

# THE BLACK EAGLE OF HARLEM

A dissertation submitted to the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies  
Drew University in partial fulfillment of  
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# THE BLACK EAGLE OF HARLEM



ICON INDEPENDENT FILMS

PRESENTS

A FILM BY BILLY TOOMA

STARRING GUY E. FRANKLIN, JOHN GRÜESSER, MARK JULIAN,  
AKIL KOKAYI KHALFANI, DAVID SHAFTEL, JOSHUA STOFF

NARRATED BY MICHAEL VILA

ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY NAJEE R. SMITH ORIGINAL SCORE COMPOSED BY WILL LEWIS

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## ABSTRACT

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*The Black Eagle of Harlem* is a study in biography and forgotten history. Col. Hubert Fauntleroy Julian – aviator, soldier of fortune, and arms dealer – led a life of high adventure, finding himself at the center and periphery of major world events. Julian drew headlines wherever he went, generated a fair share of controversy – but most importantly – fought against racial attitudes and shattered countless stereotypes. He flew before Charles Lindbergh, traveled to Ethiopia before most Americans had seen their own Grand Canyon, and pushed for the advancement of his race even while many of his own people vilified him with accusations of being a flamboyant charlatan. Julian’s Zelig-like ability to adapt and take on multiple personas helped him persevere in the face of adversity. The challenge of telling the most honest version of Julian’s story is what drove this project. The documentary spawned from this study utilizes a combination of interviews, archival materials, voiceovers, and original artwork to recreate the amazing – sometimes unbelievable – life of the Black Eagle, one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s most intriguing icons.

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## PREFACE

The first time I heard about Hubert Julian was during an interview with Philip Chamberlin for my first documentary, *Fly First & Fight Afterward: The Life of Col. Clarence D. Chamberlin* (2011). Philip mentioned how Julian, whose moniker was the Black Eagle, would have Chamberlin fly him around New York City in the 1920s so he could perform parachuting stunts. He would get himself arrested, have Chamberlin bail him out, then proceed to do it all over again. That was *it*. That was the end of the story. Philip had nothing left to say beyond that short anecdote (he also mistakenly said Julian was from Jamaica rather than Trinidad). Chamberlin himself, in his autobiography *Record Flights* (1928), dedicated a short paragraph to Julian, calling him by an earlier stage name: the Ace of Spades. Hubert Julian did not factor into that documentary.

The second time I encountered Hubert Julian was when several individuals, linked to me via Chamberlin, sent queries regarding the Black Eagle – had I ever looked into the man’s life? It was early December 2014 and I was in search of my dissertation’s subject. More serendipitous than coincidence, as I look back at that moment now, I thought, at the very least, Julian’s story might be an interesting read. His Wikipedia page was sparse, but I found that an autobiography had been published in 1964 and a biography, by John Peer Nugent, in 1971. I realized, after purchasing used copies of both books, that Julian’s life was lacking a clear, concise, and credible story. A Kindle-exclusive book, from 2014, by Guy E. Franklin, was more a listing of factoids, debunking stories Julian told in his autobiography, culled from some newspapers and websites like Ancestry.com than a true biography. An honest version of his story, uninhibited by misinformation, tall-tales, and outright lies of past retellings, did not exist.

What finally led me to choose Hubert Julian as my dissertation's subject had little to do with the color of his skin; I never saw it that way – ever. Yes, he was a black man, but his story, while inextricably linked to his race, extends far beyond it. I was discovering, through my rudimentary research, that Julian lay upon the same ash heap of history's forgotten ones. I found Chamberlin in that same pile. I am a storyteller. I am interested in characters who radiate vigorous personalities. And while Julian's race and story walk hand-in-hand, I, a first-generation American of Assyrian and Italian descent, felt and still feel a kinship with the man. It cannot be put into words, but it is there; it exists. The challenge to do his life justice, to retell his story by filling in the holes and finding out what was fact and what was fiction is what ultimately led me to choose Julian as my subject. His iconic fire, seen and felt by millions around the world during his lifetime, had been nearly extinguished; I was going to pour as much fuel onto it as possible.

A quick search on the Internet yielded a PBS documentary from 1987. *Flyers in Search of a Dream* profiles, over the course of one hour, the lives of several black aviators of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The likes of Bessie Coleman, James Herman Banning, and, surprisingly, Hubert Julian, were featured, with a little under ten minutes dedicated to the latter. He was mocked, called flamboyant, and generally regarded a failure as an aviator (and I realized that, on an aesthetic level, the filmmakers had used archival materials out of context). I was shocked at the way in which the talking heads of the film tossed his exploits, where aeronautics were concerned, aside, and ignored completely the rest of his adventures about which I had read. This leads to the issue brought up by Jonathan Haslam that “the biographer is perhaps better employed ‘exposing’ rather than ‘imposing’ moral judgement.” It became clear, after those sixty minutes had lapsed, that I just did not *want* to tell Julian's story, rather, I *needed* to tell it. By making this decision I knew I was tasking myself with weeding through the many falsities, half-truths, and

inconsistencies in order to create a compelling story, anchored in fact, which would show that the Black Eagle was a legitimate contributor to the history of aviation, and, that once he hung up his wings, found himself at the center and periphery of major world events, infusing his flair for the dramatic all along the way.

A bit of deception arises when one searches for scholarship on Julian. Excluding the aforementioned biographies and PBS documentary, there is little else to find. What exists includes several essays and entries found in anthologies and an encyclopedia. Anyone who has read his autobiography, however, will at once see that each of the texts in question are simple regurgitations of it. Even then it becomes a scavenger hunt of sorts: “the historian chooses, and ultimately determines, from a multitude of conflicting sources what constitute the facts of history” (Haslam). Special attention should be placed upon the information regarding Julian having gone to England to study medicine before WWI and his receiving a pilot’s license in Canada after the 1918 armistice. Both instances are false; they *never* happened. People have been buying into these stories since Julian started telling them back in the 1920s. It was also outside the scope of David Shaftel, author of a 2008 article for the Smithsonian Institution on Julian, to understand that the Black Eagle *was* in Trinidad when he witnessed the American aviator, Frank Boland, die in a plane crash rather than him being in England at the time and making up having been witness to the event. Even Henry Louis Gates, in his co-authored *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience* (1999), fell victim to this misinformation. In short, there is no modern-day scholarship on Julian which relies on primary sources outside of the autobiography. I knew what my mission was upon this realization.

Primary sources were vital if I was going to craft the documentary’s screenplay. A cold search, in early January 2015, produced Newspapers.com. A free preview showed that there

were potentially hundreds of articles featuring Hubert Julian. I was able to access *The New York Age* and *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* for a small fee. This information was readily available to anyone who wished to seek it out. None of this was new material, lost to history, and now suddenly being rediscovered in someone's basement. David McCullough points out that "though I've never written a book where I didn't find *something* new...it's more likely you see something that's been around a long time that others haven't seen." It was plain to see that there was just too much information out there for any one person to sift through, but it was up to me to make sense of what I was finding. *The New York Times* was next, but resulted in less than the ones that preceded it. Then I discovered *The Chicago Defender's* and *The Pittsburgh Courier's* archives. The puzzle that was Julian's life was beginning to take form. I learned that his first parachuting stunt was two months *prior* to the one he claimed it to be, which makes sense, because he got more press coverage the second time.

There was one newspaper archive, however, to which I could not gain access. *The New York Amsterdam News'* database belongs exclusively to ProQuest. No college or university I am, or ever have been, affiliated with, was able to help me directly. Thanks to the wonderful crew at Drew University's Library, I learned that Seton Hall University would provide me the access I needed. Once done there, in June 2015, the core of my research was accomplished. Hubert Julian's life, between 1922 and 1983, was accounted for on a near month-to-month basis. The trick now was how to put it all together. There had to be a narrator controlling the story. There had to be direct quotations from the Black Eagle himself. And there had to be direct quotations from the newspaper articles. All of this was quite clear. An interesting story, seeped in facts, was needed. I had to take the biographies, cross reference them with the newspaper articles, and determine the most honest version of Julian's life. That took weeks to accomplish and when I



started to write the actual screenplay, after eight months of research and outlining, the process was still ongoing as I had to ensure I was maintaining objectivity. But to delay the writing any longer would have hurt me more than helped. McCullough calls research seductive, that the love of it can create the “tendency...to wander off on tangents,” and Brian Jay Jones says something similar, pointing out that he knows he is ready to write once “I can sit down and make even just a chronological outline of my subject’s life.” I had the bulk of research completed. I had Julian’s life written out in front of me. It was time to write.

I am a relatively disciplined person when I have to be. But what I did in order to write *The Black Eagle of Harlem* between September and December 2015 goes beyond what I have done in the past. Every Friday, between eight in the morning and twelve noon, I wrote. Nonstop. No breaks. Just writing. Every week. Sometimes I would add a Saturday morning to my routine if the previous day’s work called for it. Jones wrote *Jim Henson: The Biography* (2013) in his basement office, with a huge whiteboard, illustrating the biography’s outline, at his disposal. McCullough has what he calls “World Headquarters,” a small building in the back of his property, void of a computer, telephone, and even running water. My “war room” was my basement. It provided me with the quiet and lack of distractions necessary for me to write uninterrupted.

I had to be mindful of the story I wanted to tell. Always wanting to start at the end of Julian’s adventures, I wrote a prologue, placing him in a United Nations prison in the early 1960s. Geoffrey C. Ward seems to disagree with this approach when he says that “You should not assume that either the audience or anyone in the film knows how it’s going to end up....It’s less interesting, to me anyway” (Bernard and Robin 139). I agree with him to a certain extent. While I do not believe you should give away the ending to your story at the very beginning, if

you tease your audience with a tidbit of things to come, they will be drawn into the story quicker. Sheila Cullen Bernard writes that as “long as the underlying chronology remains intact, you can enter and exit the story where you like” (“Documentary”), so I took that approach when crafting the very beginning of the screenplay. I have done this before in my first documentary, however, I kept it short and to the point. The prologue of *The Black Eagle of Harlem*, though, is more in-depth and I extended the drama to allow an audience to really understand that they are about to watch the life story of a man who talked his way out of every jam he ever got into, but not at that moment up on the screen. It is this desire of mine to make sure that viewers are aware that no one, not even the focal point of the documentary, is safe. I am not trying to create dread. I am trying to create a moment of suspense.

Bernard writes that even though filmmakers may have extensively outlined their story, they should also let the natural flow of the creative process take its course and not be stifled. She points out that “the best documentaries evolve in ways the filmmakers can’t anticipate” (“Documentary”). For example, I planned out, well in advance, the type of visual mixture necessary to tell the story. To bring in a commissioned artist to render images for me only served to benefit the storytelling process. It was a much better alternative than finding miscellaneous photographs which would not make any sense up on the screen: “In moderation, b-roll can be useful, but it can also be a weak alternative to images that specifically and dynamically advance your story” (Bernard, “Documentary”). If I went the route that Ken Burns advocates for, then instead of viewers having their eyes gazing upon a wonderfully drawn picture of my subject, they might be looking at a newspaper clipping reporting on said moment. While I have included periodicals as visuals (as well as photographs and newsreel footage) I did so via a balance between what I call traditional archival materials and reimagined archival supplements.

Burns says that, for his films, illustration is something he wants to *avoid*. He claims that it “is the thing that keeps it running at a rather superficial level” (Cunningham 27), then goes on to make it clear that *photography* is what will resonate with an audience because of its preserved realism. The major aesthetic brought to *The Black Eagle of Harlem* is the use of illustrations, but just because an idol of mine and I do not see eye-to-eye does not mean either of us are doing anything wrong. Burns has always been certain to point out that style and storytelling comes from an *organic* process, which is what brought me to the use of original artwork. I did not intend to build upon the use of illustrations that was started with my second documentary, *Poetry of Witness* (2015); it happened in an organic manner, entrenched in necessity. Viewers *need* to see Hubert Julian, the titular Black Eagle, parachute down into Harlem, NY wearing a crimson jumpsuit while playing a saxophone. There is not a single photograph that captures the moment. So my style, grown from a sequence of perceiving what works and what does not work, characterizes how I believe the story should be represented and presented to an audience.

Najee R. Smith is a twenty-one-year old undergraduate at Essex County College whose talents extend far beyond his years. He was introduced to me in November 2015 by an adjunct colleague of mine when I asked her if she could recommend an artist for my documentary. We hit it off right away. Najee has this uncanny ability to treat his eyes as if they were a camera’s lens. I commissioned him, based off of my estimates, for two hundred pieces of original artwork. He signed his contract and began working in February 2016. We would sit together, go over my notes, chapter by chapter, and he would have deadlines of seven to ten days. This went on until July when he handed me his final batch of what we were calling the First Round, those images I absolutely had to have. Between August and September he completed the Second Round, and finally, in early December, Najee gave me a handful of images I realized could be utilized in

place of stock photographs. He produced, in all, around one hundred and ninety pieces of artwork, ten under my estimate.

The archival materials: photographs, newspaper clippings, and newsreel footage, were easy enough to acquire once I knew where to look. A dozen or so photographs of Julian were found via a simple Google search. Nearly fifty visual pieces, however, called for me to visit the Library of Congress' Prints & Photographs Division. It was the same place McCullough had discovered the photographs of the Johnstown Flood. You can imagine my utter glee standing in that work area, making copies of photographs which had not seen the light of day in probably half a century. The newspaper clippings were easy enough because I had saved every single article I had come across. A simple PDF to JPEG conversion was all that was needed. The only newsreel footage that actually features Julian speaking, that I could find in a useable state, comes from the British Pathé archive. It is a wonderful thirty-second clip with Julian, complete with his fake English accent, speaking on the plight of the Ethiopian people. While I was able to obtain a relatively modest collection of archival materials, my initial gut feeling of needing an artist was definitely validated. I could not have made this documentary without Najee's artwork. There was never going to be enough visual material without it all.

Because I have always been fascinated by the way Burns makes a documentary, I knew I wanted to include voices other than that of the narrator's and interviewees. Burns says that "A hallmark of my style is not just a third-person narrator, but something I pioneered, which is a chorus of voices speaking many different things from the past – first-person voices" (Cunningham 34). I found several individuals who I thought had interesting-sounding voices and who could help me tell Julian's story. A Drew University classmate of mine, David Hunscher, provided the voice of the historically white newspapers. Former student of my mine, and actor in

his own right, Raymond Spencer, recited direct quotations from the historically black newspapers. Rebecca L. Williams, my Humanities Division colleague, was more than willing to provide the voices for Bessie Coleman, journalist Thelma Berlack Boozer, and Julian's widow, Doreen. Shaheed K. Woods, introduced to me by a mutual friend of ours, performed the pivotal role of Julian himself. With just that thirty-second newsreel clip he was able to replicate a very Black Eagle-sounding voice which humanizes the subject greatly. These were all recorded between the middle of February and very beginning of March 2016.

There was only ever one name for me regarding who would provide the narration. Michael Vila was the narrator of my first documentary, but had since moved out of New Jersey. But once I called and asked him if he would be willing to come back for a long weekend to help me out he did not even hesitate. Over the course of Memorial Day Weekend the two of us sequestered ourselves in my basement and Michael proceeded to record his entire part. It was tedious. It was grueling. It was hot: the central air conditioning in my house had stopped working, but we got through it.

The interviews were conducted between the end of March and the very end of May. I knew who I needed to get early on. Joshua Stoff, Curator of the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Long Island, New York, came on as my aviation expert. Guy was the only living biographer of my subject and I was able to find him via Facebook. David came on board after I found his email and sent him my proposal. John Gruesser, Professor of English at Kean University, and I had met, quite by accident, at a conference one year before I conducted his interview. His book, *Black on Black: Twentieth-Century African American Writing on Africa* (2000) covers parts of Julian's exploits. My colleague, Akil Kokayi Khalfani, Professor of Sociology, rounded out my cast of experts. But, without this final individual, the documentary would be sorely lacking.

Quite by accident, via another Google search, I found Mark Julian, the Black Eagle's son through his third marriage. Mark and I communicated for the first time right before Christmas 2014 and we have been on this journey together ever since. The words and phrases he used during his interview touched my heart, and I know that audiences will immediately connect with him. I followed Burns' model of interviewing: "They never see the questions in advance, so every talking head in any film I've made is a happy accident of trial and error" (Cunningham 28). The only thing I did differently was send each interviewee a very brief outline of the subjects I was going to be addressing. So for David, who was well-versed in Trinidadian literature and Julian's time in Ethiopia, would address those areas rather than get into the aeronautical aspects of the subject because that is where Joshua fit in. For them just to have that little bit of information prior to sitting down for the camera helped them form abstracts which we brought into concrete statements during the interviewing process.

The editing of the documentary began in June. I set up different phases in order to be successful in this endeavor and not go insane in the process. The first thing to do was piece together the third-person narration, followed by the first-person voiceovers. This took several weeks. Not only did I have to listen to each recording, I also had to choose which takes sounded best, and sometimes I had to splice multiple takes together. The second phase, the laying in of the interviews, was next. It was necessary to watch each one at least twice, cut out anything that was not completely relevant, and then decide how to fit the chosen clips into the film's editing timeline. This part was not difficult so much as it was time consuming in that I had to make sure not to overwhelm the documentary with talking heads. The result is a very well balanced sprinkling of interview clips throughout the film with each individual having nearly equal speaking time (a happy accident). The visuals were next.

If anyone ever tries to tell you it is easy to lay visuals into a film's editing timeline please let them know they are full of it. This is, by far, the hardest part. But, truth be told, it can be the most fun as well because it is at this phase when all of your hard work during the filmmaking process starts to really feel like it is paying off. It is hard in that you begin marrying yourself to specific visuals for specific moments. Then you need to figure out just how long you want to stay on a particular image before moving on to the next. Once this is all accomplished you have to bring movement into the mix. I believe in utilizing the pan and scan function, manipulating the imagery to move up and down, zoom in and out, whatever is necessary, in order to create a dynamic look to the film. This, together with the voice work, generates a flow that can quicken or slow the pace of a film depending upon how the filmmaker wishes it. I chose to have constantly moving imagery, at varying speeds, because I see my documentary as a living, breathing entity that needs room to spread out and expand its reach towards an audience.

I love the use of music in a Ken Burns documentary. The consistent playing of the "Ashokan Farewell" in *The Civil War* (1990) completely ties an audience to the film. If you remember nothing else from that work you will remember that haunting melody. But Burns has his soundtrack generated at the beginning of a project's editing phase rather than at its end (Cunningham 25). I fear this process because as an editor I may become too much a slave to the music and cut the visuals and audio in a way which does not make sense. Obviously this works for Burns, but for me I need the freedom to edit without musical tunes influencing me. My first two documentaries were scored by Will Lewis, a musician who can produce quality unlike any I have seen before meeting him or since. Will and I can powwow for a few minutes and he can compose, off the fly, a brief glimpse of what our back and forth bantering inspires him to think of. I have told him, time and again, no one else will ever score my documentaries. But *The Black*

*Eagle of Harlem* is a three and a half hour film, surpassing both of my previous documentaries in runtime by far. It dawned on me that if Will and I changed up the way in which he scores my films, creating specific music for specific scenes, he could still produce an amazing soundtrack without taking up so much of his time and charging me more money than I was willing to spend. We came up with the idea to have him create piano-based themes, six in total, ranging from a happy tune to one of dread. The fact that he was able to do this within a month and deliver a week before Thanksgiving 2016 shows how professional he is. Once I had the soundtrack I was able to lay it into the film's timeline, finally getting to add some sound effects at the same time in order to spice up a few moments.

There is a sense of relief when the filmmaking process comes to its conclusion. Feelings of euphoria mixed with dread are present as well. I do not know what people will think of this documentary. Those who I have screened it for tell me they think it is wonderful, but I often question their critiques, mostly out of anxiety. But the moment when the end credits flash and the words "A Film by Billy Tooma" can be seen is when I can take in a long breath and feel vindicated. It is *my* film. Yes, others were absolutely necessary for it to be created, but, in the end, as Burns puts it: "it's really important to know that I'm the cipher who stands in for a great number of very talented people who also make up this style..." (Cunningham 18). Every decision was mine. This cannot be stressed enough. What I have created is a dissertation unlike anything else done in the Arts & Letters program at Drew University. I placed a lot of pressure on my shoulders. If I failed then no one else would probably ever be allowed to follow my lead in the future. But I did not fail. This documentary is my most ambitious one, and it is held together by a strong story, voiceovers, visuals, and a musical score which combine for a perfect storm of cinematic beauty. It reinforced my long-held belief that documentary is scholarly. I do



not have to write book reviews, critical analysis essays, or books if I want to practice and hone my academic interests. Documentary has given me an outlet to create and educate at the same time. No one can take that away from me because all I would need to do is show them the work I have been able to accomplish and let it speak for itself. For the longest time I described my work in documentary as a “professional hobby.” I no longer see it that way. Documentary is my form of academic scholarship and I will continue working in the medium until it no longer satisfies my storytelling urges.

The immediate results of *The Black Eagle of Harlem* are that it fills a niche in the study of Black History as well as globalizes the notion of what it means to be of color. Julian may not have espoused the same messages as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Jr., or Malcolm X, but his contributions to society and culture cannot be denied. The Black Eagle was an everyday fixture in the minds of those in and around Harlem, and once he took his show on the road, both stateside and internationally, the worldwide community knew his name. Julian reinvented himself as he saw fit. He saw himself as a person who had so much to accomplish, regardless of his race. In all, the Black Eagle was an eccentric character who drew attention, both positive and negative, wherever he went. He saw himself as a man of the world, a cosmopolitan in the truest sense of the term’s modern definition.

## INTRODUCTION

“We are not just a Babel of voices. Nor is the culture that surrounds us”

– Lois W. Banner

History should not be viewed as an artless regurgitation of facts, figures, and dates. The story of humanity should be approached from a more humanistic perspective. The implementation of the study of biography and documentary can build bridges across time, creating connections, thoughts, and opinions among students in ways a standardized, oftentimes sterile, textbook cannot. But the two are, more often than not, viewed as oddities, unfit for classroom use. Academia does not receive them well. Jonathan Haslam writes that biography is, unfortunately, “seen as somewhat eccentric: a whimsical detour from well-travelled direct routes...,” but it could not be any further from the truth. Biography is not a quirky genre meant to be seen as an alternative to a mainstream understanding of history. And documentary has suffered from what many films in other genres suffer from: an output of questionable titles of poor production quality. The reluctance to rely on it as a teaching tool has grown because people tend to focus on the negative results of working within its realm rather than on the positive. Geoffrey C. Ward says that it “really is a terrible shame that there should be any hostility between serious filmmakers and serious historians because the cause of informing the public about the past we all share is a great one” (Bernard and Robin 136-137). It becomes this constant Sisyphus-like struggle to push for the use of documentaries within education. Conservative academics like tangible teaching tools. Documentaries represent an intangible audio/visual experience. This is what they are wary of. Students must be taught to understand that they do not exist within “a vacuum, and [that] the social, political, economic and historical forces” of their times were spawned over millennia by *real* people, not just printed names with birth and death

dates next to them in parentheses (Fowler 54). History, if handled via a literary (not to be confused with fictional) experience (in this case through biography and documentary) can stimulate and reinvigorate the learning experience.

Biography embodies years of work. A scholarly paper does not, on average, do the same. Many academics look at the genre as time-consuming. One work produced within a three-year period gets outweighed by several shorter works within that same amount of time. Publish, publish, publish – this is what many conservative academics of today have had ingrained into their minds. Brian Jay Jones says that he is not exactly sure where the disdain originates from but that perhaps biography is “viewed as navel-gazing” and that “there’s also a shaking of the head, too, when...[conservative academics] hear that someone is writing a three-volume biography of some Obscure Left-Handed Nearsighted Unappreciated Poet.” But no one should be allowed to judge the biographer working on that. Leave that individual alone. Once the work is completed and made available then judge it by its ability to teach. If it succeeds then no one should question its merits.

The low opinion of biography in conservative academia can be linked to the way in which this type of historian tends to think of the genre as second-rate. There is a clear indication of jealousy on the conservative historian’s part due to biography being relatively more accessible than the works they are producing. Lois W. Banner writes that this type of historian sees biography “as inherently limited because it involves only one life, derives from a belles-lettres tradition rather than a scientific or sociological one” (580). It becomes an “us versus them” mentality on the part of the conservative historian who is forced to compete with authors who may not possess their level of education but who are producing works of value, being read by large audiences, and receiving praise. The belles-lettres tradition notion points to a mental

disconnect many suffer from when viewing biography because, as H. Ramsey Fowler writes, biography “and autobiography are both forms of fiction, and that they deserve to be thought of seriously as literature and to be *taught* in the...classroom” (52). So because biography is formed through a much more creative/artistic process the conservative historian balks at its value; many would rather see hard facts presented in such a way that would cause learners to lose interest, or worse, not retain any of the information.

Creative forms must be allowed to figure themselves out through trial and error. Nothing is completely defined all at once, and, definitions can change over the course of time. Biography has changed greatly since Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* and so too has documentary changed since the days of Robert J. Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* (1922). Ken Burns admits that “what makes documentary a kind of lesser animal, in the scale of things, is that for too long it was a didactic, essayistic thing; an expression of someone else’s already-arrived-at ends, and not interested in narrative” (Cunningham 33). There is this sense of proving the worth of documentaries among filmmakers. At the heart of that, which is the same for biographies, is making sure a *good* story is being told.

Biography must *teach* its readers *something*. It cannot be dry, yet it cannot be a fabrication. The biographer must understand that while they are limited by the concrete facts, they are not bound to those facts in that the storytelling process should read like a government document, or a very well-researched dissertation. David McCullough is quoting E.M. Forster when he says that “If I tell you that the king died and then the queen died, that’s a sequence of events. If I tell you that the king died and then the queen died of grief, that’s a story,” and it proves true to the structure of biography. Nobody wants to open a book and read through a laundry list of information. That is not interesting. But a framework narrative which ties that

information together creates a dynamic that entertains and informs without warping what really happened.

