite didn't like King demanding civil rights, still these demands were accomplished to a large degree and he miraculously lived through that period of his life. But with a shift toward economics and demanding economic equity he was moving into uncharted turf. In his anti-Vietnam speech in New York on April 4, 1967 he spoke of the triple evils in America that, he said, were interrelated and they are racism, poverty/economic inequality, and military imperialism. In fact, it would be appropriate to note that his anti-Vietnam speech laid the ground for the Poor People's Campaign.

King had essentially noted in his anti-war speech that it was impossible to separate the international policies with the domestic policies and motivations. The inference was that you can't separate napalmed children in Vietnam with

poverty in Mississippi or garbage workers in Memphis. They all suffer and are treated as being less than human. The lack of humane and equitable treatment and policies were stark. And how can you point fingers at black Americans for lack of achievement when you witness the huge inequities of treatment between blacks and whites historically and the huge amounts of money going into the military industrial complex to then kill Vietnamese and increase inequities in America as well. That money going to the military could instead be used to advance the quality of life for all Americans.

Dr. King's shift of emphasis in the last year of his life demonstrated to the country and the world what was significant to the ruling elite in the United States because of the way they immediately reacted after his anti-Vietnam War speech. President Lyndon Johnson immediately distanced himself from King. Many black civil rights leaders, including Ralph Bunch and others, were critical. The day following his speech virtually all the major media criticized King.

But finally, regarding the Poor People's March and demands for economic equity, it's also important to note the following: it is the simple profound statement that the reason people are treated differently by those in power is generally for profit. So that would include racism and economic inequities. King was attempting to change that equation by attempting to give workers more power. He was about to threaten the profit accumulation by taking a forthright stance on the side of economic equity for the black community overall. This was compounded by his planning to bring the massive civil rights community and activists with him to Washington to make these economic demands. King was stepping on dangerous ground. It is not ironic that he was killed in Memphis while demanding rights for garbage workers.

America is still needing to address the economic inequities that plague the country with its 1% versus 99% scenario of huge economic disparities. We are fortunate there is now a revival of the SCLC Poor People's Campaign thanks to Reverend William Barber who was also inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King. And also that SCLC has, in recent years, been developing an international "Poor People's Campaign" to address poverty throughout the world. These important efforts are essential for the welfare of us all! sclc



HEATHER GRAY has a history of activism on civil and human rights for decades in the southern region of the United States as well as nationally and internationally. She expresses this background and activism in media both on the radio and in articles.

She is producer of "Just Peace" on WRFG's Monday evening on WRFG-Atlanta's FM station. The program is one of the station's longest running public affairs shows on WRFG that covers local, regional, national and international peace and justice issues.

Remembering SCLC's Rev. James Orange

BY MAYNARD EATON

As we observe the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination, we would be remiss to not recall and salute the memory and mission of the late Rev. James Orange, a top aide to Rev. Martin Luther King during the height of America's civil rights movement, and a major activist/influencer in the election of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa.

Rev. James Orange was the quintessential civil rights, human rights and political activist. His 1965 arrest in Alabama is considered the impetus for the historic Selma-to-Montgomery march. As Heather Gray reported in a February 25, 2008 story, Rev. Orange is from the heart of the Jim Crow South in Birmingham (sometimes called Bombingham or the Johannesburg of the United States) which was also home of the infamous arch segregationist Police Chief Eugene "Bull" Connor. Connor was known, among other dastardly deeds, for the hosing down of and using attack dogs on numerous young black protestors in the 1960's. James Orange was one of them.

He was a 6'3", 300-pound black man—an imposing figure—who was eulogized February 23, 2008 as one of the civil rights movements' premier organizers. The late Rev. Hosea Williams was considered the "field general" of Dr. Martin Luther King's revered and respected "Ground Crew". James Orange was his top lieutenant or "Leader" as he was affectionately called.

"Not only was he widely known as 'Leader', he also addressed others as 'Leader,'" recalls SCLC Chairman Dr. Bernard LaFayette. "Rev. Orange felt people had to stand up and take leadership. He believed if you want a leader, you should be a leader yourself."

Former Georgia State Rep. and SCLC veteran Tyrone Brooks says Rev. Orange was his "big brother." "He was the foundation, the guru of the 'Ground Crew', says Brooks. He effectively brought labor unions, elected officials, young people and countless others to "The Movement". Without James being such an integral part of the 'Ground Crew', we would never have been as successful. He was always ready to go to jail fighting for justice, freedom and equity for our people."

Rev. Orange's impact and inspiration as an organizer and movement 'Leader' also spread to South Africa, where he was instrumental in the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994.

"He was like royalty in South Africa," Brooks recalls. "Going around South Africa with James Orange was the equivalent of being with the President of the United States.

Everywhere we went, they called him 'Hey Leader'".

James began his civil rights career as a young man just one year out of high school in 1962 in Birmingham, Alabama. In an interview of Reverend Orange in 2000 by Fred Gaboury (late dean of labor journalism for the People's Weekly World), James describes his initiation into the civil rights movement

"I was a year out of high school," said Orange. "I had met a beautiful young woman who sang in the choir at the Monday night mass meetings in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. We were to meet afterwards and go have a soda and talk."

The church was jam-packed with a standing-room-only crowd except for two benches in the front. Never one to hesitate, Orange walked up and sat down on one of them.

"I listened to Ralph Abernathy's sermon," Orange remembered, "and the longer I listened the more intently I listened as I became absorbed in his message. It was 1962 and the movement was determined to break segregation in Birmingham, the city of Sheriff 'Bull' Connor and his police dogs."

After the services, Rev. Edward Gardner, a leader of the Alabama Improvement Association that was leading the campaign, asked people to come forward. As they moved to the front of the church, the audience stood and started to applaud.

It was then that Orange realized that he was in the wrong pew. But there was no turning back. "I was already up front and, a few minutes later, found myself, together with those who had come forward, in the church basement." He said, "Although I didn't know it yet, the trip down those stairs changed my life forever."

After people took seats and quieted down, the Rev. James Bevel, director of direct action for the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), began telling the group, many of who were high school or college students, how they were to behave if they were confronted by the police or arrested.

Never a shrinking violet, Orange asked who was going to get arrested. "We are," Bevel replied. "You are."

"That's when I learned that those empty benches had been reserved for people who had volunteered to go to jail, if necessary, in the fight against Jim Crow," Orange said, a broad smile crossing his face.

"But there was no turning back." And, as far as Orange was concerned, not then and not ever! That's why Rev. James Orange is so fondly and reverently remembered. sclc



Rev. James Orange

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The Rev. James E. Orange:

A Personal Memoir of My Mentor

BY CALVIN ALEXANDER RAMSEY

My arrival in Atlanta January 7, 1988 was a journey traveling to the unknown with a one way Amtrak train ticket. I only had in my possession a suitcase and a letter of introduction from Gordon Perry, an executive of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company and at that time the largest African American Insurance Company in Durham, North Carolina. The letter was for Mr. James Paschal, the youngest brother of the three Paschal brothers who launched the legendary Paschal's restaurant and hotel on Hunter Street. Mr. Paschal had no idea I was headed his way or any desire to hire me at that time but against his senior management team's advice, he hired me to be a night auditor at his airport concession. I was slated to begin work that Thursday night, January 10th. I had a few evenings on my own to explore Atlanta.

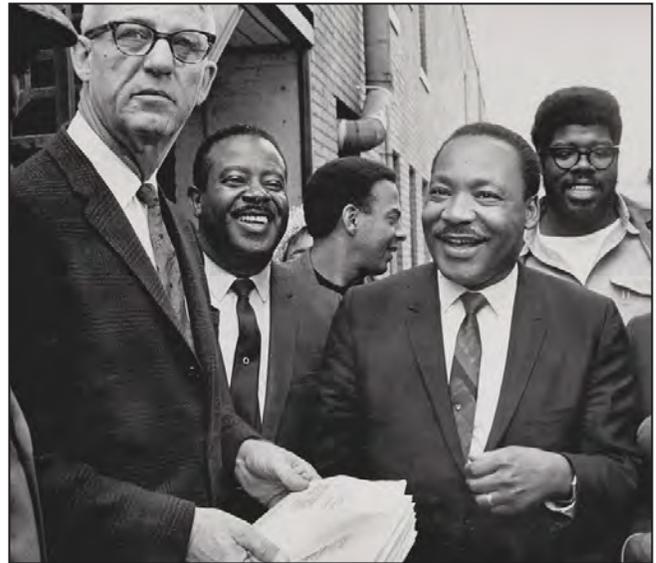
That first night in Atlanta, I ventured downtown Atlanta and soon realized that "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Week" activities had already begun. I followed a couple down Auburn Avenue to the Atlanta Life Building and as I entered a quite tall and hefty Black man with a booming baritone voice said to me, "Leader would you like two tickets to see a play at the Alliance Theatre tomorrow night?"

I answered that I would be more than grateful, though, at the time, I didn't have anyone else to give the second ticket to. That gentleman was Reverend James Orange. I had to find my way to the Alliance Theater the next night and that play was August Wilson's "Joe Turner Has Come and Gone" starring Avery Brooks.

Reverend Orange saw me at the theater that night and I was rather proud that I'd kept my word to this man. I did not know a thing about Reverend Orange's heady history, but over a brief time, I would see him at various functions and soon learned of his steadfast passion and value to the Civil Rights Movement.

I learned how Rev. Orange's arrest led to the murder of Jimmy Lee Jackson, one of the first "foot soldiers" killed in the Selma Movement. The circumstances were as follows: Rev. James Orange "who was an aide to the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr, whose arrest in Alabama in 1965 is considered one of the catalysts for the historic Selma to Montgomery March" (NY Time, Feb 22, 2008).

As the years passed, I moved from working with Mr. Paschal to the Atlanta Life Insurance Co. and finally, with Aflac Assurance Co. as a special representative



James Orange (right) with Ralph Abernathy, Andrew Young and Martin Luther King Jr. King is being served with an order barring a Memphis march in 1968. Photo: Barney Sellers, Memphis Commercial Appeal

of theirs in the office of Maynard Jackson's firm Jackson Securities. After Aflac and the World Trade Center 9/11 events, I began writing plays following a childhood dream. I managed to get an agent and a few of my plays were subsequently published.

One day I was in the Atlanta Life building for a meeting of The People's Agenda, a weekly meeting of community issues facing metropolitan Atlanta on human rights and civil rights. The meetings were led by the former SCLC President Rev. Joseph Lowery and the Rev. James Orange. One week I arrived a little early and went over to join Rev. Orange at his table and that was when he told me the story about the two mules that pulled the wagon that carried Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's body through the streets of Atlanta on April 9, 1968, to the Ebenezer Baptist Church and later to the Lincoln Cemetery.

