

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission Anne Arundel County Live Stream

[00:03:29] - Mayor Gavin Buckley

Welcome, everybody. Thank you all for being here, for this very important conversation and recognition. This is an amazing, historic town that I get to be the mayor of with an amazing history. But to move our cities forward, we have to recognize all of our history. So thank you for being here. I want to recognize my partners, my elected partners here. There is Scott Poyer, Judge Vicky Gibson, Alderman Sheila Finlayson, Alderman Ellie T. Thank you. Tony Spencer. Thank you. Delegate Dana Jones, Senator Sarah Elfreth, and Ann Colitis. Thank you so much. Thank you for recognizing the importance of this with other elected officials I know are on their way. We look forward to today's presentation. And thank you for being here in the state Capitol, in the place that we do business that has seen a lot of history. This is some of the most important history that needs to be recognized. Thank you all for being here. Thank you.

[00:05:11] - Chris Haley

Thank you, Mayor Buckley. My name is Chris Haley. I'm director of the study of the legacy of slavery in Maryland and also a community member. I just have a few words to say to you before we begin. We join here today in person and virtually to give a touch of dignity to those who did not receive a shred of it at the end of their lives. We recognize today individuals who, because of their race, were violently deprived of their humanity. And in these actions, those who perpetrated the deaths of John Simms, George Briscoe, Wright Smith, Henry Davis and King Johnston diminished their own. Today, if nothing else, we raise up and recall these five names so they no longer remain a statistic and one of many victims, they are today remembered as men. And with that, I turn it over to our chair of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Dr. David Fakunle.

[00:06:15] - Dr. David Fakunle

Good morning. Before I proceed, everybody take a deep breath in, let it out. Do that one more time. Deep breath in, let it out. In the words of Kendrick Lamar, we going to be all right. And with that, I would like to call to order, I don't have a gavel, so I will call to order this public hearing session for Anne Arundel County of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I hope that everyone who is joining us in person and joining us virtually from wherever you may be, first and foremost, thank you. And I hope that you all prepared for a holistic experience, a holistic moment, and an opportunity to see firsthand how the legislature can work for the people. Today's hearing will begin with a reading of House Bill 307 following a reading of the MLTRC's protocols for conduct and testimony. Following that, we will hear the narrative summary of each of the five known victims of racial terror lynchings in Anne Arundel County: John Simms, George Briscoe, Wright

Smith, King Johnson, and Henry Davis. After we learn about the victims, we will transition into the phase of the hearing session that includes testimony from expert witnesses.

[00:07:56] - Dr. David Fakunle

During that time, the commission may also respond with a question after a witness has concluded their testimony. We will then also have a portion of our hearing session that is open to public comment and that will be led by Annapolis zone, Anne Arundel County zone, Maryland zone, a legend in the streets and in the courtroom and everywhere else in between, Carl Snow. Before we begin, our partners from Living and Growing have joined us to help create and maintain a safe emotional space for today's hearing session to occur. We recognize that this history is ugly. It's not pretty. It brings pain. It relives trauma. So we need the space to navigate that. And we're so thankful for Living and Growing, for giving us their skills. They are seated in the back of the chambers. They will be available throughout the day and during the break to talk, so please utilize that. Sorry. Yes, please. Yes. There you go. All right. Thank you. And they will also conduct a debriefing, a short debriefing exercise after the hearing session. So I encourage you all to participate. At this time, I recognize Madam Assistant Attorney General Kristen McFarland, who will cite the specific state statute that requires this hearing session. Thank you.

[00:09:32] - Kristen McFarland

Good morning, everyone. My name is Kristen McFarland. I am an Assistant Attorney General with the Maryland Office of Attorney General, and I represent the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. House Bill 307, the legislation creating the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission was signed into law in April of 2019. It has since been amended to extend the commission's sunset date from 2022 to 2024.

[00:10:00] - Kristen McFarland

The act states as follows: whereas lynching or the extra-legal murder of an individual in an act of mob violence is a violation of the rights to due process and equal protection of the law; and whereas at least 40 African Americans were lynched by white mobs in Maryland between 1854 and 1933. And whereas no person has ever been tried, convicted, or otherwise brought to justice for participating in these racially motivated lynchings. And whereas various state, county and local government entities colluded in the commission of these crimes and conspired to conceal the identities of the parties involved.

And whereas these crimes far exceeded any notion of justice, just retribution or just punishment, but were intended to terrorize African American communities and force them into silence and subservient to the ideology of white supremacy. And whereas no victim's family or community ever received a formal apology or compensation from state, county, or local government entities for the violent loss of their men. And whereas restorative justice requires a full knowledge, understanding and acceptance of the truth before there can be any meaningful reconciliation. Now, therefore, being enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland that there is a Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

[00:11:30] - Kristen McFarland

The act further provides for commission members consisting of representatives from the Commission on Civil Rights, the State Archives, Maryland Historical Trust, the Commission on African American History and Culture, the Maryland State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Great Blacks and Wax Museum, the Maryland Historical Society, the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project, the Lily May Carol Jackson Civil Rights Museum, and Maryland's four historically black universities, Bowie State University, Coppins State University, Morgan State University and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, with four public members appointed by the governor. Staff for the commission is provided by Bowie State University in consultation with the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project and by the Office of the Attorney General.

[00:12:27] - Kristen McFarland

The staff member provided by the Office of the Attorney General may issue a subpoena for the attendance of a witness to testify or for the production of documents in connection with any investigation or hearing conducted by the commission. The commission shall hold regional hearings open to the public in areas in which a lynching of an African American by a white mob has been documented, received from the public, including those from the families and communities affected by racially motivated lynchings, recommendations for addressing engaging and reconciling communities affected by racially motivated lynchings, including the erection of memorial plaques or signage at or near the sites of racially motivated lynchings and make recommendations for addressing the legacy of lynching that are rooted in the spirit of restorative justice.

[00:13:15] - Kristen McFarland

In the hearings, the Commission may research cases of racially motivated lynchings for which there is no documentation, should those cases be brought to the Commission's attention, and the involvement of state, county, and local government entities and relevant news media in cases of racially motivated lynching. On September 1, 2020, the Commission submitted an interim report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and to the General Assembly. On or before December 1, 2023, the Commission shall submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and to the General Assembly. Thank you.

[00:13:56] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you, Madam Assistant Attorney General. At this time, I recognize Commissioner Maya Davis to explain the code of conduct for the hearing session and explain the process for testimonies and public comments. Thank you, Commissioner.

[00:14:07] - Maya Davis

Thank you, Chair Fakunle. Good morning. I am Maya Davis. I am the Commissioner designated from the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, and at this time, I will explain the hearing process and testimonies for public comments. Testimony, questions, procedure, and code of conduct. Members of the public had the opportunity to submit testimony via email to MLTRC@Maryland.gov prior to today's hearing. During the hearing, questions and comments from the members of the public here in the chamber will be collected by volunteers. Please provide your name and organizational affiliation, if any, and limit your comments or questions to no more than three sentences. Questions and comments, as well as live testimony, must be limited to the topic of discussion for today's hearing.

[00:14:58] - Maya Davis

If your comment or question is off topic, it will not be included in the hearing, or your live testimony will end. Comments, questions, and testimonies should be presented with decorum and the respect appropriate for conducting public hearings. Any comments or questions containing obscene language or language inciting imminent violence will not be addressed, and any live testimony containing such language will end. Finally, please note that members of the media may be present today during our hearing, and as such, public comments, questions, and testimonies may be broadcast or printed by news outlets.

[00:15:35] - Maya Davis

Thank you.

[00:15:37] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you, Commissioner Davis. At this time, I would like to recognize Ms. Lynda Davis of Connecting the Dots, Anne Arundel County, who will introduce the coalition members and begin presentation of the history concerning the life and death of the victims: John Simms, George Briscoe, Wright Smith, King Johnson, and Henry Davis. Welcome.

[00:16:03] - Lynda Davis

Good morning. Thank you all. First, I would like to introduce Monica Lindsay. She's the co-chair and founder of Connecting the Dots, and she will do the next proceedings. She's also a member of the Anne Arundel County branch of the NAACP, the Caucus of African American Leaders, and she's a board member of the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project, March on Maryland, Al Kebulan Shule, and the South Sudan Hope Network. She's also a public school educator. Monica Lindsay.

[00:16:40] - Monica Lindsay

Thank you, Lynda. Good morning, everyone.

[00:16:42.660] - Dr. David Fakunle

Good morning.

[00:16:44] - Monica Lindsay

This morning, we'd like to acknowledge the partnership with Mayor Gavin Buckley and his team for allowing the space for the Maryland Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Our commissioners' special mentions to Mr. Chris Hayes and Carl Snowden, as well as Janicee Hayes Williams and Elinor Thompson for keeping this history alive, as well as Maryland State Archives. We appreciate the work of Winnie Gardner who did a lot of the research behind the information that we'll be sharing today, as well as Rich Forgo for his work and writing about King Johnson. We also thank the Heritage Association for their lynching and genealogical research, as well as Stephanie Thompson in her work in collaborating and coordinating this event.

[00:17:41] - Monica Lindsay

A little bit about Connecting the Dots. We are the Anne Arundel County Lynching Memorial Coalition. We entered into the work partnering with the Equal Justice Initiative in 2017, and we are a grassroots collaborative fighting for racial and social justice. Our mission is to remember, reconcile, educate, and transform, and we strive to connect the dots from the past and ongoing racial injustices in our current situation today. We have a diverse coalition of active community members and partners with many organizations that include the Anne Arundel County Branch of the NAACP, the Caucus of African American Leaders, the Coming to the Table of Annapolis local Affiliate group, the Equal Justice Initiative, as well as the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project. In 2018, that marked a shift in racial terror and remembrances for lynching victims. We did our first reconciliation of Henry Davis, and we called it A Path to Reconciliation. In 2019, we completed the installation of the lynching memorial marker located on Calvert Street. In 2021, we did the King Johnson Remembrance and Soil Collection over in Brooklyn Park, and also in 2021, we dedicated the original memorial marker at Savannah Park and replaced the marker that was on Calvert Street with another marker due to a bus accident.

[00:19:28] - Monica Lindsay

Connecting the Dots is pleased to have been part in partnership with the Commission and we look forward to our continued partnership in hoping to keep this history alive as well as dealing with racial terror events past, present, and hopefully not in our future. Thank you.

[00:19:54] - Lynda Davis

Thank you. So now we will introduce the narratives of the five known. They were sons, brothers, cousins, grandsons, nephews, husbands, fathers and men. They were human beings who were immediately seen as guilty instead of innocent until proven guilty. They did not receive due process. They were killed by white lynch mobs. The first narrative is going to be read by Emma Buckman. She will read the narrative for John Simms. Emma Buckman is a member of Connecting the Dots.

She's a member of the Anne Arundel County NAACP, a member of the community actively seeking transparency of Anne Arundel County, and a member of the Caucus of African American Leaders. She's also a partner writer at Studio ATA. She's the digital content director and blog editor for March on Maryland. And she's the director for March on Maryland. Emma.

[00:20:59] - Emma Buckman

Thank you, Lynda. Can everyone hear me like this? My name is Emma Buckman. I will be reading the narrative of John Simms. According to the summary of the John Simms case from the Maryland State Archives, John Simms, a farmer, was accused of attacking 18-year-old Adeline Jackson, the daughter of John Jackson, near Oddington, Maryland. According to newspapers of the time, Simms was, quote "captured near Stony Run cooking his breakfast" and when he saw his captors, exclaimed, "You've caught me." Reportedly, Simms' captors walked him to the home of John Jackson to be identified by his daughter, who recognized him as her attacker. While at the home of Mr. Jackson, it was reported that Simms stated his name and that he was from Richmond, Virginia. Simms was arrested on June 7, 1875, and put in jail in Annapolis, Maryland, where he was kept in shackles behind bars. According to the Alexandria Gazette, ten men under the leadership of an elderly white man assembled together in order to lynch John Simms on June 14, 1875, according to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. The men took a handcar to Annapolis where they met up with several residents from that city.

[00:22:19] - Emma Buckman

The group went to the jailhouse where John Simms was being held. When the white mob tried to secure Simms, he attempted to fight them off unsuccessfully. At about 3:00 in the morning, John Simms was dragged from the jail to the dark woods where he would be lynched. According to a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article dated June 15, 1875, and entitled "Lynch law: A colored man hanged on a tree," the people in the white lynch mob were painted in black and wearing masks. This article states that they lynched Mr. Simms in a place known as Perry Gate, which is 1.5 miles from the city. An article from *The Evening Capital* dated November 29, 1884 said the lynching occurred near Best Gate about a half mile from town. A *Baltimore Sun* article dated December 22, 1906 and entitled "No arrests made. Annapolis lyncher's identity apparently unknown to authorities," says the place where Simms was lynched was known as Simms Crossing after the lynching.

[00:23:37] - Emma Buckman

According to a *Baltimore Sun* article dated September 19, 2018 entitled "Bringing a dark chapter to light, Maryland confronts its lynching legacy," after he was accused of assaulting a young white woman near Odinton, several papers described Simms in typically one sided, incendiary fashion. *The New York Herald* called him the Piney Woods Monster and the Black Fiend reporting outright that the brute had, "awaited the young girl by a watering hole, coolly asked her for a drink of water, then ravaged her." A mass mob of 28 white people removed Simms in leg irons from his cell, placed him in a railroad handcar, rode him outside Annapolis and lynched him. Large numbers of citizens came by to view the body. According to the Equal Justice Initiative, almost 25% of documented lynchings were sparked by charges of sexual assault at a time when the mere accusation of sexual impropriety regularly aroused violent mobs and ended in lynching. Narratives of lynchings

reported in the sympathetic white press justified the violence and perpetuated the deadly stereotype of African American men as threats to white womanhood. Say his name, John Simms. John Simms.

[00:24:46] - Lynda Davis

Thank you, Emma. And next, we're going to have Tony Spencer read the narrative for George Briscoe. Tony is a commissioner for the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. He's a board member of the Northern Arundel Cultural Preservation Society. He's a member of the Caucus of African American Leaders and the Anne Arundel County branch of the NAACP. He's a commissioner on the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County. He's a member of the county executive's region seven stakeholders advisory committee. And Tony is from Freetown, an African American enclave founded by his great great grandfather, James Spencer. And this enclave is near where George Briscoe was lynched. Tony?

[00:25:30] - Tony Spencer

Good morning to everyone. George Briscoe. According to the summary of George Briscoe case from the Maryland State Archives George Briscoe was born around 1844. Since he was about 40 years old at the time of his murder, he was married and described as a bright mulatto. George Briscoe was lynched by a party of mass men at the New Magley Bridge in Anne Arundel County. This was Wednesday, November 26, 1884. Briscoe was suspected of being the perpetrator of a rash of robberies in the Stony Creek and Mountain Road areas. A series of robberies were all executed in the same manner: by lifting a shutter with the chisel and lifting it off the hinges. Articles entitled "Briscoe Reported Lynched" and "Lynching of Briscoe" from the *Baltimore Sun* mentioned that Briscoe was suspect of robbing the following residents or establishments: George Shinenett, Dr. Lynch, James A. Arminger, Addison Johnson's store, Justice Thomas Jacobs, Richard Phelps and James Sally, Edwards Foreman, Samuel Chase, Henry Stallings, Howell Hodges, Frank Hodges, the Oakley brothers, and Thomas Sohim Net. These articles also said that Mrs. Richard Phelps was so severely frightened by the affair, that she had been critically ill ever since. And that the robberies gave so much anxiety to the families, that she was afraid to come out of her house unless she had a man.

[00:27:19] - Tony Spencer

And the women in the community, if they had men with them, during the evening hours. Prior to his arrest, a vigilante committee had gone to Briscoe's house at 2:00 in the morning to demand that he leave the county. The group was reportedly surprised to find that Briscoe answered the door fully dressed. Briscoe responded angrily to the threats, and someone in the crowd fired a shotgun into Briscoe's home. Justice Thomas S. Jacobs released a warrant against George Briscoe and he was arrested Wednesday afternoon by Detective Drost and Cybold and taken to the Jacobsville jail. Briscoe reportedly responded boldly at the preliminary hearing, and the judge would later tell the *Baltimore Sun* that Briscoe's manner of language "were insulting to him and all who were present. The man was full of bravado at all times." Briscoe was bound with leather hamstrings and transported to the Annapolis jail at around 7:00 p.m.. Briscoe had objected to this escort. Deputy Sheriffs, Grafton Boone, and Tip Wells. Deputy Boone later told the *Baltimore Sun* that during

Briscoe's transport, he and Wells had been driving leisurely along towards Annapolis, not dreaming that any person desired to take the prisoner from them.

