



The Mountaintop

BY KATORI HALL

April 1 – 27, 2014, on the IRT's Upperstage

STUDY GUIDE

edited by Richard J Roberts & Milicent Wright
with contributions by Janet Allen, Courtney Sale
Robert M. Koharchik, Guy Clark, Kate Leahy

Indiana Repertory Theatre
140 West Washington Street • Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
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The Mountaintop

by Katori Hall

April, 3rd 1968--After delivering his magnificent and memorable “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech, an exhausted and defeated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. retires to the Lorraine Motel where he encounters a mysterious and spirited stranger. She will lead Dr. King through a powerful, vivid exploration of his life and legacy on what would become his final night on earth.

Estimated length: 100 minutes

Recommended for students in grades 11 & 12 (due to strong language and adult situations)

This play will help meet [Common Core Standards / Indiana Standards](#) applications for English, History/Social Studies, and Theatre Arts.

Themes & Issues:

Martin Luther King Jr.’s role in the Civil Rights movement

Personal fears, doubts, and weaknesses

Each individual’s responsibility to society

Defining the role of the leader

Student Matinees: April 9, 15, & 23 at 10:00 am

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Imagining History ... and More

by Janet Allen, Executive Artistic Director

Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop* appears to fall into a simple category: one where we enjoy learning more about the personal lives of our heroes, as a playwright reveals the little things that the history books ignore. You will quickly find that this play holds other surprising attributes. The events of the play appear to be very recognizable on the surface—it's a rainy night in Memphis, at the Lorraine Motel in the late 1960s, and Martin Luther King Jr. enters, weary and worn. Anybody with a passing knowledge of this historic moment knows where this is going. But that's about all Hall gives us that could be construed as fact. After that, she does what good playwrights do: she imagines what might have happened. This is the stuff of poets and playwrights—they take us to places where we can only dream of going.



David Alan Anderson
as Martin Luther King Jr.
in *The Mountaintop*
at the Court Theatre in Chicago.
Photo by Michael Brosilow.

Among our pleasures at producing this piece is to celebrate once again the many talents of native Hoosier actor David Alan Anderson. He's taken on iconic characters before: four presidents and Winston Churchill, along with White House chief butler Alonzo Fields, in *Looking over the President's Shoulder*; Dredd Scott, Uncle Tom, and yet another president in *The Heavens Are Hung in Black*; Julius Caesar in *Julius Caesar*, even Adam in *Searching for Eden*. But King requires, I imagine, a bit more courage. It requires an actor to refract what we all know through studying picture, film, and recording—and then essentially forget it and make it one's own. One can't pretend to *be* King—theatre isn't an audio-animatronic experience—but one must enliven him in a believable and compelling and personal way. The magic innate in this theatrical experience is that we emerge from it feeling that we've had the rare privilege of being in the room with Dr. King for 90 minutes; and further, that we've experienced ourselves just a bit of what he might have experienced. This alchemy is made all the more enriching by having David, who has lit our stages so beautifully so many times, take on this role. We are in his debt that he is willing to do so.

There's another piece of the puzzle at work here. Our playwright-in-residence, James Still, has been working for a couple of years on a commissioned piece that forms a kind of sequel to this play. It focuses on events that took place the following night—at a historic moment in Indianapolis and US history, when Bobby Kennedy announced the assassination of Martin Luther King in a park just 20 blocks from here. We've done a preliminary workshop on this play—derived from oral histories collected from people who were there that night—and we will produce it in 2016. I hope you'll think back then on this experience—the experience of April 3, 1968, and what might have happened in a rainy hotel room in Memphis—when we dramatize something of what happened on another windswept night, April 4, 1968, in Indianapolis.

Martin Luther King Jr.

More than four decades after his death, Martin Luther King Jr. is one of the most widely honored Americans of the twentieth century. He has been posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established as a national holiday in 1986, and more than 750 streets in the United States have been renamed in his honor. A memorial statue of King was unveiled on the National Mall in 2011. But he continues to be a figure of controversy as well, with charges of communism, adultery, and plagiarism tarnishing his reputation. Recently a more balanced portrait of King has begun to emerge: a complex man, flawed and fallible, but nonetheless a visionary leader.

Martin Luther King Jr. was born Michael King in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, the son of Rev. Michael King and Alberta Williams King. Attending the 1934 Baptist World Alliance Congress in Berlin, his father changed both their names in honor of German reformer Martin Luther. Young Martin attended segregated public schools in Georgia and graduated from high school at the age of 15. As an adolescent, he had been skeptical about Christianity, but in college he concluded that the Bible contained “many profound truths which one cannot escape” and decided to follow his father into the ministry.

King graduated from Morehouse College at 19 with a degree in sociology. At Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, he was elected president of his predominantly white senior class, earning his Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1951. He married Coretta Scott in 1953; they would have four children. In 1954 he was appointed pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama. By that time he was already a member of the executive committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He earned his Ph.D. from Boston University in 1955.

That same year, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. King led the Montgomery Bus Boycott, saying, “We have no alternative but to protest. For many years we have shown an amazing patience. We have sometimes given our white brothers the feeling that we liked the way we were being treated. But we come here tonight to be saved from that patience that makes us patient with anything less than freedom and justice.” Lasting 382 days, the boycott meant a year of walking to work, enduring harassment, intimidation, and violence. The boycott finally ended when the courts ruled to end racial segregation on public buses in Montgomery. King’s role in the bus boycott made him a national figure at the age of 26.



Dr. King during the Montgomery Bus Boycott.



Dr. King and others leading the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965.

In 1957, King and 60 other church leaders and civil rights activists founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Their goal was to develop nonviolent civil rights activism through an organization of churches. Over the next 11 years, King would travel more than 6 million miles,

write five books, and deliver some 2,500 speeches against injustice. During a 1959 visit to India—a trip inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent activism—King said, "I am more convinced than ever before that the method of nonviolent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for justice and human dignity."

In 1963 King led a nonviolent but confrontational campaign against racial segregation in Birmingham, Alabama. Police used fire hoses and attack dogs against the protesters, including children. National television coverage shocked white Americans and united black Americans, and the campaign led to positive changes in discriminatory laws.

During the Birmingham campaign, King was arrested and wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," urging activists to fight unjust laws with civil disobedience: "We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed." King criticized those who supported a more moderate approach:

"I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the white citizen's council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: 'I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action;' who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a 'more convenient season.'"