The best biographies are the ones which can present the information that the author has accumulated and made approachable for readers. Biography and history should not be viewed as separate areas of study, rather, the former should serve to enhance the latter. Both are “based on archival research, [which] interweaves historical categories and methodologies, reflects current political and theoretical concerns, and raises complex issues of truth and proof” (Banner 580). It ends up being entirely in the presentation of the material. The biographer, by forming a coherent, honest story based on primary source material is going to outperform the historian by generating an accessible style of prose. If anything, biography should challenge the conservative historian to deliver their scholarship in a more creative way.

Documentary, regardless of the subjects being covered, should work in a similar way. There needs to be a deep narrative constructed in order for the filmmaker to convey their message to viewers. Burns points out that the “medium is so richly panned for being superficial. And in many cases that’s a deserved thing...” (Cunningham 33). He is speaking out against those who construct an entire story on paper, film it, and call it a day. There is a coldness to that approach, which translates to the screen, and ultimately turns audiences and critics off. The same approach to biography is the same to documentary even when the latter is not biographical: the accessibility of the subject matter, not dumbed down, but not ivory tower, rather, a mixture of fact and an entertaining presentation.

The responsibility of the documentary filmmaker is to understand that what they are creating “is intimately tied to historical memory. Not only does it seek to reconstruct historical narrative, but it often functions as an historical document itself” (Rabinowitz 119). So the

filmmaker takes on the responsibility of doing right by their subjects in order to present their stories. The audience is not ignorant. Many who come to a certain documentary are bringing their preconceived notions and ideas. The filmmaker's duty is to ensure that if they are going to challenge said preconceptions then there is evidence to back up their decisions because the work "calls upon its audience to participate in historical remembrance by presenting an intimate view of reality" (Rabinowitz 119). If there is new information being brought to light that could perhaps paint the subject in a different, not even necessarily negative, way then the filmmaker needs to be aware that their audience's acceptance of this new construct is imperative.

The shortsightedness of many conservative scholars comes from resentment rooted in their own education. Biography is *specific*, not *broad*. It can cover the lifespan of a person, but that number of years is unlikely going to get close to and exceed one hundred. History classes – general ones, surveys, etc. – go well beyond the times of any one individual. So biography goes against the curriculum that exudes what is considered "well-roundedness." It trumps the conservative academic's view that history needs to be studied a certain way. Jones believes that the accessibility of biography lends itself the audience which the academics simply do not have. He says that "I have no idea how a telephone works.... I would never buy or read a book with the schematics of the phone.... But I sure would like reading about Alexander Graham Bell trying to figure it all out," which, by doing so, Jones feels he would grow to appreciate the device that much more. It is the focus on individuals, even specific *things*, which guide people towards biography as well as the characterization of those who lived through the events and happenings.

Biographers are all too often accused of being flash-in-the-pan experts on their subjects, leaving them behind once the project has been completed with the next one on the horizon.

Nothing can be further from the truth. Biographers, especially those who do not dedicate themselves to one specific person, place, or thing (which is what many conservative historians end up doing), must become deeply immersed in the time and place their subjects lived in. They are “detectives and interpreters, attempting to illuminate the past and to interweave its threads in new and compelling patterns.... A life span of seventy years, after all, encompasses nearly a century of historical development” (Banner 582). Biographers and historians are not unlike one another, so the divide amongst them is ridiculous. Being able to pick out key pieces of information that have never been looked at or have been looked at in only one way is what both sides end up doing in order to produce their work, and sometimes it leads them to more projects. McCullough became so entrenched in the life of John Adams and the 18<sup>th</sup> century that he had enough leftover research material to write *1776* (2005). Biographers may step away from their subjects but they never fully divorce them. Those who criticize them must come to understand that the desire to tell stories is what drives them to go from subject to subject.

Information, presented in a classroom at any level, is all too often watered down. Students do not feel connected to anything. This causes them to not care. When Ward says that “history is biography – what interests people is what happened to other people” (Bernard and Robin 135), he is emphasizing the importance of not glossing over the fact that the stories being told are about *people*. He further states that history “is just dates and movements if you don’t have some individuals to hold on to” (Bernard and Robin 135), which strengthens what Jones said above: no one wants to learn cold facts without a reason to *care*. If anything, above all else, what separates humanity from the rest of the animal kingdom it is that we tell stories. Whether they are fact or fiction depends on taste.

It is that personalized connection that the stories told in documentaries are trying to generate. Students, at all levels, are trying to form better understandings of the times they sprung from, currently are living in, and the ones they hope to have a hand in forming. Arch A. Mercey was talking about the importance of incorporating documentary films into the classroom as far back as 1939 when he wrote that books alone could never give students the type of experience films could because by bringing the latter into the mix “the teacher is taking his class on a field trip to every corner of the earth and the teacher can in fact dramatize problems of the social sciences in his own area through the use of the camera” (308). Nearly eighty years later the same philosophies are being fought for where the study of documentary is concerned. To watch a film is to see it, feel it, internalize it, and react to it. When Arthur H. Auerbach began using documentaries as part of his grade school curriculum he was careful to ensure that discussions immediately followed a screening because “these provided not only focused review on the specific topic but also tapped into the students’ emotional response” (518). The textbook is too often skimmed in order to memorize what may or may not be on a test. Students are cheated out of developing an in-depth knowledge base. By using documentary as a teaching tool the students become active participants because the audio/visual experience enriches their previously abstract notion of historical, even contemporary, events.

The characters of history must be the ones telling the story, even in a biography of a nonperson. In McCullough’s *The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914* (1977) the story is told from the perspective of those who were involved with the construction, from the politicians who pushed for it to the laypeople who physically brought it into existence. McCullough says that history “is best understood as an unfolding story. I think there’s more intellectual honesty in seeing it that way, from *within* what happened.” Readers



develop a rapport this way. It is a bond that cannot be formed when reading a textbook. There is no humanization going on.

Just as biography brings vibrancy to the written word so too can documentary bring it to the screen. But it must also adhere to what is most important and that is to be lively. Burns considers himself “an emotional archaeologist, uninterested in the dry dates and facts of the past” (Cunningham 21), which speaks to his need to not fail his audience. People, a lot of the time, do not know what they want. Sometimes they have to be told, but not in a forceful way. Interest in the Civil War grew because of Burns’ documentary on it. In that film he had to gather voices from all across the splintered nation. But he knew that “you cannot manipulate character development to fit into the arc of your narrative, but at the same time, the character development is a given because you know what happens to that person” (Cunningham 35). Audiences sitting down to watch his documentary knew the Confederacy was going to lose, but it was the journey, via the various voices, which kept them fixated.

The interdisciplinary nature of documentaries (and by extension, biographies) challenges the conservative academic to admit that fields of study are not isolated islands. They should begin to comprehend that documentary films “have made important gestures and interventions into both public and private history.... Documentary then is historical filmmaking; but documentary crosses a number of disciplinary divides: anthropology for one” (Rabinowitz 123). The textbooks put in students’ laps do not provide them with a full understanding of the ramifications of historical events beyond what publishers have determined to be relevant. They will learn that Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence and was the third president of the United States of America, but watching Burns’ film on the founding father will make them aware of Jefferson having lived the end of his life in debt and bankruptcy, and

reading Annette Gordon-Reed's *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (2008) will show students that the whitewashing of history has sadly been, and continues to be, widespread.

A question arises out of this need to understand what has come before us: are we getting the entire story? The short answer is no. The longer answer, according to Joseph Epstein, deals with the fact "that even the most superior biography cannot be complete. Biographies may be authorized; they can even be impressively authoritative; but they are never, ultimately, definitive". Jones' *Washington Irving* (2008) boasts on its cover that it is "The Definitive Biography of America's First Bestselling Author." The author says that he "*hates* that subtitle" as he always thought his subject should have been advertised as "An American Original." When asked the question of definitive versus representational, Jones' answer was: "Can a biography be definitive? Boy, you've got me. Until people stop being so...wonderfully inscrutable, probably not. Sorry, disappointing answer, I know." His response is not a disappointment; actually, it strengthens the fact that biographers are never going to know every exact detailed moment of their subjects' lives, so they have to research and discover what they can.

It becomes a combination of consciously and subconsciously deciding what goes into the telling of a life, be it someone else's or the author's own. Conclusive and concise is what the conservative historian wants. They want to know when one war ended and another began or when one emperor's reign was cut short by a coup. But biography works differently because it is working less towards conclusive and more towards what is most *accurate*. Fowler points out that neither Plutarch nor Thomas Carlyle intended to write what he calls chronicles. Instead, he writes that they "were writing interpretations that were meant to isolate, to crystallize, and to immortalize great fortune, great genius, great talent, or even great folly.... [They] were searching for the essential truth of each life portrayed" (52). Falsities have no place in biography or history,

yet the former tends to brave with treading those waters because the biographers recognize the importance of being able to, like a writer of fiction, select, emphasize, condense, and arrange materials, knowing they must stay true to the information that has been gathered (Fowler 52).

Ward says the same where documentary is concerned: “Nobody making a film is ever trying to make a definitive anything. No book is definitive, and certainly no film can be” (Bernard and Robin 136). Even though the documentaries made from his screenplays have runtimes of eleven, fourteen, and twenty-three hours in length, none are the *definitive* versions of the War Between the States, the Roosevelts, and the National Pastime, respectively. And this is what brings people back to biography, especially when there are multiple retellings of the same life.

The very idea that any one biography or documentary could tell the *entire* story is ridiculous. A married couple might be together for over fifty years and still not know one another entirely. Burns sees the major task of constructing biographical documentaries as “a failing enterprise – because we don’t even know the people closest to us, our family members, our loved ones. It’s impossible to know anybody. But the effort is what propels the human adventure...” (Cunningham 32). He is not damning those who tell the stories of others or the histories of places, things, and events, rather, he is saying this is why it should never stop. Burns’ films are not the only ones to look at the subjects covered. Go into any library or bookstore and numerous biographies on, say, Napoleon Bonaparte, are there. People want to learn. People want to be entertained. They should be allowed to do those two simultaneously.

Biography, in all of its forms, has become quite popular, particularly in the United States. There is this desire to take in the life of another, learn from them, and feel connected to the subject. Biography “at its best is a good read, and the older one gets, the more attractive and

entertaining biography becomes” (Haslam), which signifies something important: a rebellion against education. Adolescents are not checking out or buying biographies in droves because they are still suffering under a flawed system of instruction. It is taking people longer to find themselves attracted to the genre of biography. This is key. Something within them realizes this is how they should learn. They think that they have to be older to be able to appreciate the stories of other peoples’ experiences. They do not realize that feeling is unfounded: they can understand, to one degree or another, life’s complexities at any age. This approach can be brought back to the younger generation if they were only allowed time away from the current curriculum wrapped around textbooks.

Readers of biography must also be aware that their fascination with the genre stems from a yearning to comprehend the people who shaped the world. Biographies “remind us that in the end men and women, not impersonal forces, are the true measure and motor force of history” (Epstein), which reinforces the personal connection. We tend to put historical figures on pedestals, especially when the conservative scholars favor them, and forget that they were born, lived, and died just like every other human to grace the face of the earth. What biography does is humanize those who have been deified. That is the difference between a textbook and a biography: the latter challenges the sterile nature of the former.

There is a rich age of documentary filmmaking coming into being. This surge in the medium has lent credence to those who believe in the work they are doing. Sean O’Hagan writes that we “are living in a moment when film-makers, the young film-makers in particular, are increasingly turning towards documentary as a way to make sense of the world they live in,” and Burns was a catalyst for that. Today’s documentarians grew up watching his work on PBS. The interest his films generate in the subjects he covers is remarkable. The budding filmmaker of

today is going to know that the medium can make a difference on many levels. SeaWorld no longer holds orca shows thanks to the backlash they received from *Blackfish* (2013). Sixto Rodriguez, obscure everywhere except South Africa and Australia, is now in his 70s and touring worldwide because of *Searching for Sugar Man* (2012).

None of this would have been possible twenty years ago. Film stock is very expensive, but, according to David Edelstein, “it wasn’t until the advent of small digital cameras that the line between video and celluloid began to blur.” Yet, not everyone can pick up a camera and shoot a good documentary. People often make this mistake that because the technology is accessible, anyone can be successful with it. That could not be any further from the truth. Ward says that a “good many academic historians are basically suspicious of the medium and want to blame you for the sins of all the other people who have made films” (Bernard and Robin 136). When making a documentary one needs to be disciplined and know, at minimum, the basics of camera operation, sound, and lighting. The overall goal is to give life to something that will reach people on an emotional level and that cannot be accomplished by fumbling around with equipment and various types of editing and rendering software.

This aforementioned rich age is only just beginning. The goal of a filmmaker ten years ago was to make a film, get it into some sort of film festival, and, the cinematic gods willing, sign a DVD distribution deal. It was a singular road towards getting your work made available. That, however, is no longer the case. Edelstein writes that “there are so many outlets for exhibition – not just via commercial releases but in festivals, on cable, via video on demand, and over the Internet,” which highlights the now seemingly endless avenues towards exposure. Anyone can now make their documentary available on DVD via Amazon; the goal for many is to now get a deal signed where the streaming rights are concerned. And even the avenue of

streaming can be a most liberating experience. Times change. People change. Sean Dunne, someone who makes documentary films but who has a career outside of that to sustain himself, says, “I want to put this [his body of work] on the Internet today for free and say, ‘Here. Let’s talk about this,’” (qtd. in Edelstein). He wants to be a part of the conversation. He wants people to watch his work. He wants them to connect to the individuals whose stories are being told.

In 2010 a group of likeminded biographers came together in order to form the Biographers International Organization (BIO). Among the goals of the founding members was the one which called for the encouragement of public interest in and appreciation for biography. Over the six years of its existence BIO has grown to well over one hundred members, holding an annual conference where they can converge for a few days in order to report on the state of biography as they see it. At the second annual conference then president Nigel Hamilton said that by confronting the challenges biography faces “together, rather than singly, we can ensure the survival of biography as seriously researched, articulately composed, and well-produced work chronicling the lives of real individuals: a craft that has been in existence since Greek and Roman times.” When individuals with similar goals come together like this then that means one door is about to close as another begins to open. BIO is ready, willing, and able, to advocate for biography as a way in which to alter the conservative approach to history instruction.

Documentary film festivals, both domestic and international, are all over the map. What began as a category in one film festival or another has branched out and become its own thing. When a movement can take on a life of its own then the message is obvious: the objectives of said movement cannot be ignored. The backbone of this is the International Documentary Association (IDA), founded in 1982, and now boasting some two-thousand members from fifty-three countries. IDA, like BIO, advocates heavily for its medium and the filmmakers who work

within it. Its members describe themselves as being part of a documentary culture, which exemplifies their strong-willed feelings towards their craft.

Students want to be entertained when they are learning. This is entirely possible. But it cannot be accomplished through using a standardized textbook. They will suffer under the system of banking education that Paulo Freire criticized. Students, by studying biography, “emotionally identify with the texts they are reading and with the professors teaching them, thus engaging in a personally transformative process as they reflect...on their own lives and the pasts and present in which they are living” (Banner 585-586). If they are given the opportunity to see the stories through documentaries they are being educated through an audio/visual approach, taking in the information as they see it on the screen, seeing and hearing primary and secondary sources come alive. A greater impact is made, a deeper footprint is formed, and history becomes more than a summary of thousands of years within just several hundred pages. The study of biography and documentary can no longer afford to be marginalized. Both must be embraced if the modern-day conservative academic approach to history instruction is to evolve for the better.

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## THE BLACK EAGLE OF HARLEM

### CHAPTER ONE: PROLOGUE

[FADE IN FROM BLACK]

NARRATOR -

On July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1960, Moise Tshombe declared the Congolese province of Katanga an independent state with himself serving as its new president. The first wave of United Nations peacekeepers would begin appearing less than four days later, which would serve as the catalyst to a crisis lasting for over five years.

By the following winter, the scene could be described as "filthy duty for all concerned" (Nugent 1). Amid the mortar-shattered capital of Elisabethville, with its jacaranda-shaded broad boulevards that still bore European names like Astrid and Stanley, the "savage little war...[was] exploding all [a]round" (Nugent 1).

With Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld killed in a plane crash en route to attempt peace negotiations between Tshombe's secessionist group and the Congo-proper, all concerned parties were on edge: The Gurkha troops believed that local Baluba tribesmen were cannibalizing their dead. The Katangese accused UN fighter-bombers of napalming innocent civilians. And "both sides...[were] thirsty. The Simba brewery had been knocked out of action," and would stand unrepaired for quite some time (Nugent 1).

In a stripped-down high-rise room in Leopoldville, capital of the Congo, under the watchful eyes of armed guards, sat a man whose expensive suit now hung soiled upon his body. Accused of trying to smuggle weapons to Tshombe's forces, UN blue-helmets arrested him at the Elisabethville airport and transported him away for interrogation. This man, whose exploits not many could parallel, would find none of the comforts he had grown accustomed to over the many years of traveling in high-class circles. Hubert Julian, known the world over as the Black Eagle of Harlem, had finally gotten his wings clipped. He had been in trouble many times before, yet this man who had become famous as a parachutist, an aviator, a soldier-of-fortune, and in his current occupation as an arms dealer had always seemed to be able to talk his way out of a jam. This time, however, there would be nothing he could do. It would be his jailors who would

tell him when they were done with him. It would be his jailors who would dictate his daily routine. And it would be his jailors who would ultimately keep him locked up for four months.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #1 -

"[F]our months in which I had plenty of time to reflect on all the events and excitements which had finally led me to imprisonment here in the center of the continent from which my forefathers had been taken so long ago. This, I was determined, would be my last adventure. The clock was ticking a little slower now, and as I surveyed the sixty-five years of my life I made up my mind it was time for this adventurer to retire" (Julian and Bulloch 24).

[FADE OUT TO BLACK]

[OPENING CREDITS ROLL]

## **CHAPTER TWO: TRINIDADIAN BEGINNINGS**

[FADE IN FROM TITLE CARD]

NARRATOR -

It was recorded by J. Wilkinson, the British registrar of the colony of Trinidad, that on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1897, within the white frame house at 21 Charlotte Street in Port-of-Spain, Hubert Fauntleroy was born to Henry Julian, a manager at a cocoa plantation, and his wife, Lily (Julian and Bulloch 26; Nugent 3).

Most of Julian's early years are shrouded in both mystery and misinformation. He himself would tell, later in life, of his family being very wealthy, yet there is no proof that they were anything beyond what might today be considered as lower middle-class. While not poor, they were not as well-off as he would have liked people to have believed. And whether or not his father wanted him to become a doctor so badly that he would send him away to England as a teenager becomes a moot point as there is simply no evidence to back this up. This habit of stretching the truth was a trademark of Julian's, yet when one digs deep enough, they can find the honesty in between the tall-tales.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #2 -

"Mine was a very happy childhood in Trinidad. The sun really did shine all the time, there was plenty to do, plenty to eat, and friends to play with. Like all West Indians, cricket was my game, and before I was ten my parents had given me bat, ball and stumps, and soon we had a team from our neighborhood which used to play other lads on scratch wickets marked out in the park facing our house" (Julian and Bulloch 27).

NARRATOR -

Julian's education began at the Eastern Boys' Primary School. In 1910 he would advance into St. Mary's College, a government-assisted secondary school with a Roman-Catholic affiliation, located in the heart of Port-of-Spain. Because there are no preserved records from this time period, it is not known what type of a student he was. What is clear, however, is when and how Julian's future life truly took root.

Just five years after the Wright Brothers had made history in 1903 by being the first to pilot a powered flight, the Boland Brothers of Rahway, New Jersey, consisting of Joseph, Frank, and James, had managed to design, build, and test an eight-cylinder, water-cooled engine. The key to their airplane's successful ease of handling and maneuverability was a patented system of lateral control, long known to sailors as a jib. Wilbur Wright himself, after checking to make sure his and Orville's patents were not being infringed upon, praised the work of the Bolands. (Wooldridge).

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #1 -

"[Frank] Boland long ago became interested in aviation problems and gave up an automobile business to devote his time to the development of a flying machine of his own invention. He dispensed with the conventional rudder in his biplane, relying upon speed and his ability to shift his weight from one position to another to steer the craft. In...1911 he had frequent narrow escapes from death, but each mishap appeared to make him more determined to succeed in perfecting his machine" - *The Montreal Gazette* ("Aviator Killed" 9).

NARRATOR -

The brothers set out, in 1912, to tour South America and the West Indies with their tailless biplane, performing exhibitions for crowds of more-than-curious onlookers who had never even seen a picture of an airplane, let alone one in the flesh. After

accomplishing numerous flights in Venezuela, Frank scheduled one in Trinidad for January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1913, which would serve to be the island's first in its history ("Aviator Killed" 9).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #3 -

"We stood eagerly around the field as the airman, dressed in breeches, high boots and leather jacket, made last-minute adjustments to his plane. Then he climbed in, a mechanic swung the propeller, and the engine burst into life. As the pilot opened the throttle there was a crescendo of noise. Then the plane rolled forward and soared into the air. It circled the field twice, with every head in the crowd, white or black, swiveling to follow its progress. Suddenly, with no warning, the engine cut out and the plane plunged to the ground just outside the field where thousands upon thousands of people were watching" (Julian and Bulloch 25-26).

NARRATOR -

Frank Boland, age 32, was pulled from the wreckage of his shattered cockpit, dead upon impact. Julian burst into tears upon seeing the mangled corpse of the aviator he had, only minutes before, watched climb into the air in a most triumphant manner. He was horrified that such an effortless and gracefully-appearing act could end so abruptly and tragically. The day Frank Boland died was the day a spark was lit inside of Hubert Julian, who, in his own mind, would pick up and carry on the torch where aviation and aeronautical innovation were concerned (Julian and Bulloch 26).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #4 -

"From that day onwards all my interest was in flying. I made up my mind to be one of this race of birdmen myself. And I was also determined that somehow, someday, I would find a way to stop planes and men falling helplessly from the sky. Books on aviation and engineering became to me what comics and story-books were to other boys.... For years I kept the *Trinidad Gazette* containing the account of that crash, and each day I would search the current paper eagerly for any stories of new flights. I used to bore my friends with facts and figures about aeroplanes, with my own theories and with my predictions for the future. It was almost an obsession with me" (Julian and Bulloch 26-27).

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**CHAPTER THREE: TO CANADA AND THE SKIES**

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NARRATOR -

When World War I broke out in July 1914, the colonies of the British Empire saw themselves thrust into the conflict. The residents of the Caribbean islands under the rule of the crown would now be expected to take up arms against an enemy thousands of miles away on a continent completely foreign to them.

Julian, who would be just 17 years old at the time, but now a high school graduate, might have felt that joining in the fight against the Central Powers was his duty as a citizen of the United Kingdom. In reality, it also might have been his way of eventually gaining access to an airplane, which would see its debut as a fighting machine now with the war going on.

Resolved, Julian left his parents' home one morning, walked down to the St. James barracks, and enlisted in the Trinidad & Tobago Unit of the West India Regiment. Even though he was on the cusp of adulthood, Julian, on his walk back home that evening, knew he would have to answer to his mother and father for the decision he had made that day, without either their consent, or, at the very least, their blessing (Julian and Bulloch 33).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #5 -

"Very fearfully, I told my mother what I had done. She set up a crying and a wailing as if I had committed suicide, and soon my father and all my aunts and uncles were on the scene...I was a fully grown, strapping six-footer, but my father gave me the biggest hiding of my life for joining up without first asking his permission.... And to my great regret it was all to no avail, for after five weeks of drill and fatigues I was out of the army. Officially the reason was that I was medically unfit, but as that was clearly not true, I believe my father, who had some influence in the island, had arranged my discharge" (Julian and Bulloch 33).

NARRATOR -

Henry Julian had to have taken care of getting his son out of the military as there is no record of association between Hubert Julian and the West India Regiment. So determined was his father



that he should not serve that the enlistment papers were wiped from the books. This instance reflects a truth not normally seen in Julian's own account of his life. If anything, it makes him look weak and cowardly. An emptiness appeared inside the character of this young man when he was not allowed to serve in a regiment that would go on to see action in the Cameroons, East African, and the Sinai & Palestine Campaigns. Julian was being shaped by both his boyhood desire to enter into aviation and now a desire to seek fame and glory.

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NARRATOR -

Less than two years after the November 1918 Armistice, Hubert Julian found himself as a passenger aboard the S.S. *Chaudiere*. With the Great War over, he had arranged to finally leave Trinidad, determined to make something of himself in the world outside of the Caribbean within the profession, as he yearned for, of aviation. To say that Henry Julian was supportive of his son's dreams, however, would be a falsity.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #6 -

"In those early days my father, like so many other people, regarded aeroplanes as a strange and rather dangerous novelty with little practical potential. He dismissed all my talk of flying as a boyhood craze, but I kept plugging away at the subject, for I was certain that bigger and faster planes would soon be produced, and that in the future it would not be a question of a fifteen-minute joy-ride for the thrill of it, but an everyday means of getting from place to place" (Julian and Bulloch 29).

NARRATOR -

The *Chaudiere*'s manifest shows us that Hubert Julian, whose occupation is listed as a mechanic, was documented to be carrying roughly \$700 on his person. This shows that during the war and right after, he had entered into a profession he felt would prepare him for passing on into aeronautics. The amount of money he had with him was, more than likely, his entire life's savings. Failure to meet the goals he had been setting for himself over the roughly eight years since the Boland crash was not an acceptable option. Julian was determined to make a life

for himself and show his family back in Port-of-Spain that he was not simply trying to live out a childish fantasy where no future could exist.