[00:28:51] - Tony Spencer

This statement by Boone is unusual since violence had already been threatened and perpetrated against Briscoe. When Briscoe challenged Justice Jacobs' authority at the preliminary hearing, *the Baltimore Sun* reported that his words angered the people to such a pitch that there were mutterings of lynching him on the spot. When the deputies in Briscoe had passed over New Bridge spanning the Magothy River, a band of white men descended from the woods along the road. Boone claimed that the men were heavily armed and had dragged Deputy Sheriff Wells from the carriage. The two fled, leaving Briscoe with the lynchers. According to Boone, before he ran from the scene, he heard one of the lynchers say to Briscoe, "You're an innocent looking son of a gun, ain't you?" To which Briscoe reportedly said, "I don't know whether I am or not." Briscoe was hanged from a tree near the spot where the lynchers had intercepted the carriage. The coroner later found that his neck had been broken by the hanging, and he had instead died of strangulation. Briscoe had also been shot several times. According to the coroner, the gunshot wounds looked as if they were a week old. *The Baltimore Sun* suggested that Briscoe had been shot in a failed robbery the week before. Deputy Sheriff Boone found the body an hour later when he returned to the road in search of his horses and carriage. But however, he did not cut the body down. Briscoe's body remained there for the following afternoon. William D. Parsons was traveling on the road to Jacobsville and came upon Briscoe's body and sent word to Justice Jacobs, Dr. George H. Crow, and others.

They cut Briscoe's body down at two o'clock. Justice Jacobs requested that a justice Thomas Boone summoned a jury of inquest. Any relation to Deputy Sheriff Grafton is not mentioned at the article. The article entitled, "Lynching of Brisco," says the following jurors were sworn: J. L. Toddings, Percy Williams, A. Simon, A. J. Ashburn, James Meek, W. Posterweight, George A. Gray, Kelvin G. Chestnut, Hamilton T. Williams, Jacob Johnson, Thomas Burke, and E. L. Brooney. The inquest held the testimony of Jacobs, who had found the body the following morning in Deputy Sheriff Boone.

[00:31:53] - Tony Spencer

They determined that a perpetrator was a person or persons unknown. Yet Briscoe's father-in-law, William Boone, was informed of his death. Briscoe was buried by the state in a hastily-built pine coffin. His grave was dug out at the foot of a dogwood tree with a pine stake to mark it. An article by Jonathan Pitch of *the Baltimore Sun*, dated September 19, 2018, and entitled "Bringing a Dark Chapter to Light: Maryland confronts its lynching legacy" said a local African American Minister, the Reverend William P. Rider decried the lynching from the pulpit 10 days later. There is no evidence to date of similar condemnations from white ministers.

An article, "The Lynching of Briscoe in the Evening Capital," dated November 29, 1884, stated that "The lynching of George Briscoe colored in the third district on Wednesday morning last by a party of masked men of which particulars were given in the capital of yesterday may be condemned by some, yet under all the circumstances, it was perhaps the only way to rid the community of so desperate a character as the Negro had proved himself to be. He had been ordered by the residents

of the neighborhood to take his departure or abide the consequences. But he defied their threats and persisted in making his presence a terror to the female inhabitants of the community and a feeling of general insecurity among the inhabitants of that section. While we do not approve of Lynch Law, yet there are some instances where it is justifiable.”

The title of a weekly news article based out of Frederick, Maryland, dated December 4, 1884, is quite telling. “Lynch Law and Anne Arundel County, a colored desperado meets his fate he deserved.” These articles show the complicity of the media with lynchings. The lynching of George Briscoe and these newspaper articles were messages to the people living in the nearby African American enclaves: Freetown, Johnstown, and Pack Town. Say his name, George Briscoe.

[00:34:25] - Lynda Davis

George Briscoe. Thank you, Tony. Next, we will have Rick Forgo, who will present the narrative of King Johnson. Rick Forgo owns and operates Time Passages, LLC, an independent book publisher in Lakeshore, Maryland. Rick is a published author who is working on a detailed history of the Baltimore suburb of Brooklyn, which is how he came to learn of the King Johnson lynching. He wrote a seminal article about the King Johnson lynching entitled, “King Johnson, Maryland Governors Took Bold Action to End Lynching in 1912.” Rick?

[00:35:19] - Rick Forgo

Thank you very much for allowing me to be here today. You can start it. King Johnson was relatively new to the Baltimore area in late 1911. Published reports said that he had moved to the area from Saint Mary's County. He had been arrested there and he may have moved North to find a new start. Census records from 1910 showed that he had lived with a Johnson family in Fairfield, an enclave of Brooklyn, and one might surmise that that family were his relatives. He was 27 years old, and he made his living as a laborer and doing odd jobs. Fairfield was a community situated between Brooklyn and Kurtis Bay across the Patapsco River and south of Baltimore. It was different than many turn of the century Baltimore neighborhoods in that blacks and whites were commingled throughout. They went to the same saloons, shopped the same stores, some went to the same churches, but mostly they worked together in the factories and plants on the shore. Brooklyn, Fairfield, and Kurtis Bay were driven by industry. The deep channels of the Patapsco River made it inviting to chemical companies, and their workers knew each other well. King Johnson worked at the Rosen Monumental Chemical Factory near Tyson's Wharf.

[00:36:55] - Rick Forgo

On a wet Christmas Eve afternoon, Johnson and his friend Hubert Chase were playing pool at Miller's Saloon in Fairfield. Johnson was playing Frank Schwab, a white Fairfield man, and both were drinking. Insults were hurled and Johnson and Chase left the saloon to avoid trouble, but Schwab and his brother pursued them. There was a scuffle in the street and Johnson drew a pistol and shot Frederick Schwab, killing him instantly. Johnson and Chase fled. The Brooklyn police found them later that night and took them to the Brooklyn lockup on Second Street. Johnson admitted shooting Schwab but claimed it was self-defense. Around 2 AM Christmas morning, a group of eight masked men entered the jail using keys. Johnson was clubbed unconscious and was taken to the

nearby woods and shot four times. He died there. Christmas morning, Johnson's body was found in a ditch by the paper delivery boy. The next day, *the Sun* paper published a story that explained it all in intimate detail. The Brooklyn patrolman stayed at the jail until 1 AM that morning, and then they went home. There were no laws requiring them to stay with prisoners. The lynchers made their way up the street, spacing themselves to avoid detection, initially went to Chase's cell, and then grabbed Johnson, and beat his head with an iron bar.

[00:38:16] - Rick Forgo

He was unconscious when he was killed. Lame duck Maryland Governor Austin Crothers was alarmed and called for an immediate investigation. Baltimore City Police were not involved, as the city had not yet annexed Brooklyn. But this was an Anne Arundel County crime, and the investigation was led by Brooklyn Police Chief Thomas Irwin. Irwin spent the better part of January investigating the murder. It did not seem thorough. The eyewitness testimony given to the Sun papers was not well explored. He focused his investigation on the black residents of Fairfield and Kurtis Bay, but Irwin said he doubted any arrests would be made. However, what happened to Johnson was an open secret in the communities of Fairfield and Brooklyn. The most telling piece of evidence was an anonymous letter sent to Justice John Potie that described the events that night and named all the people involved. Justice Potie shared the letter with Chief Irwin and the impaneled grand jury, but it was discarded because it was anonymous. More testimony that might have led to an arrest was shrugged off. The Reverend Samuel Mace appeared before Justice Potie and said his wife learned that "The Negro would be lynched." But the grand jury dismissed the testimony because they said it was indirect evidence. Six days after the grand jury was convened, their foreman said that they had probed the limit of what they could investigate and could not accomplish anything of consequence. Justice Potie dismissed the twelve members. There would be no arrests, no indictment, and no trial.

Local officials thought the King Johnson case ended there, but it didn't. Governor-elect Phillips Lee Goldsborough took immediate action. Goldsborough had witnessed the injustice of mob rule while serving as state's attorney on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The lynchings of William Andrews and Garfield King, murdered in 1897 and 1898, respectively, may have had a profound effect on him given what he did next. He was committed to putting an end to lynchings in Maryland. Goldsborough secretly hired the Burns Detective Agency to investigate the Johnson lynching. It was the first time that a sitting Maryland governor ever hired an outside agency to investigate a crime in his state. Burns, a Baltimore native, had a reputation as a crime investigator and solved high profile cases across the country. He eventually became the first director of the Bureau of Investigation, which eventually became the FBI. Burns brought in a team of 15 detectives led by veteran investigator D.B. Shaw.

[00:41:40] - Rick Forgo

Shaw organized an elaborate undercover operation to investigate the crime. He put men undercover, including African American detective Archer Owens, who gathered critical information about the lynching. Owens started the investigation for Burns by taking a job at the Raised and Fertilizer plant where Johnson had worked as a laborer. He got close to the workers there and gathered what information he could about the lynching. He could not gather all the information

Burns needed at the plant so Shaw and Owens set up a fake secondhand store on the other side of the longbridge in Baltimore on Light Street. Owens invited plant workers he thought would know about the lynching to his other job and sold them goods cheap. The store was wired with buzzers to alert other detectives when unwitting informants were arriving. The undercover detectives then loaded wagons daily and went into Brooklyn and Fairfield to sell junk, find craps games, lose often, pay up quickly and make fast friends. Shaw also rented the house next door to the prime suspects, the Gleason brothers, on Duncan Alley in Baltimore. The Dunn family were a fake family of three that welcomed the Gleasons often and got them to talk about the lynching into a dictaphone, an early recording device.

[00:43:29] - Rick Forgo

Using a hidden microphone in the kitchen, the Gleason's confessions were recorded, Burns said. The undercover work didn't stop there. Tom Gleason loved fortune tellers. So, the detectives offered up a fake Astrologer at the famed Emerson Hotel in Baltimore. And Gleason spilled yet more incriminating information about the lynching to the mysterious Dr. Dormis. In August 1912, William Burns met with Governor Goldsborough in New York. The Burns team had compiled the 700-page report of evidence, and they were ready to make their case. Days later, four men were arrested, the two Gleason brothers, Yom, and John, Frank Schwab, the brother of the man Johnson killed, and an African American man from Fairfield named Howard Herring. They were all jailed in Annapolis and held without bond. The arrests were splashed across the front pages of *The Sun* papers with alternating stories supporting the Burns detectives and the Gleason brothers. And Brooklyn police chief Thomas Irwin and his entire Brooklyn force, they reported, were completely unaware that the investigation had happened under their noses. In November, the grand jury heard the evidence and there were leaks everywhere. *The Sun* papers published the accounts of the secret grand jury proceedings as if they were right there in the courtroom.

[00:44:59] - Rick Forgo

Evidence was presented from conversations at the fertilizer plant in the junk shop and the fictional Dunn family and Tom Gleason's conversations with the fake fortune teller were told. Two days later, the judge released Frank Schwab and Howard Herring, citing a lack of evidence. The prosecution, led by Maryland state's attorney, focused on the Gleasons. But a damaging blow to the state's case was made when the Burns detectives could not get the dictaphone to play their recorded audio. Detectives said the machine was broken. Without the boasted recordings, the defense argued that all the other evidence was hearsay. The grand jury agreed, and the Gleason brothers were freed after the most famous lynching case in Maryland history ended without it ever making it to trial. William Burns tried twice to force another grand jury. He failed both times. Then three years later, Tom Gleason, now being called Michael, had his wife and another man arrested on a statutory charge. At that trial, she recanted her testimony from 1912 and implicated Gleason in the lynching of King Johnson. Burns again tried to reopen the case, even coming to Baltimore to interview Mrs. Gleason. But the case would not be reopened.

[00:47:23] - Rick Forgo

Say his name. King Johnson.

[00:47:44] - Lynda Davis

Thank you, Rick. So next we will have Thornell Jones read the bio of Henry Davis. Thornell Jones is a member of Connecting the Dots, Caucus of African American Leaders, and the Anne Arundel County branch of the NAACP. He's also the co-facilitator for the Coming to the Table Annapolis affiliate group. And he's the co-founder of World Class Graduates. Thornell?

[00:48:21] - Thornell Jones

Thank you, Lynda. According to the summary of the Henry Davis case from the Maryland State Archives, Henry Davis, an African American laborer, was lynched in Annapolis on December 21, 1906. Davis was arrested the week prior on suspicion of committing the assault of Mrs. John Anna Reed at their country store in Inglehart station in Anne Arundel County. Davis was seen fleeing the store from neighbors in the area who responded to Mrs. Reed's screams. It was reported that Mrs. Reed was able to beat her attacker away with a horse whip. Sheriff Lintencomb and Deputy Sheriff Brian pursued Davis as he was running along the railroad tracks heading towards Annapolis. However, Davis was able to avoid capture for several days until he was arrested in the city of Annapolis on December 16 on Northwest Street. My words, this is the beginning of the mystery. How they get away with this? Henry Davis, aka William Davis, aka, Henry Chambers also had the nickname Toe and Foot due to the limp he had developed after a bout with frostbite.

[00:50:13] - Thornell Jones

Davis was positively identified as the attacker by an African American woman witness, Josephine Johnson of Parole, who picked Davis Chambers out of a lineup. Johnson notes that she believed that Davis fit the description of the attacker and spotted him in the vicinity of Reed's store on the Friday afternoon of the assault. The positive identification was needed because Mrs. Reed was left in such a condition that she was partly paralyzed and blinded in one eye. It was reported in the *Evening Capital* that the punishment for an attempted assault was ten years in the penitentiary.

[00:51:00] - Thornell Jones

However, the punishment for an actual assault is death by hanging. Even at this early stage, talk of lynching the prisoner was apparent and the sheriff's department, Sheriff Linthicum, stated it was doing all that was in their power to protect the prisoner until his trial.

[00:51:27] - Thornell Jones

Mr. Reed was able to eventually positively identify Davis as her attacker, Mrs. Reed, when he was taken to her home a few days after the attack. It was reported that once Mrs. Reed identified Henry Davis, he made a full confession of the attack. It was urged by the community and repeated by State's Attorney Nicholas H. Green for the courts to conduct a speedy trial in accordance with the law. But ultimately it was up to the courts to hold a special session for the trial of Mrs. Reed's attacker.

[00:52:10] - Thornell Jones

State's Attorney Green stated that he was not prepared to call for a special session of the court to try Henry Davis without the testimony of Mrs. Reed. Sheriff Lintham felt that he had enough positive evidence in hand to try Davis even without Mrs. Reed's testimony and continued to urge the court to convene with the trial in order to avoid any fallback from the community. As it was well known, there was talk of lynching Henry Davis. On the night of December. Would you put that back, please? Can't see it because of the lights. I tried. Anyway, down toward the right hand bottom corner of that is the corner of West Street and Calvert. On the corner of West Street and Calvert was the train station. Coming from the left on that chart, you see a line coming across. That's where the train track was from Ingelhart. That's another chart coming up from Ingelhart. A black dot on the map to the train station is about 6 miles. Further northwest is where Henry Davis was from.

[00:54:05] - Thornell Jones

The deputy sheriff's guarding the jail. He was in the jail on the night of December 21, the deputy sheriff's guarding the jail. Ruben Smallwood and James Krause, told the *Evening Capitol* that they were not willing either to shoot white men or lose their lives for the sake of a brute who had confessed to the most outrageous crime in the history of the county. According to EJI, it was not uncommon for lynch mobs to seize their victims from jails, prisons, courtrooms or out of police hands. Though they were armed and charged with protecting the men and women in custody, police almost never used force to resist white lynch mobs intent on killing black people. In some cases, police officials were even found to be complicit or active participants in lynchings. Davis was removed from the jail on Calvert Street and paraded through the town before being shot numerous times and hanged in a tree along College Creek.

[00:55:21] - Thornell Jones

As the guards stood their post at the jailhouse, a white mob of dozens simply overpowered the men and were able to reach their target with little delay. There was much talk about the possibility of students from St. John's College being involved, as it was reported that a large gathering had taken place at one of the dormitories on campus. A professor approached the crowd and urged them to leave the premises, unaware of their intentions at the time. It could not be confirmed that any of the students actually participated in the lynching of Henry Davis, but it can be assumed that they at least stood by as spectators to the event.

[00:56:11] - Thornell Jones

It was reported by a reliable witness that he saw a number of youths in the crowd donning ribbon bands on their heads, as was the style among students, but it could not be confirmed to what capacity those students held the spectacle. According to the Equal Justice Institute, the mob dragged Mr. Davis a quarter of a mile to an open area near College Creek, along the way, questioning him repeatedly about his guilt and brutally assaulting him.

[00:56:49] - Thornell Jones

Black people accused of crimes during this era were regularly subjected to beatings and torture in efforts to obtain a confession, and the results of those coercive attacks were later used to justify the lynchings that followed. In fact, without fair investigation or trial, the confession of a lynching victim was more reliable evidence of fear than guilt.

[00:57:16] - Thornell Jones

Never convicted of any crime, the presumption of innocence followed lynching victims to the grave. Governor Warfield was asleep in his room at the governor's residence during the hours the lynching took place. Everybody here knows how close the governor's residence is to Calvert Street.

