

THE HISTORICAL CRIMINALIZATION OF BLACK MASCULINITY TOWARDS A SOCIAL DISABILITY:
THE NEW YORK CITY NEWSPAPERS AND THE CENTRAL PARK FIVE

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Advisors:
Dr. William B. Rogers
Dr. Christina I. McGrath

Adrianne D. Moses Ridley
Drew University
Madison, New Jersey
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ABSTRACT

THE HISTORICAL CRIMINALIZATION OF BLACK MASCULINITY TOWARDS A SOCIAL DISABILITY: THE NEW YORK CITY NEWSPAPERS AND THE CENTRAL PARK FIVE.

Adrianne D. Moses Ridley

This research paper reviews the Central Park Jogger Rape Case through a transdisciplinary lens to highlight how the New York City newspapers influenced the investigation and the trial's social justice outcomes, ultimately leading to multiple convictions. These newspapers influenced how people viewed the incident and motivated them to believe that the accused were guilty, both privately and publicly. This project demonstrates that the sensationalist New York City newspapers were embedded with racial stereotypes that invoked old and new racist mores, resulting in a panicked public, a divided city, and the wrongful convictions of a group of Black teenage boys. Historically, New York City newspapers have misrepresented Black culture and Black masculinity to the public, resulting in unequal social justice practices and outcomes.

America's historical legacy of prosecuting groups of Black boys and men accused of sexually assaulting White women began in the early 20th century with the Scottsboro Boys case in 1932 and has continued through to the Central Park Five (CP5) Jogger case in 1989. The ramification of this trend presents new layers of social disability within disability studies. The fear of Black boys and men sexually violating White women is a significant phenomenon in American discourses constructed and supported by the newspapers. In Athens, Tennessee on July 24, 1868, under the *Editorial Brevities* entitled "Lynching," *The Athens Post* headline read

“Lynching of the Black Fiend for outrage committed upon young White girl by a negro,”¹ and *The Chattanooga News* article about Ed Johnson in 1906, “A Fiendish Crime,”² included the announcement of the scheduled lynching of John Hartfield in the *Jackson Daily News* on June 26, 1919.³

Using a social, political, cultural, and historical lens, this project employs a mixed methodology with a convergent parallel design of quantitative analysis of scholarly writings from the fields of sociology, criminology, journalism, history, anthropology, linguistic, and cultural studies, with the qualitative data from the focus group survey results. The methodology was developed using selected elements from each academic field to examine and interpret content analyses of articles, photographs, and headlines from New York City newspaper archives. Qualitative analysis of a focus group’s survey responses to questions based on knowledge of other historical cases involving race, sex, and crime were presented in a PowerPoint presentation of front-page news articles, newspaper headlines, and photographs to stimulate individual and collective memory discussion.

In doing so, it was revealed that the New York City newspapers were complicit in influencing the social response of the public to the accused individuals and the social justice outcomes of the case. In the same manner, my model equates the permanent social barriers imposed on the wrongly accused and convicted Black boys and men as a form of disability.

¹ “Lynching of the Black fiend for outrage committed upon young White girl by a negro,” *The Athens Post*, July 24, 1868, www.loc.gov.

² “A Fiendish Crime,” *The Chattanooga News*, January 24, 1906, www.loc.gov.

³ “John Hartsfield Will Be Lynched By Ellisville Mob At 5 O’clock This Afternoon, reprint from the *Jackson Daily News*, June 26, 1919, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, www.dh.sch.edu

This study was limited by the small group size of participants in the focus group, access to data during the worldwide COVID epidemic when this research began, and the unavailability of other transdisciplinary studies that focused on race, sex, crime, culture, and journalism.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project posthumously to three men in my life, whose great love I feel, always and forever, now at peace and resting by each other's side.

To my father, Johnnie Moses Jr. (d. 1994),

who introduced me to the importance of history and my place in it as a Black American. He instilled in me the understanding that, as Anna Julia Cooper so profoundly said:

“When and where I enter, then and there the whole [Black] race enters with me; I am the cradle of [my] people.”

To my son, Steven Moses (d. 2016),

who catapulted me into the disability culture, teaching me that even with his many physical challenges, he too possessed social capital. The patient and humble lessons from his life emboldened me to always be his voice and the voice of a deserving, underserved population.

As Proverbs 31:8 reminds us:

“Open your mouth for those with no voice, for the cause of all the dispossessed, and defend the cause of the poor and needy.”