The Mules were from Gees Bend, a small Black community in Wilcox County in Alabama and there were great difficulties that occurred in transporting the mules into the City of Atlanta on that solemn day. Later, I found out that the Mules were named "Belle" and "Ada." Their photos are on display, next to the wagon that carried Dr. King at the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site—National Park Service. I had an idea. I,



April 9, 1968: James Orange and Jesse Jackson are pallbearers for Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral. Photo: Lisl Steiner

immediately, telephoned my agent and she was very excited. Thus “Belle, The Last Mule at Gees Bend” is a pictured children’s book for Pre-K to 5th Grade. The book is dedicated to Reverend James Orange with a photo of him walking behind the wagon carrying Dr. King.

I was quite saddened when I received the news that “LEADER” Rev. Orange had passed on February 16, 2008. That was a sad day for everyone who had ever heard his voice. I attended his memorial service on a very chilly day on the Morehouse College campus. Reverend Joseph Lowery was on the stage as well as the Honorable David Scott, the Honorable John Lewis and Ambassador Andrew Young. A very large delegation of South African Black union officials, both men and women, were on stage. Ambassador Young referred to the work that Rev. Orange had done in South Africa with developing the various unions.

In the Eulogy, Reverend Orange’s father and brother both were named Calvin and because my name is, also Calvin, I was profoundly touched. Rev. Orange befriended me when I was at a very low point in my life. I had just lost my business, gone through a divorce and my mother had just died. One kind act offering me tickets to see a play and Mr. Paschal hiring me, I knew I was at home for now—and thanks to Rev. Orange—on my own personal path to becoming a “Leader” as he first addressed me when we first met. sclc



CALVIN ALEXANDER RAMSEY was born in Baltimore, Maryland and grew up in Roxboro, North Carolina. It has been his ambition to become a writer since childhood. Ramsey served on the Advisory Board of Special Collections at Emory University’s Woodruff Library,

in Atlanta, Georgia. As a playwright he has not only produced significant works and accomplishments, but has also sparked important debate.

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Feb. 2013: Dorothy Cotton, former education director for the SCLC, speaks at the first-ever exhibit of the SCLC archive at Emory University, Atlanta.

Dorothy Cotton: Top Aide to Martin Luther King Jr. Has Died

The former director of SCLC educational programs was 88.

BY ERNIE SUGGS

Dorothy Cotton, one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s, closest aides in an orbit dominated by men, has died. The Dorothy Cotton Institute and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, where Cotton served as national director of education from 1963 until King's assassination in 1968, confirmed Cotton died June 10 in her home in Ithaca, N.Y.

She was 88.

"Ms. Cotton died peacefully at her residence, Kendal at Ithaca, with loved ones at her bedside," read a statement on the DCI website. "She was a remarkably courageous leader, an inspiring educator, a great spirit, and our dear friend."

Cotton is perhaps best known for her work with King and the SCLC, but she was much broader than that.

After leaving the SCLC in the early 1970s, Cotton moved into academia in New York and continued to be active in the movement, although she faded from the civil rights conversation.

Andy Young, who also worked closely with King in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, said that was typical.

"All of the women got shortchanged. Dorothy Height didn't speak at the March on Washington, although she was

one of the organizers. Amelia Boynton started in 1929 and worked to get Obama elected in 2008 and nobody knows who she is," Young said. "The press ignored the women and looked to preachers for everything. Dorothy resented that. She was a feminist before feminism was cool."

Young, who joined the SCLC around the same time as Cotton, remembers one small, but revealing, incident where King challenged Cotton and lost.

"I remember one meeting, Martin said 'Dorothy, get me a cup of coffee.' She said 'No, I won't get you a cup of coffee,'" Young recalled. "She was constantly rebelling against the role of being made a second class citizen. She would tell Dr. King no all the time. So I got the coffee."

Born in Goldsboro, N.C., Cotton attended Raleigh's Shaw University before transferring to Virginia State University to get a bachelor's degree in English and Library Science in 1955.

In 1960, she got a master's degree in speech therapy from Boston University, where King had earned his doctorate five years earlier.

She joined the SCLC in 1963, following her pastor, the Rev. Wyatt T. Walker from Virginia where she was teaching. Walker had been named the organization's executive director.



1966: Dorothy Cotton, SCLC Education Director teaching adult literacy and voting rights during a citizenship education project class in Wilcox County, AL. Adults were trained to train other adults in their communities, to prepare for the first opportunity to vote after the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Photo: Bob Fitch, Stanford University Library

“From 1963 onward, throughout the last five years of Dr. King’s life, no one was closer or more emotionally supportive of him than Dorothy Cotton,” said King and SCLC scholar David Garrow.

As one of only a handful of women in King’s inner circle dominated by life-sized personalities like Ralph David Abernathy, Hosea Williams and Jesse Jackson, Garrow said Young and Cotton served as perfect counter-balances.

“Their actual roles were bigger than their titles,” said Garrow, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his “Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.” “Unlike James Bevel, Hosea and Ralph, they weren’t high maintenance. They were all talented and important, but they were always management problems for Dr. King. Dr. King didn’t like that and wasn’t good at managing it. Andy and Dorothy strengthened him rather than drained him.”

Cotton’s official title at the SCLC was director of education.

“And my role was to plan the five-day sessions to help black folks unbrainwash themselves,” Cotton told *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* in 2012.

Those five-day sessions were part of the Citizen Education Program, designed to train poor people to become more civically and politically involved through voter registration and non-violent protest.

Young said the educational program was the unsung backbone of the civil rights movement, as it trained more than 6,000 people—many of whom went on to lead important aspects of the movement across the South.

“Dorothy had a beautiful voice and the one thing that black people liked to do was talk, but she started out the meetings by singing freedom and old spirituals,” Young said. “She put the character to that whole education program.”

Cotton was in Memphis briefly, but left shortly before King was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

“I was eating breakfast in the restaurant when he called for me,” Cotton said. “His last words to me were ‘Get a later plane.’ But I had to get back to Atlanta,” Cotton told *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* in 2012. “I got on my 1 p.m. flight, got home and took a nap and said I would go to the office later. While I was taking a nap, my neighbor rang my door bell and said, ‘I really have some bad news: Dr. King has been shot.’”

Cotton remained in the SCLC for a few years after King’s death.

“After his death, I worked with Mrs. King to start the King Center,” Cotton said in 2012. “Now I spend a lot of my time speaking and teaching about Dr. King and the civil rights movement. I do a lot of work looking at the lessons we learned and helping people organize. People are doing a lot of creative things, building off the civil rights struggle. And I am always answering the question of Dr. King’s last book, ‘Where Do We Go from Here?’”

In 1982, Cotton was named director of student activities at Cornell University. She remained in that position until 1991.

In 2010, the Dorothy Cotton Institute was created by the Center for Transformative Action in Ithaca to promote a global community for civil and human rights in Cotton’s name. sclc



ERNIE SUGGS has been a reporter at the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* since 1997. He previously reported for newspapers in New York City and Durham, N.C. A veteran of more than 20 years as a newspaper reporter, Suggs has covered stories ranging from politics to civil rights to higher education. He is currently on the Nieman Board of Trustees and the former national vice president of the National Association of Black Journalists.

My Marks, Mississippi Memories

BY JUSTIN NALLS

Traveling down to Marks, Mississippi was a job, but then I realized it was so much more than just another photography job—rather it proved to be a jolting, joyous journey. Money could not buy the inspiration and insight I was given throughout the entire event. Therefore, I wanted to make sure I captured every meaningful and memorable moment. At times I found myself getting lost in the lenses through my camera because I was speaking to and taking pictures of so many powerful people with so many powerful, poignant stories.

Dr. Charles Steele is a remarkable, individual with an incredible dream. He is the President/CEO of Southern Christian Leadership Conference and he walks in the same position as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I felt the same drive and passion as Dr. King had for the people. I know Dr. King is smiling down saying, “Well Done.” I am forever humbled to have shared this experience with Dr. Steele.

Walking pass the SCLC office in Marks, MS was very moving. This is the office where Dr. King and others came together to organize the Poor People’s Campaign. Fifty years ago, a mule train left the small, poverty ravaged town of Marks, bound for the nation’s capital. They were answering a call to action from Dr. King made just days before his assassination. This is also the same office he would have resided in before his death.

“We’re coming to Washington in a Poor People’s Campaign,” King announced at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., on March 31, 1968 as reported by NPR’s Debbie Elliott. “I was in Marks, Miss., the other day, the poorest county in the United States. And, I tell you I saw hundreds of black boys and black girls walking the streets with no shoes to wear.”

I really wished Dr. King had lived long enough to impact Marks more. I know it would have be a thriving city. Sadly, it is not so 50 years later!

The reenactment of the day the march on the mule train trail started was very exhilarating. I really enjoyed walking through the actual paths those brave individuals walked to D.C.

I met two courageous men by the name of Allen Williams and Bennie Williams. They really stimulated me, and I will never forget them. They were on the actual trail from Marks, MS to Washington, D.C. Allen shared stories of being afraid in Alabama while traveling on the trail to D.C. Can you imagine riding on a wagon from your state through multiple states with no hotels, no rental cars, and travel all the way back home in the same condition. Most people in the world today wouldn’t last one hour.

It’s sad so many influential people have fought and died for us to progress. If help is not there, then we must come together and help ourselves, I say.

I was blown away at the condition the city was in. I expected more from a city where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized the War on Poverty. Last year while traveling to the beautiful country of South Africa; I encountered a great deal of poverty. You would be shocked to know that this same type of poverty is 3, 4, or 7 hours down the road from every one of us—still today! There must be more done to help this city with all the resources we have in the United States.

Despite all the lack in this city; there is still so much love. You can take away the resources and jobs, but we have each other. We must come together and help one another. GOD works in mysterious ways, and he has made a way for this city.

Marks, Mississippi was mind boggling! To have been invited to photograph and experience such a historic happening; I am forever humbled. Lasting memories created by stories I heard, from the preparation to the journey itself. To see a city full of bravery, courage, and love in the deep South state that it is in lets’ me know that GOD is still alive and well. Human relationship is vital for us to come together and make a difference. We have progressed through the years, but there is still a great need in Marks. Now that we are aware; we must do more. I will take the first step forward to change and you America take the second because nothing has changed. Marks is still depressingly poor.

There is an Amtrak that’s in development, and I believe GOD is going to bless this city with more. If you would like to help just pick a day and go visit the city. It has so much history and value. The people are so nice and kind. There is a nearby hotel. Just go volunteer and serve food or donate things to this city. We can do this one city at a time. Human relationships are vital to come together and make a difference. We have progressed through the years, but there is still a great need in Marks, MS. Now that we are aware; we must do more. Thank you again to SCLC. sclc



JUSTIN NALLS, Photo Journalist, is the CEO of Mogul Clients. He is originally from Tuscaloosa, AL and received his bachelor’s degree in Computer Science from Alabama A&M University. Nalls specializes in digital marketing, advertising, graphic design, photography and is a licensed insurance agent. He is also a Mixed Martial Artist for the US Martial Arts Team representing Alabama.