[00:57:44] - Thornell Jones

He was unaware of the event until he read the accounts found in the newspaper the following morning. Governor Warfield stated that, "I hope the grand jury of Anne Arundel County will immediately take steps to discover and punish the men participating in the affair. I greatly regret the occurrence and do not hesitate to deprecate and denounce such lawless acts."

[00:58:10] - Thornell Jones

The December 22, 1906 newspaper article about this stated that Governor Warfield stated that he had not the slightest intimation that anything of that character was going on. How is this possible, given that several newspaper articles mentioned the possibility of a lynching? Governor Warfield said he read about the lynching in the newspaper, so this shows he did read the papers. An article in the *Evening Capital* dated December 21, 1906 and entitled, "The law too slow" justified Davis's lynching by saying the law was too slow to act, so the citizens had to act.

[00:58:54] - Thornell Jones

The grand jury that always stands in readiness to be called by the court could have been summoned. The Negro could have been indicted and moved to Baltimore for protection and this lynching could have been avoided. All this could have been done, but was not. Somebody bungled. Now, who is to blame? They, not the white mob who lynched him, are the direct cause of the lynching.

[00:59:21] - Thornell Jones

The Reed family heard about the events, and in a public statement at their home near Crownsville, Mrs. Reed's daughter Lillian read a statement to thank those who were able to reach Davis and punish him for his crime. She continued to thank those involved for also bearing her mother or any mother, daughter, sister, or wife for that manner to have to approach the witness stand and relive such a terrible event. There was a calm atmosphere in Annapolis the days after the lynching and there were even reports of postcards being printed, which showed the mutilated body as it lay on

the hill near College Creek. Lillian Reed's statement was printed in a *Baltimore Sun* article dated December 22nd, 1906. This same article stated that a local photographer who succeeded yesterday in getting pictures of the dead Negro's body as it lay on the embankment of College Creek, where the lynchers desert it, it has printed copies on postal cards. Today, they found ready sale at two for 25 cents as souvenirs.

An *Evening Capital* article dated December 22nd, 1906 entitled "Dr. Cloud's Comments," said that Dr. Washington Cloud, one of the most prominent physicians in this city, said that the fact that Henry Davis, "was more animal than man, made it probably better for the community to have gotten rid of him." During the April term, a jury of inquest was assembled in order to look at the details of the Henry Davis lynching. Judge Reville reminded the members of the jury that this was a lawless act and must be investigated. Associate Judge James Reville also said that the lynching was contrary to law and must be punished. However, he said those taking part in such affairs were not generally punished by the courts. The law allowed a person to shoot down a robber and that it was not remarkable that person should take the law in their hands when a woman was robbed of that which was far dearer than any mere property. After a month of investigating the crime, and although the jury had attempted to find clues to who the lynchers were, it was unable to fix the lynching to any one person or persons. Henry Davis is buried in a small box section of Brewer Hill Cemetery. However, he was placed in an unmarked grave and his exact final resting place is unknown.

A plaque was dedicated at Brewer Hill Cemetery on December 20, 2001 to honor Davis and other victims of white mob violence. According to EJI, the Equal Justice Institute, despite the amount of detailed information provided to reporters who covered Mr. Davis's murder and to the coroner's jury, that jury later concluded that Mr. Davis's death was caused at the hands of persons unknown. The Sheriff later responded to criticism of his staff's lack of preparedness by stating that though he had heard rumors of a lynch mob forming, he had assumed no action would manifest. The state's attorney later stated that he would do all in his power to identify and prosecute the mob members.

[01:03:40] - Thornell Jones

This pattern of professed ignorance, promised state intervention, and fruitless coroner investigations reflected the general failure and refusal of most legal and political institutions to respond to racial terror lynchings. Nearly all documented lynching victims never had a chance to stand trial for their alleged crimes and were killed by mobs who never faced prosecution for the lynching. Similarly, no one was ever arrested for lynching Henry Davis. Say his name. Henry Davis.

[01:04:42] - Lynda Davis

Thank you, Thornell. Next, we will have Elinor Thompson read the Narrative of Wright Smith. Elinor is a member of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. She represents Anne Arundel County. She's the Vice Chair of the Historical Committee and a member of the PR Committee. She also helped and supported to increase funding for the African American Preservation Grant from 1 million to 5 million, along with the other members of the commission. She's a member of the Maryland Historical Trust and the Commission's Cemetery Working Group.

She's a founding member and President of Broad Neck African American Heritage Project Incorporated. She's an independent genealogist, historian, and author. She has contributed more than 40 years of service in preserving and archiving of African American Church records and documenting African American cemeteries through genealogy and research. Elinor says, "The churches are the core of all of our communities, and the cemeteries tell of our very being." Elinor.

[01:05:57] - Elinor Thompson

Wright Smith. According to the summary of Wright Smith's case from the Maryland State Archives, Wright Smith was a 56 year old African American laborer from Virginia who resided with his wife, Margaret, on Bayard Street in Baltimore City. Smith was accused of assaulting a white woman, Mrs. Mary Morrison, wife of Captain James Morrison, at her home near Jones Crossing or Jones Station on the Short Line Railroad, about seven miles from Annapolis on the night of September 2nd, 1898. Captain Morrison and the oilster man was on his way to Baltimore that night with his latest hull when Smith entered his home at around 10:30 PM. Supposedly, with the intent of robbing the residence, Smith found Mrs. Morrison, her sister, Hattie Rose, asleep and woke them with a demand to get out of bed. It was reported that Smith then grabbed Mrs. Morrison and hid her over the head and threw her down a stairway until the two women fought back and drove Smith out of the house. Hattie was able to run to a neighbor's house to get help. Smith was arrested on suspicion of having committed the crime, and the two women later positively identified him as the assailant.

[01:07:44] - Elinor Thompson

Smith was recorded to be tried for attempt assault, and the two women had been sent, some of them as witnesses, when the lynching occurred in Annapolis on Wednesday, October 5, 1898. The *Baltimore Weekly Sun* suggested that the lynchers were possibly motivated by the desire to spare the sisters from heaven to give their testimony on the witness stand at a trial. Mary had said that she did not like the thought of being forced to testify. *The Baltimore Sun* suggested that another reason for the lynching could have been because Smith was reportedly a South Baltimore politician and that the efforts to secure his release on bail could have been made before the trial.

At the early hour of 2:00 AM on October 5, a mob of about 30 white men forced their way into the Annapolis City Jail where Smith was held at gunpoint. The white mob took the keys from the night watchman, Thomas J. Duvall, and took the handcuffed Smith out of the jail so quietly that Warden Perry and Deputy Warden, who were asleep in another area of the jail, did not wake up until Smith was already outside. The lynchers led Smith onto Calvert Street with a rope in hand.

[01:09:34] - Elinor Thompson

And had Smith not been able to break away and run from the white mob, the rope would most likely have been used to hang him. Smith ran up Northwest Street yelling, "Help. Murder." It's two o'clock in the morning. While the white mob of lynchers fired at his back with their pistols. Wright Smith was shot several times in the back of the head and he fell dead in a vacant lot. *The Annapolis Advisory* speculated that the white mob of lynchers probably consisted of Baltimoreans, reason being the Captain Morrison and his family had resided in Baltimore until their move to Anne

Arundel County. *The Baltimore Weekly Sun* guessed that the lynchers was probably from Baltimore as well as various parts of Anna Arundel County. The body of Wright Smith was turned over to his wife in Baltimore City.

A jury of inquest was summoned from the following Friday and nine witnesses, no evidence of importance of the jury was obtained from the inquest and no members of the white mob could be identified and no one was charged with the crime of the lynching. Dr. William Bishop, an African American, testified that at the inquest several days later after African American Alderman Wally H. Bates offered a resolution in the Annapolis City Council, condemning the lynching. But with only two votes in the favor, the resolution was defeated. If you can see here in this presentation, part of the presentation, there was actually two death certificates of Wright Smith, Smith Wright.

[01:12:00] - Elinor Thompson

This first death certificate has James crossed out on it, and then Wright Smith. It shows where he died at, which was Annapolis, Maryland, on October 5, 1898. He was a native of Virginia. It also shows that he... It doesn't indicate on there was that he was married, single, or what he was called. Cause of death, lynched. And on the first green arrow pointed to the right, you can see that it says a copy. On the next line, you see lynched. To the far right, the green arrow pointing to the left, it has a little circle around it and a B2 on there.

The death certificate was given by the Annapolis advertiser. And on the bottom of the death certificate, it says no one should be able to sign this death certificate except for a minister, coroner, doctor, or physician. The Annapolis advisor put this death certificate up. But on B third, it's saying B2B. Next slide, please. According to this death certificate was signed by the official doctor, Dr. William Bishop, who was the first African American who worked at Anne Arundel Medical Emergency Center Hospital, and it has various different names. He signed that on October fifth.

[01:14:08] - Elinor Thompson

But underneath there is the signature of the coroner. The coroner who signed off on the death certificate was none other than Julian Brewer. The son of an orphan court's judge, Dr. Nicholas Brewer, who also where Brewer Hill Cemetery is named after that family. It lists that he died from mention in a gunshot wound. Other records indicate from the advisor newspaper that witnesses Frank Matthews, witnesses Alexander McPherson, and witnesses McNeil, witnessed that there were 75 shots from an African American, Frank Matthews. The newspaper also stated that it was about 12, 13 shots from the coroner's report that Dr. William Bishop signed off. They were all lies. All of them were lies. This man was lynched. You can just imagine what this community was thinking about.

Late at night, nobody hears anything. But Dr. William Bishop was smart enough in the end. You'll see that B, go back to the slide prior to B 13. That's called the International Code for Deaths. If you see it closely, it says 13 B2B, 13 shots to the bullet and body. After me reading all the

documentation, you can go on. So, this was not recorded until January 13, 1899, for the record, signed by none other than Dr. William Bishop. Next slide. Dr. William Bishop, here is a photograph of Dr. William Bishop, and the descendant of Dr. William Bishop is here today as well. It shows that he was a physician. The cause of death that he passed away from was tuberculosis. It's documented that he's on scene and some of his relative descendants are here as well today. The sources that I have gotten this information from was from the Banneker Douglas Museum.

[01:17:11] - Elinor Thompson

Next slide. Again, at the request of Alderman Wally H. Bates, we all fought for the right to live, worship, and work in a community that we thought that we would be able to come out of the worst times that any man, any woman, any child could imagine was slavery. Yet you're still lynching people today. Wright Smith didn't deserve this. Now we just have to honor these people and recognize the people who stood up for us, this generation, and our future generation. Wright Smith, say his name. Wright Smith.

[01:18:24] - Lynda Davis

Thank you, Elinor. I'm going to conclude this narrative portion by giving a few themes that were seen throughout the common bond. Most of these included media covering the lynchings that was biased toward the perpetrators and had blatantly racist leanings. Most involved a black man being accused by a white woman of assault. All of them were killed before they had their day in court. Most of the participants in the white lynch mobs never faced the judicial system. Although many of the lynchings involved large numbers of people... And go ahead. Although many of the lynchings involved large numbers of people and created loud noises, many people in the nearby vicinity initiates, denied hearing or seeing anything.

[01:19:18] - Lynda Davis

In two of the cases, Davis and Smith, the lynch mobs stated that they were protecting the alleged female victims from having to testify in court and relive the terrible events. Many people called the allegations the most outrageous crimes ever perpetrated in the county, despite the county's history of enslavement, Jim Crow, KKK violence, segregation, punitive penal systems, disenfranchisement, economic exploitation, etc. The lynchings were message crimes to all people. The messages of the lynchings included the following. In his book entitled "Inheritance and Autobiography of Whiteness," Baynard Woods states that, Black people are bound by the law and not protected by it. White people are protected by the law and not bound by it. In her book *On the Courthouse Lawn: Confronting the Legacy of Lynching in the 21st Century*, Sherrilyn Ifill says. "The public spaces where lynchings occurred were used to enforce the message of white supremacy." Ifill continues by saying that "dragging the bodies of the victims through the black sections of town, as in the case of Henry Davis, was done to terrorize the black community." Lastly, Ifill says that lynchings were the means by which whites let blacks and other whites know that white supremacy would be protected at all costs.

[01:20:53] - Lynda Davis

An article about Henry Davis case said that the mishandling of his case created a lack of trust by African Americans in the legal institution's ability to protect them. The message to us, Sherlyn Ifill says that communities, in order to forthrightly address the reality of lynching, must be prepared to recognize and grapple with the role of ordinary members of the community in supporting and condoning this act of racial terrorism. She says that the responsibility for lynching sits squarely at the door of every member of a community who watched, who listened, but who failed to intervene and interfere, who refused to identify the perpetrators, or participated in the conspiracy of silence in the weeks, months, and years, and I would add decades following the lynchings.

[01:21:51] - Lynda Davis

Several recommendations that we have for the legal system include acknowledge, apologize for, take action to address, and make amends for past and ongoing harms. Keep searching for any reports generated from the various grand juries, the juries of inquest, the coroner's juries, and the investigations by all officials in the criminal justice system. Keep searching for the 700-page report submitted to the state's attorney by the Burns Detective Agency.

Recommendations for the educational institutions. Acknowledge, apologize for, take action to address and make amends for past and ongoing harms. Investigate the roles active and passive in the five known lynchings and publish the findings. For example, according to St. John's College website, in July 2020, the St. John's College History Task Force was tasked with researching the college's past in order to understand its relationship to Indigenous and enslaved people and to make recommendations to the board on how that history should be acknowledged. The History Task Force issued a request for proposals on the history of St. John's College. One of the topics listed on this RFP is the involvement of St. John's College in 1906 Annapolis Lynching. The timeline for this project stated that the completed reports were due on February 1st, 2022.

[01:23:19] - Lynda Davis

Members from the St. John's College are here today, and you'll hear from them in public testimony. We have President Dem Leitner, the chair of the History Task Force, Adrienne Trevisan, and the Communications Director, Sarah Lewell. Thank you for coming. We look forward to hearing your testimony.

Recommendations for religious groups. Acknowledge, apologize for, take action to address, and make amends for past and ongoing harms. Investigate the roles passive and active in the five known lynchings and publish the findings. In my reading of the summaries of the lynchings and the newspaper articles to which I had access, I did not see one condemnation of the lynchings from the white churches or ministers. In a meeting that was held at the Riverside Church in New York City on April 4, 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King said, "A time comes when silence is betrayal."

Recommendations for the news media. Acknowledge, apologize for, take action to address, and make amends for past and ongoing harms. For the *Baltimore Sun*, implement the recommendations made by readers after publishing your February 20, 2022 apology. Follow the recommendations of

the equity and media group made up of civil rights activists and leaders. Do not participate in propaganda.

[01:24:46] - Lynda Davis

And lastly, the recommendations for all of us. Break the silence. Acknowledge, apologize for, take action to address, and make amends for past and ongoing injustices and oppression. Make it safe for descendants of lynching victims to testify without fear of repercussions. Eradicate systemic white supremacy in every institution. Support reparations on the personal and institutional levels. Connect the Dots in order to see how history is repeating itself so that we can stop history from repeating itself never again, and we can finally stop racial terror. Thank you.

[01:25:45] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you again to Connecting the Dots for doing just that. Connecting the Dots. At this time, I'd like to recognize Commissioner Chris Haley, who was a member of the research committee of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Commissioner Haley will provide a brief update regarding the ongoing research and investigation into racial terror lynchings in Anne Arundel County.

[01:26:08] - Chris Haley

Thank you, Fakunle. Good morning, everyone. I appreciate you all being here today. On behalf of Research Committee Chair, David Armenti, I thank you for this opportunity to share a brief update on our work. As a commission and community, we intend to commemorate the lives of five men while supporting all efforts to document the crimes against them from 1875 to 1911. Thanks to the many researchers, some of whom we've heard from today, for building a strong understanding of the five racial terror lynchings that took place in Anne Arundel County. John Simms, 1875, Annapolis. George Briscoe, 1884, Jacobsville, Wright Smith, 1898, Annapolis. Henry Davis, 1906, Annapolis. King Johnson, 1911, Brooklyn.

[01:27:05] - Chris Haley

Since the establishment of the state commission in 2019, we have worked with an array of partners, including the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project, its local affiliates, and George Mason University. Heritage Associates, a local historical research and genealogy firm, has also joined the team as a contracted collaborator of the MLTRC. I would like to acknowledge and credit those who have been doing the work for years, including Commissioner and Reconciliation Committee Chair, Dr. Nicholas Creary, and his students at Bowie State University. The commission has built on the earlier work of the Maryland State Archives in compiling and supporting digital access to newspaper articles, vital records, and secondary research accounts.

