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## Key Till witness gave false testimony, historian says

**By Hillel Italie**  
NEW YORK (AP) - The woman at the center of the trial of Emmett Till's alleged killers has acknowledged that she falsely testified he made physical and verbal threats, according to a new book.

Historian Timothy B. Tyson told The Associated Press on Jan. 28 that Carolyn Donham broke her long public silence in an interview with him in 2008. His book, "The Blood of Emmett Till," comes out next week. "She told me that 'Nothing

that boy did could ever justify what happened to him,'" said Tyson, a Duke University research scholar whose previous books include "Blood Done Sign My Name" and "Radio Free Dixie." Emmett Till was a 14-year-old black tortured and killed in 1955 in Mississippi after allegedly whistling at a white woman, then known as Carolyn Bryant.

His murder became national news, was a galvanizing event in the civil rights movement and has been the subject of numerous books and movies. During the trial, Bryant said that he had grabbed her, and, in profane terms, bragged about his history with white woman. The jury was not present when she testified.

Donham's then-husband, Roy Bryant, and his half brother, J.W. Milam, were acquitted by the all-white jury. Both men, who later told Look magazine they did murder Till, have since died. Milam's widow, Juanita Milam, would later tell the FBI she believed that Carolyn Bryant had fabricated her story. Juanita Milam died in 2014. The Justice Department re-examined the case a decade ago, but no one was indicted as a murderer or an accomplice.

Tyson said that he spoke with Donham after her daughter-in-law, Marsha Bryant, contacted him. Bryant had read "Blood Done Sign My Name," about a racist murder during his childhood in Oxford, North Carolina, and invited Tyson to meet with her and Donham.

Tyson said he and Donham had two conversations that both lasted 2-3 hours and that he planned at the time to place the material in the archives at the University of North Carolina. Asked why he waited so long to publicize his findings, he responded that historians think in different terms than do journalists.

"I'm more interested in what speaks to the ages than in what is the latest media thing," he said.

He added that he wasn't sure whether Donham knew about the book. He said he had fallen out of touch with the family and that when he last spoke with Bryant, a few years ago, she said Donham was in poor health.

Till was a fun-loving teenager from Chicago visiting the Mississippi Delta and helping out on his great-uncle Mose Wright's farm. On Aug. 24, 1955, Till and some other kids drove to a local store, Bryant's, for refreshments. At Bryant's, some of the kids stayed on the porch, watching a game of checkers, while the others filed inside to buy bubble gum and sodas. Carolyn Bryant, the 21-year-old wife of proprietor Roy Bryant, was behind the counter.

Accounts of what happened next differ.

Mrs. Bryant claimed Emmett bragged about dating white women up north. She said he grabbed her and asked her, "How about a date, baby?" Simeon Wright, his cousin, heard none of this. But there is no doubt about what he heard when they left the store, he told the AP in 2005.

Standing on the front porch, Emmett let out a wolf whistle.

Carolyn Donham's whereabouts have long been a mystery, but North Carolina voter rolls list a Carolyn Holloway Donham. Holloway is her maiden name.

The address is for a green, split-level home in Raleigh at the mouth of a neat cul-de-sac just two turns off a busy four-lane thoroughfare. The well-tended house has burnt-orange shutters and a front-facing brick chimney decorated with a large metal sunburst. Orange flags emblazoned with the word "Google" dot the lawn.



EMMETT TILL

## Greensboro civil rights museum halfway to paying off loan

GREENSBORO (AP) - A civil rights museum in Greensboro has cut in half the amount it would owe the city on a \$700,000 loan if it can't raise enough money by next year.

Greensboro City Manager Jim Westmoreland told the News & Record of Greensboro that the International Civil Rights Center & Museum has raised \$370,000.

The city lent the museum \$1.5 million in 2013 to cover debt used to renovate the old Woolworth's building where a major lunch counter sit-in in 1960 helped spark protests across the South.

Greensboro has agreed to pay off a dollar for each dollar the museum raises to pay off the loan.

Museum co-founder Earl Jones says a golf tournament and telethon is planned for this year. He thinks the museum can raise all the money.

## Georgia city police chief, mayor apologize for 1940 lynching

LAGRANGE, Ga. (AP) - In an emotional ceremony, the mayor and the police chief of a west Georgia city have apologized for the lynching of a black man more than 75 years ago.

LaGrange Police Chief Lou Dekmar said the killing of Austin Callaway, who was taken from the city jail by a band of armed white men in 1940, should never have happened.

Callaway was 18 when he was led from his basement cell in the LaGrange City Hall, then shot and left to die along a road on Sept. 7, 1940. He had been arrested that day, accused of assaulting a white woman.

Dekmar told a gathering of blacks and whites packing a Methodist church in LaGrange that police that day had failed to protect Callaway in custody and failed afterward to investigate the killing, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported (<http://on-ajc.com/2kbqJf0>).

"I sincerely regret and denounce the role our police department played in Austin's lynching - both through our action and inaction. For that I am profoundly sorry," Dekmar added.

The police chief was joined by LaGrange Mayor Jim Thornton and others in making the apology as relatives of Callaway listened, the LaGrange Daily News reported (<http://bit.ly/2jdHUgE>).

"Let me say this emphatically: justice failed Austin Callaway in 1940," Thornton said, adding no one was ever held accountable. "Until we have a full, complete acknowledgement of the past, we can never fully heal."

Deborah Tatum, whose grandfather was a cousin of Callaway's grandfather, was among family members present.