So in early March 1920, Hubert Julian stepped off the *Chaudiere* and onto Canadian soil. From his point of disembarkation in St. John, New Brunswick, Julian settled in Montreal. He would have found employment and lodging, but in his free time, Julian would find himself at Cartierville Airport, the country's oldest.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #7 -

"I haunted the airfield, and soon got to know many of the pilots there, who appreciated my interest in what they were doing, and who lent me manuals of instruction and technical books, as well as allowing me to join them in their mess at times" (Julian and Bulloch 33-34).

NARRATOR -

Whether or not he was working directly on airplanes is unknown. But what can be firmly cemented is when Hubert Julian's first venture into the skies occurred: November 1920. And the name of the pilot who took him up was Billy Bishop, Canadian flying ace of the First World War.

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #2 -

"It was for his attack on the enemy airdrome when he destroyed three German planes that Bishop was decorated with the Victoria Cross. He flew to an airdrome 12 miles within the enemy lines, where seven machines, some with their engines going, were on the ground. He attacked these from a height of 50 feet, killing one of the mechanics. One of the machines got off the ground, but Bishop fired 15 rounds into it at close range and disposed of a second that rose against him by giving it 30 rounds at a distance of 150 yards. The foe plane fell into a tree. Two more machines left the ground and he engaged with these at a height of 1000 feet and sent one of them down. He then emptied a whole drum of cartridges into the other hostile plane and flew back to his own station. His machine gun was badly battered when he returned" - *The Spokane Daily Chronicle* ("Hero of 110 Air Battles, and a Major in the British Flying Corps at Age of 22" 1).

NARRATOR -

In the summer of 1919, Bishop and William George Barker, a fellow veteran of the war-torn skies over Europe, established Barker-Bishop Aeroplanes, Ltd., a charter flight service. While they did not have a base of operations at Cartierville, it is well within reasoning to say that they would have been making appearances at the airport, especially if they intended to turn profits with their business. One way in which to generate interest was to offer potential clients short hops into the air. Another way, and for the right price, was to let passengers take to the controls. Julian's account of the event includes him having several sessions with Bishop before being allowed to solo, but the veteran aviator more than likely would not have allowed someone with no flying experience the chance to crackup his airplane.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #8 -

"And with no...ceremony or preparation...we walked across to the two-seater plane he was using. He took it up, and then as we circled the airport he handed over the controls to me, shouting instructions above the roar of the plane's engine and the rush of the wind" (Julian and Bulloch 34-35).

NARRATOR -

Although he was very far away from knowing how to truly handle an aircraft at the professional level, when Hubert Julian stepped out of that Sopwith Camel on that chilly November Sunday, he had become quite possibly the first person of color in history to fly an airplane.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #9 -

"[O]n my own up there in the air suddenly all my dreams came true. This, I felt, was my real element. At last I was free from the constraints of the ground, able to glide and soar, bank and dive as I wanted with a touch on the controls. That first...flight was rapturous, a discovery of a new medium unlike any other...I felt I had been admitted into a special brotherhood of the air. Nothing before or since has ever given me a comparable thrill" (Julian and Bulloch 35).

NARRATOR -

Nearly 1,000 miles away in central Minnesota, Charles Lindbergh, then 18, was busy convincing farmers that the milking of cows by

machine was a great scientific breakthrough. He was a year and a half away from his first flying lesson (Nugent 5).

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#### **CHAPTER FOUR: INVENTING, PATENTING, AND IMMIGRATING**

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NARRATOR -

If Hubert Julian had been obsessed with aviation before his first flight, his interests would now border on the fanatical. He took advantage of every opportunity that came his way to get back into an airplane, all the while trying to come up with an idea that he could bring into existence in an effort to show that aviation was a viable profession and also aid in saving the lives of pilots. He was determined to do what he could to stop another crash like the one he had witnessed as a child. In the end, Julian would settle on the development of a parachute-based apparatus.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #10 -

"I made models from children's construction kits and any other bits and pieces I could find. In the evening sometimes crowds would gather outside the apartment house where I lived to watch this mad young West Indian drop baskets of eggs attached to different sizes of home-made parachutes from the window" (Julian and Bulloch 36).

NARRATOR -

Julian would come to design a device that would be situated behind the propeller of an airplane within an isolated shaft. In the event that the airplane became distressed and was heading for a crash, the pilot could activate an independently-powered fan which would push a parachute-umbrella hybrid apparatus out through the head of the propeller, held onto the frame by cables, and allow the craft to drift down, in a vertical position, back to the ground. If it did its job successfully, the mechanism could help prevent the deaths of pilots.

Julian gave his invention the rather grandiloquent name of a *parachuttagraveprerisista*. Yet, as he described it, the mundane Canadian patent office relabeled it an *Aeroplane Safety Appliance* (Julian and Bulloch 38).

While securing a patent in his country of residence was a step in the right direction, Julian understood the reality of the situation: the United States of America was where he would have to go if anything was going to become of his invention. After World War I aircraft manufacturing companies had sprung up across the nation. If he were to ever make a profit off of his device, Julian would have to secure an American patent. In order to do that, however, he needed to get his father's blessing as Henry had made his son promise not to travel there.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #11 -

"This he did because he knew from the experience of his friends and acquaintances of the racial hatred and prejudice which existed there, and he did not want his son to experience it. However, by letter and telegram I pleaded that it was essential for me to make the journey to Washington, and at last came the permission I sought... But he warned me that I should find conditions very different there, entirely unlike anything I had known in the past" (Julian and Bulloch 39).

NARRATOR -

Julian would arrive in Washington D.C. in early March 1921. When he entered the patent office, the clerk, a Southerner, laughed at the sight of a black man coming in to register anything other than music. Julian, experiencing a racial attitude that had previously been foreign to him, kindly sought out a more, as he put it, sympathetic clerk. This new individual tried explaining to him that it sometimes took years to secure a patent regardless of the invention's nature and potential. His suggestion for Julian was to try selling it under a "patent pending" label, which did not sit well with the inventor. This greatly disturbed Julian; he did not wish for his device to be pirated if left unprotected. As it would happen, he did not have much time to stew on the subject. While in Washington, his attorney, William Linton, sent word that a Canadian company had made an offer on the invention. Against his better judgement, which would become somewhat of a trademark for him later on, Julian filed the paperwork on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1921, leaving copies of the blueprints behind, and got back to Montreal as fast as he could (Julian and Bulloch 41; Nugent 7).

Upon his arrival, Julian and Linton negotiated the sale of the *Aeroplane Safety Appliance* to the Gerney Aircraft Corporation for \$3,000 plus stock in the company. Then, less than two months

after filing for it, Julian received a letter informing him that he had been issued U.S. Patent, No. 1,379,264. He was nothing short of elated (Nugent 7). Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, new avenues were opening for him. His dream of working in aeronautics seemed to be coming to fruition.

Julian would continue working as a mechanic throughout the rest of 1921, and on October 17<sup>th</sup>, he married a young woman named Edna Powell in a small ceremony in Montreal, performed by the Reverend Thomas Nelson (Chestnut 1). But Julian would not stay with his new wife for long; he had a career to build, and it would not be in Canada. Over the course of the year, he and Linton had begun and completed the incorporation, with \$25,000 of capital stock, of the Aeroplane Safety Appliance Company with several partners in Cleveland, Ohio, at the time home to the aircraft-manufacturing Glen L. Martin Company (*The Iron Trade Review* 705).

Against his attorney's advice, Julian resolved to be the one to go down and present his company's invention to the people at Glen L. Martin. In preparation for the trip, and with more wealth than he had been used to, Julian knew that in order to make an impression on potential buyers, he would need to look the part of a confident businessman.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #12 -

"I went to the best tailors in Montreal, to shirt-makers and shoemakers, and bought myself a complete wardrobe, as elegant and distinguished as all those people could make... I also made up my mind that I would arrive in America in style. I realized early in life that people are often taken at the value they put on themselves...if a man is well dressed, confident, and clearly considers he is someone to be reckoned with, then people will afford him respect and pay attention to what he says and does...I bought a McFarlane...from a Montreal firm, and...set off for a new life in America - driven by a chauffeur hired for the occasion!" (Julian and Bulloch 42-43).

NARRATOR -

In early February 1922, Hubert Julian arrived at the Cleveland plant, and walked up to the receptionist to give her his name. As she read his card her face became pale. Julian, at the time, could not make the connection; he had made an appointment with the manager of the company and some of his top technical advisors. The issue, however, was that at no time had he

mentioned the fact that he was black. The scheduled meeting was held and the manager asked Julian to stay in town so that he and his people could think over the proposed acquirement of the *Aeroplane Safety Appliance*. This request raised some difficulties (Julian and Bulloch 45-46).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #13 -

"There was, apparently, not a single hotel there that I could stay in. And none of the white people would dream of having a Negro in their homes. So one of the few colored employees in the factory was called in, and he got in touch with the minister of his church, who in turn arranged for me to stay with one of his parishioners...But when I went back to the Glen Martin company next day I was told they could not consider my invention. They said it was too advanced for them, but my firm belief is that if I had been white they would have taken it up and developed it" (Julian and Bulloch 46-47).

NARRATOR -

Having experienced the racism that his father had warned him about, Julian's discouragement was enough that he did not wish to return to his wife back in Montreal as a failure. He knew that there was a large West Indian community living in New York. There, he believed, he could reassess his situation, come up with a new strategy, and find his purpose in life. Hubert Julian instructed his driver to take him to Harlem, New York City.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE: ROARING INTO 1920s AMERICA**

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #3 -

"Harlem: exciting, exotic, innovative... [I]n the spirited, fast-changing 1920s, this community was a mecca for activists and artists who used it as a forum and a stage where old ways were challenged and new ideas seemed to flow as freely as the era's bathtub gin.

"Often forgotten is that the Charleston and the fox trot, new racial attitudes, hot jazz and cool blues, controversial publications, expressive poetry and prose and, above all, a new black pride came to national attention from the streets of

Harlem. For the creative, adventuresome...the blocks beyond Central Park became the place to be...

"This period became known as the Harlem Renaissance because of the explosion of energy that came out of the darkness of slavery, the segregation laws and lynchings in the South, and the poverty and prejudice in the North, all of which gave rise to a world that was both fun-loving and serious" - David M. Maxfield, *Smithsonian News Service* (Maxfield 15).

NARRATOR -

When Julian arrived in Harlem, he had his car parked in a garage, bid his driver farewell, and walked into the Elite Barber Shop, famous for its VIP patrons like tap dancer and actor Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, the highest paid black entertainer of the first half of the twentieth century. Once inside, the young West Indian nodded hellos all around, and introduced himself to the establishment's most famous barber, Jimmy Garrett, who agreed to store Julian's luggage and briefcase for a small fee as he got to know his surroundings. As he exited the Elite, Julian let it be known to the gentlemen there, who did not quite know what to make of him, that he would endeavor to live by his wits (Nugent 9-10).

Julian soon found himself taken in by the nightlife. Early on in his stay, he was introduced to a woman who greater Manhattan called "Queenie," but who Harlem residents knew as "Madame."

Stephanie St. Clair, a native of Martinique, had come to the United States in 1912, joining up with the 40 Thieves Gang before striking out on her own. She ran the leading numbers game in Harlem during the 1920s, before her authority would be challenged by white rivals after Prohibition ended.

When asked what had brought him to the States, he lied to her, saying he was in New York to study medicine in order to support his impoverished parents back home in Trinidad. St. Clair brought him to her salon, allowing him to keep a room on the top floor of the five-story brownstone. Julian's new "landlady," eight years his senior, had one rule: don't carouse with the girls...except for her (Nugent 10). He had still neglected to send word of his whereabouts to Edna.

One day, by chance, St. Clair ran into Jimmy Garrett on the street. He asked her if she knew of a young West Indian man with an English-sounding accent because he had snuck a peek into his



belongings, and, having found a large amount of cash, became nervous, thinking it might be stolen. The description matched her new "tenant," who she had been giving money to in order for him to continue his "studies" (Nugent 11).

Considering who he had just managed to lie to, steal from, and enrage, Julian made it out of that brownstone relatively unscathed, save for a clunk on the forehead by his former mistress' right heel. The next day he settled matters with Garrett, and handed him a sealed envelope containing \$100.00, addressed to "Madame" (Nugent 11-12).

He continued to frequent popular Harlem nightspots like Club Deluxe, owned by former heavyweight boxing champion, Jack Johnson. Not one for smoking or drinking, Julian spent his time in those establishments trying to make connections. But creating new friendships is expensive, and by midsummer of 1922, he found himself nearly out of money (Nugent 12-13).

Edna, after hearing from friends that her husband was living in Harlem, traveled down to find him. By chance, the two encountered one another on the street. Shocked, Julian hurried his wife over to a bench in St. Nicholas Park. After a short talk, he left for a brief time only to return with a piece of paper and asking Edna for her signature. Seeing that what he wanted signed was a crude divorce agreement, she refused. It is unclear why Julian requested the end to his marriage. His inability to provide income and security probably had a lot to do with it. Unable to reach an understanding, the estranged spouses went their separate ways (Chestnut 1).

Drifting around Harlem, and probably sleeping in his car after being unable to pay his bill at the Hotel Olga, Julian, growing more depressed by the day, found himself brought into Liberty Hall, an auditorium owned by Marcus Garvey, founder and leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League.

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #4 -

"[Garvey's] race surpassed his capabilities. He had attributes which enabled him to command a vast Negro following, but his instincts were too strong for his ideals and he usually wound up in court or in jail. But of all the Negro dreamers who have risen in Harlem to lead the black race to one form of Utopia or another he was the most regal in appearance, the most compelling in manner and the most articulate.

"Garvey's dream was to ship all the Negros to Africa and establish an independent African republic with an army, navy, merchant marine and parliament. These were only the fundamentals. There was no limit to Garvey's vision" - *The Montreal Gazette* ("Marcus Garvey" 8).

NARRATOR -

The Jamaican-born Garvey's Black Nationalist and Pan-African philosophies attracted many of Harlem's residents to him, especially those from the Caribbean islands. Julian, having quickly bought into the message of the domineering persona before him, began attending regular meetings of the UNIA-ACL. The newest Garveyite concluded that he would do whatever it took to raise awareness for the organization's goals. Without thinking, Julian announced that he was a pilot. The audience gathered around him were silent. Garvey, believing the newcomer at his word, described Julian as "a fighter for our race" and that "This young man...is doing something to prove that Negroes are the equal of white people if only they are given a chance.... His example should inspire us all" (Julian and Bulloch 44-45).

Julian, having put his foot in his mouth, now had two options: fade away into the background, pretending he had said nothing, or make good on his lie. Thinking back to the way the Glen L. Martin Company had treated him, the way everyone back home, including his father, thought of his yearning to make something of himself in aviation, he chose the latter and went about crafting a façade people would take seriously. Finding a tailor, Julian had a military uniform fashioned. His next stop was a photographer's studio where he had several shots taken as he held a model airplane in his hands. Seemingly out of nowhere and overnight, the Trinidadian had transformed himself into Lieutenant Hubert Julian of the Canadian Air Force.

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## **CHAPTER SIX: PARACHUTING INTO THE PRESS**

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NARRATOR -

On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1922, Hubert Julian is recorded to have performed a parachute jump from an altitude of 1,500 feet, landing safely as the band of the all-black 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry

Regiment, formerly the 15<sup>th</sup> New York National Guard Regiment, played. During World War I, the regiment had earned the nickname of The Harlem Hellfighters. It was a humble start for a man who had just announced his intentions to help push for the advancement of blacks, yet as far as recorded history goes, Julian may have, on that day, become the first black to perform a parachute jump. But also on this day a young woman, described as the only "negress aviatrix," made three short flights around Curtiss Field. Her name was Bessie Coleman ("Negress Pilots Airplane").

A native Texan, Coleman was the daughter of a three-quarter Choctaw Indian and one-quarter black man who picked cotton for a living. After moving to Chicago to work in a barbershop, her interest in flying began to develop. When offered admittance into one aviation school, on the condition that she pretend to be white, Coleman refused. She found a benefactor in Robert S. Abbott, founder of *The Chicago Defender*, who, seeking the sort of story that would sell newspapers, sent her to France where, in 1921, she earned her pilot's license, becoming the first black woman to do so (Gubert et al. 77-78).

Shortly after her exhibition in Long Island, Coleman was asked by a reporter why she took up the "game of flying":

FEMALE VOICEOVER (C) #1 -

"Well, because I knew we had no aviators, neither men nor women, and I knew the Race needed to be represented along this...[racially] important line, so I thought it my duty to risk my life to learn aviating and to encourage flying among men and women of the Race who are so far behind the white men in this special line. I made up my mind to try. I tried and was successful" - Bessie Coleman, *The Chicago Defender* (qtd. in "Aviatrix Must Sign Away Life to Learn Trade" 2).

NARRATOR -

Without funds, and a pilot's license, Julian's avenues to achieving his ambitions were limited. In order to earn press and wages, he would have to continue making jumps. So when he heard that Charles "Casey" Jones, of the Curtiss Field staff, was to host an airshow to honor the memory of Lt. Belvin W. Maynard, "The Flying Parson," Julian headed out with a rented parachute that he had not had much time to acquaint himself with the usage of.

Jones introduced him to his pilot, Slim Hennicke. Together they positioned the parachute next to the airplane's undercarriage; the type of craft they were using would require Julian to climb out of the cockpit, onto the wing, ultimately making his way underneath the nose before fitting himself into the harness.

With a crowd of over 2,500 in attendance, Hennicke brought the plane up to 2,000 feet. The wind tore at Julian's hair, lips, and limbs. His half-closed eyes were full of tears. But when they hit an air pocket that caused a sudden drop of 100 feet, Julian was thrown off his perch. He grabbed the first thing that he could: a red-hot exhaust pipe that badly burned his hands. The force of his grip snapped it, and Julian tumbled out. Still a novice, he did not yet know how to manipulate the lines of his parachute, and found himself drifting out over Westbury, finally crashing into a chicken coop (Julian and Bulloch 49-50; "Honor Memory of 'The Flying Parson'" 5; Nugent 13-14).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #14 -

"As all the hens ran squawking away in a panic, out came the farmer himself, with a shotgun in his hand, apparently expecting to find a thief in his farmyard. I was much more frightened by that indignant farmer than I was by the jump from the plane. 'Hold on, hold on,' I shouted as I disentangled myself from the parachute, 'it's a messenger from heaven come to call on you.' With a look of amazement on his face, the farmer put up his gun, and, as I was still shouting incoherently, a moment later a car from the airfield arrived ready to take me back there. Thankfully, I scrambled in, as the farmer, still looking bewildered, watched me and my helpers" (Julian and Bulloch 51).

NARRATOR -

When Julian arrived back at Curtiss Field, Jones greeted him with a warm smile and a pat on the back. Seeing the potential in a spectacle like Julian, he wrote down the name of a barnstormer who worked out of New Jersey. Once the winter was over, Jones instructed Julian to head out to Hasbrouck Heights and meet with this pilot (Nugent 15).

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NARRATOR -

On a chilled afternoon in March 1923, Hubert Julian walked into the ramshackle little hangar of Clarence Chamberlin. The native Iowan had been a member of the Army Signal Corps during World War I, but had not seen combat. On the day of the Armistice, coinciding with his 25<sup>th</sup> birthday, Chamberlin had been on a ship, in Hoboken, New Jersey, ready to set sail for Europe. With the end of the fighting, he decided to remain in the area, foreseeing the boom in the aviation business.

When Julian found him, Chamberlin was lying under the wing of one of half a dozen airplanes, surplus from the Great War, in varying stages of repair:

"Good morning, Major...", he said, "I'm Lieutenant Hubert Julian just down from Canada looking for an opportunity to pursue my profession. I follow the parachute-jumping business. Maybe you've heard of some of my jumps up around Montreal."

Chamberlin, unprepared for a guest quite like this, and who was not a major, read over Jones' letter of introduction and agreed to take Julian up for a couple of jumps, so, as Julian put it, he would not get rusty.

Because the supposed career jumper did not actually own a parachute, Chamberlin had to supply him with one. When asked if he preferred to make his jumps out of the cockpit or the wing, Julian, remembering the burns he had suffered, answered with:

"Lord...I quit doing pull-offs more than a year ago. I go bang right out of the cockpit."

Chamberlin brought his old Avro up to around 3,000 feet. As he leveled the plane, the signal was given for Julian to jump. He froze. After four more times around, Chamberlin, fed up, landed the airplane and demanded to know why Julian had not jumped. The concept of having to step up and out was probably too much for the only two-time parachutist to bear, so without another option, Julian relented to making his jump from off the wing.

They went up again and this time Julian performed his first flawless jump. After three more times, Chamberlin began to regard this stranger as a legitimate daredevil of the sky (Nugent 17-18).

Julian, feeling he was ready for more public showings, asked that if he could find sponsorship for new parachuting stunts, would Chamberlin serve as his pilot. Much to his chagrin,

Chamberlin agreed, but asked for \$25.00 in advance. Julian, with little choice at this point, handed over the asked-for deposit (Nugent 18-19).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #1 -

"An unusual advertising stunt was attempted in the interest of the A.I. Hart Co., Inc., on Sunday afternoon, April 15, when Lieut. Hubert Julian, formerly of the Canadian Air Forces, attempted to make a parachute drop from an aeroplane into a vacant lot near Seventh avenue and 140<sup>th</sup> street. He was to have carried a mysterious message to a large audience assembled at Renaissance Casino" - *The New York Age* ("A.I. Hart Co. Store Refused \$46,000 Offer From Whites" 1).

NARRATOR -

Chamberlin, leveling out his De Havilland, signaled for Julian to make his move. The parachutist, gazing out over cityscape at roughly 3,000 feet in the air, found himself clutching the strut of the airplane.

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #5 -

"[A]s the parachute spun us round with itself as a pivot, the pull veered through ninety degrees until it was straight out from the body of the ship. And in that instant the strut let go. Screaming and kicking...my erstwhile passenger was launched sideways into space, a piece of the broken strut clutched desperately in his arms. The agonized look on his face was wholly unwarranted as the undamaged parachute immediately began easing him earthward, but to him death must have seemed awfully close..." - Clarence Chamberlin (Chamberlin 15).

NARRATOR -

Landing near the banks of the Hudson River, Julian proceeded, after gathering his wits, to read a statement on behalf of Mr. Hart, whose business, a five, ten, and twenty-five cent store, was on the verge of being bought out by a white-owned company. Hart himself stepped up next and implored the citizens of Harlem to help increase patronage ("A.I. Hart Co. Store Refused \$46,000 Offer From Whites" 1).

It was decided by the UNIA-ACL that Julian should make another jump while still fresh in the public's minds. Signs were created

and posted around Harlem that read, "Watch the Clouds," and in small print at the bottom, "Admission: \$1.00."

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1923, Chamberlin brought Julian up to 3,500 feet above Harlem. Without hesitating this time, he jumped, garbed in a crimson jumpsuit he had purchased for the occasion (Nugent 19-20).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #15 -

"I tore a hole in a fifteen-pound bag of flour I was holding, so that there was a dramatic long white trailer for the 500 feet or so I fell freely. Then I pulled the ripcord, the 'chute opened and I was swinging gently over those thousands of people there below...and with the slight breeze blowing...I was heading for...the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue El, with a train roaring along... Desperately I pulled on the parachute guy-lines... Though I missed certain death on the rail-tracks, my landing was none too easy" (Julian and Bulloch 53-54).

NARRATOR -

The throngs of onlookers pressed so tightly against the ground floor windows of the three-story tenement Julian had landed on that several broke. Atop the roof, Julian, remembering his sponsors for that day, quickly unhooked his harness, pinned the Hoenig Optical business card on his chest, and flung over himself a sash advertising a St. Louis-based hair straightening product. He made his way down the fire escape where four policemen approached him, issuing a summons for inciting a riot. Those witnessing the handoff feared Julian was being arrested and so picked him up onto their shoulders and carried him off to Liberty Hall in celebration.

Once inside, Julian handed reporters his business card, which read: "Lieutenant Hubert Julian, M.D., the World's Champion Daredevil Aviator." When asked if he was, in fact, a doctor, Julian laughed, telling them the "M.D." stood for "Mechanical Draftsman" ("Harlem Sees Devil Drop From The Sky"; Nugent 20-21).

Less than a week later, Julian appeared in court to answer the summons he had been issued.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #16 -

"Apparently the judge could not find that I had done anything wrong, so he did not fine me. But I had been the cause of a breach of the peace, he said, and the same thing would happen again if I made any more parachute jumps. So he banned me from flying over New York City for six months" (Julian and Bulloch 55).

NARRATOR -

Over the course of his six-month suspension, Julian, who had fast become the noble, heroic knight that Marcus Garvey had sought to find, began rallying people to the black-is-beautiful banner. He gave lectures in Atlantic City, Philadelphia, and Detroit, receiving a handsome fee for his services (Nugent 22-23). It was during this time, due to his very public fame, when he was reunited with one Essie Gittens, a young woman slightly his senior. The two had been friends during his childhood back in Trinidad. A relationship quickly developed and Julian felt compelled to write a letter to Edna, confessing his transgression.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #17 -

"Dear Babe: Edna, dear, I am sorry, but as a young man I kept myself long enough. I am sorry to the bottom of my heart. But it is too late now. It happened on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of April, so baby, I am helpless. She is not a young girl, but she is 27 years old and I knew her years ago. She is from my home. Now baby, I have told you all, and as I am writing you tears are in my eyes. I hope you will forgive me, baby darling, and also forget me. Yours sorrowfully, Hubert Julian, Aeronaut" (qtd. in Chestnut 1).

