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Racial Terror Lynching in Northwest Arkansas: Recounting of the Story of Three Enslaved Males Lynched in 1856 in Washington County - Documentary

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Racial Terror Lynching in Northwest Arkansas:
Recounting of the Story of Three Enslaved Males Lynched in 1856
in Washington County - Documentary

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Journalism

by

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ABSTRACT

While Northwest Arkansas is considered as diverse and progressive today, it also shares a common history of racial violence, and yet almost unknown, with the Southern United-States. Little is being said about the slave plantations in Elkins, racial cleansing in Springdale, or public spectacle lynchings in Fayetteville. This is because white people who hold political and economic power also control how history is written and decide what is to be learned from their perspectives. Marginalized communities, especially Black people, have not always had agency to tell their own stories. The lynchings of three enslaved males, Anthony, Aaron, and Randall, in Washington county in 1856 for the alleged murder of a white slaveholder is a case in point. Two conflictive narratives about the events surrounding this incident emerged among white and Black residents, the most widely known being the white version. Built on the foundational research conducted by the Washington County Community Remembrance Project, a grassroots organization dedicated to memorializing the lives of the three victims, this paper is a contribution to reclaim the story of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall, by giving precedence to the oral account carried by the Black community. It also discusses the legacy of racial violence of Northwest Arkansas, the unequal power dynamic to control history in dominant-white society, and the importance of public memory of lynching.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the many Black people whose lives, in Dr. Valandra's words, "were destroyed in the making of this nation".

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I. INTRODUCTION

In August 1856, the State of Arkansas and a lynch mob in Washington County executed three enslaved males: Anthony, Aaron, and Randall. They were accused of the killing of James Monroe Boone, a white enslaver who owned two of them. This was the third known lynching of Black people in Northwest Arkansas -the first two cases involved an enslaved woman, Caroline, in 1840 and an enslaved man, Alph, in 1849 (Hogan, 2018). Particularly, the story of Anthony, Aaron, and Randal, has long been falsified through the white-dominant record until a group of Fayetteville residents, including Black and white, recently come together to research and create a remembrance project about their lives. The Washington County Community Remembrance Project, the grassroots organization that comes out of the discussions, falls within the Equal Justice Initiative movement to help communities across the country memorialize lynching victims by erecting markers and engaging in educational work about racial justice.

While certain groups celebrate today the diversity and the hospitality of Northwest Arkansas, this region carries a violent and painful past. Consider the terror of ethnic cleansing against Black citizens with the sundown town movement that occurred in Springdale, Arkansas, in the late 1800s and the race riots in Harrison, Arkansas, in the early 1900s (Encyclopedia of Arkansas, 2020). This past finds an echo in the present-day situations of racial injustice cumulating in the death of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer in the summer of 2020. This demonstrates how much the story of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall is timely and relevant. Still, a lot of information regarding the events that led to their lynching needs to be unpacked; that's why it was necessary to create a documentary on this subject. The documentary, titled *Once Forgotten*, is also a contribution to restore a little-known version of the story and hand it to future generations.

The creation of this documentary is built on the foundational work of the Washington Community Remembrance Project, a project dedicated to commemorating the memory of three victims of lynching through a marker and other educational activities. Its members have conducted extensive research on the story of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall and came across two conflicting narratives, as often is the case with lynching (Berg, 2011). Margaret Holcomb, a descendent of the Boones reports that she was told by her family that the three enslaved individuals killed James Monroe Boone because he refused to comply with their request for money (M. Holcomb, personal communication, January 29, 2021). They were put on trial and lynched, despite the fact that two of them were proven not guilty. But an oral account of the events passed down through generations within the Black community suggests that Boone was fatally injured by an enslaved Black woman he was trying to sexually assault. Regarding to the possible involvement of the enslaved individuals in the incident based on the Black version, Sharon Killian, the president of the Northwest Arkansas African American Heritage Association, assumes that they were accused by the family while helping Boone return home, where he died after thirteen days in a coma (S. Killian, personal communication, January 29, 2021).

One theme of this thesis involves who controls history and the role of power and race in those stories. The Marxist philosophy posits in that class struggle dynamic, the dominant group that controls the means of production also imposes its worldview on the minority groups (Marx & Engels, 1970). This is well demonstrated in the case of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall where the story told by the Boone family has been accepted as official and can be found in many documents in circulation, including a biographical page on the Arkansas Country Doctor Museum website, which presents James Monroe Boone, one of the drafters of the first Arkansas constitutions in 1835, as “well respected” in the community (Arkansas Country Doctor Museum,

2007). On the other hand, significant details about the three enslaved males, such as their last names, their family relationships, their place of burial are non-existent. This is prima facie evidence of their marginalization and dehumanization.

Collectively, Black people's perspectives and voices of have been so long absent in American history. The Black community in Northwest Arkansas particularly had difficulty imposing its ideas because it lacked the infrastructure for community organizations and press, unlike Tulsa at this time which had its own economic sphere, Black Wall Street. Oral history has therefore been an alternative way to preserve and transmit traditional knowledge of the African American population, though it takes a long time to be introduced in mainstream society. It was until 2004 that Melba Smith, a descendant of an enslaved woman who lived in the Boone community at the time when the incident occurred, wrote down the oral account of the events in 1856. Smith (2004) said this narrative has been corroborated by the Swords, a white family that lived in the neighborhood of the late James Monroe Boone in Richland township by 1880. But its validity has been called into question by the white community. Obtaining consensus on the truth is complicated, but this research and this documentary project serve another larger purpose: to add to the discussion about the legacy of racial violence in Northwest Arkansas and highlight the need to prevent history repeating itself.

The Documentary Project

Documentary theorist Nichols (2010) contends that nonfiction storytelling provides a platform for marginalized voices to express themselves. *Once Forgotten* is part of this approach by focusing on the Black version of the story. This involves many intentional choices during the filmmaking process. For example, the interview subjects are predominantly Black, including organizers and scholars; each brings a perspective to the story. Sharon Killian, president of the

African - the African American Heritage Association - holds the written record of the oral account told by an enslaved woman who lived in the Boone community when the events occurred. She introduces this story on tape for the first time. Margaret Holcombe, a local historian and a descendant of the Boone family, revisits and question her family's version of the events and recounts what happen in the court trial and describe the lynching scenes. RoAnne Elliott, a retired professor from Minnesota, and Dr. Valandra, an associate professor in the University of Arkansas School of Social Work, discuss the commemorative monument dedicated to the three men's names and its historical and political significance in the land space of Northwest Arkansas. Interviews with Dr. Caree Banton and Dr. Charles F. Robinson, two African American historians, cover the topics of sexual assault during slavery, lynching, and public memory of lynching, as an examination of the full scope of the events of 1856, rooted in the history of racial violence in America.