*Dr. King during the 1963
March on Washington.*

Six national organizations, including the SCLC, organized the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Demands included an end to racial segregation in public schools; meaningful Civil Rights legislation, including a law prohibiting racial discrimination in employment; protection of Civil Rights workers from police brutality; and a \$2 minimum



wage for all workers. More than 250,000 marchers stretched from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial toward the Washington Monument. King's speech that day has become one of the most famous in American history, particularly in the section where he departed from his written text:

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.' ... I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Suspecting King of being a communist, the FBI began tapping his phone in late 1963. No evidence of communism was found, but the FBI used information it gathered about King's alleged extra-marital affairs to try to embarrass him and force him out of his leadership role.

Time magazine chose King as 1963's Man of the Year. Increased nationwide awareness of the struggle for civil rights led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, making it illegal to discriminate against minorities in education, hiring, transportation, or public accommodations. This legislation would be followed in 1965 by the equally important Voting Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination in voting.

In 1964, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolence. In his acceptance remarks, he declared, "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant."

Beginning in 1965, King began to shift his longtime focus. He attempted to expand his protest work beyond the South, to such cities as Chicago and Los Angeles, with limited results. His nonviolent methods were often criticized by other, more militant blacks, including Malcolm X. Ignoring those critics, King began to speak out publicly against the Vietnam War. In 1967, he stated, "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

As time went on, King became more interested in the fight against poverty and the need for fundamental changes in the nation's economic policies. In 1967, he said, "true compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar ... it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring." In 1968, he worked with the SCLC to create the Poor People's Campaign and began to call for more profound changes: "reconstruction of society itself is the real issue to be faced." This stance was controversial, and a number of Civil Rights leaders worried that King's broadening focus would dilute their efforts.



Dr. King giving his final speech in Memphis.

In late March 1968, King traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to support black sanitation workers who were on strike for higher wages and better treatment. On April 3, at Mason Temple, he delivered what would be the last public speech of his life. As he closed his speech, he referred to bomb threats that had delayed his flight to Memphis and went on to say, "I've been to the mountaintop.... I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land." The next day, April 4, 1968, at 6:01 p.m., King was shot while standing on the balcony outside his room at the Lorraine Motel. Escaped convict James Earl Ray later confessed to the killing.

When asked how he would like to be remembered after his death, King once said:

"I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to give his life serving others. I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to love somebody. I want you to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked. I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. And I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity. Yes, if you want to, say that I was a drum major. Say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter."

Playwright Katori Hall

“I’m a story collector,” says Katori Hall. “I hear a story, and I keep it in my arsenal. It will work on itself in me until it needs to leap out onto the page.”

Born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee, Hall attended Columbia University, where she majored in journalism. As a junior, she took an acting class. Grouped into pairs and assigned to find a scene appropriate for their physical types, Hall and another young African American woman could not locate a single scene for two young black women to play. When they approached their teacher, she, too, could not think of a suitable scene. “But instead of complaining about not fitting into other playwrights’ worlds,” Hall says, “I decided to do something about it.”

After graduating from Harvard’s M.F.A. acting program at the American Repertory Theatre in 2005, Hall wrote her first play: *Hoodoo Love*, about a woman who escapes the cotton fields of Mississippi and travels to Memphis to pursue her dream of singing the blues. On the merit of that play, Hall was accepted to the playwriting program of the Juilliard School.

The Mountaintop was inspired by Hall’s mother, Carrie Mae Golden. As a teenager, Golden had wanted to attend Martin Luther King Jr.’s April 1968 speech at Memphis’s Mason Temple, but fear of violence kept her away. “There are certain things that you regret until the day you die,” Ms. Golden said recently, “and that’s one of them.” Hall based the character of the young woman in the play on her mother. “It was a way to put my mother in the room with King because I knew she didn’t get a chance on April 3, 1968.”

Katori Hall



Samuel L. Jackson
and Angela Bassett
in the 2011 Broadway
production of
The Mountaintop.



In 2009, *The Mountaintop* was produced in a theatre above a pub in London. After transferring to the West End, it was named Best New Play at the 2010 Olivier Awards, London's equivalent of

the Tony. At the age of 29, Katori Hall was the first black woman ever to win in that category. In 2011, the play opened on Broadway, starring Samuel L. Jackson and Angela Bassett.

In a few short years, Hall has written and produced a number of plays. *Saturday Night/Sunday Morning* is a comic drama with a Cyrano de Bergerac plot set in a Memphis beauty shop at the end of World War II. In *The Beyoncé Effect*, three women—an African American, an Indian, and a Ugandan—each wishes she had lighter skin and white European features. *Hurt Village* focuses on Cookie, a mouthy, precocious 13-year-old, and the residents of the derelict Memphis housing project who surround her. *Children of Killers* is an examination of the Rwandan genocide. *WHADDABLOODCLOT!!!* features a wealthy New England woman who suffers a stroke and begins to speak in a thick Jamaican patois.

To date, *The Mountaintop* is Hall's most famous play—and her most controversial. Set in King's motel room on the night before his death, the play focuses not on the revered public figure, but on the private man, with all his fears, weaknesses, flaws, and failings. Out of the public eye, he smokes. He swears. He flirts with a hotel maid while talking with his wife on the phone. Hall has noted, "To many people, *The Mountaintop* is almost blasphemous: How dare you take King off a pedestal? I say, How dare I not? I'm a dramatist. I'm supposed to put human beings on stage. People are people. People bleed. People die. People are afraid. My purpose is to tell stories that wouldn't necessarily be told."

"I wanted to depict not only Dr. King's triumphs but also his struggles," says Hall. "He had vulnerabilities and fears.... This is a man that provided a fundamental shift in American society. King forced us to see people of color are not second-class citizens; they are equal. He did this extraordinary thing. But he wasn't superhuman. He always said, 'I'm a sinner. Not a saint.' That is the King you will see in *The Mountaintop*.... It was important to see the humanity in this hero so we can see the hero in ourselves."

Controversial Words

Since humans learned to speak, various words have been considered inappropriate in certain contexts. Ancient Roman documents discuss offensive language. In Ancient Egypt, legal documents were sealed with an obscene hieroglyph—a reminder that “to swear an oath” could mean either “to affirm a truth” or “to use profane language.” Shakespeare’s plays are considered the finest literature of the English language; perhaps their mixture of exquisite poetry and bawdy language—the sacred and the profane—is part of their eternal appeal.