"It's exciting to know that he finally has a voice," she said. A historical marker for Austin Callaway is to be dedicated on March 18 in the area close to the state line with Alabama.

The nonprofit Equal Justice Initiative, which announced plans last year to build a memorial to African-American lynching victims in nearby Montgomery, Alabama, said its research shows more than 4,000 blacks were killed by lynching in about a dozen Southern states between 1877 and 1950. The nonprofit's director, Bryan Stevenson, has said lynchings - whether by gunshots, hanging, burnings or other forms of killing - were regularly used in that era to terrorize black communities.



Reverend William Barber II, president of the North Carolina state chapter of the NAACP, delivered an electrifying speech during the 2017 NNPA Mid-Winter Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (Freddie Allen/AMG/NNPA)

## Rev. William Barber Tells Black Press: 'Bowing Down Is Not an Option'

**By Freddie Allen (Managing Editor, NNPA Newswire)**  
Reverend William Barber, the president of the North Carolina state chapter of the NAACP and leader of the Moral Mondays movement, delivered a rousing keynote address to open the 2017 Mid-Winter Conference of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA).

The theme of the conference was "Strengthening Black-owned Newspapers through Training, Innovation and Technology." The NNPA partnered with General Motors, Chevrolet, Ford Motor Company, Reynolds American Inc. (RAI), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to host the conference; Volkswagen, Ascension, Coca-Cola, and the American Association for Cancer Research supported the event as sponsors.

During his speech titled, "Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?" Barber tackled voter suppression in the aftermath of Shelby v. Holder, White evangelicalism and the current political environment in the age of "alternative facts."

Noting that President Woodrow Wilson played the White supremacist propaganda film "Birth of a Nation" in the Oval office in 1911, Barber said that Trump's ascension and election is not an anomaly in American history.

"This is not the first time that White supremacy has occupied The White House. This is not the first time that America has elected a racist egomaniac," said Barber, reminding the audience that President Wilson, a former college president, played "Birth" to signal that Reconstruction was over. "Education doesn't necessarily get racism out of you."

To a chorus of "Amen," Barber said that the one thing that we have to first decide to do in this moment is that bowing down is not an option.

Recognizing that he was addressing a room full of journalists and publishers, Barber pitched ideas for a number of articles and commentaries.

"Somebody has to unpack 'so-called' White evangelicalism that is illogical malpractice and heresy," said Barber. "We've got to have some papers that write and do some investigative work to connect the money to White evangelicalism to the policies of extremism and racism, because some of our own folk are sending money to some of these TV White evangelicals."

Barber said that the loss of the full protections of the Voting Rights Act and voter suppression were two of the most underreported stories during the last election cycle.

"Long before any Russian hack, the American electoral process was hacked by systemic racism and fear," said Barber. "The Southern Strategy is alive and well."

Barber acknowledged that civil rights leaders and Democrats could have voiced louder criticism about the lack of work done in the U.S. Congress to restore the Voting Rights Act.

"Democrats talked more about David Duke than they did about voter suppression and the Voting Rights Act being dismantled," said Barber.

Barber said that they were **868 fewer voting places** across the nation; those closures disproportionately affected Black voters.

"Voter suppression has been proven, voter fraud has been disproven. The lie about voter fraud is a distraction from the truth about voter suppression, because voter suppression is about thievery. You scratch a liar, you'll find a thief," said Barber. "Trump won because of the voter suppression that went on in the Black community."

After delivering a brief history of fusion politics, a time when poor Whites and Blacks worked together to achieve political power in the South following the Civil War, Barber questioned why so many poor, White people today cast votes for lawmakers that oppose establishing living wage standards, better healthcare and more educational opportunities for low-income families.

The North Carolina pastor noted that there are 18.9 poor White people in the United States, about eight million more than the number of poor Black people, though Black people experience poverty at higher rates than Whites.

Barber said that exploring the real reasons why so many poor Whites vote against their own self-interest, would make for a great investigative report.

Returning to the theme that today's political environment in America is nothing new, Barber told the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who he described as "three millennials from the Bible days," that liked to write and Nebuchadnezzar, "a maniacal-egomaniac who loved to tweet out his own news," loved to build towers and invited people to come to his towers to bow down.

When Nebuchadnezzar commanded that everyone bow down to his image and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused, the king threatened to throw them into the furnace.

"He didn't know they already had a fire. They came from people who had been through the fire," said Barber. "They remembered how the lord had dealt with pharaoh. They remembered how David dealt with Goliath."

Barber said that the three young leaders had a fire in them, because they sang the songs of their ancestors.

"Can we just make a decision, Black folks? Can we just make a decision, publishers? Can we just make a decision, civil rights... that bowing down is not an option?" Barber implored. "I gotta suspicion that it's going to be some fiery times. I gotta suspicion that it's gonna get hot. I gotta suspicion that Nebuchadnezzar is gonna do some rough stuff."

Barber implored the publishers, journalists and activists in the room to go into the proverbial fire standing up, because help won't come, if you go in the fire bowing down.

"If you go in the fire standing up, God can transform the fire and the same fire that was meant to destroy you, can become a fire of deliverance!" Barber shouted.

The crowd roared, delivering Barber a standing ovation. The Moral Mondays leader continued:

"Bowing down is not an option! Standing down is not an option! Looking down is not an option! Breaking down is not an option! We've been through worse before." Barber exclaimed. "We've been through slavery. We've been through Jim Crow. We've been through the Trail of Tears and we're gonna stand up in this moment!"