The challenge of making a documentary on an event that occurred more than a century and a half ago, when photography was not accessible to all, is that visual materials of the people and the places of that era are almost non-existent. The interviews with present-day characters are insightful but not sufficient to tell the story given that one of the cardinal rules of filmmaking is “show, don't tell.” Therefore, the use of metaphorical and symbolic imagery becomes necessary. Symbolic contemporary images of vast land seen from above, birds, a lake, three swings, an abandoned house are used as a metaphorical representation of places and actions involved in the story. The documentary also relies on archival image about slavery collected from the Library of Congress website and dives deep into the court documents trial of the three enslaved individuals, kept at the Washington County Archives. Graphics are used in the form of on-screen text to add context and lower-third to identify the interviewees. Music and sound are critical components in

documentary filmmaking. Ambient sounds of birds, trees, and moving objects will be recorded in the field. Dramatic instrumental music helps set melancholic and serious mood.

This documentary is a thesis for my Master of Arts degree in Journalism with my concentration in Documentary Productions at the University of Arkansas. This paper presents a summary of the research that supports the project.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Slavery had been introduced in Arkansas by the French who settled in Louisiana and the surrounding areas. When Arkansas achieved its statehood in 1819, its economic development became the priority. With an environment that features a diverse range of natural areas (mountains, plateau, and rivers) that provides agricultural conditions, livestock and subsistence agriculture were a significant part of the land owned by white farmers and the government. Still, cotton had slowly emerged as a “staple production of the territory”, as referred to in an 1825 article published in *The Arkansas Gazette* (Bolton, 1998). The production of cotton relied heavily on slave labor, as is the case in many other southern states such as Louisiana, Mississippi, and Georgia.

Slavery in Northwest Arkansas, myth or reality

A direct correlation can be made between the growth in the state's African American population and its commercial development. According to historian Bolton (1998), the number of slaves accounted for 13% of the Arkansas population during the 1810s, 15% by 1820, 20% in 1840. By 1860, more than one out of four Arkansas residents were enslaved. At the eve of the civil war, one out of four Arkansas residents were a slave. Although slave labor was unequally distributed across the state with a higher concentration of enslaved population in lowland areas like the Arkansas Delta where cotton is abundantly produced, Washington county's economy

benefited also from the institution of slavery. Between 1840 and 1860, the county represented the state's third center of business activity in the 1830s (Bolton, 1998). It was also the leading slaveholding county in the northern part of the State with a slave population that grew from 344 in 1831, to 1,883 in 1840, and 1,500 on the eve of the Civil War (Smith, 1995).

Framing of Slavery in American Narrative

From an economic standpoint, those figures are revealing when assessing the scope and the magnitude of slavery in American history. But the human cost of the slave system is often overlooked when one reverts solely to statistics. On this point, America has struggled to confront the painful legacy of slavery. Gordon-Reed (2018) points to a rivalry existing in American society between those who praise the greatness of the country and those who challenge its dark period of terror and violence against Black people. Whether written in books or depicted in movies, much of the slave narrative has been shaped by dominant white institutions with a refusal of acknowledging the harm done. A classic example of whitewashing the horror of slavery was displayed in the 1939 Oscar-winning film, *Gone with the Wind*, a faithful adaptation of Margaret Mitchell's novel. The slave's way of life is portrayed as pleasant, suggesting they were happy to serve in the plantations of their will and had absolutely no consciousness of freedom (Bailey, 2020) and had no interest in freedom. Leff (1999) denounces the film's treatment of Black characters as barbarians, attacking white people, which justifies the creation of the Klu Klux Klan as a "tragic necessity." *Gone with the Wind* has ignited fierce criticism among the African American community, even while it was in pre-production. But it took eight decades after its release for such denunciation to become effective with *HBO Max* to remove it from its streaming service in the wake of the nationwide racial protest in the summer 2020.

In the face of significant social change, the discourse on slavery has evolved in American society. But romanticism of slavery seems still to have a long road to disappear from American books. Published recently in late 1990s, Bolton's *Arkansas Remote and Relentless*, though providing a wealth of data about slavery in Arkansas, contributes to the perpetuation of a glamorized notion of the slave conditions in the plantation. In one passage, he claims that the enslaved people might have not suffered from discomfort since many of them happened to be in groups, working with a spirit of comradeship to perform the labor. He went on to quote the account of a white man in a plantation suggesting that the enslaved enjoyed the work routine.

The reality is that enslaved people had no agency over their life and no right to self-determination. The companionship Bolton refers to is nothing more than what (Andrews, 2009) categorizes - along with religion, and family institutions - as survival strategies to their enslavement. Another *Arkansas Remote and Relentless* passage reads: "To talk about the treatment of slaves, as we have, implies a degree of passivity from the slaves part." But the enslaved people have never remained inactive toward the oppressive order and fought for freedom. The fact that the enslaved decided to run away from the plantation at night to escape bondage despite the potential risk captured by slave catchers is an example of bravery and commitment to freedom (Churchill, 2020). In the 1840s, Nelson Hacket got away from the Fayetteville farm where he was enslaved to reach Canada by travelling to Kentucky and Ohio River - although he was ultimately extradited to his former master (Kirk, 2014). Rather than being an isolationist act, the slave flight has been intentionally organized by a number of well-known fugitives and anti-slavery activists such as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, William Wells Brown (Andrews, 2019) who have helped thousands of enslaved to escape the south and to

find a safe haven in Canada. The political significance of this operation known as underground railroad has led scholars to attribute to it the decline of slavery in the South (Blackett, 2013).

That strong commitment of enslaved men and women to return to freedom and take control of their social and political fate is exemplified in the Haitian revolution. On January 1st, 1804, Haiti officially became the first free Black nation after having overthrown the dreadful system of slavery established in Saint-Domingue for more than four centuries by white Europeans. The most spectacular aspect of this great moment in modern history is not so much the declaration of independence itself but the path that led to it. It came from a series of resistance movements cleverly thought and organized, such as the Bois-Caiman ceremony, driven by the voodoo religion and administered by Boukman, a notable fugitive, Boukman, catalyzed the slave's insurrection in August 1791 (Geggus, 2002). Since the Haitian revolution was a slap in the face to the European countries and the United States of America, which still practiced slavery at that time, little teaching time is devoted to it in their education system. Still, this history has largely shaped the consciousness of Haitian people about the cruelty of slavery and the bravery of enslaved men and women.

Northwest Arkansas's Legacy of Racial Violence

Whitewashing of slavery in American history is not without consequences. It has led society to be selective about the historical events they recognize while leaving some of the experiences of the Black community in the shadow (Dunigan, 2019). Some Black residents say the Northwest Arkansas white population is largely not familiar with the existence of enslavement or deems it as an inconsequential occurrence in this region as compared to the rest of the State. In an interview for the documentary, Elliot recalled having faced denial of the legacy of slavery and historical injustices in the community when she first moved from

hometown Minneapolis (Minnesota) to Fayetteville (R. Elliott, personal communication, January 22, 2021). ‘‘My white friends that I was just meeting were saying, ‘Oh, that’s not Northwest Arkansas, that’s the other part of the state. Northwest Arkansas is very progressive, we’ve got the university here. You won’t find racism here’,’’ she said (R. Elliott, personal communication, January 22, 2021). Elliot also claimed that many people she spoke were unaware that there had been enslaved people in this part of the state.’’ Killian had a similar experience.