From Photo Journalist Justin Nalls at the mule train re-enactment in Marks, Mississippi...



(Left) Charles Steele Jr. (Right) Steele; Judy Bland, Administrative Assistant with the Marks, MS Project; and Ellen Meacham professor, University of Ole Miss. and author of 'Delta Epiphany: RFK in Mississippi'.



(Left) 1968 Mule Train Participants, Charles M. Johnson, son of Bertha Burress and Cassie Sade Turnipseed, professor, Valley State University; and Steele (Right) Marks Mayor Joe Shegog; Steele; Rose Handy, First Lady of Valley Queen Missionary Baptist Church; and Roderick Herron, Marks, MS businessman



From the Collection, Ernest C. Withers, Courtesy of the Withers Family Trust

May 2, 1968: Following Dr. King's memorial services on Coretta Scott King and Ralph Abernathy launched the Freedom Train from Memphis, Tennessee, the first caravan of the Poor People's Campaign. Participants marched three miles before 300 people boarded buses bound for Marks, Miss.

The Freedom Train included The Movement's iconic mules and wagons to symbolize the injustices of tenant farming, sharecropping, and the plantation economy. During segregation, traveling could be dangerous for African Americans who had few public accommodations to service them. African American entrepreneur Arthur George Gaston built the A.G. Gaston Motel in Birmingham, Alabama, to house people of color. It was considered headquarters for the Civil Rights Movement.

*“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”
“Truth crushed to earth will rise again.”*

— MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

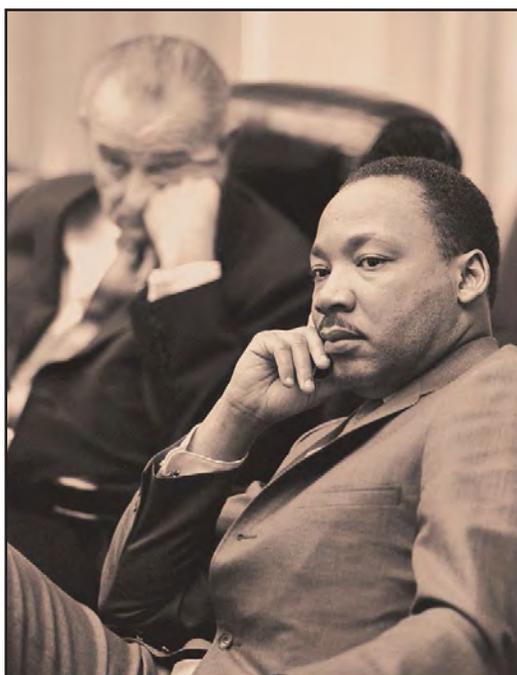
The Murder of Martin Luther King Jr.: How the Myths Were Created and Sustained for Fifty Years

BY PHILIP F. NELSON

Within my newest book, Who REALLY Killed Martin Luther King Jr.?

The Case Against Lyndon B. Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover, (Skyhorse Publications, May 1, 2018), I present what I refer to as the long-hidden “Rosetta Stone” of that case: Proof that FBI leaders—in addition to what has long been known about how they surveilled and stalked Dr. King around the country as they conducted illegal wiretaps—had also gone to great lengths to plot his final demise. As all of that was going on, they simultaneously brought three contemporary “acclaimed journalists” on board for the purpose of preparing the public to accept an “official story” about the alleged assassin that had no basis in fact. The creation of the myths about James Earl Ray had begun well before King’s assassination and were based upon reframing his persona, from that of a backward, but non-racist, introvert with an eighth-grade level education, a country boy from Northwest Illinois—who had become a petty, small-time swindler and burglar, yet always non-violent in behavior—but morphed by them into a man portrayed as a vicious Southern racist who dreamt of national notoriety, a man who purportedly set out to fulfill his dreams by stalking and killing Martin Luther King Jr.

The writers who were given this turn-around mission in 1968 by FBI leadership were William Bradford Huie, Gerold Frank and George McMillan. The lead-off assignment was given to author Huie, Gerold Frank was “on deck” for a 1972 follow-up and McMillan’s book was scheduled for 1976. Decades before his involvement, through his lengthy association with FBI Director Hoover, Huie had proven that he possessed all of the “right stuff”—with a series of deceitful articles in 1956 on the infamous Emmett Till murder



March 18, 1966, Lyndon B. Johnson and MLK Jr.

which had occurred in Mississippi in the summer of 1955. Through his famed “checkbook journalist” methods, Huie had paid thousands of dollars to the two men who had been acquitted of Till’s murder, for them to admit their guilt since they could not be retried, in the same *Look* magazine that he would use to create a new profile for James Earl Ray beginning in a three-article series starting in November 1968, ending in April, 1969 (decades later, as detailed within the book, the purported “victim” of Till’s advances admitted not only that he had not touched her, but that those men were not actually the murderers of Till . . . that she had protected the real murderer for six decades! Huie’s involvement—his own self-promotion—had resulted in what can only be described as an outrageous act of journalistic fraud).

It was this “checkered” background that qualified Huie for his most nefarious assignment in 1968.

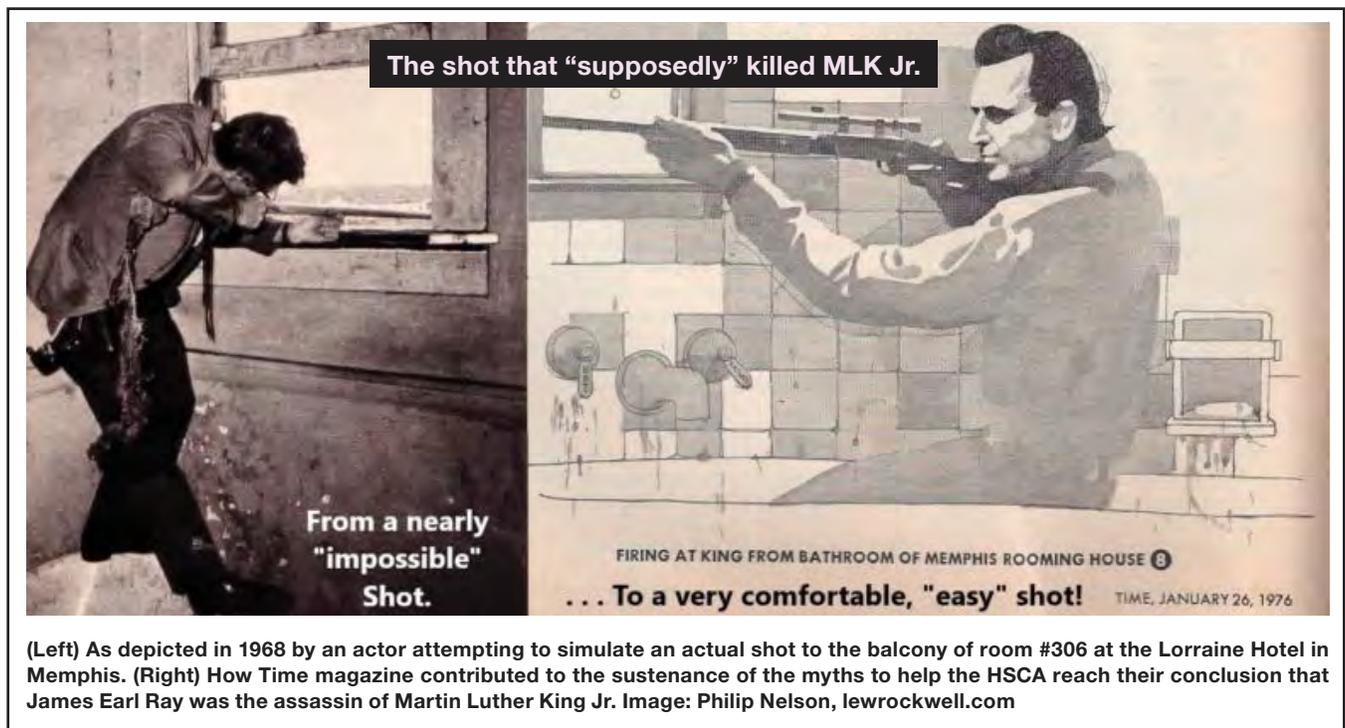
Huie followed the *Look* articles with a 1970 book, *He Slew the Dreamer*, (changed from “*They Slew . . .*”) after his deceptions caused Ray to fire him immediately after the first magazine article, knowing that Huie had turned on him, and was not writing his own, real story, as he had originally promised. Huie’s book was followed two years later by Gerold Frank, and four years after that by George McMillan’s book, both of which built on Huie’s original lies and added even more deceptions to them. McMillan’s book, heavily promoted by *Time* magazine in two featured articles in January, 1976, came along just in time for a fresh update of Huie’s original myths just as the movement to establish the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) was being formed.

How *Time* magazine contributed to the sustenance of the myths to help the HSCA reach their conclusion that James Earl Ray was the assassin of Martin Luther King Jr.

At about the same time, Huie himself decided to write a follow-up book ("Did the FBI Kill Martin Luther King?" published in June, 1977), which had a new "Introduction" and "Epilogue" but otherwise was simply a second edition of his first book. Using the same patterns of mythmaking, within the new sections, he piled on even more lies and deceit, including the brazen assertion that his articles and first book ". . . explained how Reverend King was murdered by Ray. *With Ray's help and approval*, I answered the questions as to where he got his money, how he obtained a Canadian passport, and what his motive was" (italics in original). Huie once again brazenly lied, this time about actually having Ray's "approval," knowing that as a prisoner, he was in no position to object. Ray had fired his first lawyer, Arthur Hanes, due to the inherent conflict of interest in the contracts that Huie and Hanes had originally entered to provide

rendered the FBI's role in his assassination highly "suspect." Claiming that he was a "friend" of Dr. King, Huie had the temerity to write that, because Americans . . . "need the truth to save themselves from being hoodwinked, I have added this prologue and reissued *He Slew the Dreamer*. I have also added an epilogue which refutes the more recent lies being told mostly for the profit of the liars."

Evidently beset with worries that his own lies might be revealed in the HSCA hearings then just beginning, his urgent "doth protest too much" reaction illustrates the truth of the adage of that phrase: "the opposite of what he is saying must be true." Even after the HSCA was effectively defanged by the FBI's and CIA's "bought and paid-for" congressmen, they still couldn't prevent the committee from establishing that Ray was not the racist, "Negro-hating, habitual criminal named James Earl Ray" as portrayed in the first paragraph



first-hand access to attorney-privileged information, though his complaint was not directly with Hanes: His intent was to get rid of Huie—which meant having to fire Hanes in the process—after reading his first magazine article in *Look* magazine on November 12, 1968. The previous understanding that Ray had with Hanes and Huie was that the articles, and subsequent book, were supposed to be supportive of him; he found that the first article (of three being written) had violated his tepid "trust" in both of them, especially the oleaginous Huie.