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As Toni Morrison beautifully stated:

“Don’t ever think I fell for you, or fell over you. I didn’t [just] fall in love, I rose in it.”

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PREFACE

The recent debates surrounding sexual assault and the Me Too movement have sparked a media frenzy, drawing intense public attention to both victims and the privileged individuals accused of misconduct. As numerous high-profile and wealthy figures face allegations, Americans are increasingly confronted with the justice system's failure to impartially identify, judge, and punish sexual abusers. This was particularly evident during the highly publicized Senate judicial hearings of Supreme Court Justice nominee Brett Kavanaugh. The partisan struggle between Democrats and Republicans over whether Kavanaugh had sexually assaulted someone in high school revealed a willingness by many to dismiss such allegations as youthful indiscretions.

Although several individuals have been accused of more severe sexual violations, there has been minimal legal action taken, with few arrests or convictions. To date, Bill Cosby remains one of the only high-profile figures serving time for sexual assault. Notably, Cosby's alleged victims are White women, and like Kavanaugh, the accusations against him date back nearly 30 years. However, sexual assault cases involving White men of privilege and White female victims have often been downplayed, rationalized, or dismissed by both the media and the public, with little pressure for accountability.

The stark difference in how these cases are handled reflects America's deeply rooted racial, sexual, and criminal stereotypes, which have been continuously reinforced through the media. The media's portrayal of such cases not only shapes public perception but also influences the policies and responses surrounding them. Since its inception, the media has served as a

powerful tool in shaping public sentiment, amplifying biases, and determining whose voices and experiences are validated or ignored.

Accused of gang sexual assault, Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation as a Supreme Court Justice proceeded undeterred, despite the serious allegations against him. In contrast, Bill Cosby was convicted of sexual assault, sentenced to prison, and labeled a "sexually violent predator" for life. During the trial, Cosby's attorney described the case as "the most racist and sexist trial in the history of the United States." In reality, Cosby's conviction merely added to the long history of Black men being criminally prosecuted for sexual violence against White women. Unlike Kavanaugh, who was shielded by his privilege and political connections, Cosby was vilified in the media and punished with severity by the legal system.

Historically, Black men in America have been presumed guilty at the first allegation, often portrayed as inherently violent and driven by uncontrollable sexual impulses. This racialized narrative was evident in the 1989 case of the Central Park Five, where five Black teenagers were accused of sexually assaulting a White woman. Despite insufficient evidence, the media sensationalized the case, reviving and amplifying long-standing stereotypes about race, class, and sexuality. The coverage fed into public hysteria over interracial sex, Black male criminality, and urban deviance, contributing to the wrongful convictions of the teenagers.

At the heart of America's racial divide lies a deep-seated fear of miscegenation, coupled with the myth of Black male sexual violence and the relentless drive to protect White female innocence at all costs. This racial mythology has cemented Black men as the ultimate threat to White women, a trope that has persisted in the national consciousness for generations. The

Central Park Five case is a stark example of how the media weaponized this fear, exploiting public anxieties about race, gender, sex, class, and crime.

Through its biased portrayal, the media influenced both public opinion and the legal process, shaping the fate of the accused. Analyzing media coverage of cases like the Central Park Five, as well as its broader representations of class, sexuality, and crime, reveals the media's powerful and enduring role in shaping America's racial and cultural landscape.

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As I close this chapter, I do so with the strength of those who walked before me, the unwavering love of those who walked beside me, and the lessons gained from every moment I wanted to give up but didn't. I carry with me the spirits of those I have walked with, those I have

walked for, the memory of walks that can never happen again, and the hope of walks I have yet to take. This project is more than pages and citations—it is a testament to faith, family, purpose, and perseverance.

Asterisks are after the names of persons that passed away during this study.

Introduction

“People generally see what they look for and hear what they listen for.”⁴

“I foresee no possibility of venturing into themes showing a closer view of reality for a long time to come. The public itself will not have it. What it wants is a gun and a girl.”⁵

During the twentieth century, newspaper reports used deviant stereotypes to describe young Black boys suspected of sexually assaulting White women, with many later often revealed to be falsely accused. This phenomenon should be recognized as a historical trend. Earlier scholars argued that this practice replaced extralegal lynching during the nineteenth century. Newspapers have continuously influenced the social psychology of the American public by using racialized propaganda to instigate and encourage hysterical social responses, linking race, sex, and crime. The ramifications of the media in disseminating news reports regarding alleged rapes has created an element of social disability for the accused. This is particularly true when the victim is a White woman, and the presumed assailant is a young Black teenage boy.