When I first came here too, I was told that there was no slavery in Fayetteville. There are actually people who believe that, and they were living in a neighborhood where black people lived. And this was in 2005, or 2008 to now, that was not a long ago. (S. Killian, personal communication, January 29, 2021)

And this statement of Holcombe is a bit of a confession: ‘‘There was an assumption that none of our immediate family members in the previous generations had a real involvement with enslavement’’ (M. Holcombe, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

It was true that slaveholding was at a much lower number in Northwest Arkansas compared to the Southern part of the state - one master can own between one and more than fifty slaves, according to Bolton (1998). However, the African American population was subjugated to the same system of exploitation and racial oppression of enslavement that McInnis (2011) claims was based on the racial ideology that Black people are humanly inferior and must be considered them as dangerous. This ideology served as justification for practices of terrorizing against the African American population, which continued to prevail in Northwest Arkansas even after the emancipation of slaves by Abraham Lincoln in 1863.

In fact, between 1890 and 1968, white citizens across the country decided to ban the newly free African American population from residing in their cities by erecting signs with explicit messages. That movement is named sundown town, referring to the prohibition for Black people to enter these territories after sundown. Trespassing the limits marked could result in

physical violence, including killing and hanging (Kattner et al., 2016). Kirk (2014) notes that while the South part of the state was widely known for its long-established racial violence against Black people, the sundown town phenomenon emerged mainly in the Ozarks; the majority of some 100 Arkansas sundown towns were found in the northern and western part of the state (Young, 2011). In Washington county, Springdale and Rogers are at least two towns that practiced sundown (Kattner et al., 2016).

In Boone county, white citizens in Harrison, the headquarters of the Knights of the Klu Klux Klan (KKK), were also engaged in a series of racial violence against African American residents. The movement began in 1905 when two Black men were taken from the jail, beaten and forced out of the area by a mob of white citizens. The crowd went on to attack other Black residents by burning down their houses and chasing them (Encyclopedia of Arkansas, 2020). A new wave of racial violence occurred again in 1909 as a result of this racial cleansing, the African American population has considerably fallen in Northwest Arkansas. According to Loewen (2018), by the 1930s, no Black resident was recorded in three Arkansas counties in the Ozarks. The Black population of eight other counties in the same area was lower than ten.

Lynching in America and Northwest Arkansas

Lynching is a terrorist activity where mob justices decide an alleged offender's fate (Rushdy, 2012). This sort of public execution has been carried out in a full range of ways: torture, mutilation, hanging, burning, incinerating living people (Thurston, 2011). The period of 1890 and 1940 is considered by many scholars such as Mitchell (2012) and Wood (2009) as the lynching era due to a peak of cases of lynchings recorded during this time. It is not uncommon to see people referring to the killing of Trayvon Martin (Ore, 2019) or the killing of Michael Brown

in Ferguson, Missouri (C. Banton, personal communication, February 27, 2021) as modern-day lynchings.

In many cases, lynchings were performed in broad daylight drawing a crowd of spectators, adults and children. Banton contends that the spectacle is used to send a message to the rest of the community and to sustain the racial power dynamics (C. Banton, personal communication, February 27, 2021). It was common for the lynch mobs to take photographs of the crime (Wood, 2014) and distribute the victim's body parts (Cook et al., 2018). In that way, the ritual becomes acceptable while the lynch mobs never consider themselves criminals. Wood (2014) explains that by attending these public executions, white spectators want to watch through their own eyes the criminal punishment as it satisfied their instinct for revenge. White Americans were afraid to lose economic opportunities due to an increase in the African American after the Civil War. Lynching then became a mechanism for economic control (Cook et al., 2018), a method of ensuring social order (Reece, 2019; Berg, 2011), and a tool to reinforce moral superiority (Wood, 2014) and white supremacy (Rushdy, 2012). To this idea, Robinson added:

Lynching is not just killing the person is killing the aspirations of the other group and their tendencies, their hopes, their beliefs, that they can somehow find equality in the system. It's reminding them that there is a dominant group, a dominant culture. (C. F. Robinson, personal communication, February 23, 2021)

There have been many instances where white people are lynched. Still, the vast literature devoted to this matter is unanimous in admitting that African American individuals were the main target of lynching. Data collected by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (n.d.) show that Black people made up more than 72% of the 4,743 victims of lynchings reported across America from 1882 to 1968. Most of those lynchings occurred in the southern part of the country. A report by the Equal Justice Initiative (2017) places Arkansas, along with Mississippi and Georgia, in the top three states with the highest cases of lynching. A

number of 457 individuals were lynched in the state between 1877-1950 —several of these racial terror lynchings in the area of Northwest Arkansas. An annotated timeline by Jerry Hogan lists 16 victims of lynching from 1840 to 1928 in Northwest Arkansas.

Hollars (2011) enumerates many reasons people can be lynched, alleged sexual assault, burglary, domestic violence, insulting whites, debts, or just being Black. But the notion of guilt is often questionable. Stories of Black people falsely accused of a crime to then be hanged are common. Berg (2011) recounts the case of sixteen-year-old James Cameron in Indiana, who already had the noose on his neck when a man halted the murder, convincing the mob that Cameron was innocent. There are always conflicting narratives about the cases of lynchings; they vary depending on the ethnic group to which belong the individuals are telling the story. The story of Anthony, Aaron, and Randal, three enslaved men who were lynched in 1856 in Washington county, is a case in point.

The case of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall

The first thing to be said is that the story of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall differs from the classical narrative about lynchings because they were in bondage. Some scholars like Robinson argue that lynching was not a common practice of violence during slavery because enslaved people were technically considered properties, their death, therefore, was an economic loss for slaveholders (C. F. Robinson, personal communication, February 23, 2021). A white mob would not lynch an enslaved person except with the consent of the master, or they can be sued for the destruction of private property. The word lynching came to mainstream use in the 1830s (Rushdy, 2012). With this context in mind, the events surrounding their lynchings are as much intriguing as the mob violence itself.

All the three individuals were enslaved in Richland Township, now known as Elkins (Washington County, Arkansas), but there is little specific information available on their identities. Holcomb (2008), said that records from the Washington County Archives show that Randal was owned by Thomas Smith, who then conveyed him to the Williams family at ten. Aaron might have been brought at a slave auction by James Monroe Boone, who also owned Anthony from previous enslavers. Anthony and Randal would be around 25 years old, while Aaron was 15 when they were lynched for the murder of James Monroe Boone.

James Boone died on June 11, 1856, from injuries after thirteen days in a coma. Two different versions of the events surrounding the injuries he received. Referring to an oral history passed down within the African American community, Killian said that Boone went to an enslaved woman's house and tried to rape her (S. Killian, personal communication, January 29, 2021). The woman fought back and hit him in the forehead with an axe. That narrative, corroborated by a Boone's neighboring family, Sarah Wilson Sword and John Sword, also white. It was written down in 2004 by Melba, a descendant of an enslaved woman owned by the Boone. As far as the three men's involvement in the incident, Killian assumes that might have helped Boone return to his house and were then targeted by the family as the alleged assailants (S. Killian, personal communication, January 29, 2021).