NARRATOR -

Edna hired the famous black detective Herbert Boulin to track her husband's whereabouts and dealings, ultimately having Julian served with separation papers on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1923. In an interview conducted by *The Chicago Defender*, Edna called her spouse out on claiming to have been a Lieutenant with the Canadian Air Force. Not much mind was paid to this, because less than one month prior, Julian, his suspension over, and finding sponsorship this time with the Martin Saxophone Company, slipped on his crimson jumpsuit, took off with Chamberlin piloting, and parachuted down into Harlem, playing "Runnin' Wild" on a sax (Nugent 23). Still unable to control his touchdowns, he found himself landing, hard, upon a rooftop, getting dragged along via



the parachute. Before going over the ledge, he grabbed a flagpole, unhooked his harness, and breathed in a sigh of relief. He then realized the building he had landed on was a police station.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #18 -

"None of the officers realized what was going on, and as they heard the terrible smash of broken glass above them, they came tearing out on to the roof with drawn guns in their hands. When the lieutenant saw it was me he called out: 'Oh, it's all right, boys, it's just that crazy nigger trying to kill himself again'" (Julian and Bulloch 56).

NARRATOR -

Prior to this jump, the newspapers had been calling him "The Ace of Spades." But after the ruckus caused by landing on the police station, H. Allen Smith, working at that time for *The Herald Tribune*, bestowed upon Hubert Julian the moniker he would embrace and never let go of for the rest of his life. Smith has christened him "The Black Eagle of Harlem" (Nugent 24-25).

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## CHAPTER SEVEN: A TRANSATLANTIC FLIGHT

[FADE IN FROM TITLE CARD]

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #6 -

"The final goal of all the ambitions which flying men have ventured to dream since the Wright Brothers first rose from the earth in a heavier-than-air machine, was realized this morning when two young British officers, Capt. John Alcock and Lieut. Arthur W. Brown, landed on the Irish coast after the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic Ocean... It was a straight-way, clean-cut flight achieved in 16 hours and 12 minutes - from Newfoundland to Clifden, Ireland, a distance of more than 1,960 miles" - *The Gazette Times*, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1919 ("Fliers Make Non-stop Trip Across Atlantic, 1,960 Miles Flown in 16 Hours, 12 Minutes" 1).

NARRATOR -

Transatlantic flights had been undertaken before and after Alcock and Brown's. Their non-stop hop showed the potential in

aviation becoming a staple in traversing long stretches of area without the need for refueling. Julian, having spent 1923 parachuting into the popular culture of the era, had a revelation, due in part to Marcus Garvey's grooming, over the course of that winter.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #19 -

"The trouble was that all the West Indians supported me and made me their hero, while the American Negroes claimed I was doing nothing special... So if these Americans wanted to deride me I thought I would really show them something, and I hit on the idea of a solo flight from America to Africa...and in particular Liberia, as the destination, as it was the only Negro republic in the world then, and I was true to my aim of drawing attention to the abilities and achievements of the Negro race" (Julian and Bulloch 60).

NARRATOR -

For someone who had very little actual piloting experience, Julian was serious and did not tolerate anyone who questioned his vigor. Over the course of 1923, Chamberlin had been teaching his parachuting partner the fundamentals of flying. At best, Julian was probably capable of piloting an airplane straight and level in good weather. But only the Black Eagle knew his own limits and Chamberlin would not have associated himself with a hack.

Julian had no intention of making his transatlantic flight a non-stop one, as the technology of the time did not yet allow for it, based on the distance he intended to travel. The proposed flight plan, as he saw it, was to skirt the eastern seaboard down to Florida where he would then proceed to make stops across the Caribbean islands en route to South America, finally turning eastward, making for the Liberian capital of Monrovia (Nugent 27).

In order to make this dream a reality, Chamberlin suggested that an old hydroplane, left over from World War I, be purchased and specially adapted with extra fuel tanks and a minimum amount of unnecessary weight (Julian and Bulloch 60-61).

Outside funding would be fundamental in achieving these plans so Julian set up a meeting with James Weldon Johnson, Secretary of the NAACP. Julian explained that in a world of blackbirds and white doves, the latter were soaring higher and in greater

numbers. Johnson looked over the budget: Julian had pledged \$7,500 of his own money and was in need of an additional \$5,000 to meet the bare minimum for a successful flight. The NAACP, according to Johnson, was incorporated to help blacks out in courts, and would not join in helping this project come to fruition (Nugent 28).

Julian, stunned and angered by Johnson's apparent lack of vision, had also to face some public criticism against him. One black-run newspaper insisted that on the day of takeoff, the airplane would disappear into the hands of whites, its true owners (Nugent 28-29). In order to combat this sort of thinking, Julian decided that those he was trying to elevate should participate in the project's funding.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #20 -

"[I]t seemed to me that as the flight was going to be in aid of the Negro people there was no reason why they should not contribute, so I invited all the Negroes in the United States to donate a few cents each. But the project was so strange to them, so far in advance of anything they knew, that they just could not believe it" (Julian and Bulloch 61).

NARRATOR -

The idea of soliciting public funding through the mail was nothing new. Marcus Garvey and his Black Star Steamship Company had done it before, gotten brought up on charges, and found guilty of committing mail fraud. Julian was unaware of the fact that the federal government, from the moment he first began seeking contributions, had him under a microscope. While discussing the flight plans with Chamberlin in the latter's hangar, James E. Amos, one of the first black special agents in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and who had worked the Garvey case, paid Julian a visit.

Amos informed him that the \$1.00 donations being asked for by Julian of blacks everywhere was suspicious and that the Black Eagle should seriously consider making sure he went through with his proposed flight, or else (Nugent 29).

Julian got the message, and, in order to silence the criticism from all angles, and generate more support, had the hydroplane brought to a rented corner lot in Harlem. He and Chamberlin would work on the aircraft there on the spot, and start up the

engines every Sunday. Money began to trickle in (Julian and Bulloch 62).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #21 -

"[A]mateur bookies were laying ten to one that the plane would never get off the ground. Others said that it was just another of my publicity stunts...[that] I cared not a cuss for the advancement of the Negro race, they said, but was concerned only with myself... To make the point quite clear I had the legend: 'Dedicated to the advancement of the Negro race,' painted on the side of the plane... [And] [a]s I aimed to fly to Liberia, the only Negro republic, I thought it right to call the plane, *Ethiopia* in honor of the only black kingdom" (Julian and Bulloch 62).

NARRATOR -

The scheduled date of takeoff, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1924, arrived. By 9am the police estimated a crowd of 30,000. Vendors eventually ran out of hotdogs, hot pig's feet, watermelon, ices, and soda pop. Authorized and unauthorized photos of Julian were being sold. Orange balloons were being handed out so as to be released into the air when the Black Eagle took off (Nugent 31).

The *Ethiopia*, settled in the waters of the Harlem River, remained idle beyond its 1:30pm departure time. Julian, garbed in a blue uniform and black leather cavalry boots, and still owing \$1,400 on the hydroplane, was being held back from even entering it by the financial partners Chamberlin had needed to bring in in order to complete the modifications to it. He began imploring to those in attendance to chip in whatever they had in their pockets, but by 2pm, without any resolution, and soaked in perspiration, Julian became irate upon realizing the tide had gone out and the *Ethiopia* was now imbedded in mud (Calvin, "Lt. Julian's Long Flight Is Checked" 1-3; Nugent 31-32).

With the sun beginning its descent over New Jersey, patches of spectators, convinced no flight would take place, started to disperse. Special Agent Amos, making himself conspicuous, approached the would-be pilot, offering him a handshake. This was it for Julian. Facing jail time, he sought out William Wellington Grant, one of the UNIA-ACL's officers, for help. Grant, learning what was needed, sent his men out into the crowd, raising \$400 in the name of Marcus Garvey (Nugent 32-33). Chamberlin's partners took the money and informed Julian he

would need to make good on the remaining \$1,000 upon his return from wherever he might end up.

Julian had the hydroplane towed out of the mud, but in the process of doing so the right pontoon sustained damage. After an inspection, Chamberlin informed Julian that takeoff would be impossible, or, at the very least, extremely difficult and dangerous. Julian, still able to see Amos in the crowd, decided that he would go through with the flight, but that Chamberlin would need to meet him down in Atlantic City, the first stop on his planned route, with a replacement pontoon (Julian and Bulloch 63; "Negro Aviator Recovering").

At around 5pm, the *Ethiopia's* engine came to life. It roared forward through the calm waters of the Harlem River, skipped, hopped, and ascended into the skies amid the sounds of a marching band and cheering well-wishers. Thousands of orange balloons began to slowly rise in its wake (Nugent 33).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #22 -

"I began to bank to swing in again over the crowd, and only then did I realize that something was seriously wrong. The knock which the pontoon had taken on the way to the water had clearly opened it up... Then during take-off the float had scooped up gallons of water. Climbing steadily this had no effect, but as soon as I went into a turn and banked, the water rushed to one side of the float, and the sudden jerk pulled that wing down. No matter what I did I just could not correct it. Faster and faster the plane slipped sideways, and was soon completely out of control. It was impossible even to straighten it into a dive from which I might have managed to get into a landing position. Right up to the moment I hit the sea I kept struggling to balance the plane, but it was hopeless. It went into the water wing first, and, still in the cockpit, I went under with it" (Julian and Bulloch 64-65).

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #7 -

"Immortal Darius Green was white. Disgusted by the silly wax of Icarus - 'him an' his daddy Daedalus' - he made his machine of 'luther, or sutthin' or other,' and failed just the same. That

the white Green was a bit blue when he came down in the barnyard may be taken for granted.

"A black Darius Green was equally blue over his experiment with the Ethiopia hydroplane... He may try again. Hope springs eternal in the human breast.... What is clear enough even to the best friends of the negroes is that their genius runs to music, to poetry, to oratory and not to higher mathematics or higher mechanics. Yet Caucasians who can remember how funny the original Yankee Darius was to their unprophetic minds may well restrain any disposition to guy Hubert Julian...Hitching your wagon to a star is a worthy aim. Emerson himself would have acknowledged that a vital preliminary is getting away from the earth. Julian is an Emersonian in disguise so palpable that it has betrayed him" - *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* ("A Black Darius Green" 22).

NARRATOR -

The entire time in the air amounted to no less than seven minutes. Julian, crashing into Flushing Bay, had been able to free himself from the confines of the hydroplane's cockpit. A man named Frederick Hess, caulking boats along the shore, saw the wreck and headed out to pull the half-drowned pilot from the water (Nugent 34).

Julian awoke the next morning in Flushing Hospital. His shoulders were dislocated and his leg was in traction. He could barely breathe without it causing him a considerable amount of pain. When someone entered the room, Julian could see that it was Amos. He had come to inform Julian that he had done his best and that if luck was against him then that certainly was not a crime the federal government could prosecute. His head covered in bandages, and looking like the invisible man, Julian, on a fair amount of pain medication, told his visitor: "I almost made it" ("Julian Crash In Flushing" G5; Nugent 34).

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## **CHAPTER EIGHT: BRAWLERS AND VANDALS**

[FADE IN FROM TITLE CARD]

NARRATOR -

After his discharge from Flushing Hospital, Julian, joined by Essie, traveled down to Atlantic City where he spent several

weeks recuperating. If privacy was his intent, he did not receive it. His crash had made him even more famous than before, yet he found it discouraging and strange that the white-run newspapers sided with him based off courage and drive while the black-run ones viewed him as a fraud and self-centered showman (Julian and Bulloch 68). All he could do was take the criticism in stride and heal. There would be no more parachuting or flying for him through 1924. Julian's goal was to find more sponsors who would help keep money in his pocket as he planned his next project.

Even trying to do that was anything but easy. Over the course of his rehabilitation, the Black Eagle discovered that Special Agent Amos had had assistance with investigating his motives in the solicitation of funds: a detective who had previously worked a Julian-centric case already. And when the two parties came face-to-face in May 1925, it was not to exchange pleasantries. Julian, selling razors on a street corner as a spokesman for the Gem Safety Razor Company, saw his antagonist and called him out.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #2 -

"Many fight fans who did not go to the Commonwealth Saturday night witnessed an exhibition free of charge at 140<sup>th</sup> street and Seventh avenue between "Kid" Herbert Boulin, head of the well-known detective agency, and "Kid" Hubert Julian, of airship fame. The scrap had the Commonwealth beaten in that there was no referee - at least not until many hours later...Boulin, with a badly swollen eye, claims victory on a foul. Julian, with several bits of flesh nicked out of his cheek and contusions behind the left ear, claims that by right he is the complainant.... Magistrate Brodsky...fined Julian \$5 or five days" - *The New York Amsterdam News* ("'Kid' Boulin and 'Kid' Julian In Street Bout" 1).

NARRATOR -

Julian appealed the decision, but in the end had to pay the fine. Once healed up, from the crash a year before as well as the fight, he went back to parachuting, but in more controlled environments. He suffered injury in September 1925 during the annual Police Games while trying to turn the propeller in preparation of a jump. Both wrists sustained fractures ("Police Games Draw 65,000 On Last Day").

Sidelined again, Julian attended the Long Island air races the following month as a spectator where he saw a monoplane,

designed by the well-known Italian-born Giuseppe Bellanca and built by the Wright Aeronautical Company of Paterson, New Jersey, perform brilliantly. It was the only one of its kind at the time. After winning the Efficiency Race, Julian realized that this airplane was the type of craft he should have waited for to make his transatlantic flight. His eyes widened, his mind whirled, and the Black Eagle decided that once he was back at 100%, his dream of flying to Africa would be revisited ("Julian Makes Ringing Race Appeal" 8).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #23 -

"Members of the Negro Race: I again come before you appealing for your financial support in making possible the purchase of a new plane... Mr. Bellanca...the designer...told his company that 'Julian is not only a competent and capable flyer, but with a plane that is half air-worthy he will be able to perform wonders'...there are thousands of young men today who are just dying to learn to master the art of flying... That opportunity will not be given...until we have proven that the same spirit of intrepidity that actuates members of the...[Nordic] race... When historians will rewrite the pages of history, when they come to the celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of...Independence...our children will read that...one of the greatest contributions to that historic event was contributed by members of our race..." Hubert Julian, *The New York Amsterdam News* (qtd. in "Julian Makes Ringing Race Appeal" 8).

NARRATOR -

Julian, learning from his previous attempt at seeking public funding, arranged to have all donations sent to the Chelsea Bank under the heading "Special Airplane Fund." The total amount he needed was \$10,000 and the bank would proceed with the payment to Wright Aeronautical directly ("Julian Makes Ringing Race Appeal" 8).

Unfortunately, for Julian, Bellanca's employers refused to sell their award-winning monoplane to him. Faced with having to find a suitable aircraft to make the flight, he settled on a 30-foot long Fokker seaplane with a 50-foot wingspan, and sporting twin Wright Whirlwind engines. Subsequently, the minimum amount for a successful flight went up to \$15,000 ("Julian Will Really Fly?" 13

Julian found backers, among which were Tiger Flowers, middleweight boxing champion of the world, who donated \$5,000,



and Standard Oil, who pledged the entirety of the flight's needed gasoline and oil ("Julian Pays \$9,000 On New \$15,000 Plane" 1; "Lieut. Julian To Exhibit Aeroplane At Happy Land Park" 9).

Over the course of late summer 1926, Julian oversaw the construction of the Fokker at Port Newark, in the hangar of the Flyad Flying School. In order to build a final round of support, and press coverage, before bringing the seaplane down to Philadelphia for its takeoff, Julian had it brought to Happyland Park in Harlem, but kept the wings stored in St. Mark's schoolyard. The next day, when he went to retrieve them, he found the wings destroyed, the victim of vandals ("Julian Pays \$9,000 On New \$15,000 Plane" 1).

The newspapers described the unknown perpetrators as jealous and disgruntled individuals, and Julian believed them to be madmen from the opposition, meaning those of his own race who did not support his endeavors. Distraught at this turn of events, Julian canceled the flight. It is unclear what happened to the money (Julian and Bulloch 70-71; "Julian's Plane Is Damaged" 11).

The Black Eagle sent his team home, telling them that that particular episode of their lives was over. They had tried, and, due to circumstances they could not control, failed. It was time to look to the future (Julian and Bulloch 71-72).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #24 -

"The first failure, I felt, was nobody's fault. The second was a willful and deliberate piece of sabotage, the result of ignorance and prejudice.... Hurt and injured as I was, I made up my mind to gain what experience and knowledge I could from all that happened, and to press ahead" (Julian and Bulloch 72).

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## **CHAPTER NINE: AT LAST...?**

[FADE IN FROM TITLE CARD]

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #3 -

"The civilized world has had two thrills in the last three weeks. The first came on...May 21, when the news was flashed across the ocean that Captain Charles A. Lindbergh, travelling alone in a monoplane...crossed the ocean at night in the midst of

rain, sleet and fog, and landed at Paris, France. The second thrill came on June 6 when the news was broadcast that Clarence D. Chamberlin, accompanied by Charles A. Levine...crossed the ocean and landed in Germany... Let us hope, however, that some Negro youth, inspired by this feat of Lindbergh's, will begin a serious apprenticeship in aeronautics. And let us hope that he will show the same stamina in the face of ridicule and the lack of interest in whatever project he may attempt to put across, and the same modesty in the face of success..." - *The New York Amsterdam News*, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1927 ("What Will the Negro Contribute to Aviation?" 13).

NARRATOR -

The summer of 1927 saw feats of accomplishment in aviation that no one in the general public would have expected to happen. The third famous crossing of that flying season would be commanded by Richard E. Byrd and his crew. Suddenly, the entire Western World knew the names of these heroic pilots as well as the names of their ships: *The Spirit of St. Louis*, *The Columbia*, and *The America*. Tickertape parades were held for these aviators, and people everywhere could not get enough of them. They were the superstars of their day.

For Hubert Julian, however, all of this must have been bittersweet and a hard pill to swallow. This man had been doing everything within his power to pull off a transatlantic flight, yet had produced nothing. His 1927 did not amount to anything that the press felt was newsworthy. Not even his marriage to Essie on June 30<sup>th</sup> would make headlines. He was overshadowed by the three white pilots, one of which had been a close friend and business partner, and the Black Eagle felt more depressed than ever before.

The newlyweds would honeymoon and settle in their new home in Harlem. Essie would suffer at least one miscarriage over the course of their marriage, and, the couple would never have a biological child. An orphaned cousin of theirs, from Essie's side of the family, a young girl named Olga, was taken in by the Julians, and raised as their own.

Despite the failures of his first two attempts to pilot a successful transatlantic flight, Julian, spurred on by the achievements of the three ocean-hoppers of 1927, began putting together the pieces of once again setting off across the open seas. Joining forces with aviation enthusiast, New York State Senator A. Spencer Feld, the two agreed upon a deal for raising

funds in order to purchase a new, \$25,000 Bellanca-made airplane, and that Julian would not only fly non-stop to Paris but that he would *return* as well, never having landed upon French soil.

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #8 -

"This venture is to be no fiasco... Before going into this matter I gave it very careful thought and consideration, as I had to consider my reputation. Therefore, I placed Julian under contract that is binding, and which provides that in the event he does not live up to its stipulations, by willing to undergo the necessary training or growing careless in his personal conduct, I may withdraw. He will be held in strict accountability to me from now until the time he flies..." - A. Spencer Feld, *The New York Amsterdam News* (qtd. in "Julian Plans Paris-Return Flight" 5).

NARRATOR -

Feld brought on Lieutenant Herbert H. Wilkie of the 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and businessman T.A. Glem to help in coordinating the fundraising and marketing of the flight. Julian would go on to tour the Midwest, performing for crowds in Detroit and Chicago, the latter which saw him banned from making a Memorial Day parachute jump over Bessie Coleman's grave, the aviatrix having tragically died in a plane crash two years prior ("Citizens To Donate Fund For Airplane" A1; "Julian Still Plans Atlantic Flight" 3).

Upon returning to New York, the team held a press conference at Curtiss Field where a newsreel camera crew was there to capture Julian and Feld's excitement over their partnership ("Negro Plans Atlantic Hop").

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #25 -

"This is a non-commercial proposition. There is no prize to be gained. And I have no desire for personal aggrandizement, whether it be material or honorary. The sole purpose of my proposed flight is to stimulate a greater interest in aviation among my own people. Too much stress cannot be laid on the fact that this flight is not being attempted for commercial purposes but solely in the interests of the flying game and to help Negroes anxious to take up the science... It is certain that if another war comes, it must be fought in the air" (qtd. in Nugent 37-38).

NARRATOR -

Blacks were split on the project down generational lines. The older thought Julian's planned flight was reckless and would prove nothing to the world, especially if he died trying.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #4 -

"I think that the aim is a noble one and worthy of Mr. Julian's ambition and nerve. Although I wish him every success in his attempt, I must say frankly that I am not in harmony with the project because of the great hazard and long odds against which Mr. Julian would have to contend... If a misfortune should befall Mr. Julian while he is seeking to carve his name in the 'Hall of Fame,' then what will he leave behind him to perpetuate his memory? A more concrete and more secure example of attainment...would be the establishment of a flying school for Harlem youth..." - Clifford J. Rodgers, *The New York Amsterdam News* (qtd. in Rouzeau 3).

NARRATOR -

The younger generation, however, saw the Black Eagle as a folk hero. They had grown up hearing and reading about stories of this man who seemed larger-than-life. One young man, Lincoln Payne of Philadelphia, penned a letter in *The Pittsburgh Courier*, begging Julian to accept him as his co-pilot despite his limited time as a flying student. Payne expressed his deep wish that he could assist the Black Eagle in making a successful flight, and return journey, across the Atlantic, happen. Julian was more than flattered, but provided no formal response as he did not want to deflate the ambitions of his admirers or risk anyone's life other than his own ("Asks Courier's Aid To Be Co-Pilot With Julian" 1).

As the spring of 1928 gave way to summer, Julian had yet to set a firm date for takeoff, and as he continued to delay, others would make the oceanic crossing, including the first woman to do it, Amelia Earhart. With that, Julian suddenly became yesterday's news, largely in part to his own inability to execute the plan laid out by his committee, headed up by Feld. The tabloids had their fun at his expense.

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #9 -

"Our faith has not been the same...although our interest has never lagged... [Julian is] one of our favorite truth-is-stranger-than-fiction characters... For a long while he raised money until it almost seemed as if he preferred raising money to flying. During this period he was more elusive than a political figure, but in an exclusive with us he revealed that he was on the very verge of waking up some morning and saying to his wife, 'My dear, I think I'll fly to Arabia today'" - *The New York Sun* (qtd. in Nugent 39).

NARRATOR -

As July came and went, the State Senator saw indifference settle into Julian's attitude, and, sensing his own reputation about to be tarnished, withdrew his support, his partners, and his funds, leaving the Black Eagle to abandon the flight. This would be the last time Julian ever seriously considered a transatlantic flight, but his ocean-crossing exploits were just a few years away.

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#### **CHAPTER TEN: NEXT STOP, ETHIOPIA**

[FADE IN FROM TITLE CARD]

NARRATOR -

Nineteen Twenty-Nine proved to be a year of inaction, stirring restlessness in the Black Eagle. After Wall Street laid its egg, the businesses Julian had relied upon to sponsor his exploits were now folding up.

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1930, as he sat listening to the weather forecasts on an Atwater-Kent radio, there came a knock at the door of his apartment at 24 Lennox Avenue. When he answered, Julian found himself staring face-to-face with a young man who introduced himself as Malaku E. Bayen, cousin of Ras Tafari, soon, upon receiving his crown, to be known as Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia - the Lion of Judah (Nugent 41).

Bayen explained to Julian that Tafari had heard and read of his adventures. The crown prince had been particularly flattered over the fact that the two airplanes Julian had intended to fly across the Atlantic had been named after his kingdom. But Bayen was not there to simply exchange pleasantries. His cousin had sent him on a mission. Tafari wished to turn his poor,

underdeveloped country into a modern state, strong enough to avoid becoming a colony under European control. Julian, to him, represented the future of this reform. The Black Eagle was being asked to travel to Ethiopia, embarking on the trip in just seven days, in order to help organize an air force that would, eventually, protect the African nation, also known as Abyssinia, from outsider aggression, as well as serve as the future emperor's personal pilot (Julian and Bulloch 81-82).

Julian, dumbfounded, told his visitor he would, of course, have to consult with his wife before making any decision. Bayen informed him that he would come calling again the next day. When Essie returned home, after an unsuccessful search for a housekeeping job, she listened to what had transpired in her absence, and was against the entire proposition. She feared Africa and thought of it as a place so far from civilization that to accept an invitation to go there would be like accepting a death sentence. But Julian, who did not want his wife becoming a housekeeper, insisted that he would be safe. Hours of arguments followed before she relented, with one condition: Julian could make the trip if a salary of \$1,000 a month was prescribed to him. Shock must have hit her system when Bayen agreed. Her husband was now permitted to make the trip, but she would stay behind (Nugent 42; Julian and Bulloch 82-83).

One week later, accompanied by Bayen, Julian boarded the S.S. *Europa*, arriving in Paris on May 1<sup>st</sup>. After a two-week stay in the French capital, they sailed from Marseilles, arriving in Djibouti on June 5<sup>th</sup> (Julian and Bulloch 83).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #26 -

"As I stood at the ship's rail watching the African coast draw near, my heart was full... I felt I was coming home, and I looked on all the dark-skinned people on the shore as part of my family. So overcome was I that as soon as the ship docked I ran down the gangway and knelt and kissed that first dirty, dusty piece of Africa on which I had set foot" (Julian and Bulloch 84).

NARRATOR -

From their point of disembarkation, it was a three-day journey, via an old, single-line tracked train to the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. They would make stops at Diradawa and Awash before arriving, exhausted, at their final destination (Julian and Bulloch 84-85).