Huie's new book (the 1977 edition) was a last-ditch effort to redeem his previous fictional account in the wake of the enormous public reaction to the news released in 1975 from the Senate's Church Committee about J. Edgar Hoover's outrageous harassment of Dr. King, which caused many of King's friends and staff members to join Coretta Scott King's call for a new investigation of his murder, which

of his "Prologue" to his new book—the same theme that had been repeated throughout all of Huie's previous articles and books; it turned out that Huie created that meme about Ray as the basis for all of his other deceitful, provably false assertions throughout his books (numerous proofs of this assertion are demonstrated within my own book). Indeed, the one and only real accomplishment of the HSCA (i.e., the MLK sub-committee) was its determination that:

"The committee then interviewed approximately 30 prison associates of Ray. While some recalled that Ray had demonstrated anti-Black feelings [those who expected their opinions, thus their names, would appear in the newspaper and magazine accounts], the majority said he was not a racist. On balance, therefore, the committee viewed the inmate testimony as essentially inconclusive. It could not be relied on as proof that Ray harbored the kind of deep-seated, racial animosity that might, on its own, trigger the assassination of Dr. King."



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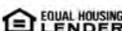
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Unfortunately for posterity—ergo truth and justice for Martin Luther King Jr.—among its many mistakes, omissions and misdirections was the fact that the HSCA staff and investigators used only the completely fabricated, fictional accounts—not the fact-based, truthful, non-fiction books available at the time as noted below—on which to base their own perfunctory “investigation.” Huie’s book was cited dozens of times within the final report, in some cases seven or eight citations per page, nearly all of which essentially codified what began as bald-faced lies.

The fictional stories—clearly commissioned and directed by high officials of the FBI, as thoroughly demonstrated within my book—became accepted by a public hungry for another reassuring and simplistic answer to a senseless and treasonous tragedy. In time, these myths became a legend that was repeated and expanded, over and over again, by many other subsequent authors—including Gerold Posner and Hampton Sides, among others—each adding more fictional figments from their own repertoire. The original myths were strengthened with every positive book review and newspaper article and subsequent books by other similarly guided authors. Eventually, they collectively blended together in a generally accepted popular narrative with a life of its own. The lies and deceptions at its foundation—as facts were long buried by the myths—gradually replaced practically the entire truth of actual events and have now become what is known as “official history.”

In the meantime, the far more truthful books, written by such early researchers as Harold Weisberg, Mark Lane and Dick Gregory, and later by Dr. William Pepper, John Avery Emison, and Dr. Philip Melanson, and James Earl Ray himself, as well as his brothers, including one by John Larry Ray with Lyndon Barsten, have been virtually ignored by a mainstream media intent on perpetuating the myths and ignoring real truths. The same can be said for the original investigations by the FBI—of course, misdirected from the beginning to protect the guilty—the Department of Justice Task Force (in 1976, and again in 2000), and the House Select Committee on Assassinations (1977-1979). In every case, they have ignored the truthful books while embracing the mythical stories.

Within my book, I’ve demonstrated how William Bradford Huie had drawn the attention of his readers—and the police, FBI, and other government investigators—into examining stalker theories that were nothing more than figments of his imagination, arguably the game-changing revelation of this book. For once and for all, it will prove conclusively how the lies that Huie put into his book—complete fabrications made for the singular purpose of railroad-ing James Earl Ray—became the accepted meme of an entire American culture. Practically everyone in the country, and the world, who has an opinion about Martin Luther King Jr.’s murder believes that the “killer,” Ray, was a vicious southern racist and stalker of Dr. King. Nothing about that is accurate—not only was he not the killer, he wasn’t vicious, he was never a racist, and he wasn’t even a Southerner. As conclusively proven within the book, James Earl Ray was

absolutely not a stalker of Dr. King; in fact, he was completely oblivious as to where MLK was at any point in time, including the afternoon and evening of April 4, 1968 (at least, until he heard over the car radio that King had been shot and that the police were then looking for a man matching his own description, driving a “white Mustang” just like his. Only then did he realize that he had been “had” by his handler, “Raoul”).

Huie, and later the numerous other authors repeating his fiction, made a series of bald-faced lies, even referencing a series of news articles that purportedly stated things that they provably did not. When the earliest books were written—two to eight years after the murder of Dr. King—Huie counted on his hope that no one would track down the articles he cited. These were not inadvertent mistakes; they were coldly calculated untruths, meant to transform a common man capable of relatively minor unlawful acts into a vicious murderer and stalker, which he was not.

Fortunately for truth-finders (but unfortunately for Huie’s scions and apologists) those lies have been revealed by something Huie had, during his own lifetime, no reason to fear: The existence of something called the Internet, which came along a few decades later, and made it easy to prove his key assertions were untrue. Within Who REALLY Killed Martin Luther King Jr.? The Case Against Lyndon B. Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover, it will be shown how the original distortions were accomplished, and why, as we demolish the foundation upon which they were constructed. In its place, a compelling and corrected account will be presented, one which conforms to the truth as revealed in the accounts by the truth-telling researchers—Weisberg, Lane & Gregory, Melanson, Emison, Ray, Barsten and many other contributors—as noted above.

The larger perspective of the murder of Martin Luther King Jr.—as designed, plotted and executed by the highest-level men at the top of the hierarchy, at the FBI, CIA, Pentagon and White House—will be presented, conclusively proving that it could only have originated with the instigation of J. Edgar Hoover and Lyndon B. Johnson. Their direct ties to the key actors—Johnson’s well-established linkage to Tennessee Governor Buford Ellington and Ray’s attorney Percy Foreman, and Hoover’s ties to Memphis Police and Fire Department Commissioner Frank Holloman, for example—are the glue that held the plot together in real time and now provide the proof of all the other connected links that ensured its success. sclc



PHILLIP F. NELSON is the author of Who REALLY Killed Martin Luther King Jr.? The Case Against Lyndon B. Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover. His previous books include LBJ: The Mastermind of the JFK Assassination, LBJ: From Mastermind to The Colossus, and Remember the Liberty.



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April 4, 1968: Robert Kennedy pays tribute to the fallen Martin Luther King Jr., Indianapolis, Indiana.

“What is going on in my country?” **RFK’s Assassination – 50 Years Later**

COLLECTION BY DANA COOK

Barely two months after civil rights leader Martin Luther King was murdered in Memphis on April 4, 1968, the New York Senator and Democratic presidential candidate Robert Kennedy was gunned down in a Los Angeles hotel kitchen on the night of June 5, after having won the California primary. George Carlin, Lauren Bacall, Andy Warhol, Sammy Davis Jr., Patti Smith, Philip Roth and others recall learning the news.

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“Mommy, Kennedy’s been shot”
Lauren Bacall, actor

Robert Kennedy was our Senator. I had known Jean, Eunice, and Pat [Kennedy sisters] for years and liked them more and more, and I had worked for Bobby when he ran for Senator. I found him really extraordinary – I had a gut reaction to him and I knew I was right...I cared greatly about John Kennedy’s election, and worked for him, but I cared

more about Bobby. He touched me more. I felt so completely that he was the man we needed...I did what I could, what I was asked to do, for Bobby before leaving for Europe. There was to be a rally at Madison Square Garden on June 17 and I’d be back for that.

...I headed for New York on June 5...I was exhausted on a five-hour time change.

The same change opened my eyes at about six the following morning. I tiptoed into Sam’s room to see if he was awake so I could hug him. He was sitting up with his radio on his lap, his face lighting up at the sight of his mama. He said, ‘Mommy, Kennedy’s been shot.’ I couldn’t imagine what had made him think about John Kennedy that particular morning. I said, ‘I know, darling, but that was a long time ago.’ ‘No, Mommy,’ he insisted, ‘Senator Kennedy’s been shot.’ I turned his radio up, totally disbelieving—heard something about Bobby’s shooting—ran wildly through the house, waking Leslie [daughter], Nanny [mother]—turning on the television in my room, where we all gathered. Then the whole hideous story unfolded.

We sat huddled around that set the entire day. Jason [husband Robards] called from Spain, unbelieving, saying

we had to get out of the United States, get the children into sanity. People everywhere who had been sure what America stood for were questioning everything now. As I looked at Sam, aged six—my beautiful, blue-eyed, yellow-haired boy—I realized that he had spent his entire life in awareness of assassination: of John Kennedy, then Martin Luther King, now Bobby; that there had been days of mourning, of funeral corteges on television, of wives left husbandless and children fatherless. Even at six he must have wondered if that was the way life was in our United States. ... (New York)

from *By Myself and Then Some*, by Lauren Bacall (HarperEntertainment, 2005)

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“Weird, but not unexpected”

George Carlin, comedian

On June 5, 1968, just after midnight, while I was working at Bimbo’s 365 Club in San Francisco with Lana Cantrell, Robert Kennedy was shot dead at the Ambassador Hotel down in L.A. I told them I wasn’t going on for the second show. They—whoever They were, Bimbo I guess – insisted that I go on. No way. In fact I decided as I watched the coverage through the night that I wasn’t going back the next night either. Fuck Bimbo.

Then the Chicago [Democratic national] convention police riot happened in August and that brought people down on one side or the other with more firmness than they might’ve had before. I was no exception.

It’s funny but I never find myself responding very much to events of great magnitude. There’s a part of me that knows that’s exactly what’s supposed to happen. I will sometimes marvel at the timing or circumstances or setting or the individuals involved. “Weird” is the word that occurs to me most often. “That’s fucking weird. Weird – but never unexpected.

from *Last Words*, by George Carlin with Tony Hendra (Free Press, 2009)

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“Why? Why? Why?”

John Lewis, civil rights leader and Congressman

The room broke into a little cheer when the screen showed Bobby stepping up to speak. He made a joke about Don Drysdale pitching a shutout that day for the Dodgers and how he hoped he’d do as well from here on out. He thanked Ethel, and Cesar Chavez and others for their support. Then he wound it up.

“My thanks to all of you,” he said, “and on to Chicago, and let’s win there.”

On to Chicago, to the Democratic convention.
And from there to the White House.

We were all just soaking it in, waiting for Bobby to come back upstairs. The TV was still on, in the background now as most of the room had moved away, over to the bar or off into groups to laugh and talk.

And then...

“Oh my God!” came a woman’s voice.

I turned and looked at the television, and there, in black and white, was a grim-faced commentator saying the senator had just been shot. The voice went on, while the screen showed film of Kennedy moving through a crowd with lights and people all around him, then a burst of movement, and Kennedy falling to the floor.