The white community has told different other versions of the story over successive generations. One narrative indicates that three African American individuals were not enslaved (Hogan, 2018) and they murdered Boone out of jealousy toward another "ex-slave" who received better treatment (Arkansas Country Doctor Museum, 2007). In fact, the court records, dated July 1856, refer to Anthony, Aaron, and Randall as "slaves". This debunks the belief reported by Arkansas Country Doctor Museum (2007) that Boone freed his slaves in 1854. According to

another account reported by Holcomb (2018), the three enslaved individuals are said to have beaten James Boone to death because he refused to give them money. There is a lack of logic in this narrative. For one thing, the question of money is not consistent with the period because enslaved people were not entitled to receive wages for their labor; instead, they were considered as commodities (Bolton, 1998). Killian also suggests that, due to the imbalance of forces between three enslaved men and one white man, there is little chance that Boone would have survived this attack (S. Killian, personal communication, January 29, 2021).

Once accused by the Boone family, Anthony, Aaron, and Randal were taken to court and indicted for murder by a Washington County grand jury on June 11, 1856 (Holcomb, 2018). They all pleaded not guilty in separate trials. Randal was brought first, and on July 3, 1856, he received a guilty verdict of first-degree murder and was sent back to prison. After the hearings on July 5, the state prosecutor decided to dismiss Aaron's case because he found little evidence to prosecute him. Aaron was released. The same day, Anthony received an acquittal from the grand jury. Though Randal and his lawyer requested a retrial, the judge refused and rendered his final decision on July 7, 1856. He was sentenced to death by hanging. The hanging took place on August 1, 1856, at Gallows Hill, where the national cemetery is currently located. Although Anthony was acquitted and Aaron's charges dismissed for lack of evidence, they had still remained in jail, and their fate was later decided by mob sentiment. An account by the *Fort Smith Herald* newspaper published in *The Liberator* (1856) said that a mob of white residents in Washington county invaded the jail, took the two men, and lynched them. Benjamin and Lafayette Boone, two sons of James Boone and lawyers, were personally implicated in that lynching by tying the noose around Anthony and Aaron's neck.

Discourse of Lynching and Erasure in White Culture

When it comes to lynching, white people do not only produce the spectacle; they also make sure to control the narrative in order to appeal to the mob upstream and influence public opinion downstream (Rushdy, 2012). These narratives often involve myths, lies, inaccuracy, and exaggeration. The most common allegation used as a justification for lynching was rape. The Black man was framed as a sexual predator and white women as vulnerable victims. By hanging the alleged rapist, the lynchers make society believe that they act as protectors of white women. This rhetoric has been repeated regularly in newspapers, books, as well as movies. One notable example is the film *The Birth of a Nation*, where a Black character called Gus is lynched by a group of Klansmen because of his aggressive behavior toward a white woman (Wallace, 2003).

As the dominant social group with the most considerable political and economic resources, white people have the leadership and power to reinforce their cultural hegemony (Marx & Engels, 1970). They also control the means of cultural production, and therefore, history. This explains why the white perspective has long dominated the narrative and the memory of lynching in American history. And even Black community unconsciously engages with the dominant views too. And the other effect is that the hegemonic process, as Marx conceptualized it, the marginalized group's experience is suppressed, and their ability to make their judgment is undermined (Gottdiener, 1985). The story of Anthony, Aaron, and Randal is a prime example of this. As R. Elliot (personal communication, January 22, 2021) pointed out, these three men never entered a record until they were accused of a crime. And the fact that the court documents do not mention their last names tells a lot about their personhood was regarded as marginal in American society.

Therefore, it becomes ethically problematic to rely solely on white culture to recount racial violence in the past. In that regard, Banton raised an important question, “How do you then tell the story of black people from the perspective of those who were implicated in their murder?” (C. Banton, personal communication, February 27, 2021). While the Boone family's narratives have been told repeatedly and taken as official, it took more than a century and a half before the Black version of the events was made public. And because it is transmitted by oral tradition passed down within the Black community, that story has met with skepticism and doubt until recently. “I was asked about where's the proof. Where is it written otherwise?” Killian (personal communication, January 29, 2021). Discusses the validity of oral history, Robinson claims that written words may not always be on the side of the truth (C. F. Robinson, personal communication, February 23, 2021). Still, oral history is an alternative tool for marginalized groups to preserve their memories and views for generations.

Public Memory of lynching in America

Once Black people started to own instruments to exercise control over their experiences, they ventured to shape the conversation about lynching. The African American journalist Ida B. Wells, well known for her anti-lynching campaign and co-founder of the NAACP, devoted her life, through a newspaper she co-founded, to debunk the myth that most lynchings were performed against Black men who sexually assaulted white women (Wood, 2010). According to Smith (2018), Wells documented more the story of more than 700 Black people killed by lynch mobs. W. E. DuBois was also known as a prominent anti-lynching activist and collected data about 2,843 occurrences of lynching. He published several fact-based reports framing lynching as a racial and political problem. He was selected to lead the National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) campaign for anti-lynching regulation, which started in 1916 (Bernstein, 2006).

These efforts have been effective; the wave of lynchings has fallen by only four per year during the period 1936 and 1950 (Crofts, 1981). But America has been reluctant to take actions to acknowledge the suffering of the thousands of African Americans victims of racial violence and restoring their dignity. This lack of memorialization is revealing to how little value is given to certain class of citizens. The first lynching memorial ever created in the nation was unveiled in 2003 in Duluth, Minnesota, to memorialize three Black men killed by a lynched mob in 1920 (Apel, 2018). It was the initiative of a group of private citizens. In 2018, the Equal Justice Initiative, a private non-profit organization founded in 1989 by civil rights the lawyer and social justice activist Bryan Stevenson, opened the National Monument for Justice and Peace in Montgomery, Alabama. It is the first commemorative monument of a national significance in memory of victims of documented lynching in 12 states. The monument displays detailed information about of the victim's identities and contextualizes the events surrounding the lynching as an attempt to restore the truth.

Nowadays, there is barely any historical monument about the racial violence events that occurred in Northwest Arkansas. According to Wooten, Stitt, and Kattner (2016), the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History has kept no record of sundown signs that were displayed in Springdale during the sundown towns era. The refusal to acknowledge this racial brutality make white people comfortable and less inclined to question their responsibility for the past (Elliott & Valandra, 2020). A the same time the variety of public monuments existing in Northwest Arkansas speaks volume about the kind of events or people the dominant white community value. The veneration of Judge Isaac Parker who had a long history of executions in Fort Smith

is a case in point. The statue of a confederate soldier stood for more than 100 years and was only removed in 2020 in the wake of the racial protests following the death of George Floyd (Jones & Neal, 2020). In Fayetteville, a commemorative plaque is installed, and a street is named after Archibald Yell, a former Arkansas Governor and Mexican War hero (Encyclopedia of Arkansas, 2020), to honor his legacy. But the monument fails to mention the fact that Yell was also a slave owner, and the hanging of Anthony and Aaron took place in his property. At the University of Arkansas, the name of the College of Arts and Science and the statue of J. William Fulbright, a former U.S. senator and a key player in U.S. international affairs, has become subject of controversy with a series of protests led by students for its removal due to the segregationist policies he pushed while serving as the president of the University.

Banton contends that commemorative monuments are a vital element to help cope with the trauma that the Africa-American have experienced and fight against racism (C. Banton, personal communication, February 27, 2021). Ore (2019) emphasizes the educational value of this work, where citizens can find context to understand the relations between current events and past history. They can also operate as a public sphere, where citizens across the color line can hold conversations about lynching (Apel, 2008) or can serve as a place for contemplation and meditation (Eliot, personal communication, January 22, 2021).