The subject of this dissertation is the criminalization of Black masculinity in the news and the newspapers' ability to perpetuate racist discourses that permeate the public's fears and imaginations of Black boys. The implications of the criminalization of Black boys, such as the group formerly known as the Central Park Five, present new dichotomies within social disability

⁴ Harper Lee, *To Kill A Mockingbird*. (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, Inc; 2009 (1960) 197

⁵ D.W. Griffith, “*20 D.W. Griffith Quotes: Early Cinema and Narrative Film*”. Accessed 9/15/2022. filmmakingquotes.com

theories.⁶ This study emphasizes the behaviors and practices of the newspapers regarding their representation of Black masculinity as sexually deviant and violently criminal. In so doing, it considers the conditions by which Black masculinity, even at an early age, came to be depicted by the local newspapers through a deviant lens and the significance of the visual images in which these newspapers helped to establish and reinforce national racist stereotypes.

The attitude and language that the newspapers and later television disseminated of Black boys accused of interracial sex crimes have often created racial and social unrest. However, for this project, only New York City's print newspapers and magazines reporting on the 1989 Central Park Jogger case will be thoroughly researched and reviewed. John Richardson, a linguistics professor and media studies lecturer, writes that newspapers and news reporters often misdirect the public trust given to their industry by misrepresenting the facts or events surrounding these cases.⁷ The fear of Black boys and later Black men sexually violating White women appears to be a significant phenomenon in the American discourse and is deeply rooted in the national narrative and collective memory.

⁶ James I. Charlton, *Nothing about us without us: disability, oppression and empowerment* (University of California Press; 2000); Lennard Davis, *The Disability Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Judy Hunt builds on this theory in *No Limits: the disabled people's movement: a Radical history* (Manchester: London, July 2019) 107; Micheal Oliver in *The Politics of Disablement*, (London: Macmillan Education: 1990); Micheal Oliver, "The Social Model of Disability: thirty years on," *Disability and Society* 28, (October 2013).

The original theory of social disability began in the United Kingdom in the 1960s. During the 1980s Mike Oliver a sociologist and proponent of disability rights became the first professor to ever teach disability studies. He described the model in social disability is a term that emerged from what Oliver and others have identified as social handicaps imposed on persons with disabilities. The development of the social model includes persons with learning, intellectual, emotional and "behavioral problems." This model has also become a major element in analyzing how stereotypes can be used to further oppress a person by prohibiting social supports needed to be inclusionary. Therefore, disability can evolve into a social construction that usually impedes on persons of marginalized groups civil rights and often misrepresentation.

⁷ John E. Richardson, *Analyzing Newspapers: An approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

The term social disability will be applied here to expand upon the model of disability defined by the sociologist and disability rights advocate Mike Oliver. Oliver reframes societal views, behaviors, and supports for the “physically and mentally disabled by arguing that the challenges of living with a disability is not inherent of the disability, but societies unwillingness to adapt to the needs of person with disabilities.”⁸ In the same manner, my model equates the permanent social barriers imposed on the wrongly accused and convicted Black boys and men to a form of social disability.

The AIDS epidemic erupted in the late 1970s, creating a fear like what the bubonic plague of the 14th century inspired. The plague was initially thought only to be a health hazard for special populations, such as the poor, minority, and those thought to be sexually deviant. As the disease became evident in middle-class society and the wealthier neighborhoods, New Yorkers became sexually unhinged from the 1960s sexual freedom “revolution” attitudes. During the 1970s, New York was ripe with economic recession, unemployment, owner-instigated or initiated arson of multifamily dwellings, and a decrease in public safety, particularly in minority communities.⁹

The decade that followed, the 1980s, was greatly affected by newspapers’ social, racial and political inferences. New York City’s static state of disease, unemployment, the housing crisis, public safety deficit, and political frustrations boiled over, encompassing racial tension, ‘crack’ cocaine addiction, economic stagnation, and a feeling of social depredation that would be used to define and depict New York City residents, as well as law enforcement and the

⁸ Mike Oliver, “The Social Model of Disability: Thirty Years On.” *Disability and Society* 28, No. 7 (May 28, 2013): 1024-1026