I dropped to my knees, to the carpet. I was crying, sobbing, heaving as if something had been busted open inside. All around me the room was filled with groans and shock. The television was still on, replaying Kennedy’s victory speech.

I sat on the floor, dazed, rocking back and forth as if I were autistic, saying one word out loud, over and over again.

“Why? Why? Why?”

from *Walking With the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement*, by John Lewis (Harcourt Brace & Co., 1998)

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“I think we can end...the violence”

Sammy Davis Jr., entertainer

...our opening night party [for Golden Boy] in London...

I was still floating under about a bottle of vodka when I felt Murphy [Bennet, his dresser] nudging me. “Sammy... wake up... Sammy... it’s important...” I heard him crying. “It was just on television that Bobby Kennedy was shot in L.A., just after he won the primary...”

I sat back in bed dreading the television reports, yet unable not to watch them. “He’s obviously been seriously injured but we haven’t any details yet. The senator had just addressed an assemblage of his campaign workers, acknowledging his California victory, thanking them for their help. He said, ‘I think we can end the division in the United States, the violence...’ and he was shot within five minutes afterward.”

from *Sammy: An Autobiography*, by Sammy Davis Jr. with Jane and Burt Boyar (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000)

.....

“On to Chicago’...then popping noises”

Tom Hayden, New Left activist and politician

It was nearly two a.m. in New York when the returns showed Kennedy winning. I watched with a stirring excitement as he introduced and thanked farm workers, along with black and labor activists who had labored to turn out their votes that day. He finished, exclaiming, “On to Chicago!”

...Suddenly there came crackling, almost popping noises over the television, a cry in the confused crowd, a call for a doctor, and I knew it was over.

On yet another haunted night, I stayed up watching the constant reruns: the words On to Chicago, followed by the human wailing and the eerie kitchen scenes. I listened without hope to the periodic hospital reports, and without much credence to the early information on Kennedy's assassin. Sometime in the night, Jerry Rubin called in hysteria, saying he believed Sirhan did it "because he's an Arab." I called a few close friends as if I might never talk to them again. "I love you," I told one, thinking I might never have the chance to tell her. I was behaving, without quite recognizing it, as one does before one's own death.

from Reunion: A Memoir, by Tom Hayden (Random House, 1988)

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"Oh no, not again"

Phil Lesch, rock musician (Grateful Dead)

...My girlfriend, Rosie, found a house for us in Fairfax, a small town on the edge of wild-and-woolly West Marin (today the last bastion of hippiedom in the Bay Area, for those who can afford it). I moved into my new house the morning after the '68 California primary election. After unloading my stuff, I turned on the TV, and as soon as I saw Walter Cronkite's face, even before the sound came up, I knew. Oh no, not again. Yep. Again. Walter's voice faded in, saying, "And if you've just joined us, Senator Kennedy was shot in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel..." The Martin Luther King and RFK assassinations seemed to tip the whole precarious top-heavy scaffolding of society over a cliff; the resulting chaos in the streets and at the conventions made it feel as if there might be a revolution going on.

from Searching for the Sound: My Life with the Grateful Dead, by Phil Lesch (Little, Brown, 2005)

.....

"Screams and meaningless words"

George Leonard, magazine writer

...Look's art director, Will Hopkins, came out for a West Coast visit...

On Tuesday, June 4, I cast my vote in the primary, then took off for Los Angeles...We had dinner at a restaurant on Sunset Boulevard...The election was close, but by the time dinner was over, it appeared Kennedy was winning...Will and I decided to go back to our hotel and watch the celebration on television.

We drove to Bel Air and went to our separate rooms. I turned on the television set. Propped up my pillows, and lay back on the bed. There was Bob Kennedy at the microphone, accepting the ovation of his supporters, thanking

people, looking a little tired, I thought, and acting a little silly. But that didn't matter to me. Kennedy's last words as he left the stage were "On to Chicago."

A few minutes later, something strange happened on the screen. All order and meaning drained away. The camera wandered aimlessly over the crowd. There were screams. Someone was saying meaningless words over the sound system. There was a knock on my door. Will Hopkins didn't want to be alone. We stayed there, barely speaking, as the horror of that night unfolded.

from Walking on the Edge of the World: A Memoir of the Sixties and Beyond, by George Leonard (Houghton Mifflin, 1988)

.....

"Joey Bishop chokes"

Michael Moore, filmmaker and activist

...I followed all of this [President Johnson's March 1968 announcement that he wouldn't seek re-election] and pinned my hopes on either Eugene McCarthy or Bobby Kennedy to win the Democratic nomination. What was unacceptable to me was the accession of the vice president, Hubert Horatio Humphrey, to the White House. He had loyally backed Johnson in the war, and so for me that was that, done and done, Humphrey was out.

I was up late watching The Joey Bishop Show when Joey was handed a note that made him choke. He announced that Robert F. Kennedy, who the night before had been shot after winning the California presidential primary, had just died. I screamed, and my parents, who were already in bed, came out in the living room..

"What are you doing up watching TV?" my mother asked.

"Bobby is dead!"

"No!" my mother said, clutching her chest and sitting down. "Oh, God. Oh, God." (Flint, Mich.)

from Here Comes Trouble: Stories from My Life, by Michael Moore (Grand Central Publishing, 2011)

.....

"Sound of the twice wounded"

Jack Newfield, journalist and biographer of RFK

I started to watch Kennedy's speech on the television with a happy group of about twenty supporters in room 516 [of the Ambassador Hotel]...Carol Welch, Kennedy's campaign secretary...tapped me on the shoulder. "Jack, the senator is going to leave for The Factory [a disco] right from his press conference. You ought to go down so that you don't miss him."

[Fellow journalist] Bob Scheer and I went down in the elevator together and reached the main ballroom just as Kennedy was finishing his remarks. Suddenly we saw some

agitation near the podium. Something was happening. Then I heard an awful sound spread across the packed, celebrating ballroom. It sounded like a collective moan. Some horrible news was being passed along.

People started running and screaming. A girl in a red party dress, sobbing uncontrollably, rushed by, screaming “No, God, no! It’s happened again!” That sound I thought was a moan became a wail of grief. The ballroom sounded like a hospital that had been bombed. It was the sound of the twice wounded.

Scheer and I started desperately to look for a TV set. We wandered into another ballroom... [RFK brother-in-law] Steve Smith appeared on the TV screen to ask, very calmly, for a doctor. That’s when it clicked in my numbed brain—Kennedy had been shot leaving the ballroom.

I ran back into the Kennedy ballroom and into complete hysteria. Girls in campaign hats and buttons were on their knees, praying and weeping at the same time. A college kid with an RFK peace button was shouting, “Fuck this country!” again and again. A large black man was punching the wall, screaming out of control, “Why, God, why?”

from Somebody’s Gotta Tell It: The Upbeat Memoir of a Working-Class Journalist, by Jack Newfield (St. Martin’s Press, 2002)

.....

“JFK assassination rerun?”

Andy Warhol, pop artist

I was in surgery for about five hours [after being shot by deranged feminist Valerie Solanas] with Dr. Giuseppe Rossi and four other great doctors working on me. They brought me back from the dead. ...

As I was coming down from my operation, I heard a television going somewhere and the words “Kennedy” and “assassin” and “shot” over and over again. Robert Kennedy had been shot, but what was so weird was that I had no understanding that this was a second Kennedy assassination—I just thought that maybe after you die, they rerun things for you, like President Kennedy’s assassination. Some of the nurses were crying, and after a while, I heard things like “the mourners in St. Patrick’s.” It was all so strange to me, this background of another shooting and a funeral—I couldn’t distinguish between life and death yet, anyway, and here was a person being buried on the television right in front of me. (New York)

from POPism: The Warhol ‘60s, by Andy Warhol with Pat Hackett (Harcourt Brace & Company, 1980)

.....

“What is going in my country?”

Faye Dunaway, actor

...the radio station broke in with a news bulletin. Robert Kennedy had been killed while he was campaigning in

California. We had been filming [The Lover] on one of the slopes [of Cortina, Italy] when we got the news. Vittorio [director De Sica] shut down the set for the rest of the day, and I went back to my room in the hotel to try to deal with the enormity of what had happened—John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and now Bobby. I cried a great deal over Bobby Kennedy’s death, as I had before over President Kennedy’s and Reverend King’s. I loved all of those men...

What was this assassination saying to me about my country? I felt such grief in my heart, in my soul, about the violence. I thought that day, What is going on in my country? And I grieved at the loss of those magical brothers.

The news of Bobby Kennedy’s death just uncorked a lot of those thoughts that day. I thought about what was going on in the sixties, campus unrest, big city riots...

from Looking for Gatsby: My Life, by Faye Dunaway (Simon & Schuster, 1995)

.....

“Thought of going straight”

Ed Sanders, poet, writer and musician

I didn’t care what the Yippies thought about Robert Kennedy. I was a big fan. His words quoting Aeschylus just after hearing about Martin Luther King’s assassination had kept total despair at bay.

[Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget
falls drop by drop upon the heart,
until,
in our own despair,
against our will,
comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.]

I was on Avenue A where we had watched Robert Kennedy’s triumphant June 5 speech at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. We still had the television lit when the gun by the ice machine fired in the dark hotel kitchen and Robert Kennedy fell, mortally wounded.

I was devastated. I remembered how just a few days before at The Fugs concert at the Fillmore East, [fellow Fugs band member Ken] Weaver had referred to RFK as an “amphetamine wolverine.” For a few days I thought seriously about changing my life, even going to law school and then putting myself into the service of the Public Good.

from Fug You: an informal history of the Peace Eye Bookstore, the Fuck You Press, the Fugs, and counter-culture in the Lower East Side, by Ed Sanders (De Capo Press, 2011)

DANA COOK’S collections of literary encounters and big event historical reminiscences have appeared in numerous publications, including Counterpunch: “Encounters with Dick Gregory: From Malcolm X to Howard Zinn” August, 2017 and “Beautiful Revolutionary: Che Guevara Remembered”, October, 2017.

UNEQUAL

IN AMERICA

Entrenched financial disparities have made it hard for African-Americans to achieve equality.

BY SUSAN MILLIGAN

ONE OF THE MOST JARRING and painful numbers in America's history on race relations is three-fifths. That, according to the U.S. Constitution written in 1789, was how African-American slaves were counted—as three-fifths of a person—determining population for the purpose of calculating states' representation in Congress.

More than two centuries after the Constitution was penned, a century and a half since the 14th Amendment undid the so-called “three fifths compromise,” and 50 years since the height of the modern civil rights movement, African-Americans still fall short when it comes to equality, according to a sweeping report by the Urban League. To put a number on it, African-Americans are at 72.5 percent—less than three-fourths—when it comes to achieving equality with white Americans, according to the study, which addressed economics, health, education, civic engagement and social justice.