Memorializing the lives of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall

The Washington County Community Remembrance project emerges out of a clear need of commemorating and recognizing the experience of the African American community affected by racial violence in Northwest Arkansas. The origin of this project is a series of meetings between some Fayetteville residents, including local historians, university professors, and

organizers, after RoAnne and Valandra attended in 2018 the opening ceremonies of the National Monument of Justice and Peace built by the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama. They describe the experience as “moving” and “overwhelming”, given the many names of victims of terror lynching they discovered. However, it came to their attention that Washington County's name did not appear among the pillars representing 73 counties in Arkansas. The reason is that there were no documented lynchings in the county during the years 1877 and 1950, the time span of the research conducted by the Equal Justice Initiative.

Holcomb (2018) said she had already come across the names of the three enslaved individuals lynched in 1856 in Washington county while doing a family genealogy project. Her great-great mother was a niece to James Monroe Boone. Her preliminary research provides to the group a foundation for examining what happened to Anthony, Aaron, and Randall. The contribution of Killian, who has preserved Smith’s written document of the oral account, has been crucial as it adds the perspective of the Black community into the conversation.

That work on restoring the story of the three victims of lynching led to the creation of the Washington County Community Remembrance Project. Funded partly by the Black History Commission of Arkansas and operating under the umbrella of the Northwest Arkansas African American Heritage Association, it has a plan to erect a memorial marker at the Oaks cemetery, a historical black cemetery in Fayetteville, to honor the lives of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall. The marker is built according to the guidelines provided by the Equal Justice Initiative through its Community Remembrance Project helping communities across the county commemorate the same kind of racial terror lynchings. The Washington County Community Remembrance Project aims also to engage in community outreach activities and public education mainly through a racial justice essay contest for local high school students.

III. CONCLUSION

Racial violence in America has a long history; it spans from the slavery period through the Jim Crow era and manifests itself today in various forms like police brutality, mass incarceration, micro-aggression. Northwest Arkansas is part of these scenes. But this situation is often hidden in official statistics about diversity and the narrative that makes the dominant groups comfortable. There are communities whose experiences and voices have been silenced from official history, as with the lynching of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall. The moral imperative to bring the truth to light is unquestionable; many believe the region's violent past must be confronted to overcome the trauma inflicted on marginalized communities and prevent reoccurrence. The commemorative monument that will be erected by the Washington County Community Remembrance Project to honor the lives of the three individuals is part of this process. There is also a need to bring that story to larger audiences and with a fresh perspective. This is precisely the purpose that *Once Forgotten* can serve: reclaiming the story of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall.

IV. PRODUCTION NARRATIVE

It was never my plan to create a documentary as a Master's Thesis project. Before I entered the journalism program at the University of Arkansas, my professional universe was limited to writing news stories for a couple of national and international media outlets about social issues. Then I enrolled in Fall of 2019 in a Documentary Production class where I met professor Colleen Thurston, who has completely changed my career trajectory. One of the best lessons I have learned over the past two years is that storytelling is a powerful tool for change and can be my way to make an impact the world.

The idea of this documentary about the lynchings of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall was being discussed in the fall of 2020 during my internship program at the Pryor Center, where I had previously created two episodes of the *Arkansas Atoll*, a podcast telling the story of the Marshallese community in Northwest Arkansas. I did not know what the story was precisely about and where it would take me. Nevertheless, I quickly realized that working on such a project would allow me to continue pursuing social justice storytelling and as well as to explore a new documentary filmmaking style: the historical documentary. I was fortunate to have two supervisors, Colleen Thurston and Sarah K. Moore, as well as my academic advisor, Dr. Rob Wells, to fall back on for guidance and resources. From the first moment, they helped me contact potential subjects for interviews and suggested readings and podcasts for more background information about the topic.

In the meantime, I was taking a political science class where I was building on a paper that would serve as the literature review for my thesis, whose goal was to analyze Twitter conversation about the U.S. criminal justice system in the light of the release of the Netflix series *When They See US*. This project was exciting to me as I am interested in social media studies and films. But I understood that my thesis project must be pragmatic, aligning with the career I want to pursue. In late December, I shared that idea with my academic advisor, Dr. Wells, and he did not hesitate to approve that plan. And when deciding whether to come up with a new documentary idea or considering the lynching story for the thesis project, the latter seemed the most reasonable choice given the short deadline to complete this project.

Pre-production: August – December 2020

The first step in researching this story was to reach out to the members of the Washington County Community Remembrance Project. They had already done extensive investigation into the lives of the three lynched individuals and had a great deal of documentation available. Almost all of them replied to my email by the end of August 2020, sharing journal articles, personal notes, and a Northwest Arkansas map indicating the locations involved in the story. It took me quite some time, at first, to familiarize myself with some of the basic information about the story, such as the dates of the events, the locations, and the people's names.

As a native of Haiti—the first Black nation to free itself from slavery—I have a deep connection to the story. It's clear for to every Haitian that slavery was a barbaric system put in place to dehumanize and exploit Blacks. With this cultural background, I wanted to understand what the state of slavery was in Northwest Arkansas and why it is often dismissed or seen as benign in casual conversations. However, the topic of lynching, as a form of racial violence, was new to me. Of course, I had heard about lynching in America through the news media but had never really studied the subject. While I was continuing the conversation with the interviewees, I started to research more about lynching. Sarah Moore recommended a podcast titled *Unfinished: Deep South*, which tells the story of Isadore Banks, a wealthy Black American who was lynched in 1954 in Arkansas. The educational nature of this podcast, primarily based on an investigative journalism approach, lies in the fact that it features interviews with different scholars explaining the concept of lynching and the history of that violent practice in America. The story of Isadore differs in many ways from that of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall, but the podcast gave me insight into the question of lynching for my interviews.

A critical part of the research work took place in the field. Margaret Holcombe, a local historian and descendent of James Monroe Boone, offered to take me on a driving tour to many of the sites that were part of the story of the three individuals. Though most sites have changed in appearance, I knew they would give a perspective of place. It took a lot of conversation and planning to make that trip happen. Because of COVID, we could not ride in the same vehicle. I had a hard time finding a ride and decided to take a taxi and made the trip on October 08. Visiting these places was effectively an eye-opening experience. I saw the vast land formerly owned by the Boone family, a family cemetery, the slave quarters where the enslaved individuals used to live, the national cemetery, and the Yell property where the lynchings occurred. I took advantage of the occasion to take down notes and photographs of the locations and as well as photographs of items such as bricks made by formerly enslaved people. Overall, this research helped me build a visual understanding of the story, plan the filming of b-rolls, and prepare the interviews with the subjects.

Production: October 2020 – May 2021

The research was vital in developing the story, but the production phase really revealed the operational limits I had to deal with. Conducting in-person interviews in the middle of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic was a challenge itself, but I followed all the proper guidelines to make the filming as safe as possible. I wanted to maintain a consistent look keeping a somber mood in all the interviews and shooting them in the same location. In Kimpel Hall, at the University of Arkansas, a large room that formerly housed the UATV was appropriate for such a purpose because it allowed me to create a seamless black background with low light for the dramatic look and a social distance from the interviewees. I suggested they wear business casual attire with neutral color, a dress code that would contribute to achieving the desired look of the

film. My classmate, Whitney King, helped me setting up the interviews with two cameras and a complex lighting apparatus.