Bayen set Julian up in a comfortable house and it would be five days before he would be received by the crown prince.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #27 -

"The Emperor's old wooden palace dominated the town from its hill-top, with the long drive down to what passed as the center - a small collection of brick-built, corrugated-iron-roofed buildings surrounded on all sides by the shacks and huts of the common people. Beyond those crazily built homes the eucalyptus trees rose like a solid green wall, here and there cut by a few roads leading out of the capital - only a couple of them properly paved, and the rest mere beaten tracks which turned into quagmires when it rained" (Julian and Bulloch 85).

NARRATOR -

When Julian arrived at the sacred Gebbi Grounds, barefoot, puttee-wearing sentries gave a salute and opened the black iron gates for him to pass through. He was led by a sword-wielding guard, took notice of two chained sleeping lions, and at the steps to the palace was greeted by the royal chamberlain, clad in a blue cape. Julian's first glimpse of Tafari was of a regal-looking man sitting upon a red velvet-covered chair with gold trimming under a large chandelier. They discussed, mostly in French and with the aid of the chamberlain as translator, Julian's journey, his now-famous aeronautical career, and what his role in the kingdom would be (Nugent 43-44).

Tafari informed him that there were already foreign pilots, two Frenchmen, in the country, preparing to help start an air force. Julian would be joining them in this endeavor. Before the meeting concluded, the crown prince whispered something to the chamberlain, who, then in English, asked Julian if he could put on a flying exhibition within the next two days. He responded in the affirmative (Julian and Bulloch 85-86; Nugent 43-44).

There were only three airplanes in the country: two German-made Junkers monoplanes and one British-made Gypsy Moth. The latter had arrived only just the week before and the all-white exterior impressed Tafari so much that he decreed the sleek little biplane his favorite. No one would fly it until the day of his coronation when he himself would serve as its first passenger (Nugent 46).

Captain Andre Maillet, the senior of the two French pilots, was a chunky man, graying at the temples. His younger counterpart was a taciturn-looking man with a moustache. Julian, upon their first meeting, disliked and distrusted them both immediately (Nugent 47).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #28 -

"[T]hey were on to a good thing in Addis Ababa, and had no desire to train the Ethiopians too fast, and thus do themselves out of an easy job. They were also concerned in the palace intrigue which was constantly going... They were taking bribes from everyone possible to use their influence in various ways - and then usually doing nothing...I could not go along with the Frenchmen in their ways, and very soon an uneasy tension had grown up between us, although we had to work together training the Ethiopians..." (Julian and Bulloch 86).

NARRATOR -

Julian grew to believe the Frenchmen were out to get him. Becoming sick after dinner one evening, Julian privately accused them of trying to poison him. They were open about their cynicism towards the Trinidadian who had, as they saw it, come to muscle them out of an easy gig. But, like it or not, the three would have to work together in order to put on the airshow that Tafari had requested (Julian and Bulloch 88).

This "private" showcase ended up with a spectating crowd of thousands, all lined up behind ropes, eager to see this black man from a faraway land, perform feats beyond their wild imaginations. Tafari, having arrived via a crimson Rolls-Royce, took his seat under a tent. Julian was driven by a limousine and the crowd cheered upon seeing him in his dark brown jodhpurs and brown suede jacket. If anyone had paid him any mind, they would have seen he had a parachute pack slung over his shoulder (Nugent 47).

When the Frenchmen pointed to the Junkers they had prepped for Julian, the Black Eagle hopped into the cockpit of the other; he would not allow himself to be sabotaged. He ignited the engine, eased back the throttle, checked the flaps, released the brake, and recited a short prayer before bringing the airplane up above the roaring crowd. He looped, spun, slid, and even managed to do several tight eights. After 30 minutes of maneuvers, the Junkers was brought back down. Seeing the thousands in attendance thirsting for an encore, Julian signaled Maillet, who he saw



tinkering on the other Junkers, possibly confirming his earlier suspicions, to ready for takeoff. Reluctantly, and due to not wanting to upset the crown prince, the Frenchman did as he was told, and together with Julian, soared back into the sky. The Black Eagle would parachute once again (Nugent 48-50).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #29 -

"At a height of 5,000 feet I jumped from the plane and tugged at my parachute. I floated down within forty feet of the King who, rushing across the field, embraced me and pinned upon my breast the Order of Menelik, the highest decoration which the kingdom awards. In addition, he presented me with \$5,000 and created me a colonel" (qtd. in "Col. Hubert Julian, Now Air Chief for Abyssinian Emperor, to Purchase Ships" 7).

NARRATOR -

Colonel Hubert Fauntleroy Julian, now a citizen of Ethiopia, became a regular sight to behold in Addis Ababa: his uniform, consisting of white jodhpurs, a blue tunic, tan pith helmet with the royal crest, and high leather boots with spurs complimented his high-profile villa on the slope of Mount Entoto where he would host elegant soirees. Beautiful women of the royal court became enamored of him and, opting not to hurt anyone's feelings, decided to make no mention of anyone named "Essie" (Nugent 52-53).

After three months, however, Julian began to feel homesick for America. He felt a responsibility to those back home across the Atlantic; they had, after all, been deprived of his presence and probably were yearning to discover what had become of their Black Eagle. Knowing he still had until November, when Tafari would be crowned emperor, Julian devised a plan, and got it approved by the palace: he would return to the United States in order to build up awareness, and possibly funds, for the Ethiopia that Tafari wished to see be created (Nugent 53).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #5 -

"With the dried skins of lions, which he says were shot by him, and other souvenirs, Colonel Julian sails on the Ile de France. He is full of enthusiasm for his adopted country and his emperor, who, he says, is 'a most remarkable man, working from 6 in the morning until late into the night, supervising all details of the government himself... 'The Abyssinians,' he says, 'are a very kindly and hospitable people. They welcome black men

from all over the world who have the ability to do things for the preservation of the only black kingdom remaining in the world" - *The Pittsburgh Courier* ("Hubert Julian Returning To U.S. To Buy Airplanes For Abyssinia" 19).

NARRATOR -

When he arrived back in New York City on July 30<sup>th</sup>, Julian was bombarded by reporters and photographers, even before he was able to leave the ship. His trip to Ethiopia peaked public interest at a time when most Americans had yet to even see their own Grand Canyon. When thinking of the shores of Africa, Henry Morton Stanley and Teddy Roosevelt were names that came to mind. Julian had crossed an ocean, a continent, and come back (Nugent 54-57).

His goal, as laid out to Ras Tafari, was to find blacks in America willing to relocate to Ethiopia and help bring it into the twentieth century. So he set up a series of lectures in order to tell his tale and recruit. He spoke at places like the Holy Trinity Baptist Church in Brooklyn where the Hon. George Stewart, a member of the New York Legislature, referred to Julian as "a messenger of peace and an ambassador of good-will" ("Abyssinian Official Repudiates Julian" 1).

But as he continued his lectures, and touted himself a representative of the Ethiopian government, the crowds grew suspicious and began to dwindle. They failed to buy into the idea of a no-white-strings-attached, free, all-black empire. When asked by James Cannon, of *The New York Telegram*, why his fellow blacks refused to embrace him the way the whites did to Lindbergh, Julian answered with, "No great man is honored by his own people. The pioneer is never acclaimed by his own hometown" (qtd. in Nugent 60-62).

When the press contacted the Ethiopian Embassy to confirm Julian's actions, they had to ensure no one would look poorly upon their country due to Julian's overzealous nature.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #6 -

"Reports appearing in newspapers concerning the Abyssinian government are absolutely false and unauthorized... [Hubert Julian] is in no way representing the Abyssinian government or any department thereof... Mr. Julian had misused the kindness and opportunity the Abyssinian government offered him" - Malaku E.

Bayen, *The Chicago Defender* (qtd. in "Says Col. H. Julian Does Not Represent Abyssinia" 13).

NARRATOR -

Fearing he would lose out on the opportunities offered to him by Ethiopia, Julian cut his stay at home short. He kissed Essie goodbye and booked passage back to Europe in order to return to the African kingdom he felt would continue embracing him. Several reporters were waiting for him at the gangplank of the S.S. *Europa*.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #30 -

"The papers, even of my own race...have harassed and maligned me. They have treated me with absolute *partiality*. They have claimed I was soliciting funds for an air force, that I was buying bombs, that I will never make an ocean-crossing flight. They are all canards" (qtd. in Nugent 62).

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#### **CHAPTER ELEVEN: A CRACK-UP BEFORE THE CORONATION**

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NARRATOR -

When Julian returned to Addis Ababa, Tafari sat him down and explained just how crucial his coronation was. Foreign dignitaries and heads of state would be in attendance. It was bad enough that the world saw Ethiopia as a backwards nation, and the soon-to-be-emperor had no intention of allowing those feelings any validity. He believed that a showing of his people's ability to fly would be in order and appointed the Black Eagle air marshal in charge of all planes and pilots. The job included taking command over a cadet training program started while Julian had been in America (Nugent 63-64).

If anyone thought that Julian would take his new position lightly, they were wrong. He took immediate charge of the cadets, drilling them from dawn to dusk seven days a week. Tafari, pleased with the progress he had been hearing about, sent a personal note to his new air marshal, telling him that a private dress rehearsal for the court was being arranged. Julian, the crown prince wrote, would sit at his side for consultation and program planning during the entire dry run.

Julian was not happy about that last part. He believed it was his right to be able to showcase his own talents (Nugent 64-65).

On the morning of October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1930, Julian readied his men inside a newly constructed wooden hangar at the end of the dirt airstrip. He had them march out towards the tent where Tafari was waiting. The emperor-elect stood and returned the salute his infant air force had given him. The men Julian had chosen boarded their Junkers and took off. They performed no tricks or stunts, rather, they kept themselves leveled out and safe. The crowd applauded. But at this point Tafari realized two things: Julian had never come to sit next to him and he could not see his Gypsy Moth at its usual position at the end of the strip. The two French pilots, none too pleased to have been pushed aside in favor of Julian, pointed out to their employer the emergence of his favorite airplane having just exited the hangar and now roaring down the runway for takeoff. Dumbfounded, Tafari snapped forward in his throne, mouth agape, as Julian ascended. No one had ever dared to so boldly disobey him (Nugent 65-66).

Unaware that this had not been planned by their ruler, the audience cheered their air marshal on. As he brought the Gypsy Moth around, Julian pulled back on the stick in order to level out. Nothing happened. He tried again, but still, nothing. Just then, the engine began to sputter (Nugent 67).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #31 -

"The controls had been tampered with, and it was impossible to maneuver the aircraft. It was a clear case of sabotage, and I had no doubt that my French 'colleagues' were at the bottom of it. Their jealousy and dislike of me had become even more violent and more open after the Emperor had praised and decorated me at the earlier show, and it was obvious to me that their bitterness had now led them into this terrible action" (Julian and Bulloch 90).

NARRATOR -

Julian could do nothing but accept that the engine had stalled and a crash landing was inevitable. This would not be a soft landing. Spectators scattered. Tafari remained on his throne, frozen with rage. Julian did his best to bring the Gypsy Moth away from the royal tent, ultimately slamming into a eucalyptus tree. Tafari cringed as he heard the sound of his favorite airplane's wings being torn off their body. No explosion

followed. No fire was started. There was simply silence; a deathly quiet chill hung in the air (Nugent 67).

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #10 -

"Colonel Hubert Fauntleroy Julian was metaphorically sitting on a wall like Humpty Dumpty, and he got a great fall in Addis [Ababa]... The Emperor did have one [favorite] airplane. The Colonel took it without permission, and wrecked it without hurting himself. He is disgraced. His orders and his uniforms and his silver spurs are taken from him. He is ordered out of the country. Moreover, the monarch had the contemptuous statement given out that Julian was in the habit of eating so much that it wouldn't pay to jail and feed him. Having no money and having been before his naturalization in Ethiopia a British West Indian...Julian...asked and got a visitor's visa to return to Harlem and secured from Americans money enough to pay his fare. His faith in America is unshaken" - *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* ("Harlem and Ethiopia" 20).

NARRATOR -

By the time Julian arrived back in the United States, Ras Tafari had been crowned Haile Selassie I. After the *Ile de France* steamed into its pier in New York City, reporters swarmed the Black Eagle and he posed for pictures while dressed in homburg, cutaway, striped trousers, a wing collar under a long dark dress jacket, gray gloves, a derby, and in his hand a Malacca cane. He denied all reports coming in that claimed he had been banished by the emperor, saying the two of them parted on the best of terms and that he resigned his position for fear of losing his own life to more sabotage. He would not cower from being killed, but he preferred, as he put it, to die with his boots on (Nugent 69; "One-Man Air Force Returns To Harlem").

Some journalists did not buy into Julian's defense and did what they could to discredit him, even insult his integrity.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #7 -

"It was difficult for me to get at the real truth of the affair short of asking the Foreign Minister or the Emperor himself, but I have good cause to believe that Julian was dismissed...because

of his swagger and his talkativeness. He spouted very much to the press on his first visit, and as the Emperor receives all the clippings from all the papers over the world concerning Abyssinia, it was easy for him to understand what Julian had been doing.

"[Julian] had a splendid chance as any young Negro of the present day could have had, but he threw it away because of his love for exhibition... I heard that he was in the habit of walking on streets with a whip, with which he would strike those of the humbler people who did not move out of his way fast enough" - J.A. Rogers, *The New York Amsterdam News* (Rogers 3).

NARRATOR -

Julian, never one to allow bad press against him to go unaddressed, sat down with Floyd J. Calvin and gave the reporter his side.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #32 -

"Of course, it must be remembered that Mr. Rogers lives in Paris...and must be careful to not offend the French or they will put him out... [He] said I carried a whip and would whip people in the street. He did not explain that the man I whipped one day was a European and not an Abyssinian, and the reason I whipped him was because he had kicked an Abyssinian youth in my presence. The thing so angered me that I grabbed the whip from the hand of my interpreter and lashed him, and when the emperor heard about it he was pleased...The fact that Mr. Rogers said he heard in Paris that I would not last long showed the French had it in for me" (qtd. in Calvin, "Says Man He Whipped Was Greek; Had Kicked Abyssinian Youngster" A6).

NARRATOR -

The first two chapters of Julian's adventures in Ethiopia had been written, but the book was not ready to be closed. It would be less than half a decade's wait for the Black Eagle to return to that country, and in the intervening years, he found equally entertaining ventures to occupy himself with.

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## CHAPTER TWELVE: THE IN BETWEEN YEARS

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NARRATOR -

*The New York-Journal American*, one of the many publications owned by media mogul William Randolph Hearst, would not allow Julian a moment's rest. Articles appeared as quick as they could be typeset, lambasting the Black Eagle for his failures in both America as well as in Ethiopia. Expecting no reprisal from the subject of their intense scrutiny, the *Journal American's* executives found themselves dumbstruck when Julian took legal action against them.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #8 -

"The Hear[s]t papers, which are noted for burlesquing the Negro, may have their attitude changed by the suit for half a million dollars filed by Col. Hubert Julian...There is no mistake about the New York [Journal] American doing what the Colonel alleges. It is all in black and white, and can't be recalled...When Col. Julian returned from Abyssinia even some Negroes attempted to poke fun at him...now we see in him a man who speaks of a king as casually as we in this country refer to a mayor or a governor... We hope he will teach the white newspapers a less[on] that will be of value to us all" - Floyd J. Calvin, *The Pittsburgh Courier* (Calvin, "Calvin's Digest" A1).

NARRATOR -

At a time when government-sanctioned segregation was being implemented within the country, Hubert Julian, a celebrity known to all races, was suing one of the richest men in the United States. He would pull no punches nor let the color of his skin determine how he should proceed. To combat the claims by Hearst's writers that he was expelled by Haile Selassie in disgrace, Julian appealed to Addison E. Southard, the American Consul General at Addis Ababa, to receive the testimony of the emperor himself ("Asks Emperor's Advice").

It would take two years before the libel suit reached its conclusion. Julian dropped the case against the *Journal-American* after signing a settlement purported to have been for \$25,000, which his and Hearst's lawyers would not comment on. No retraction was ever printed, but no one could deny Julian the satisfaction he felt by going up against the media giant's company and walking away unscathed (Whitney, "Col. Hubert Julian Wins Libel Suit Against Hearst Publications; Gets Cash And Full Page Retraction" 1; Whitney, "Attorney For Hearst Publications

Denies Cash Was Paid Col. Hubert Julian In Settlement Of Libel Suit" 2).

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NARRATOR -

Some fans of Julian began to question his ability to pilot an airplane. The *Journal-American* had tainted their opinions of the Black Eagle and no lawsuit was going to help lessen their questioning. One piece written by Floyd J. Calvin, which supported Julian as an exceptional airman, was met with harsh criticism.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #9 -

"My dear Mr. Calvin...I know of several colored pilots here in the East and in Pittsburgh.... Every one of them, I'd bet my last dollar, could fly Julian out of the sky.... If your paper would look up some of these...fellows, who really have a right to wear a pair of wings, and give them a write up once in a while, you'd be doing something creditable.... Let's hear less of this guy, until he learns how [to fly]! Very truly yours, A Courier Reader and Transport Pilot - *The Pittsburgh Courier* ("On Hubert Julian" A2).

NARRATOR -

Julian saw the writing on the wall: if he wanted to be seen as a flyer then he would have to actually do some flying. Over that late summer, starting in Long Island, Julian began performing a series of exhibition flights for crowds numbering in the thousands. While not much stunting took place, he did complete a 23-minute solo flight, waving to the crowd as he landed. He knew, however, that in order to maintain a presence within the public's eye, there needed to be something more for them to watch ("Colonel Julian Makes 23-Minute Solo Flight While 1,200 Watch Air Circus" 3).

He caught wind of William J. Powell, founder of the *Bessie Coleman Aero Club*, and his all-black flying troupe known as The Five Blackbirds, who had just performed to a Labor Day audience of 15,000. Julian saw opportunity for his reputation to grow and his pockets to fill. After a brief correspondence, Julian joined Powell and his team, who consisted of Irvin Wells, W.B. Johnson,



William Aikens, and Marie Dickerson. That autumn, the Blackbirds, along with special guest Hubert Julian, performed in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Detroit. Julian handled some of the flying while "the others wing-walked and dangled about on rope ladders hanging from landing carriages" (Nugent 73).

Powell intended to bring the Air Circus to southern California that winter. Julian extended his contract and the two pooled funds in order to purchase a used Cadillac, intending to pile in the remaining Blackbirds and drive out to Los Angeles in order to keep the show going (Nugent 73).

They set out from St. Louis, made it to Oklahoma City, and proceeded on an all-night drive to the Texas border. Julian, not ignorant of the fact that they were six blacks in the American South, pulled the car over and changed into his old Ethiopian uniform, which he had been adorning during the troupe's exhibitions.

Hungry and thirsty, the group pulled into a single gas pump service station, allured by the word "Eats" scrawled across the roadhouse's wooden exterior. As they stretched out their seat-sore limbs, a man's voice barked out, "What you damned niggers want here?"

Julian, clasping his hands in a praying position, and bowing, responded with, "I bring thee blessings from his Imperial Majesty, the African Emperor who is my ruler."

The proprietor of the establishment eyed this strange-looking black man with an odd accent. He shifted the toothpick from one side of his mouth to the other before calling out to his wife and three children, "Hey, these ain't no field niggers. They're African princes."

The six aviators ate their breakfast, gassed up their car, and drove on, Julian chuckling in contrast to the still dumbstruck faces of his peers (Nugent 73-75).

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NARRATOR -

News that The Five Blackbirds and The Black Eagle coming to perform was being received with great enthusiasm. There were

newspaper reports, leaflets being circulated, and at least one enormous billboard advertisement had been purchased for spreading the word. When the troupe arrived they took part in a motorcycle parade through the downtown business district of Los Angeles and were met by Mayor John C. Porter (Nugent 75; Rasmussen). *Esquire* claimed that "It was the first time a Negro had been received by the Mayor on the steps of City Hall" (qtd. in Nugent 75).

What had been clearly made known back during the performances in Pittsburgh was only strengthened in Los Angeles: Julian and Powell, based on reputations alone, were the main attractions of the show. The former, however, who was supposed to perform a triple parachute jump, which consisted of several freefalls in between three chute openings, did not live up to the buildup, executing only a standard jump (Scott). When it was time for Powell and his Blackbirds, they performed "Follow the leader," as Dickerson would recall, "[Powell] would lead, the first one would fall off, then the second one, then the third one, and we would make a line and come on back around and make another string and come off" (qtd. in Scott). The crowd loved them.

There was one piece of advertising preceding the exhibition, however, which left Powell scratching his head.

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #11 -

"It is announced that Lieutenant Powell, piloting an auto-giro will perform a 5,000 foot descent race with another auto-giro piloted by Colonel Julian in which the loser wins. Another feature of the air-circus will be the race between Colonel Julian in parachute and Lieutenant Powell in an auto-giro. These two fliers are making plans now for a transatlantic flight this summer..." - *The San Bernardino County Sun* ("Air Circus To Offer Stunts" 9).

NARRATOR -

While Julian had been quietly hinting at a globe-crossing attempt via the sky, the cat was out of the bag now. Powell, surprised as anyone else, did not dismiss the announcement, rather, he engaged in a series of talks with the Black Eagle regarding what the latter had in mind. The two traveled south together in order for Julian to engage the curious press in his own style of self-promotion. "If someone could rid Julian of his spasmodic outbursts of egotism," Powell would later write,

"there could hardly be a speaker found to excel him" (qtd. in Scott).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #10 -

"Colonel Julian said he came to San Diego for good luck on his proposed transatlantic flight because it was from here that many of the world's great distance flights started and were successful. 'I just want to absorb a little of Lindbergh's luck,' he said. The flight from New York to India will be made in a special Bellanca plane... The only cargo to be carried on the hop to Delhi besides Powell, who will act as navigator, will be a bale of cheese cloth which will be presented to Mahatma Gandhi" - *The Chicago Defender* ("Col. Julian And Partner Plan Flight To India" 4).

NARRATOR -

Julian kept up selling this flight for over a year, losing Powell along the way to sheer frustration on the navigator's part. But Julian did not let that stop him from soliciting funds and bringing the Bellanca plane to Floyd Bennett Airport in Brooklyn for its official christening ceremony ("Colonel Hubert Julian Has Another Ship; Will Fly Immediately - When He Gets Coin" 1).

Funds trickled in slowly with no sign of improving, so Julian traveled to Boston for a series of short flights and lectures. When he returned to New York, a banquet was set up for him at the Harlem Y.M.C.A., attended by several important personalities within the realms of aviation, law, and politics. What was absent, however, was the general public, those who Julian had, for 10 years, been trying to rally in support of his desire to fly for his race ("Julian Back From Boston Flight" 13; B. 1).

FEMALE VOICEOVER (C) #2 -

"I have no explanation to offer for Harlem's lack of appreciation of Colonel Julian and his efforts to make a contribution to the field of aviation... There surely must be some reward for an individual who possesses the perseverance exhibited by this character... If renowned aviators, if builders and users of the world's best airplanes believe in him...why shouldn't we? If and when he makes this flight, and it is a success, we'll want to be known as his friends" - Thelma Berlack Boozer, *The New York Amsterdam News* (Boozer 5).

NARRATOR -

When the operation folded in late 1933, the Black Eagle realized that the public was no longer interested in funding flights of fancy just a few years after they had salivated over such endeavors. The world had changed and Julian would have to find ways to satisfy his need to fly, promote aviation, and keep himself and his family out of the poorhouse.

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #12 -

"Harlem had its own Easter parade... It was a sinuous, brilliant procession of hundreds of chanting followers of the Rev. M.J. Divine, who is 'Father' to thousands of Negroes in a series of 'kingdoms' throughout the metropolitan area. The swaying ranks were viewed by thousands along the route and by the 'Father' himself and his staff in a...red monoplane..." - *The New York Times* ("Chanting Throng Parades In Harlem").

NARRATOR -

Although he had piloted the airplane and appeared on the platform once it had landed and Father Divine addressed the crowd, Julian was not a follower of the reverend. He saw work without prejudice and picked up what he could. But when the opportunity to escort Mrs. Amy Garvey to London came along, Julian was on the S.S. *Europa*, setting sail in late July 1934 ("Extra! Colonel Julian Is Off - On Ss. Europa" 1).

A little over a month into their trip, Mrs. Garvey played hostess to Nana Sir Ofori Atta I, King of Akyem Abuakwa, one of the largest and wealthiest kingdoms of the then Gold Coast Colony.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #33 -

"I had hired a plane... [Sir Nana] asked me if I would take him up for a joy-ride, as he had never been in an aeroplane...and...together we walked over to where the plane was parked. It was a warm day, and Sir Nana was attended by his ritual umbrella-bearer, who held an ornate, gaily colored parasol over his master's head... Under my directions the Paramount Chief got into the second seat of the plane and

strapped himself in, then I got into the cockpit... I gunned the engine. The tremendous and unexpected gust of air from the propeller caught the wide umbrella as the bearer struggled for a footing on the plane... Clinging hold for dear life, away went the bearer at the end of the umbrella, sailing across the tarmac with his robes billowing about him" (Julian and Bulloch 95).

NARRATOR -

When Julian arrived back in New York in December, he brought with him the story of him narrowly escaping death during a nighttime flight above the English Channel. By his account, and that published in the British and French newspapers, he had taken off from Le Bourget Field in France, intent on making an engagement scheduled that night in London, when a terrible storm broke out. He landed by the lights of car headlights, his plane in shambles, but physically unscathed. This was just the type of tale the American public had been without for the duration of his absence ("Julian, Back, Reveals Narrow Death Escape" 3).