Although African-Americans are actually doing better than whites in a few subcategories—and while both races are improving in some areas even as the gap between the two groups remains wide—the report, *The State of Black America*, finds that the “Equality Index” for African-American has barely moved (and in some cases, has worsened) since 2005, the first year the Urban League issued the yearly report.

Movement has occurred in certain aspects of African-Americans' lives, such as education and health, experts in the field say. But entrenched financial disparities have made it hard for African-Americans to catch up economically, they say.

“There are all these rags-to-riches stories,” but “wealth is not accumulated in a single generation. Wealth is accumulated—mostly over several generations,” says Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League. “It's not a small thing; it's a big thing. It's the most difficult element of race

that's never really talked about.”

The Equality Index, for example, showed that on factors related to education, African-Americans were at 78.5 percent equality—an equation determined by assessing various education metrics, such as access to good schools, graduation rates and test scores, and comparing it to a benchmark of what those factors are for white Americans. For health (which looked at illnesses, death rates and access to health care), the number was 79.3 percent. For civic engagement (voting, military service, government employment), blacks are at near-parity, 99.7 percent. Social justice (which includes incarceration rates and equality before the law) was calculated to be 55.9 percent.

But economics—what is often used to assess a disenfranchised or struggling group's progress in achieving equal standing in society—is nearly as low, clocking in at 58.2 percent. The number (barely changed from last year) reveals the difficulty African-Americans, as a group, have in climbing the economic ladder in America, experts say. And it shows that even better access to healthcare and education—both of which public policy specialists consider essential to improving one's economic status—can't erase the disadvantage of having little or no wealth to start with.

“All of these narratives about working hard and having financial literacy—when it comes to wealth, they have less efficacy,” says Darrick Hamilton, professor of economics and urban policy at The New School in New York. “Wealth becomes the most dramatic indicator of equality. It's persistent and dramatic,” says Hamilton, who has written extensively about race and socioeconomics.

On education, African-Americans have made definite strides, says Valerie Wilson, an economist with the Economic Policy Institute. The report found, for example, that African-Americans are close to parity (93 percent) with whites on graduating from high school by age 25. For young adults, acquisition of a bachelor's degree was lower

(62 percent on the Equality Index), though the indexes for those achieving associates degrees (88 percent) and master's degrees (82 percent) were closer. But such advances don't ensure a better financial future, at least compared to white Americans, she says.

"We're 50 years out from the real ground-breaking, history-changing aspect of the civil rights movement, yet [the economic equality index] is 58 percent. That certainly isn't great. It's clear there has been progress on education—there used to be wider gaps in high school graduation, and college attendance and graduation," adds Wilson, who has worked on the Urban League report. "The problem, and the challenges we see, is that those educational gains have not necessarily translated into better economic equality."

And at the heart of it, analysts say, is the vast chasm in wealth—a category that includes not just family savings, but home ownership.

For example, when the Economic Equality Index is broken down into subcategories, African-American women are at 82 percent of parity for earnings, and black men, 69 percent. When it comes to income—which would take into account people who are unemployed, underemployed or have little or no income unrelated to work, such as stock dividends, the number is lower—60.

But wealth? African-Americans are at just 4 percent on the Equality Index—a greater disparity between white and black than any of the five major categories or their subcategories.

That can be an enormous detriment for someone yearning to move up in prosperity, Hamilton says. And it's not just the extreme examples—such as President Donald Trump, who said in a 2007 deposition that he borrowed "a small amount" of \$9 million from his real estate businessman father's estate (fact-checkers calculate a higher amount) and turned it into a fortune. The lack of wealth can have a less splashy, but pivotal, impact on middle- and lower-income families as well, Hamilton notes.

For example, a family that can afford to buy even a used car for a teenager makes it easier for that kid to travel to a part-time job, or even to interviews. Recent college graduates who want to do a low-paid (or unpaid) internship in hopes of snagging a prestigious job later will likely need help from parents—and if a grad's parents can't subsidize rent, that takes the plum internship off the table, he says.

"As a young adult, some people will get some help—a transfer from parents, an inheritance, something that gives them the capital that puts them in a spot to buy a home, a debt-free education, capital to start a business," Hamilton says.

When it comes to home ownership, a big factor in wealth, the Urban League report shows a large disparity, with African-Americans at 58 percent of parity with whites. The index is even lower (35 percent) for the mortgage application denial rate.

Public policy in the past, Hamilton says, helped create a white middle class, but did little to nurture a black middle class. FHA loans were less available to blacks, especially in the Jim Crow South, he says. Redlining—the practice of refusing to rent or provide home loans to African-Americans seeking to move to certain neighborhoods—was another problem, he says. There is also evidence, Hamilton says, that the GI Bill, created to provide a range of benefits to World War II returning veterans, was not used to assist blacks as much as whites.

Changes in the economy could, theoretically, give African-Americans (or other underrepresented groups) a chance to gain a stronger economic foothold by getting a lot of jobs in an industry not old enough to have entrenched hiring traditions. But in the shift towards tech, African-Americans have been severely underrepresented in the workforce, the Urban League report found.

In its first study of "digital inclusion," researchers found that African-Americans are near parity with whites when it comes to having a computer in the home and access to broadband—both things people generally need when searching for



April 4, 2018, marchers raise their fists as they make their way through Harlem to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the assassination of MLK Jr., in New York City. Photo: Drew Angerer, Getty

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a job and doing other tasks. But that is not reflected in employment: less than five percent of the workforce in the tech industry is African-American, compared to more than 50 percent for whites, the report found.

Although African-Americans are less likely to get STEM degrees in general, they are more likely (as a percentage of their populations) to get degrees in computer and data science (2.8 percent of blacks got the degrees, compared to 2.6 percent of whites, the report said).

Separate research underscores the struggle for African-Americans to get hired in tech—or in other fields as well. A report last year by the Ascend Foundation, a business organization representing Asian-Americans, found that from 2007-15, there was no substantial movement for racial minorities seeking management positions at tech firms. Further, the report found that when it comes to disparity in management hiring, race was a bigger factor than gender in the tech industry, which has been hit with multiple accusations of anti-female bias.

Another report, published last year in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, found that hiring has not changed much in the past quarter century. Since 1990 white applicants received, on average, 36 percent more callbacks than black applicants, notes Lincoln Quillian, a sociology professor at Northwestern University and one of the authors of the study.

Quillian didn't break down the hiring trends by sector. But he said that there may be a bias in what kind of person exemplifies a typical tech worker. "For a long time, we have had ideas about what type of people are in math-heavy fields—math is viewed as a male thing, especially a white and Asian male thing," Quillian says. "Those kinds of stereotypes probably have some effect on generating this outcome" in tech employment.

Morial says the solution is for tech companies to adopt a very conscious and aggressive effort to diversify the workforce. "The new tech [industry] has not been intentional, or intentional enough, about this," Morial says, noting that older firms—like Comcast—have instituted diversity programs. Most of the newer tech companies—such as Google, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube—had equality index percentages in the single digits. "Where there's leadership, intention and a plan, you can have a more inclusive workforce," Morial says.

And despite all sorts of advances African-Americans have made—whether it's holding senior positions in business or even the presidency—the reality is that gains made by black America are often tied to those made by society as a whole, Morial says. In the history of America, "African-Americans are like the caboose on a train. When the train speeds up, the caboose speeds up. But the caboose remains the caboose, in the back of the train." And judging by the State of Black America, it may take awhile to catch up. sclc

SUSAN MILLIGAN is a Senior Writer, US News and World Report. Milligan is a political and foreign affairs writer and contributed to a biography of the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, "Last Lion: The Fall and Rise of Ted Kennedy."

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10.3 Seconds that Changed History and Inspired all of Humanity

BY N. JONAS OHRBERG



Owens at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin

JAMES CLEVELAND “JESSE” OWENS (1913–1980) was an American track and field athlete and four-time Olympic gold medalist in the 1936 Games.

Owens specialized in the sprints and the long jump and was recognized in his lifetime as “perhaps the greatest and most famous athlete in track and field history”. His achievement of setting three world records and tying another in less than an hour at the 1935 Big Ten track meet in Ann Arbor, Michigan, has been called “the greatest 45 minutes ever in sport”] and has never been equaled.

At the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, Germany, Owens achieved international fame by winning four gold medals: 100 meters, 200 meters, long jump, and 4 × 100 meter relay. He was the most successful athlete at the Games and, as a black man, was credited with “single-handedly crushing Hitler’s myth of Aryan supremacy”, although he “wasn’t invited to the White House to shake hands with the President, either”.

The Jesse Owens Award is USA Track and Field’s highest accolade for the year’s best track and field athlete. Owens was ranked by ESPN as the sixth greatest North American athlete of the twentieth century and the highest-ranked in his sport. In 1999 he was on the six-man shortlist for the BBC’s Sports Personality of the Century.

One of the most significant achievements in American history occurred on only 100 meters of land and lasted for approximately 10.3 seconds in Berlin, Germany, on August 3, 1936. For 10.3 seconds, Jesse Owens was not only running against time and the top runners in the world, but Jesse was also running against pure evil. This was an evil and form of inhumanity that crushed any human goodness, hope or glimpse of peace. This evil walked hand-in-hand with death.

The significance of Jesse’s achievement in Berlin included much more than running 100 meters and winning one of several historic Olympic gold medals, but also carrying the banner of humankind to overcome the evil that had humiliated and dehumanized Jesse and so many others. Jesse had the courage and resilience to face extraordinary opposition and outright hate, and achieve a level of distinction that still echoes across the world. Jesse’s achievements are legendary, but his humility and greatness as a human being survives generations and time. Even though Jesse had faced pure evil, hate and a sense of cruelty rarely seen, later in his life Jesse once said, “*The only bond worth anything between human beings is their humanness.*”

It is obvious that the events and experiences of Jesse Owens were extraordinary in a number of ways. One cannot imagine Jesse’s state of mind, feelings and thoughts as he competed in a hostile foreign land, competing on a world stage, which was infiltrated by pure evil, but also representing a country in the Olympic Games, which at the time did not fully recognize or accept him due to his race and the color of his skin. We can learn from Jesse and his achievements. As students of history, while carrying the banner of humanity, we must see beyond the obvious challenges, and look towards the mountaintop, and embrace the opportunities provided by sharing the message of “humanness,” as so eloquently noted by Jesse so many years ago.

We may have different perspectives of the definition of “humanness” and varying opinions of what Jesse meant with the term “humanness;” however, we may think of words such as kindness, respect, good faith, understanding, and forgiveness as part of a general definition of “humanness.” When considering the state of “humanness” or humanity in the United States and across the world, in many instances we

seem to be lost. Thoughts and actions that foster kindness, respect, good faith, understanding, and forgiveness appear to be secondary in what we do and how we relate to others. Our primary concerns are often focused on me, myself, and I. Basic humanity towards others in America is at times replaced by greed, division, convenience, selfishness, and labeling of those around us. We seem to have lost any idea or perspective of us, and ours as a nation.