⁹ Edmund White, “*Why Can’t We Stop Talking About New York in the Late 1970s,*” New York Time Style Magazine, 9/10/2015. NYTimes.com (3/20/2020)

government's responsiveness to these issues.¹⁰ To make matters worse, adding to a seemingly tumultuous decade, many other forces came forth to inflame the city's changing cultures. Hip hop and rap music became two of those major forces, as new forms of self-expression created and adopted mainly by the city's Black and Hispanic youth.¹¹

Although this was a cultural manifestation that urban youth used to voice their displeasure with daily life in New York City, many empowered people viewed this new phenomenon as a political and social revolt against the values and morals of society. In a society plagued by various social devastations, music was now believed to breed fear of gangs, crime, destruction, and deviance. During those years, movies such as *Vigilante* (1982) featured a White father targeted by Black and Puerto Rican street gangs, who rebels against the judicial system to protect his family. The movies *Wild Style* (1983) and *Beat Street* (1984) highlighted the city's graffiti wars and sub-culture. The documentary *Beat Street* later became a movie that ensured an ideology that graffiti was associated with minority youth and crime transmitted nationally.¹² These and other films personified the public's hysteria by dangerously misrepresenting Black males.

In 1984, New York City's social fabric began to unravel, revealing its long intertwined racial threads. Bernard Getz, a White male, was hailed in New York City newspapers as the subway vigilante after shooting and wounding four unarmed Black youths he accused of

¹⁰ Alec. "Death, Destruction, and Debt: 41 Photos of Life in the 1970s New York" All That's Interesting Acing 4/16/2016. Allthatsinteresting.com Accessed 3/20/2020; Craig Reinerman and Harry G. Levine, "The Crack Attack: Politics and Media in Americas Latest Drug Scare, 1986-1992" in Images of Issues: Typifying Contemporary Social Problems (New York: Transaction Publishers; 1995) Accessed April 2019

¹¹ Brian J. McCann, *The Mark of Criminality: Rhetoric, Race and Gansta Rap in the War on Crime Era* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press; 2017)

¹² David Grazian, *Mix It Up: Popular Culture, Mass Media and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company; 2019)

attempting to rob and assault him on a train. Getz is quoted as saying, “I would, without hesitation, shoot a violent criminal again.”¹³ In New York City's criminal court system, he was acquitted by a predominately White jury. City residents were starkly divided on the particulars of the incident, and the racist remarks made by Getz were widely printed in the city's newspapers.¹⁴ Incidents such as the Getz case and the political wars against the already marginalized minority urban youth that started in the 1970s further exacerbate those deemed “the have-nots.” Rap and the hip hop genre created by urban youth in the city's most overpopulated and economically devastated communities began putting their strife to music, interlaced with a new and unique dance expression called “Breaking.” “The Message,” a rap song written in 1982, rhythmically expressed the frustrations of urban youth, primarily for Black males: life in New York City was hard, and survival from infancy was by any means. Lyrically, they stated that “a child is born with no state of mind, blind to the ways of mankind, God is smiling on you, but he's frowning too cuz only God knows what you'll go through...it's like a jungle sometimes, that makes me wonder how I keep from going under.”¹⁵

By 1985, other songs in video format were being aired through a syndicated weekly music television show called *Hot Tracks*. Shows like *Hot Tracks* introduced rap, hip hop, and New York City urban life to national audiences. This new urban cultural phenomenon was catapulted into mainstream music and film industries through theaters with movies titled *Rappin*

¹³ Bob Kappstatter, “The Story of Bernhard Goetz, the subway vigilante,” *New York Daily News* 8/14/2017 nydailynews.com Accessed 3/20/2020

¹⁴ Ibid.,

¹⁵ Dan Caims “1982: Grandmaster Flash: The Message.” *Sunday Times*: 25. ProQuest Newsstand, 28 Sep 2008; David Hinckley, “Message from the Bronx the History of Rap in the City.” *New York Daily News*: 67. ProQuest Newsstand, 07 Dec. 2004. “The Message” was a Hip-Hop song released in 1982 that focuses on social aspect of inner-city life for young black males by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five a Hip-Hop Rap group, the first hip hop group inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

(1985) and *Krush Groove* (1985). By the decade's close, rap and hip-hop music were reaching platinum status in record sales. Although, the decade began with a Hollywood version of New York City's urban street life, romanticized in movies like *Flashdance* (1983), which depicted rap and hip-hop culture on urban streets. In this movie, it ended in a face-off of political, judicial, social, sexual, and racial issues, where the newspapers identified this same street level artistic movement's culture as the culprit.