[01:27:50] - Chris Haley

We continue to pursue references in the black press such as the Afro American newspaper, which could counter the biased and inflammatory coverage by the local white press. Ancestry and other genealogical collections and platforms have also been invaluable to gain further knowledge of the victim's family background while providing leads of how possible living descendants. In certain cases, most notably King Johnson, the state or other entities made extra efforts to pursue perpetrators and justice for the victim. As we heard, when local law enforcement were unsuccessful, Governor Philip Lee Goldsboro hired the Burns Agency to investigate. This organization included a black investigator named Archer B. Owens, who provides a fascinating account in a 1932 interview in the Opportunity Journal of Negro Life. We continue to pursue the 700-page report that was supposed to have been produced by the agency, but that as of now has not been located in any local repositories. While all of these events took place over 100 years ago, and therefore have no living witnesses, the commission seeks to connect with direct or collateral descendants of John Simms, George Briscoe, Wright Smith, Henry Davis, and King Johnson, as well as contemporary community members.

[01:29:18.] - Chris Haley

If you believe that you have any information which may help us in this endeavor, please contact us at MLTRC@maryand.gov. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

[01:29:32.630] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you, Commissioner Haley. So at this time we are gonna transition to our witness testimony portion of the hearing session. This will be an opportunity for expert witnesses to share their insights about the legacy of racial terror lynching, not just the one we know of Anne Arundel County but the history and the impact of racial terrorism in Anne Arundel County. At this time... Just one second here. There we go. If there are any additional testimonies that would like to be submitted after the hearing session, please reach out to us. You can also contact us at MLTRC@maryland.gov. We certainly want to make sure that all the stories, all the insights are well represented even after the hearing session because it all goes into the records of this work. With that, I would like to recognize Elinor Thompson, again, a member of Connecting the Dots Coalition and with the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. I will encourage you all, we are a little behind, but I want you all to share your truth. But please be mindful of the time frameworks that we have. But again, speak your peace. That's why we're here. All right? You got it. Do your thing.

[01:31:00] - Elinor Thompson

There's so much information that I have. Sometimes I'll stay up a little later. From some of the research that has been done by the heritage firm that was hired, and I have worked with them for many years, Dr. Holly, I found that with their report, they found Wright Smith, Smith Wright in the 1880 census living in Baltimore, Maryland. It documents through the census that he had his wife, Margaret, and no children, no known relatives. But however, living next door to him, I think his was house 47 in Smith Wright and his wife was House 48, there was a 19 year old, that's my find, 19

year old who lived right next door to him. So I thought that was a relative. That was probably their son and the father kicked him out because he was grown. But he did have a place. And so we talk about there weren't any social organizations and things that he was connected to. But I find that hard to believe. If he was in Baltimore City, he could have been a part of a masonry. Even if he was here in Anne Arundel County, he could have been part of the organization, masonry, the odd fellows, and certain different organization that's here right around the corner from Northwest Street in Annapolis.

[01:32:56] - Elinor Thompson

Universal Lodge is one of the oldest establishments here in Annapolis that is still going on today from 1865. There was no living members that we know of. But like I say, I see him living next door to this Margaret and Smith Wright, Wright Smith. I believe that was their son, H. H. Smith. So the churches in this area near Northwest Street was St. Philip's Episcopal Church, a historic church near where this incident occurred. Nobody heard anything, of course. Two o'clock in the morning, help murder, and the warden and the guards and different things like that were sleeping. They should have been fired. But however, that's the way it goes. The undertaker that supposedly cared for the body was Woolley and Feltermyre, both white morticians. Also from here, we have James Albert Adams, who was a mortician. We had Marcellus Hall, Hamilton Hall during the time, and they served the Burrill Hill community as well. Alex Zane, the fearsome, was also a witness to the crime. We have his great granddaughter here today. But what happened, when I looked at the reports from the undertaker, looking at the reports and looking at the drawers and the people on the jury, it says George Woolley, we're saying Felder Meyer, we're saying George Wells, we're saying James Morrison, all wealthy judges, landowners here in the area that sat right there for that trial for Smith Wright.

[01:35:28] - Elinor Thompson

Of course, it threw it out of court. All of those people were involved in the lynching of Smith Wright just because he supposedly had assaulted Mrs. Morrison, who was the wife of Dr. James Morrison, who was also a relative of one of the wealthiest landowners here in Anne Arundel County, Southern Anne Arundel County. And what has happened, I'm going to be short, what has happened, and I portray Smith Wright as being, it says, a burly man, a man of good stature. He's built real nice, stocky. And what I'm finding is that in every case, I'll say it, I'm a genealogist, so these white women are looking at these African American, good looking women, and the minute they get caught speaking to them or socializing with them, or maybe have an affair with them, then somebody catches them and they cry rape, murder, assault. Smith Wright did not deserve what happened to him, but they had already planned his lynching. They had already dug his grave. They said he was released to his wife in Baltimore, Maryland. That was just what they said. He was released. He was just released. He didn't go anywhere because Felder Meier and Woolley was the undertakers.

[01:37:22] - Elinor Thompson

They had already dug that grave. Already dug the grave. I'll tell you where it is later, but he didn't deserve it. I'm so glad I'm here to be able to testify with some additional information that I have found through my research. There's names of, like I say, wealthy people that still live in the area

that was a part of this lynch mob. You're right here in Annapolis, two o'clock in the morning, help murder? Help murder, two o'clock in the morning. Now, we don't have this hustle and bustle that we had now, today. We don't have that hustle and bustle. Everybody heard everything, but they were afraid. The community was afraid, the churches. It affected our children. It affected everybody. Yet we just came out of slavery 40 years prior. Here we're going to the turn of the century. And here we go. We think as African Americans are going to have a better way of living life and being safe and having different opportunities. Here we go. Here comes the lynching. Right here in the capital of our state, where slavery was a lucrative business. Today, tomorrow, next week, now that I have a little time, I'm going to give some more information about Smith Wright.

[01:39:00] - Elinor Thompson

Say his name. Smith Wright.

[01:39:11] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you. At this time, I recognize Scott Poyer, Anne Arundel County, Clerk of the Court. Thank you.

[01:39:25] - Scott Poyer

Thank you, Chairman Fakunle and members of the commission for this opportunity to testify regarding the important work of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. For the record, my name is Scott Poyer, Clerk of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County. My testimony today is on behalf of myself as the elected clerk and does not represent the judiciary or any other group or organization. I became aware of the commission's work in 2021 after attending a remembrance and reconciliation memorial and soil collection ceremony for King Johnson, who was the victim of a lynching in Anne Arundel County in 1911.

[01:40:01] - Scott Poyer

This particular lynching was the subject of an investigation commissioned by the governor at that time, which concluded with a ruling from a grand jury that the persons who lynched Mr. Johnson were unknown, even though several suspects had reportedly been identified. I consider it a sad commentary on the state of justice at that time that no one was ever held accountable for Mr. Johnson's lynching. Some time after the ceremony, I was contacted by a member of this commission and a member of the press asking if any records still existed from that grand jury which met in 1911. Unfortunately, a search of court records and Maryland State Archives did not turn up any records from that grand jury. I fear that any records related to this tragic case that may have once existed have been lost to history. You may ask why the current clerk of the circuit court was asked about a grand jury that met in 1911. It is because as a general rule, the clerk of the circuit court is the keeper of the records for court documents. However, what many people do not know is that there is a major exception to that general rule for grand jury records.

[01:41:10] - Scott Poyer

Currently under the courts and judicial proceedings article of the Maryland Annotated Code, section 2-503, it says that a judge may but is not required to assign a court reporter to take and transcribe testimony given before a grand jury. Further, if that testimony is recorded, section 8-416 gives custody of those transcripts to the state's attorney for the county. Unless the circuit court for a county orders otherwise, after hearing the state's attorney for the county, neither the original nor a copy of the transcript of that testimony may be taken from the office of the state's attorney. Also, on written order of the circuit court for a county, the state's attorney may have the notes and transcript of that grand jury testimony destroyed.

[01:42:06] - Scott Poyer

Unlike the vast majority of court documents that are preserved by the clerks and are transferred to the Maryland State Archives for retention, grand jury records are dependent on the local state's attorney and judges to make and preserve the record. I'm aware of several legislative attempts in the past to change the statutes related to the retention of grand jury records. This includes House Bill 607 just from last year, which would have at least required a record of grand jury testimony to be created. But that bill, as with other previous ones, did not pass. Thank you for the opportunity to comment today.

[01:42:51] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you. At this time, I recognize Elaine Bachman of the Maryland State Archives as the state archivist. Thank you.

[01:43:06] – Elaine Bachman

Thank you, Chairman Fakunle and members of the commission. Good morning. My name is Elaine Rice Bachman, and it is my privilege to testify at this hearing of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission as Maryland's state archivist. I'm the fifth person to serve in this role since the founding of the Maryland State Archives in 1935 when the agency was charged with by the legislature, the collection, custody, and preservation of the official records, documents, and publications of the state. The archives was founded two years after the lynching of George Armwood and Princess Anne, and two decades after the lynching of King Johnson in Anne Arundel County. Nearly 20 years ago, the archives as part of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland research program sought to name every person who had been killed by lynching in Maryland and was able to document 44 victims between about 1850 and 1933. For most of these cases, the only written evidence of these crimes was found in newspaper accounts. Accounts in which more often than not, the only crimes described were those attributed to the victims themselves. As archivists, we have always understood the bias of these accounts published in newspapers that were written from the white perspective and cited resources that were not reliable or accountable.

[01:44:29] - Elaine Bachman

And yet, what is found in these accounts, as we've heard today, does convey some of the cold, hard facts of these cases in chilling detail and serves to provide context for the collective consciousness of a society that in large part tolerated racial terror. Take the account of the death of Henry Davis in 1906, who, as we've heard today, was murdered along College Creek adjacent to St. John's College, not more than two miles from here. A great deal of my own work at the archives has been focused on researching and guiding the interpretation of the State House and Government House, the residences of Maryland's Governor since 1868. How shocking to read in the newspaper account that Governor Warfield lay asleep in his bed in Government House as Davis was dragged by a mob just paces from the mansion on the way to being shot a couple hundred yards away. I would say here that the term lynching refers not only to hanging, but to taking of any life in the act of racial terrorism. In seeking to look beyond these mainstream newspaper accounts of the time or in following research leads based on more accurate accounts found in African American newspapers such as *The Ledger*, *The Baltimore Afro American* known as *The Afro*.

[01:45:49] - Elaine Bachman

The trail often runs dry due to the lack of records related to lynching and archival collections. And here I am specifically stating a lack of government records. It would be logical to assume that for cases that were investigated by police or went to trial or where a coroner examined a victim, there would be documentation of these actions by these government entities. Municipal police reports, judiciary records, records of the attorney general, or executive records of the governor's are all potential repositories for documents that could shed light on the legal processes related to the investigation of murders. But in many cases, these records, if they ever existed, have not been preserved in municipal, county, or state custody. The Honorable Mr. Poier has addressed one example of this, grand jury testimony, and the fact that its permanent retention is not mandated.

Nineteenth and early twentieth century coroner's records are preserved in the archives. Our staff has conducted a search of these over the past two years as a means of potentially identifying as yet unknown victims of lynching. But the paucity of information contained within them makes determining the cause of death difficult. However, there's little question that one record I discovered in reviewing the Saint Mary's County coroner's report of a death in September 1883 of "a unknown black man drowned by a party or party's unknown, found naked."

[01:47:24] - Elaine Bachman

Very likely describes the violent death of a victim whose name will never be known. Even more frustrating is the knowledge that records that once existed documenting a Maryland lynching were not preserved. It has been a source of enormous frustration by our research partners and our archival staff that the 700-page report of 1912 on the death of King Johnson, referred to in period documents as having been prepared by a private investigator, does not appear to have been archived in any public collection. Commissioned by Governor Phillips Lee Goldsboro, who came into office just after Johnson's lynching, this voluminous report created by the Burns Agency of New York was submitted to the Office of the Attorney General. However, there is no indication that the report was ever transferred as a permanent record into the custody of the archives. Created before

there was a state archives and prior to the development of any retention schedule with the Office of the Attorney General, the state's copy of this report was either destroyed or otherwise lost. It is possible that it remains extant in a private company's archive, perhaps related to the Burns Agency, or in a descendant's private collection yet to be rediscovered.

[01:48:40] - Elaine Bachman

Because of the lack of any historical record, be it newspaper articles, legal documents, or government records, the actual number of victims of lynching in Maryland may never be known. And there may be little hope that any government records related to racial terror of the past that have been alienated from state custody will ever resurface for public access. So then what we must commit to, and what I commit to in my role as state archivist, is to provide the researchers who come after us as much evidence as possible to understand and interpret the legacy of slavery, lynching, and systemic racism as can be found in the records our government creates documenting this injustice in our own time while we continue to seek answers about the past. Thank you.

[01:49:36] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you. I think it's been made abundantly clear so far through the narratives and the testimonies how important this process is. And we've got a lot more to go through with our time here. But at this time, I would like to recognize Commissioner Chris Haley with acknowledgements and an explanation of our intervention.

[01:49:57] - Chris Haley

Thank you very much, Chair Fakunle. First, I want to recognize our honorable County Executive Steuart Pittman, who has some remarks for us.

[01:50:16] - Steuart Pittman

Thank you, Mr. Haley. And I think what I really want to say to this group is thank you, because it is so important for the current residents of our county, residents of our country, city of Annapolis as well, to know what happened. And there are those who have tried to prevent these stories from being told for many, many years. And there are still people who don't want these stories told, particularly in our schools, to young people who might feel bad about what happened. And it was our ancestors who committed these acts or who had these acts committed to them.

And every society of people across this globe knows that there is such a thing as trauma and intergenerational trauma. And when you don't confront the past, you don't understand the difference between justice and injustice and just how far a people can go in the direction of injustice. And the only way that we will be committed to fighting for justice is when we understand the injustice. And so, thank you for holding these hearings. Thank you for educating the public about what has happened in our county. Thank you to those in Anne Arundel County who, when I took office, had the same message and said, Monica Lindsay is sitting here looking at me and I'm

looking back, Connecting the Dots, came to us and said, let's work with the Equal Justice Initiative and tell the story of Anne Arundel County lynchings.

[01:52:14] - Steuart Pittman

And we did that in 2019, September 7 at People's Park when we put up the memorial to the at least five lynchings that we knew of, some of which happened right under where I sit in the county executive's office when the Anne Arundel center was the jailhouse and when white mobs went in and dragged African American men through the streets, up Clay Street and hung them and shot them. So I have a citation. And the citation simply reads:

The residents of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, salute Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In recognition of your hard work and dedicated service to bring justice to African American residents who lost their lives due to lynching, you were responsible for organizing public meetings and regional hearings where a lynching of an African American by a white mob has been documented, including here in Anne Arundel County. By doing so, you allow members of the public, including the descendants of victims, expert witnesses, and other community members, the opportunity to offer testimony about how these murders have impacted their lives and their communities and make recommendations for achieving racial healing. We salute you for your excellent work and extend our sincerest appreciation for your contributions to the community. Thank you for helping to make Anne Arundel County the best place for all.

[01:54:31] - Chris Haley

Thank you very much, County Executive. At this point, we are going to take a ten minute break before we continue with the rest of our program. I'm going to say that again. Thank you very much again, County Executive Stewart Pittman. And thank you very much for all who have already testified and presented their presentations today. We're going to take a ten-minute break so that we have some refreshments in the back. I don't know if we have anything more than water or how many refreshments we have, but whatever it is, please partake of it for about ten minutes, when we will continue with more presentations of expert testimony. And also, where the public will have its opportunity to share their feelings and comments as well with questions which either you have presented to us already or that you have already signed up on our sign-up sheet, which is in the back under the exit sign, I believe. All right, thank you so much. It's 11:03 ish, so we'll say 11:13 ish. Thank you. Okay.

[02:11:57] - Chris Haley

Didn't my voice just sound lovely? Thank you all for coming back and returning with us today. We're ready to begin with the second part of our event today. And so we are going to begin with a continuation of testimony. This portion is called Historical Perspectives, Recommendations, and Commissioners' Responses. And we're going to start now with chief Edward Jackson from the city of Annapolis police department.

[02:12:29] - Edward Jackson

Thank you. Still morning, right? Yes, good morning. Before I get started, I just want to acknowledge my command staff. With me in the back is Deputy Chief Stan Branford, Captain Amy Miguez, and just on board with us is Captain Lamar Howard. So thank you guys for coming out. And I'll also like to thank the Maryland Truth and Reconciliation Committee for giving me this opportunity to testify this morning on this very important topic, Reconciliation Committee. I like to start off by saying that if we do a critical examination of the lynchings, and in preparing for this, I didn't expect it to be so emotional for me. I looked at some of the events that happened right here in Anne Arundel County, a couple right here in the city of Annapolis, somewhere over 130 years ago. And when you really look at the very scathing, I think the archives made the point that and I think it was done intentionally that the record was pretty much wiped away from America so that scholars couldn't study the atrocities. And so we wonder why a lot of times, and the older I get, the more I recognize that we have to, as a country, reconcile whether we're going to really uphold the Constitution.