It is interesting to note how language changes over time. With the rise of mass media in the twentieth century, rules and regulations were established to determine what words were inappropriate for use in radio, movies, and television. Over time, these rules have evolved in response to societal change, and sometimes such regulations can be confusing. On some television channels certain words are consistently bleeped or dubbed during one part of the day, yet acceptable at other times; on other channels, such words might always—or never—be acceptable. Over the last 50 years or so, language once considered obscene has become much more widespread and accepted. Other words, once commonplace, have been banished because they now are considered to be “politically incorrect.”

How are we, as a society or as individuals, to determine what language is appropriate in different situations? Drama, by definition, shows people in intense situations; and playwrights, in their attempt to show the truth of how people speak under such conditions, may use extreme language. Some audience members may find this language offensive, and prefer that such words not be used. Other audience members may be offended at the idea that freedom of expression might be curtailed. As language evolves, so, too, do our perceptions of language.

The “N” Word

The word *nigger* is spoken by the characters in *The Mountaintop*. This usage reflects an accurate representation of the play’s setting in America during the 1960s.

The word *nigger* was not originally used for verbal assault. It first appears in historical documents in 1587 as *negar*, an alternate spelling of *Negro*. *Nigger* was a common word in both England and America by the seventeenth century; it was considered nothing more than an alternate pronunciation of *Negro*. By 1825, however, both abolitionists and Blacks found the word offensive and began to object to its use.

Often when a word is employed as a slur against a certain group, members of the group will use that word among themselves to rob it of its negative power. Today, the word *nigger* is still controversial. While it may be heard frequently in rap songs and in conversation among younger African Americans, many older African Americans are deeply offended by it. Even within generations, not everyone agrees whether the word should be used within the African American community. Society at large, however, has condemned the word as a racial slur; its use by other races against black people demonstrates an ignorance and hatred that should not be imitated.

An Intangible Monument

by Courtney Sale, Director

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the greatest non-violent leaders in the history of mankind. Using civil disobedience, grass roots organizing, and the power of language, he transformed civil rights in our country. His belief that “unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality” guided his fight for equality. Every monument, street sign, and tribute created in his honor (and the ones still to come) are tangible reminders of his revolutionary ideals.

But there’s another equally important legacy King offers us. It isn’t a marker you might visit or a sign you would recognize from your car window. It’s an intangible monument—one that asks us to examine personally, inwardly rather than publicly: how am I contributing to Dr. King’s vision of America?

The Mountaintop by Katori Hall takes us right up to that intangible monument. The small window of King’s life depicted in the play is the precise window of his deepest doubts, fears, and angers. Hall’s play reminds us that the greatest advances in racial justice were achieved through a living, breathing, tired, uncertain, downcast, and weary *human*. *The Mountaintop* thoughtfully asks us to consider not only how far we have come, but more importantly what we fight for today, what work there is still yet to do, and, following King’s example, what we are capable of.

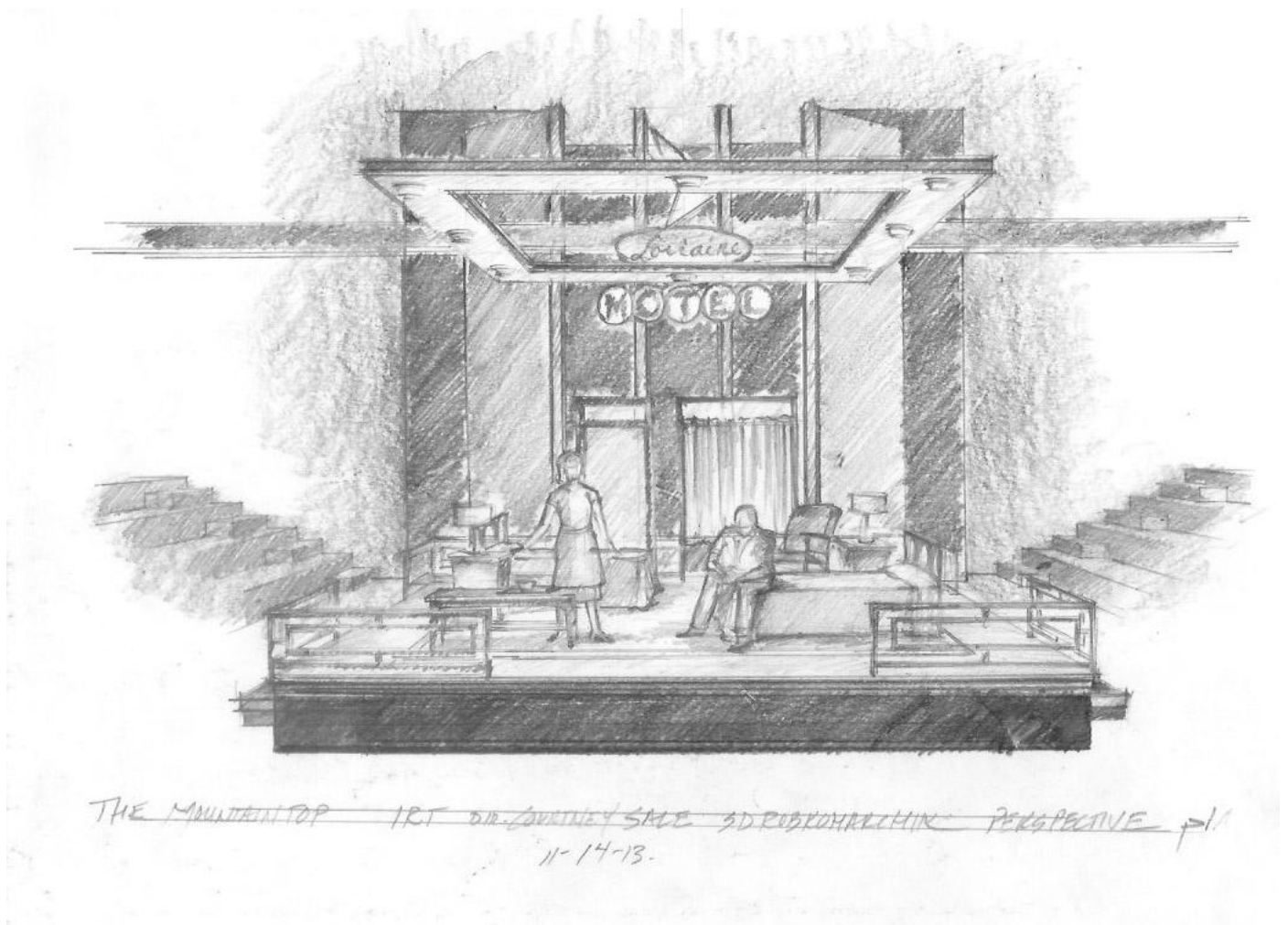


Designers' Notes

Robert M. Koharchik Scenic Designer

While the inspiration for the set design of *The Mountaintop* came from historical research images of the Lorraine Motel, a recreation of Dr. King's room would be impractical in this thrust space. It is important that the design maintain the intimacy of an actual motel room and help to set the time period of the play. But just as important, we wanted to create an environment that does not limit us to mere realism, but that might even offer a glimpse into the future.