The founding principles of the United States include the premise that we can have and express various opinions and ideas related to the human experience as Americans, and related to the governing of the United States as a nation. However, over time, the right to express varying opinions and ideas has been overshadowed by the inhumane demonizing and shunning of those who express a differing point of view. The “humanness” of a constructive and reasonable dialogue has completely evaporated. As Americans, no matter our heritage, beliefs, and political affiliation, we have the right to express our thoughts, ideas and concerns as long as these do not cause harm to others. Unfortunately, in today’s politically charged environment, emotional reactions and arguments often eclipse any constructive cognitive responses and genuine dialogue to foster real and lasting change.

As Americans we are of different ethnic, racial, tribal and cultural origins. Our origins and heritage are important to us, and we cherish who we are. Our way of life, what we do, and our points of view have their foundations in our heritage. We should celebrate our heritage and origins; however, referring to the world, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. noted, *“This is the great new problem of mankind. We have inherited a large house, a great “world house” in which we have to live together—black and white, Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jew, Catholic*

and Protestant, Moslem and Hindu—a family unduly separated in ideas, culture and interest, who, because we can never again live apart, must learn somehow to live with each other in peace.”

In the United States we must embrace the notion that we are facing the same opportunity. In our American House we have the opportunity to promote a greater sense of “humanness.” It is time to achieve a higher level of thinking, a paradigm shift, as to our existence. We may have differences based on our origins and points of view, but our differences do not have to result in a gaping division in society or that we are outright opposed to one another in severely divided camps of thought and existence. We must hold on to our “humanness” through mutual kindness, respect, good faith, understanding, and forgiveness.

As a student of history and someone who attempts to carry the banner of humanity I will never look at 100 meters and 10.3 seconds the same way ever again. The hate and evil that Jesse Owens faced so many years ago affords us the insight today that we have significant opportunities to foster positive and lasting change. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, *“All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”* The challenge to all of us is to pick up and carry the banner of “humanness,” and share a message of a constructive dialogue, collaboration, and unity.



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Does NFL Mean “Negroes for Lease”?

BY MICHAEL COARD

We need more Kaepernick, more Muhammad Ali, more Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, more Tommie Smith and more John Carlos. In other words, we need more “Noblemen For Liberty” and fewer “Negroes For Lease”.

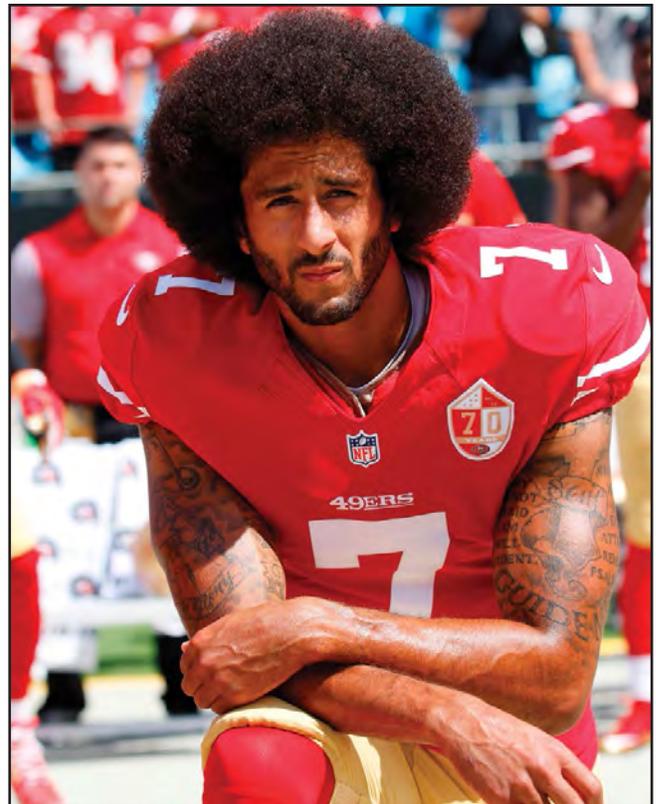
Do NFL team owners (who act like they’re NFL “player” owners) have lawyers? If so, they should’ve been told about the 1943 West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette case wherein the Supreme Court declared that a government official (e.g., a fake president directly by issuing an executive order or indirectly by politically intimidating team owners, coaches, or any other taxpayer-funded entities) cannot physically or financially coerce anyone to stand during the presentation of The Star-Spangled Banner or to participate in any kind of patriotic behavior. The Justices, in a 6-3 ruling, proclaimed, “If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official ... can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics (or) nationalism ... or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.”

By the way, this Barnette ruling took into account what was happening during that same time period when Germany was exiling thousands of Jehovah’s Witnesses to concentration camps for refusing to salute that country’s Nazi flag. And the orange fake president wearing the long red tie in the now-desecrated White House has expressed his desire to exile silently protesting players out of this country.

On Wednesday, May 23rd, following a unanimous vote by team owners (including the weaselly abstention of 49ers’ Jed York), NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell announced a new policy that imposes fines on teams, meaning ultimately on players, who, while on the sidelines, do not stand during the broadcasting of The Star-Spangled Banner.

The owners did this because they felt pressured by the racist fake president and his racist constituency. If you don’t believe me, believe Cowboys’ owner Jerry Jones who said, “[Trump] certainly initiated some of the thinking and was part of the entire picture.”

This blatant violation of free speech and blatant



Heroic former San Francisco 49ers QB, Colin Kaepernick.
Photo: Getty Images

imposition of censorship are in reactionary response to the courageous stand—actually courageous kneel—of heroic former 49ers star quarterback Colin Kaepernick. Two years ago at a preseason game, Kaepernick sat during the playing of the national anthem.

He said he did that because “I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses Black people There’s a lot of things that needs to change. One ... is police brutality. There... [are] people being murdered ... and [cops] not being held accountable. Cops are getting paid leave for killing people.”

He’s right, you know. In fact, more innocent Blacks have been killed by police each week since 2015 than were lynched by mobs each week from 1882-1890. That’s a fact.

He’s also right in using The Star-Spangled Banner as his platform and that’s because it’s a racist song written by a

I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses Black people ... There's a lot of things that needs to change. One ... is police brutality. There... [are] people being murdered ... and [cops] not being held accountable. Cops are getting paid leave for killing people.

—COLIN KAEPERNICK
On why he courageously kneeled

slave-owner. In the third stanza of that song which initially was written as a poem in 1814, Francis Scott Key wrote: "No refuge could save the... slave from the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave. And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave." This stanza glorified the murder of Blacks who escaped U.S. slavery and gained freedom by enlisting as paid soldiers in Britain's Corps of Colonial Marines during combat with America in the War of 1812 and The Battle of Fort McHenry in 1814. Key, a wealthy so-called slave-owner, advocated for the wholesale extermination of those Black soldiers contrary to accepted rules of international warfare. Furthermore, he said Black men, women, and children are an "inferior race of people."

Let's move from the racist anthem back to the racist NFL. Many people would be shocked to learn that the league officially banned Black players in 1934 after having several before then, including the first two in 1920, namely Frederick Douglass "Fritz" Pollard and Robert Wells "Bobby" Marshall.

Pollard, a chemistry major at Brown University, also became the NFL's first Black head coach. Marshall, a pre-law major at the University of Minnesota, was not only outstanding in football but also in track, boxing, and ice hockey. Prior to playing pro football, Marshall was a prominent attorney and played semi-pro baseball before the Negro National League was formed.

After 1934, the NFL, previously known as the American Professional Football Association, didn't have

another Black player until 1946 when the L.A. Rams signed UCLA football and baseball superstar Kenny Washington as its running back. But that wasn't because the Rams were racially altruistic. It was because they had just moved from Cleveland to the brand new- and taxpayer-funded- L.A. Memorial Coliseum. That means Black taxpayers in L.A. helped finance that stadium just like Black taxpayers all across the country today help finance NFL stadiums and teams.

Despite the NFL's blitz on free speech, the First Amendment has a strong offensive line called the ACLU, which issued a public announcement pointing out that "Respect ... for America doesn't require blindness to America's failure to honor its promise of racial justice ... failures that are made even more evident each time the police murder a person of color and get away with it."

In addition, the ACLU started a petition drive at <https://action.aclu.org/petition/nfl-dont-silence-your-players> and created the #TakeAKnee hashtag.

Despite the teams' owners' racism, I don't blame the 100 percent of them who voted for or raised no objection to this new policy. I also don't blame the 99 percent of them who are white. Instead, I blame the 70 percent of the teams' players who are Black.

If all of them united and boycotted, the owners would be compelled to rescind the policy and not take any breach of contract action against any of them. The owners also would be compelled to more equitably share their massive profits by providing raises to the players and premium lifetime health care to the retirees for concussions, all because of the players' increased bargaining power stemming from such a strong showing of labor solidarity.

We need more Kaepernicks, more Muhammad Alis, more Kareem Abdul-Jabbars, more Tommie Smiths and more John Carloses. In other words, we need more "Noble-men For Liberty" and fewer "Negroes For Lease."

I hate racist whites. But I hate scared Negroes even more. sclc

MICHAEL COARD, Esquire, can be followed on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. His "Radio Courtroom" show can be heard on WURD96.1FM. And his "TV Courtroom" show can be seen on PhillyCam/Verizon/Comcast.



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TODAY'S VOICE OF THE NEXT GENERATION

BY TAJ'ZHERE DILLARD



JARED SAWYER JR., age of 18, has a successful career as a motivational speaker, bestselling author, syndicated television and radio commentator, conference host and pastor. Jared has sold over 50,000 copies of his two published books. He is a YouTube Sensation with millions of hits and is known as the “voice of today’s generation”. Photo: Jared Sawyer Jr.

In a classroom full of Mass Media Arts majors, there lies an overwhelming need to get and stay inspired. That’s why we were all there anyway. As young people, we aspire to be dreamers, storytellers, and inspirers. Our professor, Maynard Eaton, knew this and took the liberty of bringing in various influencers, entrepreneurs, and dream chasers to speak to the class each week. Those weekly guests gave detailed accounts of their own journeys and advice on how we too could one day accomplish our biggest goals. This particular day, I sat down in my seat in class and waited for our usual weekly guest speaker. We were told to be expecting an entrepreneur, motivational speaker, author, and reverend with a career span of fifteen years. The classroom echoed with surprise when the young man who walked in looked to be our age or even younger. He was about five feet and three inches tall with a youthful look to him. This man was Jared Sawyer Jr.