The first interview took place on October 13, 2020, with Margaret Holcombe. I kept it in a conversational style --with some written questions-- because I had to listen more to Margaret Holcomb, who is well informed about the people involved and the events surrounding the lynching. Technically, the interview went well. The sound was good, but I realized the subject was not well lit enough. Overall, it helped better prepare the following discussions. I followed up with Dr. Valandra on October 14, with whom I discussed more lynching and slavery in Northwest Arkansas. I interviewed RoAnne Eliot on October 15. We talked about her personal experience with race relations in Arkansas and the Remembrance Project. Later, I realized that the sound had not been recorded; that was a very stressful and delicate situation. On the one hand, I didn't feel very comfortable asking Elliott to do the interview again; on the other hand, I could not move the project forward without that interview. Added to this, Eliot was out of town for an extended period. We came up with the best option which was a phone call interview (to be used for the radio edit) on November 4 with the promise to shoot an in-person interview again.

In the meantime, I started to film b-rolls to illustrate what the interviewees are talking about. For example, on November 12, Margaret Holcombe and I spent several hours at the Washington County Archives filming court documents where the sentencing of the three individuals is recorded. On February 1st, we went to the National Cemetery and the Yell property where the lynchings of the three enslaved individuals occurred. Later on, I came back to Elkins to capture drone footage of the landscape. I also captured cinematic shots of inanimate objects like graffiti murals, lakes, and a sunset. A drone pilot was also involved in capturing areal footage of the Northwest Arkansas area including some specific locations like slave

quarters. The plan to create an animated reenactment of the trial and the lynchings of the three individuals did not work out due to time constraints.

After deciding to continue this documentary as my thesis project in January 2021, I felt the need to reshoot the previous interviews because the seamless black background I wanted to create did not work well. I chose a new location that allows for better lighting conditions. Fortunately, all the subjects were very understanding and agreed with the plan. I took advantage of this new opportunity to approach the interviews differently in terms of contents. For example, with Dr. Valandra, the conversation was about the origin of the Washington County Community Remembrance Project and the meaning of the memorial marker to be unveiled with the names of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall. In fact, along with Eliot, she came up with the idea after attending the opening ceremony of the National Museum for Justice and Peace, created by the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama.

I also realized that a Black person would be seen as more legitimate to tell the narrative that has been passed down within the Black community, instead of having Margaret Holcombe, a white person and a member of the family that enslaved and lynched two of the individuals. My intention was that this film would serve as a counter-narrative to what that which white community has said for generations about this racial terror. The name of Sharon Killian had been mentioned many times in the first discussion. She has possession of Melba's papers, the woman who recorded the oral history of the Black community. I reached out to her and, on January 28th, shot the interview that adds a fresh perspective to the documentary. Some of the materials she shared in the interview (b-roll footage of Melba's notes) have never been published before.

It would be inappropriate to make a historical documentary without any insights from a historian. Since the film deals with black history, I prioritize Black historians who have expertise in slavery and the southern history and race relations: Dr. Charles Robinson and Dr. Caree Banton both fit this profile and accepted to participate. Their interviews took place successively on February 23rd and 25th.

Post-production: February - May 2021

The filming of interviews and the b-rolls was not wrapped up when I started editing the visual and audio materials collected. I had to kill two or more birds with one stone because I was working solo. Plus, it helped me improve the subsequent shootings each time I review the previous footage. With an online transcription service, Otter, I transcribed the interviews, which later made it easier to organize a script or paper edit. Professor Thurston and Sarah K. Moore were involved in this process as I shared with them radio edits and assembly cuts. They help me structure the story and make it flow. For example, I previously intended to start with Margaret Holcombe, talking about the murder of James Monroe Boone that led to the arrest and then lynching of the three enslaved individuals. This is basically the version her family carried out over successive generations. Professor Thurston pointed out the need to set the Black narrative first, with Killian talking about Melba Smith's documents. That way, the film can achieve its goal: challenging the white version of the story and presenting the perspective of the Black community, which is little known.

The production stage also presented its set of challenges. I discussed with a Music student the possibility of scoring the documentary. We were excited about that and he started to create some sketches based on the radio edit I shared with him. His academic schedule became

too busy, and unfortunately, we had to give up on that plan, and rely on Artlist to license the music. In addition, I secured stock footage and still photographs about slavery and lynching from the Library of Congress and Shutterstock websites. The editing did not involve too many graphics, just some lower third to introduce the speakers, on-screen texts to contextualize some historical facts, and the credits.

Final thoughts

Documentaries are often considered a tool of education. This is one of the things I have experienced first-hand throughout the eight months in the making of this film: having diverse occasions to meet and discuss with the interview subjects, visit places related to racial injustice in Northwest Arkansas, and read about African American history. This experience better equips me for future film projects. The documentary filmmaking process is full of challenges and unexpected events, but practice and preparation help better deal with them. For example, before I shot the interviews, I visited the location and tested the equipment, so I spent less time setting the scene when the subjects show up. The most important reason, above all, filmmakers make films is to share a story. And although the lynchings of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall goes back over 150 years, it is still very relevant to this moment of racial reckoning. I hope this documentary, *Once Forgotten*, can create space for dialogue to ensure a more just and equitable American society.

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VI. APPENDIX

Racial Terror Lynching in Northwest Arkansas: Recounting of the story of three enslaved males lynched in 1856 in Washington County (Arkansas)

University of Arkansas School of Journalism and Strategic Media
Master Thesis, May 2021

Production notes:

Director/Producer: Obed Lamy	Graduation date: May 2021
Estimated Time: 22 minutes	Status:

Documentary Script

<u>Scene</u>	<u>Video</u>	<u>Audio</u>
1	Drone Footage of Northwest Arkansas Landscapes and cityscapes Fayetteville farmers market, park Three, river, brick	RoAnne Elliott I'm from Minneapolis, Minnesota, came down to Arkansas as a retiree, a few years ago. I came down with a story of Arkansas that I remembered from my youth that Arkansas was a place of trouble for black people. Peaceful and dramatic music RoAnne Elliott And, you know, my white friends that I was just meeting, were saying, 'Oh, that's not Northwest Arkansas. That's the other part of the state. Northwest Arkansas is very progressive, we've got the university here. You won't find racism here'. Magaret Holcombe There was an assumption that none of our immediate family members in the previous generations had a real involvement with enslavement.