Preliminary sketch by scenic designer Robert M. Koharchik.



Kate Leahy Lighting Designer

Seemingly straightforward, the story of *The Mountaintop* quickly unfolds into a multilayered discussion about the past, our chosen present, and our many possible futures. The lighting design process and the final product you see tonight have been much like the play itself: layered in skins of complexity that deceive one into accepting it as simplicity. This is the story of a uniquely American struggle, and no part of it is black and white.

Guy Clark Costume Designer

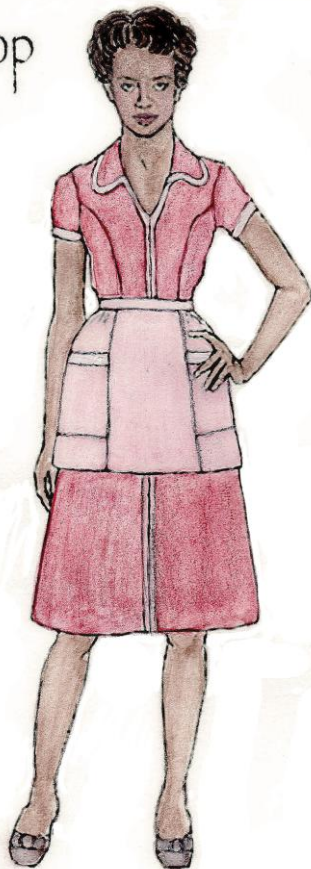
Recreating an historical person for the stage is always tricky, especially with someone whose image has become as iconic as Dr. King's. Pouring over period photographs, you can easily become preoccupied with the width of a tie or the shape of the mustache, and that dogged pursuit of precision diverts you from a designer's most important job: helping the actors tell the story. A costumed mannequin in a museum diorama may provide an accurate portrait of a legendary figure, but a gifted actor lifts that legend off the pages of a history book and brings that person to life.

The Mountaintop



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Mountaintop



Camac

Renderings by costume designer Guy Clark.

Interactive Civil Rights Timeline

1619 Jamestown, Virginia—first African slaves sold in the US

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/timeline/1619.html>

1777 Vermont abolishes slavery

1787 The United States Constitution, with three clauses protecting slavery, is approved

1833 Slavery abolished in Great Britain

1861 The Civil War begins

1863 Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/

1865 End of the Civil War

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/american-civil-war-ends>

1865 13th Amendment ratified—slavery abolished

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/13thamendment.html>

1865 Reconstruction begins (through 1877)

<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/reconstruction/timeline.html>

<http://www.shmoop.com/reconstruction/timeline.html>

1868 14th Amendment ratified—equal protection under the law

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/215201/Fourteenth-Amendment>

1875 Civil Rights Act of 1875 (ruled unconstitutional in 1883)

<http://history.house.gov/HistoricalHighlight/Detail/35889>

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/turnerbd/summary.html>

1876 First Jim Crow laws

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/civil-rights/>

1896 Plessey v. Ferguson—separate but equal ruled constitutional

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=52>

http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0163_0537_ZS.html

1870 15th Amendment ratified—right to vote

<http://www.crf-usa.org/black-history-month/african-americans-and-the-15th-amendment>
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americalexperience/features/general-article/grant-fifteenth/>

1909 NAACP founded

<http://www.naacp.org/pages/naacp-history>

1929 Martin Luther King Jr. born

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king>

1948 President Harry Truman desegregates the armed forces

<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/anniversaries/desegblurb.htm>
<http://afroamhistory.about.com/od/civilrightsstruggle1/a/order9981.htm>

1954 Brown v. Board of Education—separate but equal ruled unconstitutional

<http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/federal-court-activities/brown-board-education-re-enactment/history.aspx>
<http://www.naacpldf.org/case/brown-v-board-education>
http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0347_0483_ZO.html

1955 Montgomery Improvement Association founded; Dr. King elected president

<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-2567>

1955 Montgomery begins year-long bus boycott

<http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/>

1957 Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) founded; Dr. King elected president

<http://sclcnational.org/our-history/>

1957 Civil Rights Act of 1957

http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/civil_rights_act.html

1957 Nine Black students integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas

<http://life.time.com/history/little-rock-nine-1957-photos/#1>
<http://littlerock9.com/History.aspx>

1960 Lunch counter sit-ins in Greensboro, Nashville, and elsewhere

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/6-legacy/freedom-struggle-2.html>

1960 Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) founded

- 1963 Dr. King writes “Letter from Birmingham Jail”**
http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html
- 1963 Medgar Evers killed on his front porch**
http://www.everstrIBUTE.org/house_tour.php
- 1963 President John Fitzgerald Kennedy assassinated**
<http://www.dallasnews.com/news/jfk50/photos/20130326-nov.-22-1963-the-day-jfk-was-assassinated.ece>
- 1963 March on Washington—Dr. King’s famous “I Have A Dream” speech**
<http://www.archives.gov/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>
- 1963 Four girls killed in the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church**
<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/birmingham-remembers-4-little-girls-50-years-after-infamous-church-v20507957>
- 1964 demonstrations against Vietnam War begin in United States**
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/628478/Vietnam-War>
- 1964 Civil Rights Act of 1964**
<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/civil-rights-act/>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q11kvbJy0cs>
- 1964 Dr. King becomes the youngest man to win the Nobel Peace Prize**
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-bio.html
- 1964 Malcolm X murdered**
<http://www.biography.com/people/malcolm-x-9396195>
- 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches (including Bloody Sunday)**
- 1965 Voting Rights Act is signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson**
http://www.core-online.org/History/voting_rights.htm
- 1966 James Meredith shot during his solo “March against Fear”**
- 1966 Black Panther Party founded**
<http://www.biography.com/people/huey-p-newton-37369>
<http://blackpanther.org/FAQs.html>