But the Black Eagle was bored. He was bored with the way his life was going. Essie and Olga brought him happiness at home, but this was a man who could not sit idle, letting the world pass him by. And as 1935 rolled around it was becoming clear that he had found a new call to adventure: The Italian military mobilization had not happened overnight. Benito Mussolini's desire to take eastern Africa had been watched by the global community, yet he had been allowed to continue his operations. Julian's blood was brought to a boil when Haile Selassie's kingdom entered into the crosshairs of Fascist Italy's plans for conquest. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the day after he set sail for Europe en route to Ethiopia, "the *Chicago Tribune* cautioned: Il Duce Note, Black Eagle Sails For Abyssinia" (Nugent 83; qtd. in Nugent 84).

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### **CHAPTER THIRTEEN: ETHIOPIA ON THE EVE OF INVASION**

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NARRATOR -

Maybe it was because he had been barred from joining the fight in World War I by his father that Hubert Julian went back to Ethiopia. His courage cannot come under question, but his commonsense leaves room for criticism. The country he was

returning to stood little chance against the Italians this time, who thirsted for vengeance after their humiliating defeat in the First Italo-Ethiopian War in 1896. Julian's combination of nerve, stupidity, and that adventure-seeking drive led him back to the east African kingdom, arriving there on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1935, having managed to join up with a weapons shipment, consisting of 20,000 rifles, 1,000 machine guns, and 12,000,000 rounds of ammunition, sent from sympathetic European nations ("Ethiopia Gets Huge Load of Machine Guns - Bullets" 1).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #11 -

"The arrival of this huge consignment of arms and munitions does two things. It definitely points out the part Col. Julian...will play in the forthcoming conflict and it announces to the world that Ethiopia is ready to defend her lands and her independence.... The defiant attitude of Ethiopia shows Mussolini that he has invited more than he can handle at this time" - *The Chicago Defender* ("Ethiopia Gets Huge Load of Machine Guns - Bullets" 1).

NARRATOR -

Julian, having come into the country illegally, sought an audience with Haile Selassie immediately, but the emperor was not interested, his chamberlain sending word to Julian that Ethiopia's aeronautical branch of the military, which was very small, was in the competent hands of the two French pilots ("Julian Not Hailed By Haile Selassie" 4).

For two long months Julian tried to gain access to the palace, and when he did get in, it was done in the style that the Black Eagle was best known for. He put on his old uniform, marched directly to the gates, and demanded to see the chamberlain, telling him to inform the emperor that he was not there for pleasure, but to fight for him. Two days later a note arrived for him at the hotel he had been living in. Selassie thanked Julian for having come, reaffirmed his Ethiopian citizenship, and, while making it clear that he would not have anything to do with the air force, enlisted him into the army as commanding officer of a new infantry detachment ("Addis Ababa"; Nugent 85).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #34 -

"I replied that I had no military experience, but I was sure I had sufficient knowledge to instill discipline and the rudiments of warfare into these recruits...but these men had absolutely no

idea of anything, so it was not difficult to teach them to form up, turn left or right, or halt at the word of command. At least I ensured that they would not be an undisciplined rabble if it did come to fighting" (Julian and Bulloch 104-105).

NARRATOR -

Men from all over the country flocked daily to Addis Ababa in order to join in the war effort. Julian, in full colonel-designating attire, continued to work on his infantrymen, "training them to crawl under barbed wire, dig trenches and fortify them, fight in hand-to-hand combat, and touch their toes without bending their knees." He could often be seen in the capital's central square, drilling his soldiers and shouting the ancient warrior cry of "Ebalgume!" which translated, roughly, to "Mow the enemy down!" ("100,000 Yell Battle Cry In Ethiopia" 1-2; Nugent 85-86).

On August 5<sup>th</sup>, Julian sent a cable to *The Pittsburgh Courier*, explaining the atmosphere of impending battle which hovered over Ethiopia.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #35 -

"Intense excitement prevailing among foreigners and natives here as Ethiopia prepares steadily for war (stop) Uncertainty about...[League of Nations'] decision causes mobilization to continue (stop) Ethiopians calmly preparing for war next month which they feel is inevitable (stop) Patriotism at fever heat and Ethiopia is ready (stop) Military plans cloaked in secrecy but American Negroes can feel assured that unpleasant surprises awaiting invading army (stop)..." ("Hubert Julian Cables The Courier About 'Exciting Days' Prevailing In Ethiopia" 4).

NARRATOR -

Three days after sending that message, Julian would have his own unpleasant surprise. He was not the only foreigner volunteering his services to Haile Selassie's defense. Among several prominent Americans there in the country was John Charles Robinson, an aviator, who called himself the Brown Condor of Chicago, a moniker, Julian was quick to note, had been plagiarized straight from the Black Eagle of Harlem.

Robinson, a native of Florida but who eventually made his base of operations in Chicago, had graduated from the Tuskegee Institute, having majored in automotive mechanics. Barred from

attending the Curtiss-Wright Aviation School, he took on the job of night janitor, sweeping and dusting in the back of the classrooms, listening and learning as the teachers lectured. After his employers became aware of their janitor's intelligence and skills, they admitted him into the program, eventually hiring him as their first black instructor. Prior to leaving the United States, and in honor of his 10-year anniversary of graduation, he landed a small plane in a field at Tuskegee in an attempt to get the institute to begin an aeronautics program (Gubert et al. 252-253).

And Robinson had been invited to Ethiopia, by the emperor, whereas Julian received retroactive acceptance. The Brown Condor came in April of that year and had been asked to train pilots. The two had appeared together at airshows back in the United States and were on cordial terms with one another, boarding at the same establishment in Addis Ababa, the Hotel de France. While Julian could tolerate his counterpart's nickname to a point, he could not tolerate what he read in newspaper articles sent to him by Essie. Robinson, while not named directly, was believed to be the source of jabs against Julian in the press, questioning the Black Eagle's credentials and intentions.

At the hotel's restaurant, Julian confronted Robinson. Witnesses say their words were brief before they came to blows, throwing punches, and tossing one another over tables. Robinson then pulled a knife out, slashing his opponent across the arm, keeping him at a distance. Julian grabbed a wooden chair, charged, and cracked Robinson across the head, laying him out onto the floor (Julian and Bulloch 107; Nugent 88-89).

With the news that more Italian troops were amassing at the borders, the palace, having no patience for dramatics, responded immediately, suspending Julian and promoting Robinson to commander of the Ethiopian Air Force. The former was enraged and voiced his disapproval to *The New York Times*.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #36 -

"The Ethiopian air force has been totally mismanaged... There are...a dozen planes in the country, of which five are unable to take to the air and the other seven are only capable of flying a few score miles... The personnel is chosen from the most inefficient quarters... If Addis Ababa is raided by the Italians, the Ethiopian air force can do nothing to defend the capital. Nor can it carry out any reconnaissance flights over the Italian lines. Indeed, if war breaks out, it will not be surprising if



certain leading foreign instructors immediately leave the country" ("Ethiopia Demands League Do Its Duty").

NARRATOR -

Julian would not be expelled from Ethiopia, rather, he was gotten rid of under the pretense of being given command of a garrison in Ambo, a town about 90 miles from Addis Ababa, near Lake Tana. Ambo was home to a few thousand people, the majority of them living in shacks typical of the rural areas. Julian's assignment was to find a suitable water supply, but this proved difficult. It also did not help that the troops waiting for him there were a motley crew, under-supplied, and lacking formal military training. It did not take him long to understand just how angry the emperor had been (Julian and Bulloch 107-109). But his time in Ambo would be short.

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia, crossing the Mareb River between Haile Selassie's kingdom and Eritrea. The Second Italo-Ethiopian War had begun. Seven days later, Julian arrived back in Addis Ababa on a foaming horse he had ridden the entire 90 miles ("Black Eagle Ready; He Knows Italians" 3).

The next day he headed for the frontlines in Adowa with Minister of War, Ras Mulugeta. Upon reaching their destination it was clear that conditions had fallen into chaos. There was no mechanized transport. Supplies were nearly nonexistent. The soldiers were in a state of shock as they had never before encountered the technological horrors of modern warfare. As heavy artillery fell upon them, many fled. Mulugeta ordered Julian back to the capital, hoping that if they had time to fortify it that they might be ready for one last ditch effort of defense (Nugent 90-91).

When Julian reached Addis Ababa, however, he was brought by a palace guard to the chamberlain, asking him to explain the rumor that the Italians had paid off an American in Ethiopia to assassinate the emperor. This bit of gossip had originated in Rome's leading daily, *La Tribuna*, and no doubt was run in order to cause a shake up for the Ethiopian government. Julian became enraged by the accusation placed against him. One main point of contention was the fact that he was not actually an American citizen. He had had enough of being treated for less than what he believed he was worth. After submitting his formal resignation, the Black Eagle left Ethiopia on November 15<sup>th</sup>, and, unfortunately, for the kingdom and its subjects, Haile Selassie would leave as well, six months later in May 1936, riding atop a

donkey, preparing for a life in exile. Italy had won ("Abroad"; "Differences Between Selassie and Black Eagle Patched Up, Julian Gets Choice of Army Positions" 3; Nugent 91-93).

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#### CHAPTER FOURTEEN: HATED AND MISUNDERSTOOD

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HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #37 -

"Italy will take over Ethiopia and it will be a good thing... I'm disgusted and I'll never go back... The country is an awful place. The Emperor himself is an honorable person and doing everything he can for his country, but he is surrounded by some terrible people... I'm giving up my citizenship..." *The New York Age* (qtd. in "Julian 'Hopes Italy Will Win'" 1).

NARRATOR -

After securing safe passage out of Ethiopia, Julian arrived in Djibouti, with little money, but somehow booked passage aboard the *Compiègne*. While docked at Port Said, he sold his camera for extra spending funds. He eventually landed in France and took up residence at a Parisian hotel where he let his frustrations about what had transpired around him for seven months come pouring out. His verbal lashings of the Ethiopian people did not sit well with the press or public. The Black Eagle became a target of harsh criticism (Julian and Bulloch 113).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #12 -

"Julian's record, as far as I can gather, while distinctly lacking in achievement, has been notoriously brilliant. Julian likes publicity - and this he gets, at anybody's expense, even at the expense of his race as a whole" - Ebenezer Ray, *The New York Age* (Ray, "Dottings of a Paragapher" 6).

NARRATOR -

When Julian arrived back in New York, reporters stormed the decks of the *Aquitania*, bombarding the Black Eagle with questions on his new attitudes towards Ethiopia and on where his next adventures might bring him. But Julian, attired in black coat and derby hat, swinging an ivory-capped ebony cane, continued on with the rhetoric he had started in Europe, saying

that the Ethiopians cared not for black Americans and that the latter should stay out of international affairs ("Julian Back Home, War Career Ended").

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #13 -

"Yes indeed, New Year resolutions are fine things.... Much more interesting...might be a list of some of the resolutions that were not made - with reasons. For instance.... FOR 1936 I DID NOT RESOLVE...[t]o cultivate a liking for Hubert Julian. Because as an example of the Negro, he typifies with exceptional clarity, all of those characteristics which we could well do without. And, in my opinion, the race could just as easily do without him" - St. Clair Bourne, *The New York Age* (Bourne, "In This Corner" 5).

NARRATOR -

Shortly after the start of 1936, Julian suddenly, and uncharacteristically without pomp, left again for Europe. A report soon emerged that he had gone to Paris in order to speak with the Italian consul located there. Rumors swirled now, laying claim that a deal had been struck between Julian and the Italians while he was in Djibouti, securing himself safe passage out of the country in exchange for insider information regarding the inner-workings of Ethiopia ("Italian Consul Furnished Suite On Liner, Claim" 1-2).

Julian was not out of the country for long. But his reentrance into the United States on January 22<sup>nd</sup> would not prove easy. Upon arrival at Ellis Island, authorities detained him, claiming he did not have the proper paperwork. At the heart of the issue was Julian's citizenship. He had possessed a British passport yet he had just recently been holding an Ethiopian one, which he renounced, quite publically. Facing deportation, he appealed to the State Department, and remained on the island, in a detention area for several days, before word came from Washington, allowing him back in provided he get his papers in order and clear up the question of his citizenship ("Harlem 'Black Eagle' Barred From Country; Visa of Julian, Now an Ethiopian, Faulty"; "Julian Paroled Pending Review").

When grilled by the media about his actions and the rumors of his cooperating with the Italians, Julian promised to eventually clear up everything during a series of lectures which would begin in Chicago, coinciding with the meeting of the National Negro Congress, where he intended to make a showing ("Colonel Julian Back" 1).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #14 -

"Momentary disturbance of the remarkable orderliness which characterized all of the sessions of the National Negro Congress...was...when Hubert Fauntleroy Julian...noticed strutting about the hall brilliantly attired and wearing a delegate's badge, was asked for his credentials. His reply...was deemed unsatisfactory but, when asked to leave, he showed reluctance, whereupon...three husky delegates are said to have seized him.... Rescued by police from the angry mob which quickly gathered, Julian was with difficulty rushed to a side room and...escorted from the armory" - *The New York Age* ("Julian Thrown Out of Negro Congress" 1).

NARRATOR -

Laying low for the remainder of the winter, Julian gave no interviews or made any public appearances. Then in late spring, less than a month after Ethiopia admitted defeat, the Black Eagle set sail aboard the Italian liner *Vulcania*, bound for Rome ("Col. Julian Departs Under His New Flag"). His behavior upon disembarking in Naples caused alarm as he declared Italy his new country, citing its victory in East Africa, announced a flight centered on Rome, and made a change in his name to Huberto Fauntleroyana Juliano ("Fauntleroy Again" 6).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #15 -

"We have been forced to hear Julian's idle pratings about his mythical exploits and extraordinary plans until we are sick of them. In fact, we are heartily sick of Julian and have been for a long time. We would like nothing better than for him to start off on that proposed hop - because we don't believe he can make it. And if he didn't so much the better" - *The New York Age* ("Fauntleroy Again" 6).

NARRATOR -

No one could argue with sentiments such as those. Julian had turned against everything he stood for and was now in the enemy's camp. But those who knew him, the real man behind the persona he had created for the public, were apt to believe there was something brewing secretly in the Black Eagle's dealings. The story, never made public until the publication of his autobiography in 1964, detailed a plot straight out of an Ian Fleming novel. Julian had seemingly abandoned the Ethiopian

cause in an attempt to gain Italian trust in order to assassinate Benito Mussolini.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #38 -

"On the day of the audience [with Il Duce] I dressed even more carefully than usual... I strapped a tiny revolver to the inside of my right wrist, concealed by the sleeve of my jacket...if I suddenly extended the arm...whoever I pointed at would have the bullet delivered to him... If I lost my life, well, I should consider it well spent... Count Ciano...son-in-law of the dictator...began to blackguard [Haile Selassie]... I was unable to contain myself, and began arguing with him and giving vent to all the feelings which had been bottled up inside me for so long" (Julian and Bulloch 114-117).

NARRATOR -

With suspicions stirred, the meeting was canceled, and Julian quickly retreated to his hotel, unstrapped the pistol from his arm, packed, and hopped onto the first train going north (Julian and Bulloch 118).

The truth to this story is of course up for questioning, yet it provides the only explanation for Julian's actions over the course of the winter and spring of 1936. If even a grain of this tale of would-be assassination is true then the Black Eagle should have been lauded as a hero for his covert attempts at taking out the leader of Fascist Italy. Suspect are his efforts to conceal this part of his life until nearly three decades later, but, perhaps, beneath all that desire for the headlines, Julian had some modesty, especially given the fact that nothing came of this one-man plot.

Several years, along with a few quirky endeavors, needed to pass before Julian was to regain credibility, but it would now be mixed with remnants of the criticisms he received for leaving Ethiopia and for the words said against the fallen kingdom, but the man had the thick skin needed for enduring such disparaging attacks against him. The Black Eagle would, despite it all, find a way to prevail.

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## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN: ODDITIES, DIVINE, AND MICHEAUX**

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MALE VOICEOVER (B) #16 -

"Know that Chinese mandarin at the right? Looks like 'Chiang Hu-Fau-Ju,' a nearby pen-pusher mutters... In Harlesemese, he is just Hubert Fauntleroy Julian.... Now he is looking Chinaward...to beat the 'stuffins' out of Japan... [Y]ou can't keep Harlem's playboy put. Today he is an American, yesterday a British West Indian...the day before a strutting Ethiopian; next a subject of his Italian majesty; tomorrow, ladies and gentlemen, a Chinese...Chop Suey!" - *The New York Amsterdam News* ("Julian Goes Chinese To Fight Japanese" 1).

NARRATOR -

Julian had heard that the Chinese had sent a group to the United States, seeking to buy airplanes. Making contact with them he introduced the group to Bellanca, helping to broker a deal between the two parties. Hoping to see the shipment all the way to the Far East, the Black Eagle sailed to France in order to begin the long journey. While in his hotel room in Normandy, however, a chair collapsed from under him, sending Julian to the ground, and, later, the hospital. It would take six weeks at minimum for the three fractures in his arm to fully heal, causing him to miss the opportunity which the press had poked fun at (Duckett 3; Julian and Bulloch 147).

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #13 -

"I tried out my tricks first of all in the street, swallowing many glasses of water and then pouring forth a great fountain from one side of the road to the other... A café proprietor saw me doing this one day, and chased me down the street. I thought he wanted to beat me up, but no - all he did was put a coin in my hand and ask me to repeat the trick" - Prince Hadji Ali, *The Morning Bulletin*, November 1937 (qtd. in "The Man Who Has Jonah Beaten" 11).

NARRATOR -

Billed sometimes as "The Great Egyptian Miracle Man," "The Amazing Regurgitator," and "The Human Aquarium," Ali was a prince only when performing. Described as Judy Garland's

favorite vaudevillian, Ali had been performing in the United States since the mid-1920s, accompanied by his daughter, Almina, billed as "The Princess." When he died on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1937, in the United Kingdom, Julian, a friend and admirer, hoped to sell Ali's body to Johns Hopkins University, sharing the profits with Almina. They arrived in New York in early December, garnering much attention, and jeering, as the now monocle-sporting Julian, despite Ali's many American performances, tried to paint the dead man as a true prince, he and his daughter being the descendants of King Tut himself ("Dashing Colonel Julian Returns With Corpse, Princess and Monocle" 1).

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HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #39 -

"The legions of France are on the march and, side by side with their French comrades are many black men. Everywhere you turn you see nothing but soldiers and in every branch, blacks are well represented... [France] does not wait until an emergency arises to prepare her black citizen as is the case in America... They are chiefly in the departments of artillery and aviation although infantrymen there are in plenty... Paris is completely blacked. All neon signs and shop windows are turned off at night. The same applies to motor vehicles" - Col. Hubert F. Julian, *The New York Amsterdam News*, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1939 (Julian 1-10).

NARRATOR -

Only eight days after Germany's invasion of Poland, Julian had crossed the Atlantic, traveling under a League of Nations-issued Nansen passport he managed to obtain under the argument of having no legal citizenship of any country, and settled in as Special War Correspondent for *The New York Amsterdam News*. His stint, however, would be brief, lasting only a month, before he packed up and left (Julian and Bulloch 120; Reil 22).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #17 -

"[A]fter the none too creditable reputation of the aviator...had been recounted by a couple of his paper's contemporaries, it was noticed that his name was omitted from...[the *Amsterdam's*] columns like so much libel. Now the good-for-nothing...comes back to the U.S...This his paper publishes, but without even passing mention

that less than a month ago he was flaunted as its war correspondent. The newspaper evidently assumes that its readers have forgotten.... If we were a publisher of a newspaper we might do as blundering a job as some of the current Negro publishers, but about one thing we are sure - we couldn't do worse" - Ebenezer Ray, *The New York Age* (Ray, "A Paragrapher's Dottings" 12).

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NARRATOR -

By December 1939, Father Divine, Julian's past employer from several years back, found himself sitting in a courtroom with two former "angels," as his followers were referred to by, Thomas and Verinda Brown, suing him for the return of their savings and property which they claimed had been coerced away from them, by the reverend, in 1930 when they felt compelled to relocate to Sayville, Long Island, living in one of his "heavens," as they were called, indulging in hours long feasts. Now, out from under Divine's influence, the Browns were facing their former leader, he being surrounded by current, notebook-holding "angels" ready to scribble down anything he said, for his words, to them, were sacred (Nugent 98-100).

Julian, magnificently-garbed, burst into the courtroom, declaring that he would help settle the matter out of court, which Father Divine was not keen on doing, producing \$12,000 in warehouse receipts for whiskey. Justice Benedict E. Dineen was impressed enough to adjourn the proceedings while counsels for both sides could confer ("Negro Flier Halts Father Divine Suit" 1-14).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #40 -

"I am not a follower of Father Divine. But I am a Negro and I have seen the good things he has done. Any man who can make great numbers of people quit drinking and smoking and even make thieves return the things they have stolen, I am for. I am sick and tired of seeing the Negro race kicked around. Because I am a Negro I want to do my bit to help demonstrate its true dignity" (qtd. in "Negro Flier Halts Father Divine Suit" 1-14).

NARRATOR -



Behind-the-scenes conferences began, with Julian taking an unusual commanding role. But, ultimately, the Black Eagle would have to admit defeat. Once he began receiving phone calls from 20 other former "angels," all demanding retribution, it was clear that the previously proposed settlement sum of \$12,000 would now be more like \$50,000, a total Julian declared was out of the question. The trial would proceed, but Father Divine ended up settling the case out of court, and, out of his own pocket ("Divine Comedy" 27; Nugent 101-102).

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NARRATOR -

On January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1940, the famous black filmmaker, Oscar Micheaux premiered *The Notorious Elinor Lee* at the RKO Regent Theater in Harlem, and Hubert Julian, credited as an associate producer for contributing funds to marketing the movie after Micheaux completed it, made the screening an event worthy of Hollywood. The two men had bonded over a similar desire to forward the cause of equality.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #18 -

"My results...might have been narrow at times, due perhaps to certain limited situations, which I endeavored to portray, but in those limited situations, the truth was the predominate characteristic. It is only by presenting those portions of the race portrayed in my pictures, in the light and background of their true state, that we can raise our people to greater heights. I am too imbued with the spirit of Booker T. Washington to engraft false virtues upon ourselves, to make ourselves that which we are not" - Oscar Micheaux (qtd. in Lupack 159-160).

NARRATOR -

Stepping out of a Cadillac, "in full dress with a shining top hat, white silk gloves, and an Inverness cape" (Smith 75), Julian went straight to theater manager, Max Mink's, office, preparing the numerous bottles of scotch and champagne for the invited guests. As nine o'clock struck, guests arrived, golden invitations in their hands. Julian and Micheaux greeted each person, one-by-one, the filmmaker answering questions in passing, saying how they shot the movie in 10 days at the old Biograph Studios in the Bronx. Once everyone was seated, Julian

cried out, "Darken the theater, and on with the show. Let joy be unconfirmed!" (Smith 77-78).

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #14 -

"We sat through this drama, and at last *The Notorious Elinor Lee* was unfolded before us. It was colossal. I remember that there was a man named Stacker Lee who was tried for murder, and the star witness for the prosecution was a parrot. The parrot had been an eyewitness to the crime and during the trial kept testifying, 'Stacker, you done it. Stacker, you stabbed him with a knife.' Stacker Lee was Elinor Lee's papa, and the way Elinor Lee got notorious was in Paducah where she was 'in the low-down business before she went to St. Louis.' It was very gripping and held the interest, and I laughed until I got a pain in my side" - H. Allen Smith (Smith 78-79).

NARRATOR -

Upon exiting the theater, Smith inquired when the film would be shown again. The usher looked at him, saying, "What do you mean, again...It's been showin' all day since eleven o'clock this morning. This nine o'clock show was the only one that's the world's premiere" (Smith 79). The journalist, grinning after a short mental lapse, remembered that only the Black Eagle of Harlem could have orchestrated such an affair.

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## CHAPTER SIXTEEN: A JOURNEY TO FINLAND

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #15 -

"Russian troops dropped by parachutes from huge bombing [planes] were reported to have occupied Petsamo, Finland's chief port on the Arctic Ocean, today following bombing raids which left the port and another town in flames. Violent fighting between the Finnish and Russian forces was reported.... Despite machine-gunning from low-flying airplanes 600 refugees crossed the frontier. Crowds of women and children were seen on roads leading to the border as Soviet planes roared overhead" - *The Nashua Telegraph* ("Red Troops Land in 'Chutes Occupy Chief Finnish Port" 1).

NARRATOR -

The Winter War, as it would come to be called, started on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1939 when the Soviet Union invaded Finland, sparking a conflict that lasted 105 days with casualties reaching as high as 360,000 for the Russians and 70,000 for the Finns. The League of Nations deemed the attack illegal and expelled the Soviet Union from its ranks. The conflict ended on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1940 with the signing of the Moscow Peace Treaty which saw Finland maintain its independence but cede territory to the Soviet Union.

Before the fighting ceased, however, Julian had contacted the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C., offering his services as an airman in the fight against communist aggression. He set sail, like many other American volunteers, for Finland, ready to do what he could to assist.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #41 -

"My only regret is that the hostilities ended before I got over there.... My assignment as an instructor in the Finnish Air Corps only goes to prove that we as Negroes must be prepared for we never know when opportunity may come knocking at our door. The Negro may not be given an opportunity in the United States, but if he is qualified, there are all sorts of avenues open to him outside" (qtd. in "Julian Gone Again, Sails To Aid Finns" 1)

NARRATOR -

The assorted array of airplanes from the British, French, Italians, Swedes, and Americans proved to be enough for the Finns as they were able to combat the Russian forces which outnumbered them. But it was probably the foresight of its government that made Finland bring in people like Julian, who, despite his overall lack of formal training, knew how to rally those around him. Knowing that the Soviet Union's agreed upon peace treaty with them was nothing that would stand the test of time, the Finns wanted to do what they could in order to strengthen their aeronautical arsenal.