“I knew what God had called me to do and I wouldn’t let anything stop me,” Jared Sawyer Jr. said during his talk. Using the word inspirational to describe Sawyer would be an understatement. Although his age might enable one to assume otherwise, Jared Sawyer Jr. was more than qualified to be speaking to our class. After being called by God in a dream, Sawyer was ordained at the early age of five years old. Fifteen years later, Jared Sawyer has done it all. He has won multiple awards, spoken at high profile events, and has even earned the right to call himself an actor. He attends the esteemed Morehouse College as a double major in Religion and Sociology. Aside from having built an international ministry as a preacher, Sawyer is a motivational speaker and the author of four best-selling books. His most recent book, *Empower Your Purpose*, was written to help the next generation of leaders discover and drive their purpose. He

was inspired to write the book after a critical car crash that motivated him to dive deeper into his own purpose.

“A calling is what your set to do, a purpose is the very reason of your being,” says Jared Sawyer Jr. The class listened as Sawyer spoke about purpose and what it looks like in his life and in the lives of others. Sawyer believes that his purpose is to help the leaders within his generation empower and discover their purpose. His passion for that purpose was evident as he spoke to the youth in our classroom. He talked to us in detail about his admirable journey to success. He gave us information about his upcoming You Power Purpose conference created to empower young leaders. He offered us pieces of knowledge that would aid us in our journey to success. His being young and with such a lucrative career could have potentially made him unapproachable to his peers. On the contrary, it actually made him more approachable. We were able engage in dialogue with him about politics and other pressing matters in the black community. An active NAACP member, Sawyer’s passion for the community was visible as he answered pressing questions about his stance on the Black Lives Matter Movement. When one student asked a questions about why he thought the gun violence movement garnered more support than the black lives matter movement, Sawyer gave a well thought out answer. “White people are in a position to empathize, but not to show mercy,” he said. He believes that our generation holds a special kind of responsibility to speak out on issues that others have been silent about. Jared Sawyer Jr. is confident that our generation has realized that we have to take a stand against injustices everywhere.

I was lucky enough to be able to ask Sawyer a few questions after class. After the interview, it was clear to me that Jared Sawyer Jr. had no plans of slowing down anytime soon. “I want to build a network of the next generation of leaders where they can become efficient among each other.” That was Sawyer’s answer when asked about his goals for the future. He hopes to leave a legacy behind that empowers the youth of today, while still honoring the ones who paved a way for us. Jared Sawyer Jr. left our class with hope, pride, and most importantly inspiration. He is proof to young people everywhere that anything is possible with determination and drive. He truly is the voice of the next generation. sclc



TAJ'ZHERE DILLARD is a rising sophomore at the illustrious Clark Atlanta University. She is majoring in Psychology with a minor in Journalism. As an honors student, Taj'Zhere is very active on campus. She participates in the CAU Student Government Association, is a reporter for Her Campus CAU, and is involved in various other organizations. She has a love for writing and plans to keep writing throughout her college career.



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Maynard the Movie

BY MAYNARD EATON, Managing Editor

Maynard Holbrook Jackson Jr. was a pioneering politician. In 1973, at age 35, he was elected the first African American Mayor of Atlanta. Additionally, Jackson was the first black mayor of any major city in the South. It ushered in a new era for Black elected officials, because in effect, Maynard Jackson Jr. was to the Black political movement, what Martin Luther King Jr. was to the Civil Rights Movement. Now his legendary life is a movie.

“He transformed Black politics because he understood he was on the next level after Dr. King and Jesse Jackson. Instead of breaking the doors down he went inside to change things inside those structures,” opined director Sam Powers during a recent Red-Carpet movie premiere event in Atlanta. “Jackson was one of the most important African American figures in the last forty, fifty years and it’s about time people remember who he was and his importance to not only the city of Atlanta, but to America.”

Esteemed civil rights leader and former SCLC president, Dr. C.T. Vivian agrees. He tells this SCLC magazine editor that when history reflects on who the baton was

passed to in the relay race from civil rights to black urban political clout, Mayor Maynard Jackson was at the head of the shortlist to run the proverbial anchor leg in that evolution. Maynard Jackson was the chosen one because he was politically astute and raised right. Jackson was poised and prepared to become a political game-changer, Dr. Vivian believes.

“Without a doubt, in fact, he did it with this city and he changed it. Then he had to leave it [Atlanta] and others sort of pushed him out,” Dr. Vivian said.

Three years ago, Maynard Jackson III—in concert with his wife Wendy—felt compelled to produce a documentary about his father, the 54th and 56th mayor of Atlanta and the man who built Hartsfield Jackson International Airport, now the world’s busiest airport. His father was also the powerful politician who vowed that “weeds would grow” on the airport runways before he reneged on his promise to include significant minority participation in its construction.

“It’s been surreal and it’s an honor to be able to tell my father’s story, in the city that he helped to make what it is today,” said Maynard Jackson III, whose nickname is Buzzy.

Has it been tough for you being the son of a legend, I asked? “It’s been a pressure, it’s had its benefits and it’s a double edged sword so to speak. But I’ve taken all that with a grain of salt and it’s been a badge of honor to wear the name Jackson.”

The new documentary on Mayor Maynard Jackson Jr. deliciously delves deep and dynamically into the political struggles and racially charged scrutiny he routinely endured and experienced during his three terms as Atlanta’s first and foremost African American mayor. The compelling and complimentary documentary explores Atlanta’s fraught, fractious racial history—and the expectations nationally

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The new documentary on Mayor Maynard Jackson Jr. deliciously delves deep and dynamically into the political struggles and racially charged scrutiny he routinely endured and experienced during his three terms as Atlanta's first and foremost African American mayor



placed on him as a big city southern black mayor—are still very relevant today.

“I think this is his just due, you know, he’s so important to the city’s history,” said Hollywood director Sam Powers. “He helped make the airport what it is today, you know I think this [documentary] is just a valentine to a great man.

Former Fulton County Georgia Commission Chairman says that “Maynard The Movie” provocatively portrays Maynard the man as a genuinely authentic political icon.

“He certainly was iconic, and I know a lot of times people sort of use that word loosely but, given the context of the early 1970’s it was unusual for an African American to have a high-profile position as mayor in the city and in the south” Eaves said. “And, not only was he the first, but he did some magnificent things, particularly in the areas of inclusion, neighborhood revitalization, and having a very aggressive way for people of color and minorities to have access to our government through business. So, I thought he was certainly a trendsetter and really deserves to have a film made about him.”

On a personal note, I have written and reported about every Atlanta mayor for the past 40 years. Jackson was without a doubt, the best and brightest of Atlanta’s six consecutive African American mayors in my opinion.

I reported on Mayor Jackson virtually every day from 1978 to 1982, and again during his third term at Atlanta City Hall from 1990 to 1994. He was compelling, charismatic, articulate, accomplished, polished, passionate, and was purposeful in his pursuit of equity and fairness for the poor and people of color.

As a political journalist in both broadcast and print, I have written and reported about black elected officials throughout the south. As editor of this publication, and throughout my journalism career since 1970, I covered civil rights and the black experience.

Regrettably, I never met Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, but to me and for many others, I suspect, Mayor Maynard Jackson was the MLK of African American politics. His documentary poignantly elucidates how and why I make that comparison. sclc

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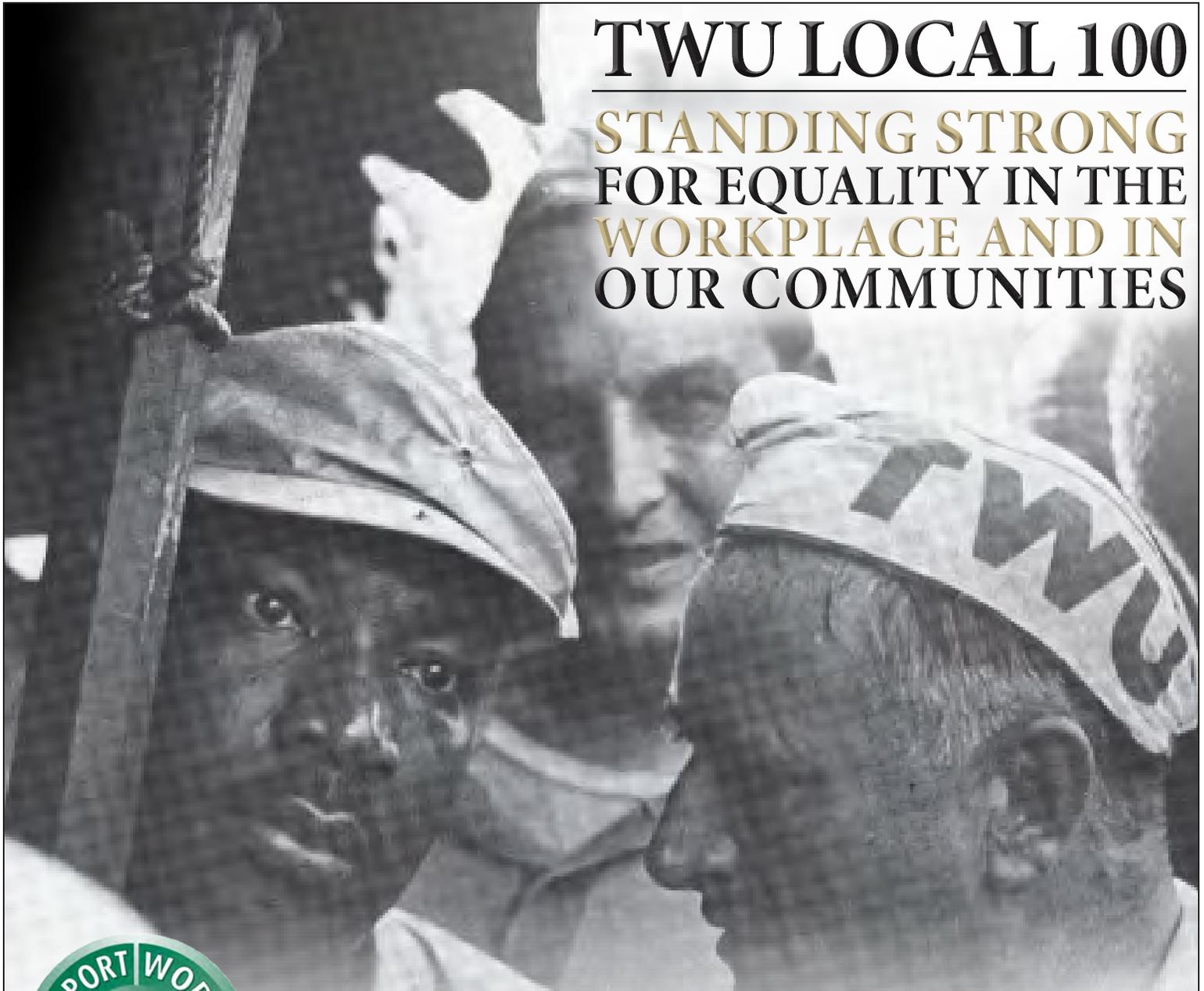


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