1967 Dr. King's speech, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence"

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article2564.htm>

1967 Dr. King announces SCLC's Poor People's Campaign

1968 Dr. King's speech, "I Have Been to the Mountaintop"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDl84vusXos>

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/martin-luther-kings-final-speech-ive-mountaintop-full/story?id=18872817>

1968 Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated

<http://history1900s.about.com/cs/martinlutherking/a/mlkassass.htm>

<http://mlk->

kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_kings_assassination_4_april_1968

1968 The Poor People's March on Washington

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=91626373>

<http://www.upi.com/Archives/Audio/Events-of-1968/Poor-Peoples-March/>

*Our earthly life is a prelude to a glorious new awakening,
and death is an open door that leads us into eternal life.*

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Common Core & Indiana State Standards

Attending *The Mountaintop* along with using the discussion questions, writing projects, and activities in our study guide can link your lessons to the following Common Core or Indiana State Standards:

Language Arts:

- Reading Standards for Literature/Key Ideas and Details
- Reading Standards for Literature/Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Reading Standards for Literature/Craft and Structure
- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Key Ideas and Details & Craft and Structure
- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Writing Standards/Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Social Studies:

- Writing Standards/Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Sociology/Culture and Social Problems
- Sociology/Social Groups and Social Status

Theatre Arts:

- Analysis and Response

*We must remember that intelligence is not enough.
Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.
—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

Pre-Show Discussion questions

Dr. King gave a famous speech, known as “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” in Memphis on April 3, 1968, just prior to the events of this play. Listen to the speech and read along. What do you take from the speech? What messages of hope and inspiration does it offer? Being aware that he would in fact die the next day, listen for truths he reveals unknowingly. How does your knowledge of the aftermath of an historic event affect your perception of the event itself?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDl84vusXos>

Like many great leaders in challenging situations, Dr. King lived under tremendous pressure. Do you imagine there might have been times when he wanted to retreat from his demanding schedule and the limelight and live like other men? What personal qualities do you think he possessed that enabled him to accomplish the extraordinary things he did? What makes ordinary people do extraordinary things? What does that individual gain and lose from taking action?

Who are some of the individuals who have advocated for human rights in the last three decades in the United States and globally? What circumstances have placed them in these positions of leadership? What sacrifices have their positions cost them? What issue do you feel most passionate about? What sacrifices would you be willing to make for this cause?

Ask your students to register their first impressions of the play’s scenery as they arrive in the theatre before the play begins. How does the scenery inform you about the story that is going to be told?

What is a martyr? What are the pros and cons of that label?

Pre-Show Writing Prompts

Write an essay about what Dr. King means to you. How has his work affected your life? Or to put it another way, how would your life be different had he not done the things he did?

Write a letter to your peers calling them to act upon a cause that you believe would benefit from mass attention.

Dr. King was a complicated man who achieved great things. What do you as a complex human being want to accomplish with your life that might have an impact on the community at large? What are your challenges or obstacles? What or whom might you call on for strength? What resources do you think you would need to have a profound impact on your community and its citizens?

Pre-Show Activities

In preparing to talk about the use of **controversial language** in the play, have the students look into linguistics and etymology. Here are two sites of interest:

<http://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/studying-linguistics>

<http://grammar.about.com/od/words/a/Etymologywords.htm>

An additional helpful resource is *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of The English Language* by David Crystal.

Assign your students some vocabulary words to research—perhaps words from the play, such as *preponderance*, *hoochie coochie*, or *albeit*; or words from your other teaching units—and then report their findings to the class. This is a good bridge to use in letting students know that all language is teachable. All words have roots and history to be explored. From what is the word derived? When was it first used? What is its social background? Discuss the purpose of language.

Why are certain words categorized as profane, vulgar, or taboo? What does the use of this language say about the person using it? How does society view and/or judge people who use (or object to) these words? Are there situations where profanity is inappropriate? Why? How and why have society's views of this type of language changed in the last 20 years?

Ask the students to note in the play when taboo words are used. What effect do they believe the playwright is seeking with such language? Is she successful? In what ways would the play be different if the playwright had chosen other language? What does such language reveal about the emotions, background, and point of view of the characters? What affect, if any, did the swearing have on the mood and point of view of the audience?

Perhaps you as a teacher will want to offer your students a summary of this topic that might include your observations of taboo language in literature and other media formats (past, present, and future), the rules of conduct of your school, and/or your personal views about swearing.

An excellent way to get a sense of the feelings and politics of the 1960s is to listen to the music of that era. Have your students individually listen to a variety of music from the 1960s. They can find many examples on-line, but they can also go to the library or ask their elders. Challenge them to learn about the songs: Who is the singer? Who is the writer? When was the song written and recorded? Listen to a few songs in class and discuss the songs' messages. What do we learn about the 1960s and the topics that were current? Here are a few websites to get you started:

<http://www.articlemyriad.com/influence-60s-psychedelic-music-culture-modern-society/>

<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/sixties/essays/protest-music-1960s>

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/sixties/resources/what%E2%80%99s-sound-teaching-1960s-through-popular-music>

Before seeing *The Mountaintop*, review the history of the Civil Rights Movement. The following websites provide a helpful overview:

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/civil-rights-movement-overview#top>

<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/1945-present/civil-rights-movement>

Alternatively, in groups, the class could work through the interactive web-based Civil Rights Timeline provided in this study guide. Research other key figures and groups in the movement. Who was involved before Dr. King? Who stepped up after his death? Here are a few names to get you started:

Ralph Abernathy	R. Phillip Randolph
Rev. Shuttlesworth	E. D. Nixon
Coretta Scott King	Bayard Rustin
Andrew Young	Claudette Colvin
Jesse Jackson	Constance Baker Motley
SNCC – Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee	

While the Civil Rights Movement may seem far removed from your lives now, issues of many citizens' civil rights being violated still exist. Create a team to research and report on what types of discrimination are at the forefront here in Indiana. Report to the class about concerns currently being monitored and/or litigated. To aid you in this research, check out the website for Indiana Civil Rights Commission:

<http://www.in.gov/icrc/>

This site gives a useful definition of discrimination and provides resources for those whose rights are at risk.