[02:14:00] - Edward Jackson

It does us no good to sing The Star Spangle Banner at sporting events and social and political events upholding the land of the free and the home of the brave when we've been so brutal to our citizens. And so we want to vilify people when they don't buy into those ideals. But then we have to reconcile our history and make sure and as a police chief, it's my job to make sure that we have the safest Annapolis that my men and women are armed with the history of lynching and other atrocities committed at the hands of groups and people. And I think that most of what I would have said was already been said. First of all, we have to understand what lynching is. And basically lynching is the process, why people have no process for people I'm sorry, who have no respect for the rule of law. They have no faith that our criminal justice system will meet our justice. They're misguided people mostly historically guided by rage, a mob mentality, which is the most severe form of cowardice. When you get 100 people to get together on very almost no evidence, feeding into stereotypes.

[02:15:22] - Edward Jackson

And one I read where it started in the bar, they got drunk and one person said something. But I got down to the end of the bar. They formed a mob and took a man and beat him to death and lynched him just based on a conversation with a bunch of drunken patrons in a bar, and our government did nothing. Now, Mr. Snowden, I'll have to say this. We have to tell the truth. We have to speak truth to power. Lynching was allowed to go on for the first 150 years in our nation's history because our congress did nothing. They condoned it. Our state legislatures did nothing. I've heard them say that they dragged I believe it was right here in the city they dragged the victim right by the state house while the governor slept. So either we want to have an honest discussion or we're not. It took Truman. Truman tried in 1948 just to get his anti-lynching bill passed, and, boy, the resistance that it was met with. What really hurt me as I'm old enough now to vaguely remember when President John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, and I remember how that impacted my family.

[02:16:39] - Edward Jackson

Of course, I was in grade school when Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, and I remember how that impacted me along with others Bobby Kennedy, Malcolm X, those turbulent 1960s during the due process revolution. Historians call the 1960s a due process revolution because that was the first time in American history where fundamental rights were at the forefront of American discourse, and that's what fueled the protest. Well, to bring it back to what I'd like to talk about today and I'll wrap up real soon because this is a subject, really, that you can't talk about in five minutes, you have 200 years worth of atrocities and horror stories that's very difficult to even sum up or characterize in five minutes. But I'll do my very best to bring the point home. As a law enforcement officer, it's my duty, my sworn duty to uphold the law, to enforce the law, to make sure that the constitution--we have four basic forms of law in America, and the highest form is the United States constitution. For my lawyers in the house, that's the highest form. After the constitution, the only place you can pray to is the lord.

[02:17:48] - Edward Jackson

Go to is the lord. Appeal to is the lord, because there's no other court to go to. But I would argue that we have done a terrible job when it comes to fundamental rights of people of color when it comes to the United States constitution. We never force the states under the 14th amendment to hold we never forced the states under the 14th amendment. The government never really, in my view, forced them to hold the states accountable for civil rights. Even more disturbing when you get into lynching, I think we are moving beyond the realm of civil rights and even more, even worse, human rights and these atrocities. So I'm here to say, first of all, we have to study all of these lynchings. I don't know how we reconcile because to reconcile anything with re means to what? To go back and try to right the wrongs of the past. I think the best way we can do it is to make sure that we're vigilant as a community. To make sure that I care who you are. Because when you really read, it's fascinating. We had deputy sheriffs who were complicit in lynchings.

[02:19:00] - Edward Jackson

We've had police officers who were complicit in lynching. And stay with me one more second. We better make sure that we study the past, make sure that we're vigilant in holding individuals and these mobs accountable. Because everybody in this room was alive. Some of you weren't alive when Kennedy was assassinated or Dr. King. Many of you were because I'm looking at you. But everybody was alive on January 6, 2021, when a mob right tried to breach the US capitol. And who knows, if it wasn't for the brave men and women of the Capitol Police that day to quell that god awful. This is America. So I haven't left the Government in our nation just a year ago, right? A year and a half ago, what would have happened? I surmised it's only theoretical. Somebody would have been lynched last year had they gotten to the right people because of this mob mentality, right? Because of people who had no respect for the rule of law, again filled by alcohol consumption, drugs, rage, hate, threatening hate, just hate. I believe that the devil would say, don't blame me for that, blame the mob. I mean, it's a place for you down here, but don't blame me for that. It's so diabolical. I believe Ed Jackson believes the devil would say, no, not me. I ain't responsible for that. And so we must be vigilant. And Mrs. Snowden, we have to make sure that we study this, that scholars study this, lawyers study this, police chiefs, that my deputy chief, my commanders, and every beat officer on the street realizes the impact of human rights and civil rights. Because we talk about police reform

right now. I know that police are not popular in America right now. I've been in this business 40 years and I've never seen the public have no faith in policing right now.

[02:21:19] - Edward Jackson

But I would argue that policing is like it is. And lynching and these atrocities that we still see, right, because somebody said it before I was sitting there and I said, they're absolutely right. Lynching is not only the noose with a rope around your neck, it's any form of brutality where you don't see people as humans. That's why they're so brutal, because you have to take the humanity out of the individual and see them as some type of animal or inanimate object, because that's the only way, I believe your mind will allow you to destroy one of God's creations in the way that some of these lynchings happen and so have occurred. And so we must. It's an imperative. And an imperative is a demand that you must act. We must take this opportunity and continue the discourse and the narrative and the research and come up with policy now and hold our elected officials and our appointed officials, our police chiefs, our sheriffs, our everybody, our judges, our prosecutors, hold them accountable to uphold the rule of law. So I didn't mean to get emotional, but thank you for this opportunity. It's truly been an honor.

[02:22:48] - Dr. David Fakunle

Yes, to all of that. Before we proceed, I certainly want to recognize the Vice Chair, and honestly, that's a misnomer. Co-chair of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Dr. Charles Chavis. Welcome to the table, buddy. And also want to acknowledge a couple of more of our elected officials who have joined us. Brooks Shandemyer, alderman, City of Annapolis. Please raise your hand if you're here. Okay, cool. We acknowledge them anyway. And that's all good. The love is here. And City Councilwoman. Sheila Finleyson, are you here?

[02:23:34] - Dr. David Fakunle

There we go right on. Thank you. And we have more elected officials that will be speaking with us as part of our testimony. Another thing that we want to remind you all about is that, thank you very much. Yes. Living and Growing is here to help us navigate this topic. I'm glad that we are feeling comfortable sharing this truth, navigating the pain. It is a painful history, but it is a necessary history to acknowledge and to navigate. So Living and Growing is here to help us with that. Please. yes, thank you. We'll be here through the hearing session, after the hearing session, if anybody wants to take that opportunity in a more intimate setting and just process, because that's part of this. Okay, so thank you, again, Living and Growing for being here with us. We will now continue with our testimony. We will now move forward. And at this time, I would like to recognize Janicee Hays-Williams, commissioner with the Maryland Heritage Area Authorities.

[02:24:45] - Janicee Hays-Williams

Thank you for the invitation. You guys have been with us for a few years. It was Carl Snowden that reminded me that we have been doing this since 2000 and whatever, 2000. Anyway, today I want to talk about the community. We are looking for reparations, restorative justice to the victims of

lynching. But that includes a whole community. And I have slides. Stephanie, here we come. Here we go. Let's talk about the community. We call it the Old Fourth Ward. It's now the Second Ward. But when the lynchings were happening, it was the Third Ward of the city. This area looks very different now than it did when the lynchings were occurring. All of Northwest Street is white. Clay Street from Pleasant Street down is white. That community extends to the bottom of Clay Street. It was called the Clay Street extended and they hooked onto Madison. President's Hill. Okay, what's at the bottom there is called the brickyard. Most of these atrocities went down to the brickyard. They came by the brickyard. The first one went by the brickyard to where we have a school named Germantown. My grandparents called it Simms Crossings. There the body was found of the first lynching victim.

[02:27:11] - Janice Hays-Williams

Okay? The community was terrorized. Imagine the black people are in one little bowl. Whites are all the way down Northwest at the bottom of Clay Street. There's nowhere to go. The question about all of these lynchings is who aided and abetted these people? We know that they came across the Naval Academy Bridge. So they came from what we call up north. They came across St. John's College. I don't know if St. John's is still here, so I got something to tell you. One of your employees, for 40 years before he died, he asked his daughter to go get that girl that writes for the paper. She said, Janicee, yeah, go get that girl. I met him because he worked at St. John's for 40 years. He knew about the Keppies being seen in the newspaper. The hats. Okay? So he worked in the bottom of the buildings, okay? The plumbing, the heating. And he called me because he found a loose brick in the bottom of one of your buildings. And he reached in and there was a noose. Was a noose being used for one of the lynchings? They all came across your campus.

[02:29:07] - Janice Hays-Williams

But this man, these are the oral histories that your research will not find. They're called oral history. Let's talk about everybody being sleep. So in 2000, I did a play called Four Women of Annapolis. And one woman was Georgia Boston. She was the spiritual advisor to John Snowden. This is 1928. So she had experienced at least four of the lynchings. I found her daughter. Who knew that her daughter had raised me on Osborne Road. She said, this is my mother's story. I said, do you know about the lynchings? She says, of course. More oral history. This is what Georgia Boston said to her children. When the mob come comes, you pull down the shutters. You make sure there's no lights on. You cower under furniture because they are coming down Clay Street. And the screams, the screens of the men being lynched, the whole neighborhood was terrorized. They in fact, need the same justice as the lynching victims. That's why this woman stayed with the last hanging. It was just a legalized lynching, and she was determined to stay with this man. Nobody is going to break in and take that man out. So the State of Maryland brings in the troops. Bayonets in the windows because the mob, you can't get this one. We going to hang him and we're going to give tickets so people can see it. The oral history is still amongst us because somebody told their children, and their children told me. Nobody was asleep. Let's talk about aiding and abetting. I got a call from Rick Hussle, and he said, do you know about Charles Obery?

[02:32:06] - Janice Hays-Williams

I said, wait a minute. As in Obery court. So I do what I do. I saw the current calling people in my book, Maryland State Archives. And low and behold who's the police chief? Charles Oldbury. Look at this. That's Calvin Street. See that picture? Can I have the next one? Have you seen the jail? That building is the exact same location as the Arundel Center. Stuart Phippen can look out of his window. Look down Clay Street. This is where all the mobs went. How do these people from the North County nowhere to go to lynch these people? So where does Charles Obery live? Lo and behold, Charles Obery, the police chief, lives on northwest street. Lo and behold, George Warfield. George Warfield is the warren, and he lives off Northwest Street. See that barrier? Ain't nobody going nowhere. Go down Clay Street. Who lives at the Brickyard? George. Charles Obery's. Father. What we now know as the Brickyard is just a little space. But his home, his father's home it was called Obery Court. The second public housing in the city of Annapolis. What's in a name? What's in a name? How disrespectful. I was happy to work with Tony Spencer because we understand what's in a name.

[02:34:29] - Janice Hays-Williams

What does that mean for our future? So I work with Tony Spencer to remove the name of George Fox from any school in this county because of his racism. You need to do the same with Obery Court. Okay? We cannot tell the history and teach our children. They should say, ain't that the man that let people in the jail? Yeah. What do we do about it? Those things we can do something about right now. Next picture. This is the community. If I was at the Arundel Center looking out what you see now is Whitmore garage. But that street, the mob, tiki torches. No, I don't think so. The scream. Help me. How dare nobody would say they were asleep. Nobody's going to tell. Our grandparents didn't even talk to us about slavery because it hurts so bad. Okay? Stuart Pittman and I talked. He said every time I sit in my office, I have a line of sight to where these atrocities occurred. So, as we look into our history, let's talk about who aided and abetted. You have a railroad. Why are you going down the railroad? Because people can't hear the gunshots. They can't see you in the dark.

[02:36:42] - Janice Hays-Williams

All along the railroad. What's that saying? The other side of the tracks. That's where the nightmare occurred. So I want to share with you that this community deserves reparations. Just like the families that had to deal with their loved ones being killed. But this generational trauma is still here today, Chief. That's why your police officer need to know where they are. And I want to say this. The anger and the hate, they're hating on us in Annapolis. You know why? Because the black people are way too uppity. You know why? Next door, this house next door, is the first black elected official in the state of Maryland two years before the lynchings. And when he ran again, the riots were in Clay Street. Understand? Because they're mad. The anger, the hate. Where else do you go? Where else do you drag the people in front of their own people? What are we going to do? Teach the children. Teach them the correct history. Teach them. Thank you. Thank you for the time. Thank you for and when you say their name, say the Old Fourth Ward. Thank you.

[02:38:54] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you. And now, at this time, I'd like to recognize the city of Annapolis Alderwoman, Ellen Tierney.

[02:39:21] - Ellen Tierney

Thank you. Thank you for giving me the honor of speaking. I not only represent myself as Alderwoman of Ward One, but I represent the entire city council. And later in my testimony, you will see why. Thank you, Janice. And talking about the physical structures that are no longer here, which are in my ward, were in my ward. And all I have left are the stories to tell. And thank you for documenting them at the archives.

[02:40:00] - Ellen Tierney

The horrific practice of lynching is a stain on our nation and on our souls. There were over 4,700 documented lynchings in the United States. There were 29 documented lynchings in Maryland. These lynchings were public events with members of the community colluding, either directly or indirect directly, in this horrifying practice. It was no accident that they made them public. They were sending a message to other African Americans in the community. These crimes left thousands of people dead and families and communities scarred. Yet 99% of these murderers were never arrested or tried for their crimes. One such victim was Henry Davis. You heard the story earlier, but it bears repeating. In 1906, he was lynched here in Annapolis on a bluff near College Creek just days before Christmas. The remains of Henry Davis rest in Brewer Hill Cemetery in Annapolis. His grave is not marked, so the date of his burial is unknown. In fact, as there is no census record, his age is uncertain. His last name could have been Chambers or Lee. His first name could have been William. He had no known home. His lynchers were never found. The Maryland State Archives in Annapolis certify his death by "gunshot wound" on December 21, 1906 at the age of 30.

[02:41:48] - Ellen Tierney

And this is the alleged story which never had its day in court. On December 14, 1906, Mrs. Annie Reed, wife of a Crownsville storekeeper, John Reed, was on her way to Annapolis when she was dragged from her buggy by a black man limping along the road near Best Gates train station. Reed fought her assailant with a horse whip before being knocked to the ground. Henry Davis was arrested December 17, three days after the attack. Two days after his arrest, Davis was dragged to Annie Reed's house where she identified him as her assailant. Davis then allegedly admitted to the assault, according to newspaper accounts, *The Maryland Gazette*. Aware of the potential for mob violence the sheriff pleaded for a jury to be convened immediately. But Reed had not yet recovered from her injuries and could not testify. Davis was placed in the Annapolis jail. The next day, a group of lynchers marched from St. John's to the Annapolis jail at the corner of Calvert and Clay. The leaders of the mob tried to trick the four guards by ringing the jailhouse bell around 1:50 a.m. claiming they were police officers with a prisoner. As the guard sensed a problem and refused to unlock the jail, the attackers pounded on the door, tearing a hole with a pick taken from a nearby blacksmith's shop and attacked with a sledgehammer.

[02:43:29] - Ellen Tierney

The door quickly collapsed. Men holding revolvers asked the guards to put their hands up and hand over the keys to Davis's third floor cell, which they did. Davis was hauled from the jail down Calvert Street toward West Street. Black residents were terrified and stayed inside while many whites, awakened by the noise, joined the crowd as it turned onto West Washington Street and headed toward a neighborhood known as Brickyard Hill. They dragged Davis, who could not walk quickly because of his missing toes, to a bluff overlooking College Creek, continuing to hit him, according to reports in *The Baltimore Sun*. The report states that David supposedly admitted to the attack again, the crowd then slid a thin white rope around his neck and hoisted him up a large tree. Someone gave a signal to commence firing. The rope broke, but the shooting continued. More than 100 shots were fired. Davis was struck directly in his chest, his neck, hand, back of head, and face. His bloody body was left on the banks of College Creek, where hundreds of people, white and black, came to look at the gruesome site. Photographs were taken of the corpse and allegedly made into postcards.

[02:45:04] - Ellen Tierney

I think I have a slide of the report. Yeah, it's okay. I understand you can't read this, so I'll help you. The postcards were reported in *The Maryland Gazette* in an article to your right. And let me just read that for you. Postcards are in circulation bearing the photograph of the negro Davis, who was lynched last Friday morning. The gruesome postals show the man lying on the ground upon the slope of the hill after he had been lynched and riddled with bullets by the mob. His clothes are partly off his body and his face is mutilated with shot. The picture is a horrible sight. Hundreds of the postals have been sold and sent broadcast over the country, one purchaser alone having bought 50 of the gruesome souvenirs. So that afternoon, the body was examined by a coroner and later buried in an unmarked grave in the smallpox section of Brewer Hill Cemetery. In April 1907, an inquest was convened to look into the details of the Henry Davis lynching. Judge Revel reminded the members of the jury that this was a lawless act and must be investigated. After a month of investigation, the jury was unable to "fix the lynching to any one person or persons."