Julian's time in the northern country was brief; he stayed about three months in total, but experienced a warm welcome. He described the people of Helsinki, Finland's capital, as "rather gay, though it was, perhaps, the rather hectic gaiety of people living on the edge of the abyss" (Julian and Bulloch 124-125). Given the rank of captain and attached to the staff of General Jarl Lundqvist, Commander of the Finnish Air Force, in his

capacity, Julian would pilot the general from one base to another (Julian and Bulloch 125).

Had it not been for one incident, Julian's stay would have been deemed uneventful. But the Black Eagle found himself out on a rescue mission one day to retrieve a fellow American volunteer, Lieut. Lewis Horton Peters, whose plane had gone down during a routine scouting mission.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #42 -

"I walked over and found that [Peters] had slipped while getting out of his aircraft, fallen on the ice and broken his ankle. So naturally I went to pick him up and carry him over to our own plane. But he wouldn't have it. 'I be damned if I let a nigger rescue me,' he said... So without saying a word I went over to him, bent down and pulled off his flying-boots and thick woolen stockings. Then started walking away. 'Hey, where you going?' he yelled. 'Right now,' I replied, 'I'm going back to the base. When I remember I might suggest someone else comes out and pick you up. Unless, of course, you feel like apologizing.' He swore, but there was nothing else he could do but say he was sorry, so I went back and carried him over to our plane. 'Just remember,' I said, 'that this is Finland, and not Texas...' (Julian and Bulloch 125-126).

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #16 -

"Lack of education and a lack of desire for one had kept millions of my people in ignorance concerning the capabilities of colored citizens. Capt. Julian...treated the American boys so well... He invited me to dinner once or twice and then I began to wonder about what a fool I had been. If the colored people had fifteen or twenty men like Capt. Julian to act as ambassadors of goodwill...it wouldn't be long before a lot of other white people would start thinking like me. They discriminate...because they just don't know... From now on, I am going to do all I can to help get colored aviators into the U.S. Army and Navy" - Lieut. Lewis Horton Peters (qtd. in Lawrence 1).

NARRATOR -

With little more to be accomplished in Finland, Julian, along with 100 or so American volunteers, boarded the *Mathilda Thorden* and arrived back in New York on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1940. The ship had been overcrowded and many of the men slept in hammocks in the cargo hold for the 13-day sailing, wearing stitched-together clothing

from their tattered uniforms and cloth given to them by Finnish civilians before departing. Julian, on the other hand, appeared refreshed and garbed in a sky blue uniform, with three captain's stars on the epaulettes. He had rested easy in his own private cabin (Julian and Bulloch 127; "Volunteers Back From Finnish War").

As reporters flocked around the homecoming volunteers, Captain Albert Ieto, a Finnish naval officer, and Captain Albert Stenberg, a recruitment officer for Canada and the United States, lambasted Julian for wearing a uniform he did not earn or deserve. The Black Eagle, ever prepared, retaliated with a document bearing the signature of Baron Gustaf Mannerheim, Chief of Defense of the Finnish Defense Forces, authenticating his role as a military attaché. "If you were a gentleman," Ieto insisted, "you would take off that uniform." Julian, infuriated, waived off his critics and took his leave; he would not stand around and be accused of lacking civility (Nugent 112-113; "Finn Volunteers Tell Of 'Nightmare' Voyage" 2).

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## **CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: THE CHALLENGE**

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NARRATOR -

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1940, Julian dined with Giuseppe Bellanca at the Waldorf Astoria. As their conversation turned to the war in Europe, now a year old, Bellanca mentioned he had read Adolf Hitler's manifesto, *Mein Kampf*, finding it appalling for, among many reasons, the way in which the German Chancellor viewed blacks and Jews. Julian confessed his ignorance of the book and Bellanca went on to explain how Hermann Goering, Minister of Aviation for the Third Reich, shared his leader's opinion that blacks were baboons, or, at the very least, half-apes unfit to associate with humans. Julian, who did not share the view of American isolationism and hoped his country of residence would take up arms against Nazi Germany, became enraged. Having just recently returned from Finland and seeing the aftermath of totalitarian aggression, he sent off a cable, addressed to Goering, via the Germany Embassy. It was soon picked up by the newspapers (Julian and Bulloch 134).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #43 -

"As the pioneer aviator and aeronautical representative of millions of intrepid and cultured Negroes of the world we resent emphatically and without compromise dastardly insult as expressed by the Chancellor of the Reich [that] 'all Negroes of American and British Empire are half apes and baboons and should be incarcerated in a special camp'.... I therefore challenge and defy you Hermann Goering as head of the Nazi Air Force to meet me Hubert Fauntleroy Julian at ten thousand feet above the English Channel to fight an aerial duel to avenge this cowardly insult to the honor of my race thirty days from date with neutral correspondents as referees..." (qtd. in "'Black Eagle' Has Date To Duel Goering in Air" 1).

NARRATOR -

The staff at the German Embassy told Julian that should Goering give him the time of day and accept such an outlandish threat that the Black Eagle should paint a big black baboon on the side of his plane. Julian told them their minister should match his baboon with a fat pink pig (Julian and Bulloch 134).

Julian's mailbox became flooded with hundreds of letters from enthusiastic blacks, again rallying behind their colonel for his desire to fight yet another group espousing prejudice against them. One man, a mechanic from Nashville, Tennessee, requested Julian to accept him into his ranks.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #19 -

"While looking over the evening papers...I noticed the remarks attributed to this Goering. It made my blood boil and, feeling the same as you do, I am willing to give my life along with you to defend the honor of our race. I have a wife and one child, but they're not apes.... If you will accept me to do the machine gunning, I am ready to come to New York right away" - Ernest Dixon, Jr. (qtd. in "Southerner Wants to Man Guns For Hubert Julian" 1-16).

NARRATOR -

Roy Wilkins, in his column for *The New York Amsterdam News*, praised Julian for his vigor and courage, writing that "We colored Americans would be much the worse off for his absence" and that "his flourishing threats...are like a cool refreshing shower in this sultry, hateful world" (Wilkins 10).

Julian, whether or not he had truly meant what he said in his challenge to Goering, seems to have been inspired by the response because he ventured up to Canada, returning to the country for the first time since his departure in the 1920s, determined to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force as a foreign volunteer, ready to take on his Nazi nemesis should the issued challenge be met.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #20 -

"[D]ispatches from an airport in Canada revealed that the Colonel had passed his physical examination and would take his flying tests for service in the Royal Air Force. Alas and alack, dispatches the following day were to the effect that Colonel Julian's career as an R.A.F. pilot was [short lived]... Not only was the examiner afraid of the Colonel's flying ability, but he also was very much afraid that if the Colonel did any flying in the R.A.F. he would have to buy his own plane because the British could not afford to have any planes cracked up because of a pilot's inability to fly" - Ludlow W. Werner, *The New York Age* (Werner 12).

NARRATOR -

At age 43, Julian refused to admit that he could not handle the precision demanded of a wartime aviator. He blamed bad weather conditions and his unfamiliarity with the twin-engine Hudson trainer he had been asked to perform his examination in (Nugent 117).

And, in order to prove his naysayers wrong, the Black Eagle called for a press conference at Floyd Bennett Airport in Brooklyn, taking off in a two-seater monoplane he had rented for the occasion with reporter Robert Smith as his passenger. After leveling the plane at 2,000 feet, Julian performed loops, rolls, and dives for 25 minutes before touching back down. He stepped out of the cockpit and said, "Now I showed you, what more can I do[?]" (Robinson 6).

While no response ever came from Goering, Julian did not let the challenge die a quick death. He continued, into 1941, to let it be known that he would be ready for anything.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #44 -

"If [Goering] sends a whole fleet of planes to get me instead of coming alone, which I anticipate he will do, that will be that.

I am ready. It will be a pleasure to die amidst bomb and shell just to show what dirty rats [the Nazis] are" (qtd. in Smith 81).

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## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JULIAN

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NARRATOR -

Julian started 1941 in heroic fashion. A fire had blazed through a 10-family tenement one night in early February not far from his home. Before the fire department could arrive, the Black Eagle rushed indoors, pulling 16-year-old Virginia Bush, a victim of infantile paralysis, from the inferno ("Aviator Saves Child In Two-Alarm Blaze" 1).

But the rest of the year would not feel so rewarding. In August, Essie filed papers for divorce, citing her husband as being unfaithful, going so far as to name one Dr. Mary Jane Watkins as his mistress. Julian, never one to shy away from publicity, begged the press to remain out of his private life. It is unclear if what Essie accused him of was true, however, given his public persona and the amount of time he spent away from home, Julian probably had been, at one time or another, unfaithful to his wife ("Names Sugar Hill Socialite" 1). How serious Essie was in pushing for a divorce is not known nor is it known how far the proceedings got, because the two remained together despite this bump. It may have had something to do with what happened before the end of the year.

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #17 -

"Japan attacked the United States today, striking by air at the great Pearl Harbor naval base at Honolulu...ignoring President Roosevelt's personal last-hour appeal for peace to Emperor Hirohito last night... The war that Adolf Hitler started...exploded into a world conflict today" - *The Spokesman Review* ("U.S. Naval Bases Are Attacked at Dawn" 1).

NARRATOR -

Following the tragic events of December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, Julian took to the press, declaring, "If the Japs could use surprise attacks, so can we!" (qtd. in Nugent 118). He began rallying black youths



in New York to join the armed forces with the intention of creating, as Julian described it, a "Suicide Squadron," trained in parachuting, marksmanship, and gunnery. The response in Harlem was overwhelming when, within days of his issuing the call, over 200 men enlisted, being examined by one Dr. Petioni ("Rally to Aid Fight on Japs" 2).

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NARRATOR -

On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, at Fort Jay, New York, the United States Army gained one Black Eagle into its ranks. At the age of 44, Hubert Fauntleroy Julian had enlisted as a Buck Private, waived his two-week pre-induction furlough, and was sent to Long Island's Camp Upton for basic training (Nugent 119).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #21 -

"Had [Julian] given as much time to developing his skill as an aviator as he gave to seeking publicity he would now be of great value to the air force. He had 'fourflushed' so much that when the war came, he had to make some attempt to justify his claims as an aviator. That his challenge to meet Herman Goering in a duel above the English Channel was all bluster is now evident. His is a classical example that the days of 'fourflushers' are over, at least for the duration of the war. We must all do more work and talk less. Braggarts cut a sorry figure in this war" - *The New York Age* ("The Black Eagle Joins Up" 6).

NARRATOR -

Julian's patriotism for the country he had called home most of his life notwithstanding, it is clear that his intentions to serve, while admirable, possessed an ulterior motive. A law had been put into place that any alien, serving for 90 days, and having a record of good conduct, would be eligible for American citizenship. On the way to his next post in Bangor, Maine, the Black Eagle of Harlem stopped in Boston, and, in full uniform, took the oath of allegiance, becoming an American on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1942 (Julian and Bulloch 135).

On short leave from his guard duties for the 38<sup>th</sup> Aviation Squadron, Julian traveled to New York on a goodwill mission.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #45 -

"I've a very important assignment for the boys from New York City who're stationed with me...and I'm going to need the help of all the folks back here who have the interest of our boys at heart. There are hundreds of boys from here up there who are stationed so far from centers of recreation that it is impossible for them to have any relaxation, especially since the deep snows make traveling almost impossible. Now they have no recreation facilities and my mission here is to rectify the situation, and I do sincerely hope its results will make the boys back there happy" (qtd. in "Private Hubert Julian Pleads For Our Boys' Play Facilities" 3).

NARRATOR -

After successfully collecting donations of recreational paraphernalia, Julian headed north again. Reports came out a month later that he was being sent to the United States Technical Air College in Lincoln, Nebraska where he would be taking a 13-week long course in order to become an instructor. This, along with the long-held story that he was a part of, if ever so briefly, the Tuskegee Airmen, has no basis in fact. It is clear that misinformation, possibly straight from Julian himself, was being fed to the newspapers. If he was, in fact, brought down to Nebraska and Alabama they were short excursions which produced nothing worth mentioning for he himself never uttered anything substantial concerning either place.

His final military check, for \$84.75, was drawn on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1943. His honorable discharge, listing his age as the reason, along with his specialty marked "guard" and his character as "excellent," came shortly after. In the end, Private First Class Hubert F. Julian had served under a year in the armed forces of the United States (Nugent 119).

He would not, however, go back to New York just yet. After sending out several applications, Julian was hired by the Ford Motor Company as an assistant to their Director of Employer-Employee Relations at the Willow Run Plant.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #46 -

"There is absolutely no Jim Crowism at Willow Run...and I am convinced that the Ford plant is the most democratic business organization in Detroit. A few weeks ago, they fired a southerner for insulting a Negro. They refuse to tolerate that

sort of stuff...Negro workers are doing their share, something we can all shout about. There's a young Negro woman on the job who handles a crane better than any man I've ever seen. I'd certainly like to see our papers print some stories like that because it would do a world of good" (qtd. Dixon 1-2).

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## **CHAPTER NINETEEN: POST-WAR DEALINGS**

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NARRATOR -

With the war in Europe coming to a close in the spring of 1945, Julian, having returned to the East Coast sometime beforehand, took up a cause alongside James Pemberton, head of the League for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities in Sporting Amusement, calling upon Ford Frick and William Harridge, Presidents of the National and American Leagues of Major League Baseball, to end the nearly half-century old Color Line, barring persons considered non-white from playing.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #22 -

"You [Presidents Frick and Harridge] are herewith advised that on the opening day of your league that we, the Negro veterans of World War II and businessmen of New York, will boycott your games. Your failure to employ competent Negro players motivates this action. Baseball is the great American sport. Black Americans contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to its support, yet we are denied the opportunity that is rightfully ours to participate as players in the game. Our sacrifices in this and other wars in the defense of our country for democracy's cause entitles us to equal opportunity in all phases of American democratic endeavor. Your discriminatory practices are alien, undemocratic and wholly at variance with the democracy for which we fight" - James Pemberton (qtd. in "Plan Major League Boycott In Fight For Players' Deal" 3A).

NARRATOR -

After a Julian-led picketing protest outside the Polo Grounds, home to the then New York Giants, it was reported that Congressman Vito Marcantonio, an Italian-American Republican from New York who had a consistent record of advocating for the rights of African-Americans, introduced a resolution to the

House of Representatives, calling for an investigation into the practices of Major League Baseball where the Color Line was concerned ("Marcantonio Urges Probe Of Baseball" B6).

The role played by Pemberton, along with Julian's help, cannot be overlooked. That year, Branch Rickey, General Manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, held tryouts for black ballplayers, ultimately signing Jackie Robinson in November who, in 1947, would become the first person of color to play in Major League Baseball in the twentieth century.

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NARRATOR -

Nineteen-forty-five, the celebrated year in which World War II came to an end, would not conclude well for Julian. An incident involving a veteran and a police officer would land the Black Eagle with a splitting headache and a night in jail.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #47 -

"Just in front of me at a Harlem [subway] station a colored soldier, slightly drunk, went up to buy a fifty-cent token at the cash kiosk. The white man inside started abusing the soldier for not pushing his money far enough over the desk, and the G.I. began to reply in the same way... I went up to the kiosk, bought his token for him, escorted him to the barrier and gave him a dollar to send him on his way. Then I went back to tell the man what I thought of him. Quite an argument developed, and when it was at its most heated a subway cop came along... I began to explain what had happened, but the officer would not listen, and suddenly raised his club to me" (Julian and Bulloch 141).

NARRATOR -

Patrolman Raphael Jacobson whacked the Black Eagle across the skull and hauled him away. Magistrate Anna Kross reduced Julian's bail from \$500 to \$25.00 upon hearing his account of what happened. Later that week, in front of a new judge, Julian's attorney went to battle against Jacobson's. Producing several eyewitnesses to the incident-in-question, and bringing to light the patrolman's previous suspension over using excessive force upon a woman a year prior, Julian was acquitted

("Black Eagle To Sue N.Y.C. For Half Million" 1-29; "Col. Julian Says He Had To Disarm Sub Cop Quick" 1).

In the background of these events, Julian had begun forming The Black Eagle Airline with his own funds and that from his parents' estate, Henry and Lily having passed away during the war. The goal of this venture was to bring supplies in the form of medicine and electronic components to various locations in South America. Due to heavy delays because of the war, Julian would make a significant amount of money, as well as acquire several key contacts who would help spur him towards a new career path. But, in the interim, the two planes and pilots he purchased and hired provided him with a very steady income (Julian and Bulloch 142-143).

One of those key contacts turned out to be Major General Harry H. Vaughn, Military Aide to President Harry S. Truman. Having been approached with an idea by Helmut Isenberg, Vice-President of the Frawley-Eastern Corporation, Julian told Vaughn of the \$11,000,000 worth of old cigarettes in storage throughout the American Zone of now military-occupied Germany. The plan Isenberg had concocted would involve the old cigarettes to be purchased, repackaged, and sold at a profit to vendors in the Far East. Julian's cut would be 5%. Vaughn thought the idea a good one, based on the fact that the government could recoup some of its losses, but had two reservations: that no repackaged cigarettes be sold in American Zones and that they bear pro-Western propaganda rather than brand labels (Nugent 123-125).

In July 1948, Julian was off to Europe, but the official story was that he had been appointed by the Truman Administration to inspect the conditions and morale of the black soldiers stationed overseas. He would also have to deal with getting approval from General Lucius Clay, Military Governor of the U.S. Occupation Zone in Germany.

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #18 -

"After talking to Negro soldiers in Frankfurt and Berlin, [Julian] said that, contrary to rumors in the U.S. that Negro troops are dissatisfied, he had not met one who was not content or who did not 'get along with the white soldiers.' Commenting on the Berlin crisis, Julian, who is traveling as a private citizen, said, 'I am an American and I am very proud of my country. We want peace but if anyone wants to start anything I'll be glad to come over here and shovel coal, drop a bomb or

whatever is necessary'" - *Stars and Stripes* ("U.S. Public Backing Clay, Julian Says").

NARRATOR -

Ultimately, General Clay would not approve of the cigarette deal, claiming that his Quartermaster Corps people had determined the so-called "stale" cartons to, in fact, still be considered "fresh." It would be Conrad Clark who broke the story for *The New York Age*, exposing Julian and Vaughn, by name. The Black Eagle simply shrugged the whole thing off, claiming he had not used government funds to travel to Germany nor was his business venture anywhere close to being illegal (Clark 2; Nugent 126).

When further pressed for a comment, Clark was told, by Essie, that her husband was not stateside, indeed, he was not even in the Western Hemisphere. The Black Eagle had been sent to Indonesia at the behest of a friend in the Dutch government, on a fact-finding mission, and, purely, as Julian would put it, "because I was a colored man... The idea of sending me was that a Negro would be able to move about more freely..." (Julian and Bulloch 147). Indonesia's people had been formally fighting for independence from the Netherlands since Sukarno, the movement's leader, declared his country's sovereignty on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1945. When Julian arrived, the rebel leader had just recently been taken prisoner.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #48 -

"[Sukarno] pointed out that Indonesia was a backward country... His attitude was that it was only the demands of those like himself, the educated elite...which should be considered. He seemed to think he had a divine right to lead 'his' people to independence, and that their wishes did not enter into it... When I returned to Holland with my report I had several interviews at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where my proposals received very close study... As events turned out, Sukarno got his way, and to my mind has been just as high-handed and arrogant in all his international dealings as he showed himself to be when I saw him" (Julian and Bulloch 147-148).

NARRATOR -

When he returned to New York in early 1949, Julian spoke of the plight of the Indonesian people, claiming many wished to remain under Dutch control, not holding with the ideology of the

revolutionaries. He also claimed to have shot and killed a tiger as well as showed off a picture of him feeding a parrot. Such were the ways of the Black Eagle. However, and most importantly, Julian realized that there was an emerging market in developing nations for hardware of the militaristic kind. And these new governments were willing to pay more than the goods were worth. He formed Black Eagle Associates and went to Washington, D.C., speaking with Vaughn and other contacts he had down there. In March 1949, Julian had registered with the State Department as a munitions dealer ("`Black Eagle' Tells His Story Of Indonesia" 16; Julian and Bulloch 148-149; Nugent 130-131).

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## **CHAPTER TWENTY: GUATEMALA**

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #19 -

"Street fighting flared through Guatemala City early today when loyal government troops and tanks fought off an attempt to seize the capital by revolutionary army artillery forces... The government of President Juan Jose Arevalo appeared to be in control of the situation, but a group of three loyal political parties issued a statement saying 'the government is in serious danger.' The revolution broke out...after the...assassination of Col. Francisco Arana, chief of the armed forces, and Col. Jorge Barrios Solares, secretary of the army. Both officers were shot to death..." - *The Pittsburgh Press*, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1949 ("Guatemala Revolt Fought in Capital" 15).

NARRATOR -

The history of Guatemala in the first half of the twentieth century is a convoluted one involving dictatorship, revolution, and foreign intervention. But for the purpose of understanding what led to one Col. Hubert Fauntleroy Julian's involvement one needs to understand that once Arana and Solares were dead it led the way for Col. Jacobo Arbenz, the Minister of National Defense, to run against Arevalo in the November 1950 elections, winning the presidency.

Arbenz, nicknamed "The Big Blonde" for his paternal Swiss German origins, had evidently been utilizing the services of Julian because when the latter turned up back in New York in January 1951, it was reported that he possessed a contract for

\$1,000,000 with the Guatemalan government for the purchase of airplanes and airplane engines. Col. Eduardo Weymann, of the Guatemalan Embassy noted that the Black Eagle had spent the prior 10 months negotiating the procurement of surplus war materials ("Fabulous World Adventurer" 1).

The items obtained then sold to Guatemala by Julian were clothes, medical supplies, jeeps, and firearms of various makes and models as well as the ammunition to go along with them, which, in the end, made him a very rich man. The boots alone were an indication of just how well off he was becoming. When an order for 4,800 pairs of boots came to him, he found a New York-based company that wanted \$2.00 a pair. After handing over the \$9,600, he turned around and sold them to the Guatemalans for \$20,244 (Nugent 138).

Arbenz's series of land reforms, specifically Decree 900 which passed through the National Assembly June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1952, called for the transferal of uncultivated land from large, wealthy individuals and companies to poverty-stricken laborers. This ran afoul of the United Fruit Company, whose banana production in Guatemala accounted for more than one quarter of all its assets in Latin America. The American-owned company was among those guilty of leaving large tracts of land to go unused as well discouraging the government's past desire to build highways as it would eat into their monopoly of the railroads also under its ownership. So Arbenz's construction of the Atlantic Highway brought the UFC owners more heart palpitations (Chapman).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #49 -

"When I first started supplying goods to Guatemala the Government there was being warmly supported by the American administration. United States army officers had been sent to the country as instructors to the Guatemalan forces...and when I made the first shipment of jeeps direct from the States there was no difficulty at all about getting an export license. Then the American attitude began to change. C.I.A. reports from Guatemala said that the Government there was becoming Communist-dominated, so the American administration promptly withdrew its support...and it landed me in real trouble..." (Julian and Bulloch 155).

NARRATOR -

In September 1952 a U.S. State Department agent paid Julian a visit at his Harlem office. The government had heard rumors of Guatemala asking their arms dealer to find heavy anti-aircraft



weaponry and could not support such an order. Julian was told, off the record, that the United States would not fill such an order nor allow one to be transferred through its borders (Nugent 139).

Julian, however, paid little mind to what had been said to him. Instead, in Black Eagle-style, he contacted the Swiss government and purchased 12 Oerlikon 20mm anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns. The profit, once the Swiss equipment made it to Guatemala, never seeing itself in U.S. territories, was his motivation: the guns cost \$1,500 apiece and Arbenz was willing to pay \$4,000 for each ("Blasts U.S. Refusal Of Aid To Guatemala" 3; Nugent 140).

When he arrived back in Guatemala City to ensure delivery and payment, he found that his contract was being terminated. Arbenz was angrily displeased with his arms dealer's lack of restraint in keeping the doings of his government under wraps. Julian had talked about the Oerlikons to the press, and, in a display of how much income the Guatemalans were providing him, purchased a \$28,000 Rolls-Royce. Arbenz dismissed him and sent him to the airport (Nugent 141-142).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #50 -

"One day I will fly back to Guatemala in a jet plane at six hundred miles per hour. My friends had better paint their roofs as identification against the bombing and revenge of the Black Eagle" (qtd. in Nugent 142).

NARRATOR -

Thanks to the heavy pressure from the United Fruit Company, the Administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower had sent the CIA down into Latin America to begin arming, funding, and training an army led by Carlos Castillo Armas, a former Guatemalan military officer, living in exile after escaping imprisonment at the hands of the Arbenz government.

While this was going on, it was discovered that while the Oerlikons were operational, there was no ammunition included in the shipment. A furious Arbenz recalled Julian, hiring him back under the condition that this time, he keep his mouth shut. The Black Eagle went to work, knowing that if he did not meet the demand from his client in an acceptable amount of time, there would be no more contracts, no more deals, and, most importantly, no more income.

The CIA-backed Operation PBSUCCESS was launched in August 1953 against the Arbenz government of Guatemala. Julian, feeling an amount of pressure he had yet to experience in his few years as an arms dealer, hastily, and rather foolishly, put out \$40,000 of his own money in order to secure the purchase of 25,000 rounds of ammunition from a company based in Italy. What he did not plan on was the Norwegian freighter carrying the shipment to stop in New York Harbor (Nugent 145).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #23 -

"Customs officials...seized the shipment...and transferred it to the U.S. Navy Arsenal at Leonardo, NJ... Although the United Nations does not have an embargo concerning shipment of arms in Guatemala...it is known that the Central American nation is 'playing the Communist game'... According to customs officials, Mr. Julian did not apply for the necessary import license for shipment of the ammunition as required under the 1939 neutrality act... While government officials deny that there are no 'political factors' involved in the business jam, sources said that there was a possibility that some officials may resent the fact that a Negro is representing a foreign government in its business dealings" - *The New York Amsterdam News* ("Deny Politics In Munitions Grab" 1).