	<p>Still of murals graffiti</p> <p>Night life Dickson Street Train</p>	<p>Sharon Killian Believe me, when I first came here too, I was told that there was no slavery in Fayetteville. This is like between 2005, 2008 to now. That's not long ago.</p> <p>RoAnne Elliott So, it was interesting for me as I started researching, doing the work of researching the lives of these three men, and found that, in fact, there was there was slavery in this part of the state. And, you know, it's just interesting how a place can have a self-concept based on myth, you know, things that really aren't the whole truth.</p>
2	<p>Screen: ‘‘In the summer 1856, a white mob in Washington county (Arkansas) executed three enslaved men: Anthony, Aaron and Randal. They were accused of the murder of a white slave owner.’’</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Fade out Peaceful and dramatic music</p>
3	<p>Sunset lake of Fayetteville</p> <p>Establishing shot of Sharon Killian</p> <p>Lower third: Sharon Killian Northwest Arkansas African American Association President</p> <p>Shot of a road in Elkins Drone footage of a land / Boone family cemetery, old house</p> <p>Dramatic, sad and tense music Establishing shot of Dr. Robinson</p>	<p>Sharon Killian How do I, how did I come to know about them? Well, it just so happens that my friend Melba, and I'm so glad I started out with her, talking to you about Melba Smith. She is descendant from the same and slaved community in Elkins in that same Township, that these men, it was Randall was from. And so, as we did research, we came across the quote, unquote lynching because of a murder of James Monroe, Boone.</p> <p>And then written in Melba Smith's notes, the story goes, James Monroe Boone, in the black community, went to this black woman's cabin. And he wanted to have his way with her. And she fought him. She hit him over the head. He was able to get back to his house from that cabin. She didn't hit him. She didn't kill him. She didn't hit him hard enough that he couldn't get from one place to the other.</p> <p>And either, you know, who knows what they've done? Either he walked back or, or the three guys, I can't really tell you that they were even there. Okay, I can't even tell you that. For all I know. It could have been that he, you know, they helped him back to the house.</p> <p>Dr. Charles Robinson</p>

	<p>Lower third: Dr. Charles Robinson Historian Archival footage of a Black woman Establishing shot of Dr. Banton Lower third: Dr. Caree Banton Historian Close up shot of Dr. Robinson Archival still of Black women</p>	<p>It was common for white masters to sexually assault slave women. We know that to be a historical fact. The extent of it, in terms of being able to quantify it is impossible. There are no good numbers, but we know that it happened regularly.</p> <p>Dr. Caree Banton Sexual Assault also was another significant aspect because the product of sexual assault, which were children often became the owner's property, they became capital for the owners, they became they represented money.</p> <p>Dr. Charles Robinson And this sexual harassment, of sexual harassment is probably to light, the rape of black women was protected by law. There was no law that empowered black women in the slave states to sue or to prosecute or seek prosecution against white men who raped them.</p>
	<p>Establishing shot of Margaret Holcombe</p> <p>Lower Third: Margaret Holcombe Descendent of the Boones, Local historian Margaret walking and looking at the Boone family cemetery</p> <p>Close-up and medium shot of Sharon Killian</p> <p>Birds flying over a three, threes</p>	<p>Magaret Holcombe My great great grandmother was a cousin to James Boone's sons. And, of course, a niece of James Boone.</p> <p>The most common thread of the descendants' stories that were told over successive generations, is that three enslaved men came to Boone's door, demanded money. When he refused to give it, they killed him, beat him over the head with sticks and, and provided blows that were sufficiently lethal that within about approximately 10 days, he died.</p> <p>Sharon Killian It doesn't make sense for one thing, if you're going to harm, if you're going to come out and hit somebody over the head, you're pretty sure you're going to die. If you're an enslaved person, you're pretty sure you're not going to live. So why would you spare alive? Why would you spare it? I'm just thinking pragmatically here: three of you, and you hit make one hit over the head, and you just damage that skull. And then he lives for several days and you're going to be lynched anyway.</p> <p>And it's fairly incongruous, that we would march up to the front door of the master's house and demand money. I don't care which Confederate state you're in and walk free. And I would suspect that they would the two young men, even though they're enslaved people, they have humanity, they would have thought about taking a 15-year-old to help them do something like this.</p>
6	<p>Fade into on-screen text: Anthony and Randall were around 25 years old at the time of Boone's death. Aaron was most likely a teenager.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dramatic, sad music continues</p>

7	<p>Margaret walking on a vast land, former Boone property</p> <p>Margaret talking-head interview</p> <p>Dr. Caree Banton talking-head interview</p> <p>Establishing shot of the Washington county archives</p> <p>Shots of the inside of the building, photographs and documents</p> <p>Wide shot of Sharon inside of the Archives</p> <p>Sharon talking-head interview</p> <p>Medium shot of Sharon looking at a photograph in the Archives</p> <p>Close-up of Sharon's documents</p> <p>Tilt shot of a typewriter</p> <p>Pan shot of a pile of cassettes</p> <p>Wide shot of the inside of the Archives</p> <p>Dr. Robinson talking-head interview</p> <p>Medium shot and close-up shot of artifacts inside the Archives</p>	<p>Magaret Holcombe</p> <p>Those elements of the story bring a lot of questions, and certainly brought a lot of questions to my mind. Because we have no evidence at all that this was ever revealed to the white community, that perhaps they all conspired to keep their silence about what had the truth of what had happened and allowed the Boone family to make their own assumptions. And the story went from there.</p> <p>Dr. Caree Banton</p> <p>The African writer Chinua Achebe says until lions have their own historians, the tale of the hunt will glorify the hunter. You know, we are trying to tell a story about three African Americans. And so, if we're going to be predominantly using a white archive, that is, that is very problematic. That would be extremely problematic. Because how do you then tell the story of black people from the perspective of those who were implicated in their murder.</p> <p>Sharon Killian</p> <p>Believe me, I was asked about where's the proof? Where is it written otherwise? Well, the actually the white story was also written by a white family member of James Monroe Boone. So why would I believe that any more than I would believe something that's coming out of the victim, the victim in this case.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dramatic, serious music</p> <p>Dr. Charles Robinson</p> <p>When you consider the question of why certain history is oral, and other history is written, it's tied to the power dynamic in any area. Whites wrote the history, blacks talked about it. And remember, enslaved people were not often taught how to read and write. Sometimes, there were laws in states that prevented it. And so, it took a strong oral tradition for history to be passed down. And even when people of color could write and read, there still tended to be the lack of instruments or organizations like newspapers, that would take their written statements in the same with the same validity as they would take those of whites. So if there is a disparity between what one community is saying happened, and another that is understandable and predictable, and it doesn't mean that the disparity sides with whites because it's written, because whites control the narrative, and we've seen this in other historical occurrences that whites will write the narrative about a particular event until historians A century later, come came back or years later came back and actually deconstructed that narrative and determined what truth was.</p>
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	<p>Panning of still archival of enslaved people, zoom-in of a still of Frederick Douglass</p> <p>Dr. Robinson talking-head interview</p> <p>RoAnne Elliott talking-head interview</p> <p>Lower third: RoAnne Elliot Program Director of the Washington County Community Remembrance Project</p>	<p>RoAnne Elliott</p> <p>Those men, their personhood, was not what was considered non-existent, really, to the white people who owned them and the white people who wrote about them, because actually, Aaron Anthony and Randall never even entered the written record until they were accused of a crime, and then we're victims of a crime.</p>
8	<p>Medium shot of a court record book</p> <p>POV shot of Margaret walking inside the Archives</p> <p>Margaret reading the court record books</p> <p>Close-up shots of the court book page</p> <p>Pan shot of the bookshelves</p> <p>POV of Margaret's feet walking in the national cemetery</p> <p>Tilt shot of a three at the national cemetery</p> <p>Tilt shot and zoomed in of a newspaper</p> <p>Margaret's talking-head interview</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dramatic music</p> <p>Magaret Holcombe</p> <p>Aaron Anthony and Randall, once accused by the family, were housed in the home and kept what was virtually house arrest until Boone's death on June 11. By June 13, they were placed in the county jail, and preparations began for the court trial.</p> <p>Randall first appeared and was tried within a day and a half. We presume with witnesses and evidence presented. He was given a guilty verdict to set the end of the second day.</p> <p>There was a recess the next day. First, Aaron is called and because the prosecuting attorney could find too little evidence to prosecute, he advised, and the judge agreed that a Nola process or release for lack of evidence was made.</p> <p>That afternoon, another jury was seated, and Anthony received an afternoon hearing and by the time the jury returned light that afternoon, he was given an acquittal by best evidence from a paper that was published later that based it claimed on reports from payable, they must have all three remained in the jail. through July 7, the Monday, when Randall was called back to court with his lawyers, he requested a retrial. The judge refused and instead sentenced Randall to death to be hung on August 1, 1856. We believe that hanging took place at what is now called in historic records gallows Hill, which is located near the current flagpole center flagpole in the National Cemetery. Here in Fayetteville, Arkansas.</p> <p>The other two men were still evidently returned to the jail. The newspaper account says that a mob assembled on the court steps, proceeded to the jail, removed, the two men from the jail took them what would essentially be down to the Yale property where tradition in some of the family stories have that the three that those two men were lynched, particularly by at the hands of Benjamin and Lafayette boon to have the sense of James Boone.</p>