Have your students interview people they know regarding their knowledge of and beliefs about Dr. King. Encourage them to interview people of different generations, different families, different races, even different geographic regions. Have the class as a whole devise the core questions to be used in each interview, to make it easier to compare and contrast the students' findings and create graphs, charts, or other ways to compare data. How do others' feelings about Dr. King differ from your own? What has been his impact on others' lives? What can we learn from those whose opinions or backgrounds are different from ours? When important advances are made over time, how do we preserve our cultural knowledge of the struggles that made those advances possible?

Spoiler Alert

Teachers who have read the play are aware that it contains important elements that should not be revealed in advance, so as not to diminish the play's impact. The following section contains questions and activities that should be shared with students only *after* they have seen the IRT's production of *The Mountaintop*.

Post-Show Discussion Questions

How did the playwright fold in actual events, people, writings, and political issues of the 1960s and beyond into her fictional play? What other events of this period might have been included, and how would these events relate to the central issues of the play?

Some have suggested that racism is no longer a pressing issue in the United States. Recent events such as the killings of Travon Martin and Jordan Davis or the response to a bi-racial family in a Cheerios commercial may suggest otherwise. How do generational, cultural, geographical, or other issues affect people's views on the subject of race? In what ways do we see the dreams and hopes of Dr. King accomplished? What issues still need tending, and why? How do we fight complacency in the face of partial progress towards long-term goals?

Discuss the vision of the future Dr. King is given at the end of the play. What do you remember the most? What else might have been included? Think particularly of events in the last few years—globally, nationally, and even locally. What current events, both good and bad, have stemmed from Dr. King's dream or blemished it? How might your additions to the list move people to action?

As you watched the play, what clues suggested to you that Camae was more than a motel worker? Were you surprised when she revealed her true identity? How effectively does playwright Katori Hall make this imaginative leap work?

Katori Hall gives us an image of the Judeo-Christian God in the play. How is this image similar to or different from other images of God? Were you able to accept it in the context of the play, or did you find it disconcerting? Why or why not?

How does the play combine the serious with the humorous? Given the subject matter, is humor appropriate? Why or why not?

Near the end of his life, Dr. King was turning his attention to other issues in the United States, particularly poverty and the Vietnam War. If he were alive in Indiana today, where might we direct his attention? What people and organizations are working to bring fairness to all? What can you and your peers do in your school and in your community to address such issues?

Post-Show Writing Prompts

The characters of Dr. King and Camae are products of their time. Looking back at them from today's lens, how have gender roles and expectations changed? How is either sex stronger and/or weaker now than it was 46 years ago? How are responsibilities and expectations different? How have the male and female images we see in print and on screen changed over time?

Write about your vision of the "promised land" or "the mountaintop." What do you desire for humankind and the planet?

Write about what the play suggests are important characteristics of a leader. What do you think are important characteristics of a leader? How do today's leaders measure up to the leaders of the past?

Write a poem or an essay or a short story or a play on this theme: If the baton were passed on to you, what would you do?

*When an individual is protesting
society's refusal to acknowledge his dignity as a human being,
his very act of protest confers dignity on him.*

—Bayard Rustin, friend & colleague of Dr. King

Post-Show Activities

Indianapolis has a history with Dr. King; he visited the city a number of times. Indianapolis is noted for being the largest city in the nation not to riot on the day Dr. King was assassinated. Many have suggested that the speech Robert F. Kennedy gave that evening influenced the actions of the African American community. Listen to that speech and then discuss Kennedy's rhetorical style and the content of his speech.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCrx_u3825g

What does the speech suggest about both the personal and public relationships of Kennedy and King? What are your emotional reactions to this historical event in Indiana's capital city?

Although the play seems at first to be realistic, such elements as thunder, rain, and other weather conditions, dreams, heaven and celestial beings, flowers, fire, and more take on deeper meaning. Research the traditions, symbolism (both sacred and secular), mythology, folklore, and superstitions of these elements. How do they affect the play's storytelling?

Discuss spoken word poetry with your students: its definition, its history, its impact on today's poetry scene. Talk about the vision of the future presented in the play, particularly the lines spoken by the character Camae. How does this part of the play relate to the idea of spoken word poetry? Here is a definition of spoken word poetry from the Urban Dictionary that you can use to prompt your discussion.

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=spoken+word>

This site expands on the Urban Dictionary definition:

<http://northwesternda.org/sites/default/files/LAW%20Day%20spoken%20word%20definition.pdf>

After the discussion, listen to Gil Scott Heron's "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" as an example of early spoken word poetry:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnJFhuOWgXg>

Working in groups of no more than four, have your students choose a topic that stirs their passion and write a poetry performance piece. The students should research the chosen topic for relevant current events, key figures, and phrases that could be incorporated into their work. Encourage them to find or write instrumental music to enhance the poetry. The presentation can be live, recorded with images, or written. Perhaps a class competition could award which piece is the most innovative, the most political, the most moving, the most humorous, etc.

Resources

Books by and about Martin Luther King Jr.

A Time to Break Silence: The Essential Works of Martin Luther King, Jr., for Students by Martin Luther King Jr., with an introduction by Walter Dean Myers (Nov 5, 2013)

Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community? (King Legacy) by Martin Luther King Jr., with an introduction by Vincent Harding and foreword by Coretta Scott King

Why We Can't Wait by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference by David J. Garrow (Winner of the 1987 Pulitzer Prize)

The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr. by Clayborne Carson

A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr., edited by James M. Washington

We Will Stand Here Till We Die: Freedom Movement Shakes America, Shapes Martin Luther King Jr. by Stewart Burns

To the Mountaintop: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Sacred Mission to Save America 1955-1968 by Stewart Burns

Martin Luther King Jr.: A Documentary ... Montgomery to Memphis with an introduction by Coretta Scott King edited by Flip Schulke

Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-63 by Taylor Branch

Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years 1963-65 by Taylor Branch

At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-68 by Taylor Branch (National Book Award Finalist)

The King Years: Historic Moments in the Civil Rights Movement by Taylor Branch

Let the Trumpet Sound: A Life of Martin Luther King, Jr. by Stephen B. Oates

Other Books

Eyes On The Prize: America's Civil Rights Years 1954-1965 by Juan Williams

The Race Beat: The Press, The Civil Rights Struggle, And the Awakening of a Nation by Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff

Polite Protest: The Political Economy of Race in Indianapolis, 1920-1970 by Richard B. Pierce

MAKING FREEDOM: African Americans in U.S. History, a five-volume set compiled and edited by the curriculum specialists at Primary Source, Inc.