[02:46:44] - Ellen Tierney

Present day with Resolution 21-16, the Annapolis City Council had the opportunity to correct a previous wrong by apologizing. 120 years ago, our predecessor, Alderman Wiley Bates, offered a similar resolution condemning the lynching of Wright Smith, a black man accused of assaulting two white women. That resolution that you see handwritten back then on the slide, obtained only one other favorable vote and was eventually defeated by the City Council. The primary objective of this resolution, R 21-18, was for my colleagues and the full council, to recognize and remember racial injustice that occurred here in this city. The more timely purpose of the resolution was to support the Equal Justice Initiative. This resolution served as an apology to the descendants of all victims of lynching, the ancestors of whom were deprived of life, human dignity, and the constitutional protections accorded all citizens of the United States. It was introduced on second reader June 18, 2018, and received unanimous support from my colleagues, nine eyes. It was an important milestone in this road towards justice and a necessary obligation to the memory of Alderman Wiley Bates. Thank you.

[02:48:45.] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you. And at this time, I would like to recognize Anne Arundel County Councilwoman Lisa Rodvien.

[02:49:09] - Lisa Rodvien

Good morning, everyone. I also want to just acknowledge that it is my honor and privilege to be here this morning, I guess almost afternoon if I'm looking at that clock, but it's really my honor and privilege to be here and representing District Six for the Anne Arundel County Council. District Six includes the entire city of Annapolis and many of the outlying areas. So this touches very close to the hearts of District Six as well. My time at this microphone is going to be used a little bit differently in that one of the conversations that goes on quite frequently, especially among people more my shade, my skin tone is, what does this have to do with us, and why do we need to take any responsibility. We shouldn't feel guilty. This wasn't something that we did. And I think that's a very short-sighted way of looking at things. I'm pleased to say that my very first piece of legislation that I brought to the Anne Arundel County Council was a resolution condemning the acts of violence and supporting the Equal Justice Initiative, because I disagree with that sentiment. And I think more and more people are coming to disagree with that sentiment that this is all in the past and we don't have any responsibility for that. And I think of it in the following manner. If you're driving down the road and you see a house that's on fire, doesn't matter if you started the fire, you are going to take action to stop that fire. And whether it's calling the fire department or getting out of that car yourself and making sure that people can get out safely, you'll do what you can. And we can see that there are fires still burning in our country that are the legacy of the racial terror that occurred for a very long period of time. I would say almost close to 100 years. Well, probably more.

[02:51:19] - Lisa Rodvien

I guess we're focusing on the period between the Civil War and World War II. But we know things had you know, there had been things before, and there are certainly things after that that certainly look a lot like racial terror as well. We have to know this history. We have to teach this history, because if we don't, we are pretending that that fire that we see in our country is not related to anything that happened before. And of course it is. We have the descendants of these particular victims, the five that we can acknowledge here in Anne Arundel County who are still alive. Those descendants, in whatever various ways, we can only imagine. But they lost their ancestors. They suffered a kind of harm that I think is unimaginable in hearing stories passed down through the generations. And so I'm here to say we must take action to try and put out that fire. Even if we personally didn't have the responsibility for starting it, why would we do anything less? Why would we let a fire like that continue to burn for the next generation or the next generation or the next generation?

[02:52:46] - Lisa Rodvien

We are here. We can see it, we can see the causes of it, and we have the ability to take action. The question, I think is what exactly is that action? I mean, obviously, a resolution on paper is nice, right? It's words on paper. And I will say that I'm proud that this got the support of the full council,

all seven members of the county council. But really, words on paper are that; they're words on paper. So what does that mean? I think there are lots of different things that that could mean. You know, I've heard Janice Hayes Williams talk about reparations and I think that that is absolutely something we need to be talking about. We also need to be talking about policy and what kind of policies--we can look at the specific harm that is still playing out here in Annapolis. We're a very segregated city. Our economic levels are very much aligned with race, not completely, but they're rather aligned on racial levels and our educational outcomes are often very much aligned on race and all of those things. In fact, I almost question if you don't see the connection to the past, what exactly is it that you think is causing all those differences?

[02:54:10] - Lisa Rodvien

And that's what I would like to ask some of my colleagues who may have voted for this resolution but aren't necessarily interested in taking the actions. Well, if it's not related to things like segregation and racial terror and slavery what exactly is it that you think is the cause of those things? Because I'm not sure you want to say the answer out loud. I think about my own education and when I think about American history, I took AP American History in the early nineties, and somehow there was this large gap between Reconstruction and World War I. And somehow, all of a sudden, we were looking at the racial concerns, the racial terror, we were looking at slavery and the Civil War that ended slavery. But then somehow, we magically, like that thread of history just disappeared in my American history class, and we moved on to World War I. And somehow, we're talking about different alignments in Europe, and there were reasons for the United States to get involved, but that thread just disappeared in my American history. And I see a lot of folks nodding that they had a similar experience. And it wasn't until after I graduated from college that some folks had said hey, you should read this book. You should read this book. You should read this book.

[02:55:45] - Lisa Rodvien

And thankfully more and more authors are writing those books are going back. Is Janice Hayes Williams still in the room? People like Janice Hayes Williams are doing the research are digging through the archives to find out the truth that was left out. And so we can't tell an incomplete American history. We have to tell the whole story, because if you don't know the whole story, you're never going to be able to move forward. You're going to leave the problems for the next generation to figure out. And like I said, we are capable. Anne Arundel County is one of the wealthiest counties in the nation. If anyone can solve problems and has the resources to do it, it's here in this county, in this state. So, as we go forward I want to continue to have conversations about how do we move forward? How do we make the reconciliation of things, of horrible things that happened in the past, complete. Like I said, putting something on paper is nice and it's valuable. I mean, there are certainly lots of places that haven't done that that haven't acknowledged that it was a horrible thing and said we should have never condoned this, and we're going to condemn these actions of the past.

[02:57:07] - Lisa Rodvien

But I don't think we really get to cheer ourselves for being ahead of that by putting something on paper. We have a lot more to do. And so we need to continue to have conversations and say how do

we fix it? And whether those conversations involve housing, involve education, involve policing, involve culture, things that may not necessarily be resolved through government institutions, but maybe are done outside in the community at large. But I think all of those pieces together are necessary. And so I want to thank the commission for existing and I think I know there were more folks than, I know Delegate Pena Melnick was instrumental in creating this and I know there were other folks involved. And it's my apology, I'm giving my apologies for not knowing all of the folks that were involved, but obviously the folks that are here in the room and sitting at the table and listening and people that came to testify are involved and are being part of this conversation. So my request is let's keep this conversation going and let's not just continue to have conversation but actually figure out actions. What are the steps? What are the things that we can do?

[02:58:26] - Lisa Rodvien

Because wouldn't it be wonderful to wake up someday and truly, truly, truly have a world without racism and a country without racism? We're getting closer, but we are not there. Thank you.

[02:58:52] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you. And we got you. Thank you all for your testimony. And at this time, we will now transition to a different form of testimony. We have heard from experts in various fields, various sectors, about the legacy of racial terror lynchings in Anne Arundel County and beyond. And now we want to hold space for the testimony of descendants. One of the things that we've made very clear as a commission is that above all else, with every effort and every amount of energy we have, we want to elevate the narratives of the descendants, of victims of racial terror lynchings. And we are utilizing our resources to find those descendants as best we can. So shout out to Generative Futures for all their hard work in reaching out to every corner of the state to find the descendants of racial terror lynching victims. But at this time, I would like to bring back Ms. Lynda Davis, who will give an acknowledgement of the descendants of perpetrators. That is also important. As has been said, these stories have been told from all sides. The descendants of those who have been involved in these horrific crimes are here. They exist. They are still with us in this mortal world. We want to give space for the stories that we represent. This is not about hearing an ulterior narrative. No, the narrative is clear about what happened, but we want to give space to the legacy of the stories that have been passed down to the descendants. Again, I bring up Ms. Lynda Davis. We certainly want to acknowledge if there are any descendants of racial terror lynching victims that are in this space, we want to acknowledge you. If there are stories that you want to share with the MLTRC, we welcome it. This hearing session is not the end. It's just a step. We want to make sure that your narratives are represented and elevated as best we can. If you are here, we thank you. We understand how difficult this is. We do not take lightly that we have to tell the story of your ancestor being killed.

[03:01:14] - Dr. David Fakunle

We do not take lightly having to tell the story of your ancestor being disrespected in the most carnal sense of the word. We also understand and appreciate that your ancestor has a story that needs to be shared, and we will tell that story because it represents a larger story that people need to know. I think that's been reiterated over and over and over again, so I'm going to take it as truth that these

are the stories that need to be told. So, Ms. Davis, we thank you. And after we hear from Ms. Davis, we do want to take a moment just to reflect, just to give space again to the descendants, any of whom may be with us. But if nothing else, just to acknowledge that this is their story too, and we need to respect that story. We need to appreciate that story and do everything we can to make sure they know that we know. Ms. Davis.

[30:02:08] - Lynda Davis

Thank you and thank you to the commission. My name is Lynda Davis, a member of Connecting the Dots. I do not know if my ancestors participated in racial terror lynchings. Unfortunately, it is highly likely that they did. To me, knowing whether or not my ancestors participated in racial terror lynchings is beside the point. To me, the point is that white people, like myself, are perpetrating and tolerating injustices today and need to be doing something about them. In 1951, William Patterson, the African American founder of the Civil Rights Congress, told one of my heroes, Anne Braden, a white southerner, that she did not have to be part of the world of the lynchers. She could join the other America, a term he used to describe the people in this country who had always struggled against injustice. Braden took Patterson's advice and joined the other America. She fought for racial and economic justice until she died in 2006.

[30:03:33] - Lynda Davis

In December 2017, I watched Ava Duvernay's documentary, *The Thirteenth*. At the end of the documentary, Brian Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, said, "People say all the time, I don't understand how people could have tolerated slavery. How could people have gone to a lynching and participated in that? If I was living at that time, I would never have tolerated anything like that." And Brian Stevenson concludes, "And the truth is, we are living at this time and we are tolerating it." Brian Stevenson's statement struck me like William Patterson struck Anne Braden. It caused me to ask myself, what current injustices am I perpetrating and tolerating? And more importantly, what am I doing about these injustices? It helped me connect the dots and see that I too can join the other America by not perpetrating and tolerating injustices and by not supporting the white supremacy system. Will you join the other America with me and work on doing something about the injustices that are happening now? Or will you tolerate and perpetuate them like people tolerated and perpetuated slavery and lynching. To me, joining the other America would mean doing the following four things. First, we can make it safe for descendants of lynching victims to testify without fear of repercussions. I believe that one of the main reasons that no descendants of lynching victims came forward to testify today is that it is still not safe for them to do so.

[30:04:57] - Lynda Davis

White supremacy is alive and well. People have received death threats for telling the truth. Second, we can acknowledge and address the injustices of today that are perpetuated by the systemic racism and white supremacy that caused the racial terror lynchings. Injustices today include and are not limited to, poverty, police brutality, mass incarceration, the school to prison pipeline, the opportunity gap, the discipline gap, the racial wealth gap, food and banking apartheid, jobs that do not pay a thriving wage, voter suppression, housing that is not affordable, pollution and health disparities, to name a few. Speaking of health disparities, I recently learned that from Anne Arundel

County Health Officer Dr. Nileish Kalyanaraman, that there is a 15-year life expectancy difference between those living in Brooklyn Park, near where King Johnson was lynched, and those living in Arnold, home of the people who accused Wright Smith of an attack, and home of his possible lynchers. The people in the Brooklyn Park area live 15 years less than those living in Arnold. Dr. Kalianna Raman pointed out that these areas are 15 miles apart, so you lose a year of your life for every mile you travel down Ritchie Highway from Arnold to Brooklyn Park.

[30:06:23] - Lynda Davis

On October first, 2022, the seventh edition of Poverty Amidst Plenty was released. The report states that Brooklyn Park has the highest poverty rate, and it has the highest percentage of low birth weight infants, in Anne Arundel County. It is considered a food desert, now called food apartheid, and lacks access to transportation, childcare, and health care. According to US Census data, Brooklyn Park, when compared to Arnold, has almost double the population density, almost half of medium household income, about 20% identifying as black only compared to 5%, and less than half of the median value of owner-occupied housing units. The bottom line is that Brooklyn Park has poverty and Anne Arundel has plenty. Are you willing to continue tolerating poverty amidst plenty? Or are you willing to join the other America and eradicate poverty once and for all? In his book, The Color of Law, a forgotten history of how our government segregated America, Richard Rothstein shows how government intervention created some of America's most impoverished and isolated neighborhoods such as Brooklyn Park. Rothstein states that in 1968, when Richard Nixon was President, he appointed George Romney, Secretary of Housing. Romney began a program called Open Communities to force the suburbs to desegregate.

[30:07:53] - Lynda Davis

Romney announced that housing policies had created a white noose around black ghettos that should be untied. Rothstein states that the anger about open communities among voters in the Republican Party's suburban base was so fierce that President Nixon reined in Romney, required him to repudiate his plan, and eventually forced him from office. Are you willing to join the other America and untie the white noose? Third, we can implement reparations, which I'm glad was brought up by Janice Hayes Williams and Lisa Rodvian. We can implement reparations on the local, state, and federal levels. I recently learned that the word reparations was deliberately omitted from HB 307, the law that created the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I am disappointed but not surprised that the law does not include reparations. HR 40, the Federal Reparations Bill, was introduced in 1989 and still has not passed. I believe that no reconciliation... I believe there can be no reconciliation without reparations. So we must create and support reparations programs in order to address the ongoing injustices to the individuals as well as the communities. Admittedly, I had concerns about reparations when I first began hearing about the idea. Now I am in full support.

[30:09:25] - Lynda Davis

To me, reconciliation is a nebulous term and is related to good relations between people. I believe that reconciliation relates to the concept of self-actualization on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Before we get to reconciliation or self-actualization. We need to make sure people's basic needs for

food, clothing, shelter, and water are met. Reparations could provide this. Many people have thought about what reparations would look like. Scholar and activist Barbara Smith is one of them. She has suggested that we implement what she calls the Hamer Baker Plan to end systemic white supremacy. Her plan is named after Fannie Lou Hamer and Ella Baker. In an article in a podcast in which she discusses the Hamer Baker Plan, Smith asks what it would be like if we had a Marshall plan, or a plan on the scale of the space race, to eradicate white supremacy. She says the solutions need to be done on the scale equal to the problem of white supremacy, which is huge.

Some of the interventions she mentions are ending mass incarceration, shutting down the prison industrial complex, ensuring that all neighborhoods have the level of resources that affluent communities take for granted, eradicating poverty, eliminating the racial wealth gap, and supporting reparations. We have implemented massive social programs in the past. They included the Homestead Act, the GI Bill, FHA mortgages. My great great grandfather received 40 acres of so-called free land nine years after he emigrated from Germany. My father received the GI Bill and the FHA mortgage. The majority of African Americans were restricted from these benefits and never received the 40 acres and a mule they were promised after the end of the Civil War.

[03:11:26.960] - Lynda Davis

HR 40, the Federal Reparations Bill, is so named because of the 40 acres African Americans have never received. I believe advantages like the ones my family received should be given to everyone. Providing advantages to others will not take away my advantages. It will be about sharing the advantages. We do not have a zero-sum game. We have enough for all. We have plenty and we should not have poverty. There should be no hierarchy of human value. We should all have equal value, and we should have equal have equal rights to resources.

Will you join the other America and work with me on implementing Barbara Smith's Hamer Baker plan to end reparations? I'll repeat, will you join the other America and work with me on implementing Barbara Smith's Hamer Baker plan to end white supremacy, which includes reparations? And the fourth and last thing we can do is refuse to accept the lies of white supremacy, the lies about the psychological wages of whiteness, the lies regarding a hierarchy of human value, and the lies about the zero-sum game. These lies are all used to keep us fighting each other instead of fighting for our collective liberation and for a world where we would all have thriving wages and thriving lives, where we would all have the same value and the same access to resources and opportunities, where we would all benefit from what Heather McGee calls the solidarity dividend.

[03:13:03] - Lynda Davis

Will you join me and the other America in our fight to end racial terror, to end white supremacy, to end racism, to end injustice, and to end oppression? Will you join me in the other America in our fight for liberty and justice for all? Thank you.

[03:13:37] - Dr. David Fakunle

Let's marinate on that for a little bit. I'm serious. This is not in the agenda, but I really want us to marinate on that and to think about the totality of what we are representing on this commission. I'll try not to give the closing thoughts away so early, but I think it's very necessary to wrap our heads around the gravity of the situation that we are acknowledging, but a piece of officially on this commission. I echo Ms. Davis's sentiments. Will you join us? You've taken a big step by being here, so I'll give you that.