NARRATOR -

Financially crushed, Julian sat back and watched as Poland supplied Arbenz with the weaponry he desperately needed. Despite constant remarks that he had nothing to do with the deal, Julian's recent series of exploits were marks against him (Nugent 147-148; "State Department Says 'Friendly Nations' Helped U.S. Keep Arms From Guatemala").

He was seized while in Paris on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1954, a month after the Polish shipment had made it to Arbenz, and taken to the American Embassy, where he was made to sign an affidavit swearing to never again support countries considered unfriendly to the United States. Three days later, he was picked up at New York International Airport, Idlewild, and had his passport seized by federal authorities. It would take a month, and long, heated talks, with State Department officials, to obtain a new one ("Julian Goes To London"; "Julian Passport Is Seized By U.S.").

As all of this was transpiring, Armas' forces had disposed of Arbenz, who fled into exile, ultimately dying in 1971 of an

apparent drowning in his bathroom in Mexico City. Armas would become President of Guatemala on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1954 and serve until his assassination on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1957. A series of other American-backed dictators would follow in his stead.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #51 -

"[O]nly a sucker would buy arms from behind the Iron Curtain, sight unseen. Guatemala did just that and they lost the war. For the big shipment of arms they got from Poland - cash on the nail just before the balloon went up - turned out to be duds. A lot of rusty old junk. At my rate, which is 30 percent, I could have cleared three million bucks on the deal. Sure, sure I'm in the arms business. And I was doing all right until Washington gave me the works... Whoever runs Guatemala now owes me a hundred thousand berries - and I don't mean bananas" (qtd. in Nugent 152).

NARRATOR -

When Julian returned home from England in August, he walked off the ocean liner wearing a gag, mumbling a "good day" to the reporters, and stormed off. No explanation was given as to the reasons for this act, but it might have had something to do with Julian recognizing a serious need to quiet down his boasting to the newspapers. He would not take up his new profession again for nearly two years until events in the Caribbean turned favorable for him ("Black Eagle Comes Home Wearing Gag" 12).

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## **CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: CUBA**

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #20 -

"It was at dawn on July 26, 1953, that [Fidel Castro] led his first rebel band. He brought them to the walls of [President Fulgencio] Batista's Moncada Barracks and fired a shot. When the battle was over, the rebels were in prison...sent to the Isle of Pines to serve 15 years. The 26<sup>th</sup> of July is hardly a heroic day. It is a day of immaturity. The sun has not yet set on it... Batista made a mistake. He freed all political prisoners. Fidel Castro might have gone home to his wife and his son and hung out a new shingle. But he didn't" - Jim Bishop, *The Sunday Independent* (Bishop 4).

NARRATOR -

Hubert Julian had been looking for where the next phase of his career would take him. When word reached him that Castro and his brother, Raul, had teamed up with the Argentine Ernesto "Che" Guevara, a revolutionary he had been briefly made aware of during his stint with Guatemala, in June 1955, Julian knew what he needed to do. In August, he flew to Havana.

Batista had once been the publically-elected President of Cuba before seizing power in 1952, establishing a dictatorship which the United States recognized as a legitimate government. But with the news of the exiled Castro regrouping his forces, Julian set up a meeting with several agents in the Cuban Defense Ministry, explaining that his services were available and that he could get for them what they needed from the United States, but faster. Perhaps, he hinted, even equipment the Americans were unwilling to provide. His impromptu meeting over, he left (Nugent 154).

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #21 -

"More than 100 persons are believed to have perished and thousands were left homeless by hurricane Janet's furious winds last night and today. Inland communications are knocked out and officials said it was impossible accurately to estimate the number of casualties... The hurricane smashed across Barbados Island, flattening flimsy wooden structures in which the poorer of the Island's 200,000 inhabitants live. Shattered buildings and fallen trees blocked the main highways" - *The Spokane Daily Chronicle*, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1955 ("Damage High on Island as Hurricane Janet Hits" 5).

NARRATOR -

At its worst, Hurricane Janet's Category 5 winds reached a maximum of 175 miles per hour. Over 1,000 deaths were reported across the Caribbean and Mexico, where it ultimately dissipated. Damages amounted to an estimated 65.8 million dollars.

Julian put aside his arms dealing ventures to provide humanitarian aid. He purchased clothes, blankets, and medical

supplies, shipping them off to the devastated areas. To Grenada, he sent two Cadillac ambulances and two hearses. George Solomon, of the Registrar's Office, wrote to him in a letter that said, "I can assure you, Colonel, that I vouch for the sentiments of each and every Grenadian in saying that never in the annals of West Indian history do we find that any one man has done so much for our people" (Julian and Bulloch 163; Nugent 155).

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #22 -

"Up in the Sierra Maestra mountains where Castro has been holed up these many months, he had perhaps a few hundred men at most. Surrounding them on all sides are 10,000 government troops. The rebels lack arms and food. They are torn by dissension and demoralization. Worst of all, they have lost the local countryside. Dictator Fulgencio Batista, on the other hand, is more firmly in the saddle than ever. He has beaten back every rebel attack... The truth is, Castro was a sawdust hero. He was nothing but an adventurer who had no political program, no serious military organization, and no mass movement behind him" - Daniel James, *The St. Petersburg Independent*, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1958 (James 4).

NARRATOR -

James, considered an expert on Latin American affairs, wrote those words when Castro, who had returned to Cuba for another attempt at sparking revolution on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1956, appeared to be at the end of his rope. What James could not anticipate was the utter collapse of Batista's forces once the United States cut off all arms shipping to Cuba. The guerilla warfare being practiced by Castro's forces began to hack away at the now unable-to-resupply-themselves forces of Batista's government, which, out of desperation, made contact with the Black Eagle.

Julian, ignoring what he had promised the American government after Guatemala, accepted the contract. Learning, finally, to keep his doings under wraps, he made no statements to the press about the deal. In fact, the year 1958 did not feature much on Julian's life save for one incident right at around the time Batista's agents started doing business with him.

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #24 -

"On the morning of April 22, the Colonel reports that he was apprehended in his hotel suites by Haitian police who advised him to take the next plane out of Haiti. He said that they pretended an astounding ignorance of the reason for his presence there and questioned him at length in a manner which suggested that they suspected the possibility of his connection with revolutionary influences.... He was hustled aboard a U.S. bound plane that afternoon" - *The New York Age* ("Julian Arrested While Closing Arms Deal In Haiti" 22).

NARRATOR -

While Julian would later claim that this misunderstanding stemmed from his having once spoken with four Haitian radicals opposed to President François "Papa Doc" Duvalier in New York, his ousting from the country had more to do with his Cuban contract and Rafael Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic (Julian and Bulloch 164).

Trujillo had been supporting Batista with money, men, and weapons once he identified Castro as a legitimate threat. Julian, working off of this, and wishing to not raise the eyebrow of anyone in Washington, D.C., began shipping all orders to the Dominican Republic, who, in turn, would send on to Cuba. This went on for the better part of 1958 (Nugent 157).

In late December, Julian, along with one of Trujillo's munitions coordinators, went to Geneva in order to buy 150 30- and 50-caliber machine guns. On the eve of the shipment, however, the Dominican disappeared. Julian, confused and angered, began preparing to have the crated weapons sent directly to Havana. They never made it out of Switzerland (Nugent 157-158).

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #23 -

"Batista said he was giving up the presidency 'to save the country from further bloodshed'...His decision came after the four days of heavy and apparently inconclusive fighting at Santa Clara.... Batista and his party took off for Ciudad Trujillo, capital of the Dominican Republic in a DC3 presidential plane about 3:30 a.m.... It is estimated that rebel leader Fidel Castro has 5,000 partisans in Havana, many of them well armed" - *The Lawrence Journal-World*, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1959 ("Batista Leaves Cuba In Face of Pressure As Junta Takes Over" 1).

NARRATOR -

This was by no means the end of Julian's Cuban story. Indeed it is the prelude to a more dangerous one for the Black Eagle. When 1959 ended and it was clear that Castro's forces were in complete control of the country, Julian visited the Cuban Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Sergio Rojas Santamaria. Six months prior Santamaria had accused his visitor of selling to Trujillo, which was of course denied with somewhat of a half-truth as Julian technically was selling to Batista, using the Dominican Republic's leader as a middleman. That, of course, he chose not to reveal ("Black Eagle Screams 'Not Guilty'" 1).

The two spoke about 10 North American single-engine jet trainers which Julian promised could be Castro's for immediate delivery. By January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1960, after three days of negotiating with the high-ranking military officer Sergio del Valle Jiménez in Havana, a deal for the 10 planes was struck. Julian stood to make \$30,000 in profits from it, but when he went abroad to secure the shipment, a cable came in, on February 15<sup>th</sup>, saying everything was off. Julian, furious for having his time wasted, flew to New York, picked up his friend, Jon Kraker, who was fluent in Spanish, and traveled down to Cuba. (Nugent 158-160).

They went straight to Jiménez's office, and, through Kraker translating, Julian was told that the Cuban government had reason to believe that Ambassador Santamaria's earlier accusations were, in fact, true. After Julian protested he was told proof was required if business was to resume or he could run the risk of being labeled a traitor to the Revolution. The next day he produced a sworn statement, bearing the seal of the American Embassy, that he had never sold arms to the Dominicans. Jiménez was pacified, not satisfied. Something did not sit right with him regarding Julian. After making several phone calls he found a former diplomat from the Batista-era who backed up the Black Eagle's testimony; he had not sold anything to Trujillo...he had sold them to Batista (Nugent 161-162).

Kraker had gone out that night, leaving Julian behind in the hotel. Upon returning he found his companion, still in his pajamas and silk robe, in the back of a car, surrounded by young soldiers in their green khaki fatigues. He unhappily joined Julian and the two were driven to a military installation. They were housed in a shed before Julian protested, demanding, at the very least, to remain in the main building. The two would end up sleeping on library benches, feeling the sting from the bruises

inflicted upon them by the soldiers as they were moved about (Nugent 162-163).

They were allowed coffee the next morning before a sergeant, operating on Jiménez's orders, informed them that they were being deported, immediately. It seemed to be in the best interests of the new Cuban government to not jail, or send to the firing squad, two Americans. Within an hour, Julian was on his way back to New York (Nugent 164).

In two years' time, the Black Eagle had been jailed twice, deported twice, and by two separate countries, yet managed to avoid long-term consequences. Unfortunately, for Julian, the third time would not turn out to be a charm. Flash-in-the-pan skirmishes were over. He was going to learn, the hard way, what it meant to be under the thumb of others. His return to the African continent, indeed his last great adventure, would not turn out the way he had expected.

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## **CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: KATANGA**

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MALE VOICEOVER (A) #24 -

"It was 5 p.m....and the sun's fury was dying... The usual evening crowd sat at the pavement tables of the Palace Tavern.... Peaceful enough - and at the same time sinister...because no one was talking. Instead they gazed fixedly across the street at the gray post office with its clock stopped at 6:53. The building's windows were gone, shattered by the same bullets that stopped the clock. In their place were sandbag emplacements. Through chinks in the sandbags poked the snouts of machine guns and behind them peered the unwavering eyes of lithe Gurkha soldiers. Hatred smothered the scene. This was Elisabethville in the cease-fire of late September [1961], and at once you could see that war would soon be back" - Colin Frost, *The Tuscaloosa News* (Frost 2).

NARRATOR -

At the heart of the Congo Crisis were the copper, manganese, and cobalt deposits in the Katanga Province. Once the Belgians declared their former colony independent, chaos ensued: the army



mutinied and the new Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, began talks regarding an alliance with the Soviet Bloc.

For Moise Tshombe, declaring independence was his attempt to avoid the reach of communism and maintain peace between whites and blacks. The new president employed white officers to run his military, which the United Nations declared unacceptable and moved in to disarm, repatriating a great majority of the several hundred to Belgium. Katanga, it was dictated, could defend itself, and would soon have to, as the Congolese invaded shortly after, embarking on a campaign, as several British eyewitnesses reported, of looting and rape (Frost 2).

The world was watching, with great interest, to see what would happen. Many saw it as another Democratic West versus Communist East conflict being played out in a location that should not have had to perform the hosting duties for a proxy war. By the time Hubert Julian came onto the scene, Lumumba was dead, executed by Katangese forces, and U Thant was now in charge of the UN (Frost 2).

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #52 -

"Mr. Dahlman, president of a firm called the International Broadcasting System, approached me and asked if I would act as a messenger from him to...Tshombe...who was at that time staying in Geneva. Dahlman thought that as I was colored, and also spoke French perfectly, I would be more likely to be successful in getting to Tshombe than himself or any of his executives. Dahlman's object[ive] was to get a contract from the President for the making of a documentary film of Katanga, to show its prosperity and orderliness compared with the rest of the Congo, to offset the bad publicity President Tshombe's province was getting in America, and to influence businessmen to invest in the country" (Julian and Bulloch 171).

NARRATOR -

Their meeting took place on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1961. According to Julian, just before boarding his flight back to the United States, Tshombe, in the backseat of his Lincoln, informed the Black Eagle that he could, perhaps, be interested with the idea of Julian doing some business for him. Julian would have to wait in order to see what his potential employer had in mind (Nugent 172-173).

Nothing ever came of the IBS documentary. Having gone back to America to collect the 10-man film crew, Julian and the group never got farther than Rome. The ceasefire had ended on December 5<sup>th</sup> and with the fighting resumed, it was deemed too dangerous to proceed (Julian and Bulloch 174).

It would not be until after Christmas when Julian was able to enter into Katanga. He met with Tshombe, who made it clear to him that he was not asking for arms and ammunition, rather, he was asking for the arms dealer's services in finding doctors, nurses, and medical supplies. The two major hospitals in Katanga had been damaged by the recent outburst of fighting. Julian let the president know he would be happy to be of service, but Tshombe stressed a point: the medical staff should be non-whites. He was tired of the international community viewing him "as a puppet of Belgian neo-colonialism." The Black Eagle set out to New York to purchase the supplies then to the West Indies to recruit the doctors and nurses (Julian and Bulloch 174-175).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #25 -

"Col. Hubert F. Julian...said...he has been named special Katanga Ambassador at large. The 65-year-old Julian told United Press International his new job was 'to break down barriers' for President Moise Tshombe's government. 'Katanga needs friends. I have to help find them. My task is to explain to other countries what we are fighting for,' he said... The flamboyantly-dressed Colonel...came to Katanga last November. He soon took up an apartment in Tshombe's palace. His position has never been quite clear... [He] has been reluctant to disclose his exact relations with Katanga. 'As leader in the fight against Communism, America is fighting for the same goal as Katanga. I hope to get the people there to see our side,' he said" - *The Chicago Defender* ("Recall Exploits Of Famed 'Black Eagle'" 3).

NARRATOR -

When he was in Martinique, however, it seemed that plans had changed. Word was received from Katanga: buy up an arsenal worth \$18,000,000 for a 20% commission. With another ceasefire in place, security, it was thought, would be loosened. Julian dropped what he was doing and did as was instructed. Before leaving Brussels, and much to his later dismay and suffering, he purchased two antique pistols and a machine gun, complete with velvet-lined carrying cases, presents, he would declare in a few days, for Tshombe, and nothing more (Nugent 177).

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1962, Julian touched down at the Elisabethville Airport. He was met, upon exiting the plane, by a Pakistani UN official who offered him some water, praised his humanitarian efforts, and then informed Julian that his luggage would have to be inspected. The "gifts" were found, followed by the blowing of the Pakistani's whistle. Finding himself surrounded by military and civilian personnel, he insisted on his innocence as far as those firearms were concerned. When they search him, however, the Black Eagle had nothing left in his bag of tricks. In his pocket, he had a document detailing the monetary arrangement he had agreed to, and, worse, stapled to it was the order: "2,000,000 rounds of ammunition, 200 120-mm mortars, 200 60-mm mortars, 320 machine guns, and 200,000 rounds of mortar ammunition." The blue helmeted-UN peacekeepers promptly arrested Julian ("Link 'Black Eagle' To Huge Congo Arms Deal" 3; Nugent 178 and 183).

MALE VOICEOVER (A) #25 -

"Foreign Minister Evariste Kimbe announced today that President Moise Tshombe would leave for Leopoldville May 3 for further talks with Premier Cyrille Adoula on unifying the Congo...Before he left for a short tour of the interior of Katanga, Mr. Tshombe announced that Col. Hubert Julian, known as the 'Black Eagle of Harlem,' had never been Katanga's ambassador at large and had no formal connection with the provincial government" - *The New York Times* ("Tshombe To Renew Congo Unity Talks").

NARRATOR -

Julian, abandoned by Tshombe, was flown, less than a week after being taken into custody, to Leopoldville, under armed guard. He was placed in a room inside the unfinished Le Royal, where the United Nations had set up its headquarters. Interrogations began the following day. Each and every single piece of evidence against Julian was gone over ad nauseam. His history as an arms dealer was dissected. The Swedes who were overseeing the questioning kept at it for days until Julian began telling them tall-tales, in an effort just to break the monotonous hours imposed upon him, which included a claim that all weapons believed to be for Katanga were actually meant for insurgents in the Bahamas looking to overthrow Castro (Nugent 184-185).

While he was not being starved, Julian was clearly not living on what he was used to, and, being older now, his body began exhibiting its wear and tear. On the morning of May 19<sup>th</sup>, he awoke in the hospital, fatigued and weak; sometime during the

night he had suffered a heart attack and managed to call out to his jailors before passing out (Julian and Bulloch 178).

MALE VOICEOVER (B) #26 -

"I'm just about at my wits end. Nobody is able to tell me what my husband is charged with or why he is being detained!' These words were told to the Amsterdam News this week by Mrs. Hubert Julian...she has not heard a single word from her husband and her appeals to officials have resulted in 'nothing but a curtain of silence and secrecy.' Last week she sent telegrams to officials.... 'I'm interested in his health and legal status, and if he has committed an error, I think I have a right to know,' Mrs. Julian said...the White House still had no comment on reports two weeks ago that Julian had lodged a protest with President Kennedy claiming that he is the victim of brutalities inflicted by his captors" - James Booker, *The New York Amsterdam News* (Booker 1).

NARRATOR -

When U.S. Ambassador Edmund A. Gullion learned that Julian was ill, he arranged a meeting with Premier Adoula, asking him to appeal to the United Nations forces in the Congo to have their prisoner expelled from the country. The main factor in Julian's favor was that no munitions were ever actually delivered. In reality all they had against him was a piece of paper (Nugent 187).

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, Julian's release was arranged and Robert K.A. Gardiner of Ghana, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, visited his room to inform him of the situation:

[MALE VOICEOVER (B) #27 & HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #53]

GARDINER - This is one of the saddest days of my life. When I was an undergraduate I worshipped you as a hero. Most of my African contemporaries did the same because you were fighting as a Negro pilot with the forces of the Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia to help maintain the integrity, dignity, and sovereignty of an African state. I meet you in person for the first time today as a mercenary, ready and willing to deliver lethal weapons to persons who care nothing for the lives of Africans, and seem determined to enslave us again.

JULIAN - No, Mr. Gardiner. These are hard words. I was misled by Tshombe.

GARDINER - You are too much a man of the world and too experienced to be so easily misled. Do you not see in Katanga a betrayal of the faith of abolitionists, philanthropists, and missionaries like Dr. David Livingstone, who believed that legitimate trade and industrial development would put an end to the worst forms of slavery in Africa and the consequences of economic backwardness?

JULIAN - It is a pity I have been completely misunderstood. I share your sentiments.

GARDINER - The Adoula Government has decided to allow you to be repatriated. When you get back home tell our people in America and in the Caribbean of our agonizing encounter. I had hoped to be encouraged and inspired by you (Julian and Bulloch 180-181).

NARRATOR -

In the end, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu would take control of the Congo in a 1965, CIA-backed military coup, declaring himself president, and, in 1971, renamed the country Zaïre, a name it would bear until 1997 when, in another power shift, it was rechristened the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1962, Col. Hubert Fauntleroy Julian finally arrived back home in New York City. He had been detained, without formal charges, for four months. When asked about his situation, Julian said that he felt that the "black men must sit down together. This is an African issue, and Africans must decide their destiny and problems without duress from Europeans" ("Black Eagle Flies Home To Harlem And Tells All!" 1).

The Black Eagle's globetrotting days of high adventure had seen their climax and the sun had begun its descent. But his golden years would be lived in classic Julian fashion. One could not expect anything less, of course.

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## **CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE: RETIREMENT**

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NARRATOR -

There is much to the old saying that you cannot keep a good man down. Even in retirement Hubert Julian would not settle for a complete stop. He continued to travel, making headlines even when he was not seeking them. On a vacation to Haiti in 1963, the newspapers speculated that he had ventured back to the French-speaking nation to conduct business. He laughed it off, saying, "I'm too old and too rich to start any foolishness" ("Black Eagle In Haiti" 5).

A year later, he made his way back to the Congo after Tshombe was elected Premiere of the Congolese government, making sure to jab once or twice at the United Nations for his being detained two years prior. He continued to deny any wrongdoing in the whole affair when he said, "If I had wanted to smuggle guns, the United Nations would not have been smart enough to stop me" ("Col. Julian Will Aid Congo Premier" 13).

He exchanged pleasantries and laughs with the likes of Muhammad Ali, appeared on *The Tonight Show* and *The Merv Griffin Show*, and even sat back to watch the Apollo astronauts reenter the Earth's atmosphere, courtesy of a parachute device that bore striking similarities to the invention that had originally brought him to the United States for the first time.

When events abroad or at home occurred, he was not going to start censoring himself. In response to the race riots which broke out in Los Angeles, Julian, controversially, but not wholly unexpectedly, let the world know where he stood.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #54 -

"I will take my family somewhere - to some part of Europe or Africa... As far as living in the United States is concerned, I can't any more. The conduct of people who look like me leaves me appalled. I am ashamed to be a Negro. This riot is disgraceful. The rioting, raping and arson does not solve any racial problem... Negroes should be thankful and carry themselves in such a manner as to justify the stand...President [Lyndon B. Johnson] took in spite of the criticism he has received from the southern bloc" (qtd. in "Gives Up His U.S. Home" 2).

NARRATOR -

Even though he maintained, as best he could, a separation between his public and private lives that did not mean Julian's family played second fiddle to his career. When Essie passed

away on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1975 the two had been married for 48 years, raising Olga Vera Edmonds as their own and enjoying their two grandsons, Anthony and John Jr. ("Mrs. Hubert Julian dies" A1).

But in March of that same year two individuals would join Julian at his home in the Bronx: a woman named Doreen and her four-year-old son, Mark Anthony Bernard, whose father was none other than the Black Eagle himself. The parents met when Julian had stayed at a hotel in Grenada where Doreen worked as a housekeeper. He took to her when he realized her skills at, oddly enough, ironing his custom-made shirts. She was brought up to the United States to look after the large house the Julians called home. When Doreen became pregnant in late 1970, she was sent to Trinidad, where she gave birth to Mark the following July. Julian did this to avoid a scandal, and, keep Essie from finding out. Whether she knew or not is not known. But when she died, Julian felt it only proper to be able to know and raise his son. Given his advanced age, he did the best he could.

The Black Eagle died of natural causes on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1983 at the age of 86. He was buried in Calverton National Cemetery in Long Island, New York. His death went unnoticed by the world for eight months, causing one writer for *The New York Amsterdam News* to accuse Doreen, Julian's widow due to their 1977 marriage, of not liking his famous, sometimes infamous, reputation. Nearly a quarter of a century later, Doreen would set the record straight.

FEMALE VOICEOVER (C) #3 -

"I had nothing to do with [what] this [writer wrote]... [Hubert] didn't want any reporters swarming the house. He just told me to keep it peaceful, he'd had enough of it all... He didn't leave the house for the last five years...There was nothing left to do, nowhere left to go. But he felt very comfortable with his life, and always talked all the time about the things he had done, the people he had met, and all the money he used to make. He gave you so many stories you didn't know how to keep up with it all. His life was like a fairy tale" (qtd. in Shaftel).

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## **CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: LEGACY**

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NARRATOR -

How does someone so public, so much larger than life itself, become forgotten? Hubert Julian is not the only victim of this phenomenon. While his name is not fully wiped away from the annals of history, it is not present in the mind of even the average historian. For 40 years the Black Eagle of Harlem played a role at either the center or periphery of world events. Big or small, he was there. He was as big a part of the twentieth century as any one of his contemporaries or counterparts. There were moments of triumph, of failure, but, overall, they were definitive in that change, for better or worse, was transpiring. A young Trinidadian from humble beginnings captivated the masses with a bravado the likes of which many had never seen or have experienced since. This showman of international renown summed it up all quite poignantly.

HUBERT JULIAN VOICEOVER #55 -

"There have been thousands...of words written about me over the years... Often the writers treated me as a joke... Others have been sympathetic... Others again have seen me purely as a mercenary, as a merchant of death concerned only to make a fast buck... But all of them have missed the central point of my life, the thing which has been the basic cause of all I have done. And that is that I am a Negro...it is not easy for people to understand just how big an effect this one thing can have... It has often been said that anything I did, I did solely for Hubert Julian. But this is not true. Of course I was concerned to make money, and of course I wanted personal fame... But everything I did focused attention on the Negroes. When I first started flying and parachute jumping, that in itself was enough of a novelty to attract notice. It was twice as much of a novelty when a colored man was doing it, and helped to prove, if only in a small way, that Negroes really are as other men are...Show me a man who has never made a mistake, or made a fool of himself, and I will show you a man who has done nothing with his life, attempted nothing and achieved nothing... To a young man of [today]...I would give this advice: look at yourself in the mirror, and see not a man with...black skin, or brown, or yellow, or any other color. See just a man. And know that you are just as capable as any other" (Julian and Bulloch 189-195).

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**THE END**



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