A Faith Not Worth FIGHTING FOR: Addressing Commonly Asked Questions About Christian Nonviolence edited by Tripp York and Justin Bronson Barringer

This Far by Faith: The Companion to the PBS Television Series by Juan Williams and Quinton Dixie

My Soul is a Witness: A Chronology of the Civil Rights Era, 1954-1965 by Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin

Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s (Companion to the acclaimed television series *Eyes on the Prize*) by Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer

"Takin' it to the streets": A Sixties Reader by Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines

Katori Hall Plays One: Hoodoo Love; Hurt Village; The Mountaintop; Saturday Night/Sunday Morning published by Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011

The Meeting by Jeff Stetson

Swearing: A Social History of Foul Language, Oaths, and Profanity in English by Geoffrey Hughes

Expletive Deleted: A Good Look at Bad Language by Ruth Wajnryb

Teacher Texts:

MAKING FREEDOM: African Americans in U.S. History (Sourcebook 5) March On Till Victory 1877-1970. Compiled and edited by the curriculum specialists at Primary Source, Inc. Heinemann

Websites

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/>

<http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/kingpapers/>

<http://www.biography.com/people/martin-luther-king-jr-9365086>

<http://www.martinlutherking.org/>

<http://www.history.com/topics/martin-luther-king-jr>

<http://www.civilrights.org/resources/civilrights101/>

<http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/>

YouTube

Katori Hall's keynote address to the 2012 Theatre Communications Group, *Governance: Leading the Charge*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iw2-glMywqY>

An interview with Katori Hall about how she became a playwright and about what inspires her to write

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SA5n1Hol6ZU>

Katori Hall talking about *The Mountaintop*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8TqdNQ9_rc

Katori Hall: the inspiration behind the *The Mountaintop*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0NHUX3eMeA>

Meet and Greet with the Broadway company of *The Mountaintop* at Brooklyn High School of the Arts

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3jMe32pC1M>

"I Have Been to the Mountaintop," Dr. King's final speech, delivered on April 3, 1968

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDl84vusXos>

No More, a winning documentary created by students

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDl84vusXos>

Movies

Boycott (2001), with Jeffery Wright as Martin Luther King Jr.

Eyes on The Prize: America's Civil Rights Years 1954-1965 (2010)

King: A Filmed Record... From Montgomery to Memphis (1970)

King (History Channel) (2008)

4 Little Girls (1997)

Freedom Riders (2010)

Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin (2003)

Talk to Me (2007)



The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington, DC.

Glossary

Abel was slain by his brother Cain

According to the Book of Genesis, Cain and Abel were two sons of Adam and Eve. Cain's jealous murder of his younger brother Abel is considered the first murder.

Abernathy, Ralph

Ralph Abernathy (1926–1990) was a leader of the Civil Rights Movement, a minister, and a close associate of King. in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Abernathy shared Room 306 at the Lorraine Motel with King. The night before King's assassination, Abernathy introduced King at the Mason Temple before his last public address; King said at the beginning of his speech that "Ralph Abernathy is the best friend I have in the world." Following King's assassination, Abernathy took up the leadership of the SCLC Poor People's Campaign and led the March on Washington, D.C., that had been planned for May 1968. He was president of the SCLC for the next nine years.

Albany

The Albany Movement was a broad-based desegregation coalition formed in Albany, Georgia, in 1961. Police made mass arrests but avoided the kind of violent incidents that might backfire by attracting national publicity. Few concessions were achieved, and subsequently King decided on more tightly focused activism aimed at scoring specific symbolic victories.

chain smokin'

Chain smoking is the practice of lighting a new cigarette immediately after one that is finished, sometimes using the finished cigarette to light the next one. The term is most often used more loosely, however, to describe people who smoke constantly, even if not actually "chaining."

Commie

Communism is a classless, moneyless, and stateless social order structured upon common ownership of the means of production. The twentieth century saw intense rivalry between the Communist states in the Socialist world and the capitalist states of the Western world.

Corrie

King's wife was Coretta Scott King (1927-2006). An aspiring classical singer, she met King in college. While raising their four children (Yolanda [1955-2007], Martin III [born 1957], Dexter [born 1961], and Bernice [born 1963, nicknamed Bunny], she participated in many of King's Civil Rights activities. After his death, she became a prominent Civil Rights leader herself.

hoochie coochie

The hoochie coochie was a sexually provocative belly dance that originated at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. The name may have come from the French verb *coucher*, to lie down. The dance became wildly popular during and after the Chicago World's Fair in 1893.

Jackson, Jesse

Jesse Jackson (born 1941) is an American Civil Rights activist and Baptist minister. In the late 1960s he was national director of the SCLC's economic arm, Operation Breadbasket. After King's assassination, Jackson's national profile grew as Ralph Abernathy's waned. He was a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988.

“King Challenges Court Restraint. Vows to March”

This headline appeared in the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* on Thursday, April 4, 1968. A temporary restraining order had forbidden any mass marches, but a protest march was planned for the following Monday.

Lorraine Motel

During the segregation era the Lorraine Motel, located at 450 Mulberry Street, Memphis, was an upscale accommodation that catered to a black clientele. Its guests included Ray Charles, Lionel Hampton, and Aretha Franklin; King stayed there regularly on his visits to Memphis. Historic aspects of the site have been preserved, and new buildings added to accommodate the National Civil Rights Museum, a privately owned complex opened in 1991.

Lucifer

Lucifer means "shining one, morning star." Using the image of the morning star fallen from the sky, Lucifer became another name for Satan, a fallen angel.

Luther, Martin

Martin Luther (1483–1546) was a German monk, former Catholic priest, professor of theology, and seminal figure of the Protestant Reformation. His theology challenged the authority of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church by teaching that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge from God. His translation of the Bible into the vernacular (instead of Latin) had a great impact on both the church and the development of the German language.

Mace

Chemical Mace is the brand name of an early type of self defense spray invented in 1965. The first commercial product of its type, it packaged tear gas dissolved in hydrocarbon solvents into a small aerosol spray can. Today, pepper spray is considered safer and more effective.