9	<p>Still archive about lynching (tilt up)</p> <p>Dr. Robinson’s talking head</p> <p>Still archive of lynching (zoom-out)</p> <p>Dr. Banton’s talking head interview</p> <p>Still archive about lynching (pan right)</p> <p>Dr. Robinson’s talking head interview</p> <p>Dr. Banton’s talking head interview</p> <p>Drone footage of a river</p> <p>RoAnne’s talking head interview</p> <p>Fayetteville farmers market</p> <p>Still of mass protest</p> <p>Drone footage of the national cemetery</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sad music</p> <p>Dr. Charles Robinson Lynching is a means of social control of a particular group. It's not just killing the person, it's killing the aspirations of the other group and their tendencies, their hopes, their beliefs, that they can somehow find equality in the system.</p> <p>Dr. Caree Banton In lynching, spectacle is central to the violence. Because when you lynch one person, you use the spectacle to include the rest of the community in order to send a message. And in doing that you sustain the racial power dynamics. You're trying to send a message that if any other person from the community steps out of line, this will likely be the outcome that happens.</p> <p>Dr. Charles Robinson It is a form of social racial repression by its very utilization in the American South.</p> <p>Dr. Caree Banton The kinds of terror and trauma that African Americans had to endure, having to witness relatives being lynched, dragged through the community having to flee their communities by night, because of the luncheon is a deep, deeply traumatic thing.</p> <p>RoAnne Elliott I wonder this about white people in general, is when they hear stories, like this story of Aaron, Anthony, and Randall, and what happened to them? Does it make white people curious about what the people that they're descended from what they were doing at the time that these men were alive, and were accused, and were murdered? What were my people doing when that was going on? Because I think when you start to be curious about that, maybe that would make you curious about what you're doing now.</p> <p>Sharon Killian Look at what happened to George Floyd. You know, look at what happened to Brianna Taylor, look at how she was murdered. And, you know, number one, not even a slap on the wrist. And they're all so many others, it's the same story being repeated.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Music stops</p> <p>Dr. Caree Banton</p>
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10	On-screen text: The National Memorial for Peace and Justice is the first national monument dedicated to victims of lynching in America. It was created by the Equal Justice Initiative in 2018.	
	<p>Still photographs of the National Monument for Justice and Peace</p> <p>Dr. Valandra’s talking head interview Lower third: Dr. Valandra Professor of Social Work</p> <p>RoAnne’s talking head interview</p> <p>Dr. Valandra’s talking head interview Still photographs of the National Monument for Justice and Peace</p> <p>RoAnne’s talking head interview</p> <p>Footage of people at the Black cemetery</p> <p>Dr. Valandra’s talking head interview</p>	<p>Dr. Valandra In 2018, RoAnne and I went to Montgomery, Alabama to the opening of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. And we walked through the memorial among other things, and saw just hundreds of slates from different countries around the country with the names of individuals who had been lynched</p> <p>RoAnne Elliott And so, as we walked through it, it was a very moving experience there were, you know, people around us who were looking for the names of people, they were descended from family, people who had been lynched. And so, it was a very moving and very immediate kind of experience.</p> <p>Dr. Valandra It was overwhelming to see so many names. And we did see a pillar from Arkansas with several counties from Arkansas, but we didn't see Washington County.</p> <p>RoAnne Elliott And what we learned was that there were no documented lynchings during the time period that EJI did their research within. But there were documented lynchings outside of that time period. And so, when we came back to Fayetteville after being down in Montgomery, we met a couple of local historians who knew about various instances of lynchings and other kinds of racial terror that had gone on in the county. And so, we found out one of the one of the historians was actually doing a family genealogy research, and came across the names of Anthony, Aaron, and Randall,</p> <p>Dr. Valandra So, we started off, you know, as a small group talking about how we might consider the possibility of partnering with becoming a partner with EJI and memorializing the lives of these three individuals.</p>

11	On-screen text: The discussion led to the creation of the Washington County Community Remembrance project with the main goal of erecting a marker for Anthony, Aaron, and Randall.	Uplift Music
12	<p>Still image of Black people (slavery, cotton plantations)</p> <p>Dr. Valandra's talking head interview Still image of Black people (segregation)</p> <p>Sharon talking head interview</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Uplift Music (continues)</p> <p>Dr. Valandra And one of the main reasons why we felt it was important to represent Aaron Anthony and Randall was is basically to really bring forth their humanity. We want you when you look at that marker, the front and the back to recognize you were talking about human beings, flesh and blood, individuals who had hopes, who had aspirations and who had dreams that were stolen from them.</p> <p>Magaret Holcombe And these truths had been silenced for so long in our community and not recognized even within our family.</p> <p>Dr. Valandra I do feel like it's it is a part of my own legacy to see myself continually, to do everything that I can within my power to create a society that speaks the truth about the past, that honors the lives of individuals that were and families and communities that were destroyed in the making of this nation, and also to recognize the resilience of individuals and families and communities that were affected tragically by enslavement.</p> <p>RoAnne Elliot It's just a really gratifying kind of kind of thing to do. And it makes me feel really happy and proud to be descended from, from black people who were enslaved and who lived through it. All the all the all the Jim Crow and things that they lived through,</p> <p>Sharon Killian no matter how hard you know, it was for us. We persevered and we are still here.</p> <p>RoAnne Elliot You know it reminds me of Maya Angelou poem.</p>

		<p>Dr. Valandra You may write me down in history With your bitter, twisted lies, You may trod me in the very dirt</p> <p>Dr. Valandra & RoAnne Elliot But still, like dust, I'll rise.</p>
13	Text	Credits