There's a lot more that needs to be done, so thank you. Thank you for putting it so succinctly, so clearly. If you don't get that, I don't know how we can help you. I truly, truly don't. The conciseness is necessary at such a time as this. At this time, we will move forward. As you continue to reflect, it is time to hear from the people, from the public. It's time for public comment. At this time, I will recognize Commissioner Maya Davis, who leads the logistics committee of the MLTRC, who will read a public comments that have been submitted by email during the course of the hearing session.

[03:14:59] - Dr. David Fakunle

Then after that, we will follow with an opportunity for those who are with us in person to share their comments. That will be led by Commissioner Carl Snowden. But first, recognizing again, Commissioner Davis.

[03:15:13] - Maya Davis

Thank you. I would just state at this time that we have not received any comments by the email.

[03:15:18] - Dr. David Fakunle

Nobody wants to say nothing. Fair enough. All right, cool. Then we're going to move forward with our in person public comments. What we will do is we will first recognize the President of St. John's College, Dr. Nora Dem Leitner.

[03:15:39] - Maya Davis

Excuse me. Before we start, I need to reiterate the public comment.

[03:15:44] - Dr. David Fakunle

Dr. Demleitner, before we have your thoughts, we will allow Commissioner Davis to just reiterate our rules and guidelines for decorum for our public comment.

[03:15:55] - Maya Davis

Thank you. Thank you so much, Chair Fakunle. Please provide your name and organizational affiliation, if any, and limit your comment or question to no more than three sentences. That does not apply to you, St. John's College. Questions and comments must be limited to the topic of discussion for today's hearing. If your comment or question is off topic, it will not be included in the hearing. Comments and questions should be presented with decorum and the respect appropriate for conducting the public hearing. Any comments or questions containing obscene language or language inciting imminent violence will not be addressed. Finally, please note that members of the media may be present during today's hearing, and as such, public comments and questions may be broadcast or printed by news outlets. Thank you.

[03:16:48] - Nora Dean Leitner

Thank you and good afternoon. My name is Nora Dean Leitner. In January, I begin my tenure as the 25th President of St. John's College. Thank you for giving me the opportunity today to be here, to listen, to learn, but also to share my perspective now. Before joining St. John's College, I was the Dean of the law schools at Hofstra University and Washington and Lee University. And throughout my career, I've been deeply focused on issues of criminal justice as well as access and inclusion for underrepresented groups in education.

As you may know, St. John's College is the third oldest college in America, behind only Harvard and the College of William & Mary. We were founded in 1696 as King William's schools and have played an integral role in the history of both Maryland and the United States. And while there is much history, we can take pride in, we also must recognize the moments of darkness and ensure that they are brought to light. And the lynching of Henry Davis in December of 1906 is one of those terrible moments. And what little information we have access to about the incident comes primarily from newspaper reports from the time, and we've heard how fraught those are.

[03:18:10] - Nora Dean Leitner

Also, we do not know everything that happened on that day in December, these newspaper reports certainly indicate that a crowd assembled on the grounds of the campus and that one witness reported that some members of the crowd were dressed in a manner in which students typically dressed at the time. The president of the college later claimed that the college was not in session. Also, this does not preclude the presence of students. The grand jury, as we also heard, never indicted anyone, which was sadly not uncommon for the time.

Detectives sent by the governor were unable to uncover the identities of any of the lynch mob. According to contemporaneous reports, and I think confirmed today, the lynching murder occurred on Break Yard Hill on a steep bluff, overlooking College Street. And although the extent of the participation by members of the college community is still uncertain, even presence in the crowd would be a criminal and certainly a morally reprehensible act. This event serves as a reminder that great evil is never as far from us and our institutions as we might wish. Racial justice is important to me and to the college. A primary tenet of our program is education for all.

[03:19:32] - Nora Dean Leitner

And in 2020, the College's Board of Visitors and Governors took an important step in reckoning with racial justice issues by establishing two college task forces. One, the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, the other, the College History Task Force. And the former was established to further our understanding of how students from different backgrounds experience the college. And it has made multiple recommendations to the college that are currently being implemented to ensure that we're creating internally an ever more inclusive educational environment that is welcoming to open to all students, faculty, staff, and community members, regardless of background. The History Task Force was tasked with researching the college's past in order to understand the relationship to indigenous and enslaved people and to make record recommendations to the board on how that history should be acknowledged. And that work turned out to be quite voluminous and continues and is ongoing. Now, let me say, as a new leader of the college that I promise to be continually engaged in these issues and I appreciate all the work that has been going on in the community and by the Task Force to get to the truth of these atrocities. And I personally aren't the college and are fully supportive of the commission's ongoing efforts. Thank you.

[03:21:11] - Carl Snowden

Do understand Nora you're the first woman, right, to hit St. John's College to be head of that. My colleague that's sitting next to me has written a book that I would strongly recommend for those who are listening and watching to pick up. It's called "The Silent Shore" and it's talking about a lynching that took place. I'm very familiar with St. John's College, and it would be very helpful if your students would take a look at that particular book. It's an incredible book and sort of promoting this for you. Dr. Chavis, I don't I hope you don't mind, and I'm almost positive Dr. Chavis would be more than happy to come down and have a dialogue with your students because I think education is important. So having said that, I just want to make two other quick announcements before we go right into this hearing. Next Tuesday, right here, right in this facility, there's another public hearing is going to be on, and that public hearing is addressing how do we deal with white supremacy today, right now, the FBI is going to be joining us. They're going to be discussing what communities can do to protect places of worship.

[03:22:23] - Carl Snowden

And as the FBI directors said, the most greatest threat to domestic tranquility is white supremacy. So I would hope that you and others who are watching will be able to come back 05:00 P.M. on Tuesday. And then lastly, if you're Annapolis on Friday, if you're in Annapolis on Friday of next week between 1:30 and 6:00, there's going to be a huge traffic jam. And it's not going to be based on the boat show. It's going to be based on the fact that there is a group of citizens who are coming together to form what's called a voter cave. There will be hundreds of cars lined up starting at Mount Mariah Church in Annapolis and going to People's Park. And the purpose of that is to enlighten people of the importance of voting and why it's important that we cast our ballot on that day. So I just wanted to make sure that...Judge Gibson.

[03:23:43] - Judge Gibson

Thank you. And thank you for giving me an opportunity to address the commission. Didn't know there was a limitation for three sentences. So I have a couple of preliminary remarks. One is that I am here representing myself. I'm not representing judiciary or any other organization. So my comments are my personal opinions about lynching. I also just in thinking of lynching, I wanted to read the lyrics for Strange Fruit. Take a second. Strange Fruit, a song by Billy Holiday. "Southern trees bear a strange fruit. Blood on the leaves and blood at the root. Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze, strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees. Pastoral scenes of a gallant south. The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth sweet, sorry scent of magnolia sweet and fresh then the sudden smell of burning flesh. Here's a fruit for the crows to pluck, for the rain to gather, for the wind to suck, for the sun to rot, for the tree to drop. Here is a strange and bitter crop." That's one of the most visual explanations of lynching that I've ever come across, because it kind of touches on all of your senses. The best definition of lynching that I heard was from Chief Jackson.

[03:25:30] - Judge Gibson

My issue with this is, as I think about this, I think about Sojourner Truth, Ain't I a woman? Well, ain't I a human? That's part of the problem with how we look at these things, the dehumanization of black people, that somehow, we are supposed to be able to take all of the junk that everybody puts on you and not impact you on an emotional or psychological level. I believe that lynching, which is the long arm of white supremacy, the means of controlling masses of people, because if you know you're going to die, you're less inclined to do things that are outside of whatever those rules or limitations that have been set for you. So that's got to affect your mind that, in my opinion, causes generational trauma and that we are living through generational trauma that must be addressed. And that, yes, reparations are important, but part of that reparation process needs to be a vehicle to get us the mental health services that we need. And they should be free, free to everybody. Because just as crazy as we might be in terms of not being able to balance this, white folks are just as crazy because they're still doing it.

[03:26:56] - Judge Gibson

So where does it stop? It's like this vicious cycle, and it really has to stop. So I know that time limited. I had other comments to make, but I just want to close by saying that I am 61 years old and most of the advances that we have made in civil rights have occurred in my lifetime. That is a shame. We should be ashamed of that because now we're facing a political climate where a lot of those advances could be reversed. And we are so mentally and emotionally ill prepared for that fight that we're still busy acting like it doesn't exist, because that's what you do to survive. You kind of get this elective amnesia thing that you got going on, the ongoing PTSD that everybody has, but nobody knows that they have it. We've got to begin to look deep to address these emotional and psychological issues. Otherwise, the pain and the trauma is going to happen, and we could face another cycle like they did in Reconstruction. There was a little bit of advance, and then he's like, oh, no, you've done gone too far. We're going to push you back. I'm not interested in going back. And the only way you're not going to go back is if you address the mental health problems that our country is suffering. So thank you.

[03:28:37] - Carl Snowden

Thank you. Judge Gibson. Lorraine Thomas.

[03:28:55] - Lorraine Thomas

Good afternoon. And thank you for giving me this opportunity. I am the, I guess you would say, great great great niece of Dr. William Bishop. I brought with me the family tree that my cousin's late wife researched from the beginning of the Bishops coming to America. My cousin's wife, Joan, got in touch with Janice Hayes Williams, who guided her. She wrote a book called "The Bishops of Annapolis." It was never published. Joan died before that could occur. But I only have three sentences. Okay, but from my other cousin, who is a direct ancestor of Dr. Bishop. He's 90 years old now, and he mailed to me what he would like read today. He said:

Dear Lolly, which is what everyone calls me, William Bishop, born in the early 1840s was the son of Nicholas Bishop and the grandson of William Bishop II. The family members were all manumitted out of slavery or self-purchased from slavery by the 1820s. The family was industrious, owned considerable property, invested to buy more property, deeded property to close relatives in Annapolis in the 1870s. He eventually owned and sold the building called the First Annapolis Bank and Trust, the land for the courthouse, and the land for the emergency hospital before he died.

He also was the only African American doctor who was a founder of the emergency hospital known now as Anne Arundel Medical Center and Luminis. He was a very famous and well-known Annapolis physician. During the early adolescent, William participated with a group from Annapolis on a trip to Liberia. They spent time as the Justice of Peace in Monrovia, Liberia. When William, like the rest of his family, are buried in the Church Cemetery, Rebecca Lowenthal, my niece, is the most recent internment.

[03:32:01] - Lorraine Thomas

The Church is on Church Circle, started in 1699. William's relationship with the Church must have cemented his relationship with the Annapolis public. He was always described as a Mulatto, which made it comfortable for white people to communicate with him. I believe there was a distinct change in the relationship after his death. My mother, who was attending Saint Mary's Catholic Elementary School, was expelled from the school for being of black heritage, which sent the message to all the bishops that they were black and needed to follow segregation guidelines. I personally followed the path of my great grandfather as I prepared for medicine at Yale University and went to medical school and training at Western Reserve in Cleveland, Ohio. After three years in the Army Medical Corps, I practiced in the state of Washington, signed Demorris Moses MD. I think that's all.

[03:33:24] - Carl Snowden

Thank you. Okay. Next is Merrin Winke, who's the latest recipient of the Fannie Lou Hamer Award.

[03:33:43] - Merrin

Good afternoon. I just wanted to make a comment that I am a descendant of Alexander White McPherson, who was a resident of the Old Fourth Ward. He lived on Northwest Street as my mom's family did. They were raised on Northwest Street. He did witness the death of Mr. Wright Smith.

[03:34:12] - Carl Snowden

Thank you.

[03:34:16] - Carl Snowden

Mr. Greg Trasker. Greg? You may have left.

[03:34:25] - Maya Davis

And if I may interject Commissioner Snowden, I do want to reiterate to the public that you are able to submit your comments if they were longer than the three sentences via email@MLTRC@maryland.gov so that we can have it on the record.

[03:34:40] - Carl Snowden

Thank you. Thank you. Tony Spencer, you're next.

[03:34:50] - Tony Spencer

Good afternoon. I just want to say for the record, I'm also related to the McPherson family. I married Maranie's sister on the one to find out I'm Maranie's cousin on both her mother and father side. Hi, guys. I have a question for you. The word conflagration, if I said that word, who knows what it means? Conflagration, your hands just described it. I did 23 years in the Annapolis Fire Department. You're familiar with Main Street. You see how the buildings are built as individual buildings? They have open attics. So if you had a fire and a massive fire, you could have a massive conflict ratio because there's no fire stops between buildings, which would be a catastrophe. I say that based on what Janice said and other Councilwoman Lisa Rodvine.

The legal lynching of many people have occurred and it's been alluded to today. I'm going to say this name, Carl. Everyone there, I'm taking full responsibility for what I'm saying. You know me. Irving Howard, a name from Glen Bernie Freetown area, worked for the Gunther family. If you're not familiar with the Gunther family, if you're going on being a boulevard in Glen Bernie where Sun Valley is, and there's this beautiful Chapel on the left-hand side, Mr. Gunther would have Easter egg hunks every Easter Monday. Why? Mr. Gunther killed his mother. He blamed it on Urban Howard.

They had a legal court hearing. Mr. Howard was hung. How do I know this? Little boy Tony couldn't go to school. My mother, who was domestic, was there when Mr. Gunther had a come to Jesus moment and admitted that he killed his mother. While this was a legal proceeding, he was lynched. I want to talk to the commission more about it, how we need to move forward. But I can't let it go. Thank you.

[03:36:58] - Carl Snowden

Thank you. I think we now have Ms. Warren.

[03:37:13] - Sherri Warren

Thank you. Sorry, I had a moment outside. I'm going to be brief. My name is Sherri Warren. In 1986, my brother was found strung up on a tree in Montgomery County, Maryland. He was lynched. The county has since been fighting me since 2009. My family, rather my mom since '86, but she passed in '09. I have now taken on her cause to get this case reclassified for what the evidence reflects. Evidence reflects that this was not a suicide, but a homicide. And if you go online, this is this picture. I have brochures if you'd like a copy. Discovery Plus, did a three part docuseries which was released this year, 2023, in February.

It's called Uprooted. It's my three-part docuseries. It basically follows my family's struggle to current day trying to get officials in the state of Maryland and Montgomery County to acknowledge that this, that lynching did not stop in the 1930s and 40s, that they continued on and that they're still happening. And the same systematic injustice that happened in the 1800s and the 1900s and the early 80s is happening to me today from local newspapers not wanting to talk about it because they don't want to piss the police off, to the judicial system not wanting to acknowledge that there was inconsistencies in the situation.

[03:38:39] - Sherri Warren

I'm not asking for anything but just to reclassify the case. That's it. You can investigate the case, but there's no evidence. The detective lost every piece of evidence. You can't go back and investigate. They lost the news. They sent the body to the funeral home of his choice. There was no autopsy. He cut the tree down. He destroyed the tree. He changed Keith's clothes. There are so many inconsistencies with this case. All I'm asking is for the state of Maryland to acknowledge that this was an injustice, and they need to write it. From my understanding, I have to get the Secretary of Health hearing to go to the Maryland to go to the ME's office to get them to intervene because I'm now playing ping pong between ME and the police department. Anyway, name is Keith Warren. You can Google him. I have everything online.

[03:39:29] - Carl Snowden

Thank you. Thank you. Reverend Marguerite Morris is next.

[03:39:53] - Marguerite Morris

Thank you for allowing me the time. I'm Marguerite Morris. I'm with a number of organizations, too many to count. You've heard them all, including Community Actively Seeking Transparency, Connecting the Dots. I want to just say that Keith Warren was found hanging from a tree in 1986. I want you all to hear that. And I want you to also, I got a little emotional earlier, because if you Google Keith Warren tree, this is not what Keith Warren looks like when he died. Google Keith Warren tree so that we can see the reality, just like in that Till movie, that history will be righted. In reference to Keith Warren, a 19-year-old.

And I will only say that the ME that responded to the scene states in that documentary that she said that he was expecting it to be front page news, that there was a young black boy found hanging from a tree in 1986, and it never showed up. So we're saying that to you. This is not the picture. Google it. Some of us have to face the reality and see the reality of what this was really like and the families that it impacted. Thank you and God bless you.

[03:41:03] - Carl Snowden

Thank you. Is there anyone else from the public. Who would like to comment? Let me just yes, Emma. Emma [inaudible] another Fanny Lou Hamer recipient.

[03:41:25] - Emma

I'll keep this brief. Everyone said most of what I wanted to say, but I did want to sort of speak mostly to the white members of another of a community that I belong to, the LGBTQ+ community. I identify as queer. And oftentimes in the LGBTQ+ fight for our own against our own oppression, black members of our community have stood beside us and have fought with us, and oftentimes we would not stand with them. We would not stand beside them to defend them, especially trans people of color. And so I am just calling on fellow members of my community to right those wrongs of the past. We are all a part of the same systemic oppression, but we have the privilege in my case, I have the privilege of being straight passing, and white and black members of our community don't have that privilege. We need to be constantly cognizant of that and remember that through love and truth, we are much more united than we are divided. Thank you.