Malcolm X

Malcolm X (1925–1965) was an African American Muslim minister and a human rights activist. To his admirers, he was a courageous advocate for the rights of blacks, a man who indicted white America in the harshest terms for its crimes against black Americans; detractors accused him of preaching racism and violence. He has been called one of the most influential African Americans in history. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, published after his 1965 assassination, is considered one of the most influential nonfiction books of the twentieth century.

Mason Temple

Mason Temple, in Memphis, Tennessee, is central headquarters of the Church of God in Christ, the largest African American Pentecostal group in the world. The building was named for Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, founder of the denomination. When it was built in 1941, its 7,500 capacity made it the largest black church building in the United States. It was the site of King's last speech: "I've Been to the Mountaintop," on April 3, 1968, one day before his assassination.

Mayor Loeb

Henry Loeb III (1920–1992) was the mayor of Memphis from 1960 through 1963, and again from 1968 through 1971. He gained national notoriety during the sanitation workers' strike.

Memphis Sanitation Strike

The Memphis Sanitation Strike began on February 11, 1968. Citing years of poor treatment, discrimination, and dangerous working conditions, some 1300 black sanitation workers walked off the job in protest. Two recent on-the-job deaths highlighted this inhumane working environment. Echol Cole and Robert Walker had been crushed by a mechanical malfunction in their truck on February 1; city rules forbade black employees to seek shelter from rain anywhere but in the back of their compressor trucks, with the garbage. King visited Memphis in support of the sanitation workers off and on throughout March.

my brother 'nem

King's younger brother, A. D. King (1930-1969) a Baptist minister and Civil Rights activist, arrived in Memphis the evening of April 3. Besides Ralph Abernathy, others in King's group included Andrew Young, executive director of the SCLC; James Bevel, director of both Direct Action and Nonviolent Education for the SCLC; Chauncey Eskridge, SCLC lawyer; Jesse Jackson, national director of the SCLC's Operation Breadbasket; and Hosea Williams, whom King referred to as his "chief field lieutenant."

my country tis of thee

"My Country, 'Tis of Thee," also known as "America," is a patriotic song whose lyrics were written by Samuel Francis Smith in 1831. The melody used is that of the national anthem of the United Kingdom, "God Save the Queen."

Panther

The Black Panther Party was a black revolutionary socialist organization active from 1966 until 1982, part of the Black Power Movement. It was widely known for its armed citizens' patrols created to evaluate behavior of police officers, and its Free Breakfast for Children program. The group's political goals were often overshadowed, however, by the supposed criminality of members and their confrontational, militant, and violent tactics against police.

paponderance

Camae mispronounces preponderance, the quality of being greater in quantity or importance.

Payne, Larry

On March 28, 1968, in Memphis, King joined a protest march that turned violent when some protestors started breaking windows. Police responded with batons and tear gas. Sixty protestors were injured, and 16-year-old Larry Payne was killed by a shotgun blast fired by patrolmen as he emerged from a basement in a housing development. The police charged that Payne had been seen with a group of looters, and that he was carrying a knife when he was shot, but no knife was ever produced as evidence.

Poor People's Campaign

The Poor People's Campaign was an effort to gain economic justice for poor people in the United States organized by King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. A lengthy occupation of Washington, D.C., was planned for May 1968. Despite the assassination of King on April 4, some 3,000 people lived in a tent city for six weeks on the Washington Mall; but an economic bill of rights was never passed, and leaders spoke with regret about the occupation.

press 'n' curl

Press 'n' curl is a technique long used by African American women to straighten their natural hair with a press, and then curl (style) the hair, often with marcel curling irons.

the Promised Land

According to the Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible), the Promised Land (also known as Canaan) is the territory from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates River, given to the Israelites after Moses led them out of Egypt. Moses himself was not allowed to enter into the Promised Land, but only to see it from atop Mount Nebo.

Riverside

On April 4, 1967, at Riverside Church in New York City, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a controversial anti-war speech called "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence."

Saint Augustine

Saint Augustine (354–430) was an early Christian theologian who helped formulate the doctrine of original sin and developed the concept of the Catholic Church as a spiritual City of God distinct from the material Earthly City.

siddity

Urban slang for uppity, pretentious, stuck-up, conceited. Often preceded by the word "high." The word has been in use since at least the 1940s; its origins are obscure.

square

Slang term for a tobacco cigarette, popular as far back as the 1920s with prisoners and jazz musicians. The term may have come from the square shape of cigarette papers or early packs when cigarettes were shorter.

U.S. Marshals

Created in 1789, the United States Marshals Service is the enforcement arm of the U.S. federal courts. U.S. Marshals are responsible for protecting officers of the court and court buildings, assisting with court security and prisoner transport, and serving arrest warrants.

Tom Lee Park

Located immediately west of downtown Memphis, Tom Lee Park runs parallel to the Mississippi River for about one mile. Tom Lee was an African American river worker who saved the lives of 32 passengers of a sinking steamboat in 1925. The park was named in his honor in 1954.

Washington Mall

The National Mall is a park in downtown Washington, D.C. It includes the entire area between the Lincoln Memorial and the United States Capitol, including the Washington Monument.

“Why America is going to Hell ... “

When he died on Thursday, April 4, 1968, King was writing a sermon for the following Sunday entitled “Why America May Go to Hell.” Presumably it was intended to promote King’s new focus on anti-poverty and anti-Vietnam War efforts. Some leaders in the Civil Rights community objected to this shift in focus.

Woolworth’s

Founded in 1878, the F. W. Woolworth Company was the most successful American five-and-dime store chain, creating the modern retail model that stores follow worldwide today.

Ya dig?

The expression is thought to derive from the African Wolof word *dega*, meaning “look here” or “understand.” The expression “dig it” meaning “understand” first emerged among jazz musicians in the 1950s, and then expanded to the drug and youth culture of the 1960s.

Young, Andrew

Andrew Young (born 1932) is a politician, diplomat, activist, and pastor from Georgia. He has served as a US Congressman, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, and Mayor of Atlanta. He served as President of the National Council of Churches USA, was a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) during the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, and was a supporter and friend of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Since leaving political office in 1989, Young has founded or served in a large number of organizations founded on public policy, political lobbying, and international relations, with a special focus on Africa.

Going to the Theatre: Audience Role & Responsibility

You, the audience, are one of the most important parts of any performance.

Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:



Leave mp3 players, cameras, mobile phones, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home.

You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.

Food and drink must stay in the lobby.

The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.

Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.

Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call because this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.