[03:42:44] - Carl Snowden

Seeing no one else. I'm sorry. Go right ahead.

[03:52:56] - Linnie Girdner

Thank you all. Just what comes to mind for me, like little flashbacks during this time we've been together. Henry Davis's body on the street, left on the street. Michael Brown and Ferguson. Coroners who are not doing their job accurately or change things. The coroner that was brought from Maryland to be in the trial for the murder of George Floyd. The practice of police and others thinking all black people look alike and arresting whoever else happened to be on the street. Forced

confessions like the Central Park Five. So this is not all in the past. We have to be able to move forward and address these issues now and in an ongoing way together. Thank you.

[03:44:07] - Carl Snowden

Thank you.

[03:44:10] - Maya Davis

Ma'am, can we get your name for the record?

[03:44:17] - Linnie Girdner

Linnie Girdner. G-I-R-D-N-E-R.

[03:44:20] - Maya Davis

Thank you.

[03:44:21] - Carl Snowden

Thank you. Anyone else from the public? Seeing none. Another friend at Fanny Lou Hammer recipient.

[03:44:42] - Maya Davis

Monica Lindsay.

[03:44:45] - Monica Lindsay

I just wanted to take the opportunity to speak to the ongoing trauma, the daily trauma. I live with someone who has experienced war, the nightly nightmares, the images that are continuous, the not knowing, the gaps being misunderstood, not understood. The continuous mental trauma. The pain in the eyes of the older folks. The pain in the eyes of the younger folks who don't know, won't know, may never know. That damage can't be monetized. That damage likely won't be ever healed in any way that could make up for the many, many lives that have walked this journey. Continue to walk this journey.

And we see in the eyes of the young people the pain that they experience. But we have a job to somehow find a path that's going to be better than the journey that many people won't be able to see ever got fixed. Those gentlemen that we spoke about today, those families that are still trying to figure out what happened in their families, I have family members in my family tree who

disappeared. I have always felt, for whatever reason, that the stories that people in my family only hinted about but never really expressed, were stories of something that was just too horrible to speak about. And let's just put our heads down and keep on moving.

[03:47:15] - Monica Lindsay

But the pain is still there. So at some point we do need to talk about it and figure out the way forward. And that involves all of us. So I thank you for the time today.

[03:47:33] - Carl Snowden

Thank you.

[03:47:34] - Monica Lindsay

And I thank you for the ongoing time that is going to have to be committed to this cause. And I hope that the journey is better for some of the young people as we find ways to deal with this traumatic past and the present that we continue to experience. So thank you for the opportunity.

[03:48:02] - Carl Snowden

Thank you. Let me try one more time. I just want to make sure I don't miss anybody. Is there anybody who would like to speak who've not spoken before I say this comment? Okay.

[03:48:32] Unknown Speaker

Sorry to hold you up, Carl. I was born in 1937. My father was born in 1885, so he's pretty old. When I was born, he's in his fifties. And I remember my father who grew up in South Carolina on one of the islands where we got rice from. When he was born, there were no automobiles. So when my father learned how to drive automobiles, there were no roads. It's hard for us to think about that today, how far things have come.

But my father used to go out in New Jersey to hunt Ku Klux Klan. I'm standing here telling you that during my lifetime. We had a young man within a couple of years ago who wanted to hang a noose by a school. Why would somebody want to do that? So the only reason that I can figure that out is that because most people don't really understand that if we don't all talk about this, this will never change. This is not my problem. This is an American problem, and we have to all figure out how to solve this problem by talking about it.

[03:50:29] - Carl Snowden

Thank you, sir. Dr. Charles Chavis.

[03:50:38] - Dr. Charles Chavis

Thank you all so much for being here. I apologize for being late. I actually was coming from the CRRJ, the Civil Rights Restorative Justice Center at Northeastern University. And I mentioned this center because they have been working alongside the Commission at Northeastern University to document additional cases that we will be potentially including in our official number. Last year, in fact, we received 33 additional cases of potentially racially motivated homicides outside of those in which we have identified between our period.

And so it's very important as we move forward that we continue to search for the truth and that we continue to validate and honor the lived experiences and stories, the oral histories, and all of these truths that the descendants and members of the black community continue to deal with and grapple with. And we also have to do our job of making sure we have access to the evidence and materials that we need. And I would be remiss if I did not make a request in an appeal to the officials who represent institutions that are the keepers of these records. If the Commission at this time can make a request to inspect materials that are stored, unprocessed materials, specifically, that are stored at the state archives and any other state or local agencies in which records are supposed to be held.

[03:52:12] - Dr. Charles Chavis

And I make that appeal. And, of course, we work closely with the Maryland State Archives, but we understand, due to budget constraints and things like that, that there's not enough hands or arms to be able to inspect and have access to anything. The Commission, fortunately, has received funds from the Department of Justice, and I'm sure with those funds, we can assemble a staff and assemble additional resources to be able to quickly inspect unprocessed collections that are currently being held. Collections in which, Carl briefly alluded to this, I discovered statements from the lynching of Matthew Williams.

In fact, I'm thankful for Mr. Fargo, whose research I came across in identifying the Burns Detective Agency, which, in fact, was the first agency to be employed by the governor. But it was not the only agency. According to my research, Governor Albert Ritchie also employed the Pinkerton Detective Agency. He also issued a report, and I discovered this report in an unprocessed collection that was held in the Maryland State Archives. And it was also a report that detailed listing the names of the individuals involved. It also had listing of bills and receipts from the Pickard and Detective Agency.

[03:53:26] - Dr. Charles Chavis

And the same goes for the Matthew Williams, excuse me, George Armwood case as well. And so I'll conclude with that but thank you all so much for this opportunity and we'll continue to fight on behalf of the victims, the sentence of victims, in the state of Maryland.

[03:53:43] - Carl Snowden

Thank you. Just before, I'd just like to share one thing that we're here in Annapolis and I just want to share this as sort of like a closing remark. There's something that happened that's really historic in Annapolis that deals with lynchings. And I want people just to know this because as we talked about this oral history, it's important that we not forget. Now one of the central pieces that occurred with Henry Davis. I want people to remember this. When Henry Davis was murdered, he was shot 100 times. His body was so mutilated that the gruesome postcards that they talked about was actually sold in Annapolis. And the fear was so great on that day that Henry Davis was buried in an unmarked grave. And we discovered the story about Henry Davis after we had looked at what happened to John Snowden, who's the last man that was executed in the city of Annapolis. Henry Davis was the last man lynched in Annapolis and the two go hand in hand. And when John Snowden, who also died by the gallows, by illegal process where many believe they did not commit to crime, what Henry Davis and what John Snowden had in common, they were both accused by white women of sexually assaulting them and they both died.

[03:55:19] - Carl Snowden

And here's the point I want people to know about Annapolis. 95 years after Henry Davis was murdered, this community decided the one thing that should happen that had not happened previously, that he should get a burial. So 95 years ago. And that's what these articles in the back is about. *The Washington Post* covered this. Asbury United Methodist Church, a number of the local clergy held the funeral for Henry Davis, a funeral that had not been previously done. It was done on December 20, 2001, 21 years ago.

And it was something said at that funeral that I think's worth repeating here. As the clergy went through its process of laying to a final rest this man, Henry Davis. Someone in the audience asked the question, will his spirit ever really rest? Because he had indeed been murdered. And those who are responsible for his murder has never been apprehended. And there are men and women who live in this community who are descendants of both Henry Davis and the perpetrators. And it was this quote that was attributed to Dr. King that I just want to leave people with today because I think it reflects what these public hearings is all about.

[03:57:01] - Carl Snowden

Dr. King basically said, truth crushed to the earth will rise again and no lie can live forever. These hearings have demonstrated truth rising and lies dying. Thank you so much.

[03:57:24] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you, Commissioner Snowden. Thank you, Co-chair Chavis. Thank you to the members of the public, I'll call y'all the people. Thank you to the people who shared their stories. It's always love seeing where stuff like this goes, what people are compelled to share. And there was a lot of truth that was shared in this space. And I want you all to take solace in that and take hope from that. That even in this brief gathering that we had, we were able to share truth.

[03:57:58] - Dr. David Fakunle

We still got a long way to go, but this is an important first step. So I want to thank you all for, again, your comments. They are entered into the record. Before I say my final remarks, what I want to do, I guess I should do the remarks first and then we accept the testimony. So I'll say what I got to say real quick.

[03:58:17] - Dr. David Fakunle

Every time we do this it's special. If you know the story of the MLTRC, you know the work that goes into these moments. And it is truly just a start to the work that needs to be done. We are acknowledging, as the county executive said, we are acknowledging the truth that people are actively trying to suppress. That's not new. That's not new. Hello, moto. That's not new. Honestly. Carl said it best. The truth rises. It's not easy. It's not fun. It takes time, resources, money, energy, infrastructure, people power, and everything in between. But is it 100% necessary? Yes. And that's why this commission will not stop. We have the leverage that we need to share this truth. And we will use every point of leverage that we have to share this truth.

[03:59:19] - Dr. David Fakunle

And we'll take it one step further. We're not just going to tell you the truth. We're going to create the spaces for healing. Because this truth hurts. I think we can all agree, the things that we heard, not just the way that the lies were unnecessarily taken, the manner in which they were taken, but everything that was done to erase the story, that hurts.

[03:59:44] - Dr. David Fakunle

And it's okay for us to acknowledge that it's totally fine. I want you to. If it doesn't hurt, then we got an issue. We can talk to you on the side, but it should hurt. So whatever feelings of anger, frustration, pain feel it. Feel it. Feel it today, feel it tomorrow, feel it next week, wherever you go, feel it. At the same time, be strengthened, empowered by the fact that every single one of us in here came for a reason. We didn't force you. You chose to. That tells me what I need to know. That you believe in truth, that you believe in healing, that you believe in justice, that you believe in getting this relationship to a place where it's actually healthy.

The ramifications of this history are around us. I think that's been emphasized more than anything else. Yes, we are a commission that's looking at history, but we're very much about the impact on the present and trying to change the future. It does start with the children, there's no doubt. It is no surprise to me and I never lose sight of the fact that the two people officially at the head of this commission are young black men, the ones most likely to be the victims of the crimes that we are investigating. There's a reason I'm wearing this noose because I know, I know, I can't forget. We won't forget. I want this to become a relic of the past.

[04:01:24] - Dr. David Fakunle

I truly, truly do. We're not there yet. So you need to see it. You need to feel it. You need to understand it. Even if it's not tangible, it still works. So what are we going to do about it? What are we going to do about it? What can we do from the top to the bottom and everywhere in between to make sure that this doesn't happen anymore. We all feel the news one way or another. This system of oppression affects all of us one way or another. It is not just a black problem. It's not a black problem at all. This is our problem.

Let it be our solution. None of the work of this commission is done in a vacuum and none of this work is done alone. The 17 commissioners, the staff that we have, we do mighty work, but we don't do it alone. We need our local coalitions. We need our national coalitions. We need our local historians. We need our local genealogists. We need all the people who truly believe in a world that we can truly live in. I'll leave it I leave it at this and then we'll do everything we need to do to make this official. At the end of the day, there are five things that every single person in this room wants. If you don't know, you about to know now.

[04:03:14] - Dr. David Fakunle

Acknowledgement, appreciation, respect, understanding, and love. I'll leave you with this question. Why do we stop ourselves from achieving that? With that, at this time, I move that we accept all the testimony, all the stories, all the narratives that we heard on this day. Is there a second? Yeah. All right. Do I got to do the all those in favor say our thing? Okay, cool. I'm cool with it if I have to, but that's fine. Thank you. Thank you all. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your energy. Thank you for your work. Thank you for your sacrifice. And yeah, I said thank you for your love. Thank you for your love.

And with that, anything I'm missing? Oh, yeah, of course. So before I do the thing, next comments. Yes, absolutely. So at this time, I do want to acknowledge our commissioners who are here. Please raise your hands. I think they're all up at the front here. So we have Marshall Stevenson, we have Elizabeth Hughes, of course, Commissioner Mike Davis, Commissioner Chris Haley, co-chair Charles Chauvin, Commissioner Snowden, and I'm honored to be the chair Dr. Dr. David Fakunle. So at this time, any of my fellow commissioners, is there any words that you want to share before we officially close? The floor is yours.

[04:05:03] – Commissioner Marshall Stevenson

Okay. There's not much to say. Well, there's a lot to say, but there's not much to say. This was a powerful moment, a very historic moment for the state of Maryland, a very historic moment for the state of city of Annapolis. I think all of us have heard and it's been reinforced what we need to do as a people to move forward. The police chief mentioned January the sixth in this country and that there are those forces who want to turn us back in time. I represent the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, an educational institution and one of the HBCUs in this state. We're going to have a hearing on our campus November the fifth to recognize those who were lynched in Somerset County.

One of my goals is to see the auditorium that we have that hearing packed with the students on that campus, but also students from Salisbury University and other universities in this state. It's important for this next generation to understand not only the past, but as was said here, how there are those forces trying to reverse where we are. Our young people need to know the world in which they're graduating into we need to give them the knowledge to know that freedom is not free. With that, I want to welcome you to the Somerset hearing in about a month and thank everyone for your role in this today.

[04:06:41] - Dr. David Fakunle

A little bit of housekeeping that I will do. I do want to acknowledge the upcoming hearing session in two weeks in Wicomico County, October 22nd, same time. Nine AM to 1 PM. It's going to be a little bit longer. It's going to be a little bit longer. Warranted, of course. Nine AM to 5 PM, my apologies, in two weeks, October 22nd. I also want to give space for any elected officials who were not recognized.

Any elected officials who were not recognized, we try to do a good job with that because we appreciate you all being here. Okay, good. We did a wonderful job. Also want to give special recognition very quickly to Mayor Gavin Buckley for hosting us, allowing us to be in this space, and to his team for their assistance, Chief of Staff, Kate Pettit and Hillary Rafferty, Senior Advisor, William Row, Public Relations Specialist, Mitchell Stevenson, and the Technical Production Team. Huge shout out. Yeah, huge shout out. Led by Mark Hildebrand and Julian Jott. We do have a couple more comments from fellow commissioners, one that could not be in attendance, Commissioner Nick Creary, very essential to the creation of this commission. Who would like to share his comments?

[04:07:57] Commissioner Maya Davis reading Dr. Creary's remarks

There are really questions for the descendants and you'll be able to respond to it because I know it's hard to formulate your response right away, which requires heavy thought. The questions from Commissioner Creary are questions for the descendants and witnesses in the room. What harm was done to families and communities? What has been the impact of the harm? What should justice for the harms perpetrated look like and include? Thank you.

[04:08:28] - Dr. David Fakunle

Again, we welcome your thoughts, your insight. We make every opportunity for that wisdom to be shared with us. So please take your time to ponder those questions. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us to help you navigate the best ways to bring justice to the legacy of these atrocities. That is what we are here to do. And we welcome, again, all your insight, all your wisdom in making sure we are doing it right.

Am I missing anything else? Yes. Thank you. Got you. Again, want to emphasize one more time. I know that we are a little bit over, but Living and Growing is here. Again, we do not want to de-emphasize the emotional impact of this history, of this presence. Please utilize their resources. Please talk to them. There will be space for that debriefing. Anyone who chooses to utilize their talents and skills. Again, thank you so much for being here. Again, I will continue to urge it. Yes, this affects us here. It affects us here. We got to talk about it. Use those opportunities when they're presented. All right. I can do the little clap. Yes? Yes. Thank you to the interpreters.

[04:10:00.] - Dr. David Fakunle

Thank you. Thank you to both of them. Yeah, both of them. Absolutely. There's two of them. Yes, absolutely. That is okay. We good. All hearts and minds. All right, so with that, I will yes.

[04:10:15] – Commissioner Maya Davis

I just want to make one final comment. I don't want to take too much time, but I just want to acknowledge the steadfastness fastness of Ms. Warren. I remember that you came to our very first kickoff meeting when we met in Baltimore for the first time as a commission. And I know at that very first meeting, it would stress that our time period, we're looking at 1854 to 1933. And that's based only on the documentation that we have. And I just want to let you know that you still showing up for your brother is so powerful, and it's definitely something that needs to be in our recommendation.

[04:11:04] – [Unknown audience member]

I want everyone to go home with this thought. In November, people are elected in a position that are supposed to be for our community. We don't understand how many who ignore me, who will come to the meeting and walk out because they killed us. Understand that. Tell your people when they go to vote for those who want to speak for them and understand to your use your vote.

[04:11:32] - Dr. David Fakunle

I will definitely second that notion. Vote. Vote smartly. All right, so with that, I am proud and honored to bring this hearing session for Anne Arundel County of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation to a close.