Black criminology now had a new component to include alongside Black masculinity, sexual violence, and drug addiction: rap music and hip-hop culture. When Steve Fox's special report on hip hop aired on ABC's *20/20* in 1981, it featured an interview with syndicated rock columnist Lisa Robinson. Robinson indicated that there was a fear of rap music. "People hated rock and roll 15 years ago[...]it's not something that they really understand is very Black and very urban and people are scared of that."¹⁶ This would become encouraged by New York City newspapers in 1989, as a song titled "Wild Thing" went platinum in January of that year and was reported to be the mantra used for a sexually horrific crime a few months later.¹⁷

On April 19, 1989, Trish Meili, a White female investment banker, was one of several people attacked in New York City's Central Park, during what the media has referred to as "the Central Park Wilding."¹⁸ Police and media reports stated that approximately 30 youths entered the park at Harlem's North end and moved south, attacking joggers, bicyclists, drivers, and

¹⁶ Josh Jones, "How ABC Television Introduced Rap Music to America in 1981: It's Painfully Awkward," *Open Culture* 7/24/2020 [Openculture.com](https://www.openculture.com/2020/07/how-abc-television-introduced-rap-music-to-america-in-1981-it-s-painfully-awkward.html) Accessed 3/20/2020

¹⁷ Dan Charmas, *The Big Payback: The history of the Business of Hip-Hop*. (Penguin - Google Books; 1 November 2011); Kiah Fields, "Today in Hip Hop History: Tone Loc Releases 'Loc-ed after Dark' 27 Years Ago" *The Source*, January 23, 2016.

"*Wild Thing*" A 1989 Hip Hop Rap single by Tone Loc on his album *Loc-ed After Dark*. (1) A reference to a sexual euphemism "doin' the wild thing."

¹⁸ Robert F. Worth, "A Crime Revisited: Wilding; A word That Seared a City's Imagination" *New York Times*, (December 6, 2002), [NewYorkTimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/06/nyregion/a-crime-revisited-wilding-a-word-that-seared-a-city-s-imagination.html)

pedestrians. It was also reported that some victims had been robbed and beaten unconscious. Meili was assaulted, robbed, and raped shortly after she began her daily jogging routine.

The police in the area received a radio dispatch at about 9:00 pm to respond to reports of a gang of teens assaulting park visitors. As two police officers approached the park, they encountered a teenager named Matias Reyes leaving the park. Since the officers were familiar with Reyes and knew him from the local store where he worked, they never considered him as a part of the group reported to be causing havoc in the park.¹⁹ However, another group of teenagers were spotted by the officers and ordered to stop. Most of the youth fled, except Raymond Santana and Steve Lopez. Eventually, they were rounded up with seven Black teenagers: Kevin Richardson, Lamont McCall, Clarence Thomas, Antron McCray, Michael Briscoe, Yusef Salaam, and Korey Wise.²⁰

In the early morning hours of April 20th, Meili was discovered in a wooded area near the 102nd Street transverse, unconscious, naked, gagged, bound, and badly beaten.²¹ The police were questioning five of the youth suspected of the park episodes, as Meili was being transported to the hospital. Initially, it was reported that she would not survive her injuries. The process of police interviewing quickly escalated to a criminal interrogation of Raymond Santana, Kevin Richardson, Antron McCray, Yusef Salaam, and Korey Wise. The crime suspects were four Black boys and one Hispanic boy, aged 13-15. They were arrested and charged with the attempted murder, robbery, rape, and sexual abuse of Trish Meili.

¹⁹ Sarah Burns, *The Central Park Five: The Untold Story Behind One of New York City's Most Famous Crimes* (New York; Vintage Books. 2011) 41

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Chris Smith, "Central Park Revisited," *New York Magazine*, October 21, 2002, *NYmag.com* Accessed 3/12/2019

Reportedly during the next thirty hours, these youth were at times held, jailed, and incarcerated without food, sleep, or a parental presence as they were interrogated. The police employed the “Reid Technique” and its nine steps per procedural protocol, allowing them to effect and secure voluntary confessions.²² The confessions from each of the accused described the victim differently in her attire, physique, place of assault, and those that were involved. Each suspect implicated the others in the rape, and none of the crime’s details were consistent. However, though there was no physical evidence to link any of them to Meili, they were informed otherwise, and the District Attorney instructed that each of the youths be Mirandized and charged.²³

On April 21, 1989, videotaped confessions were conducted of four of the youth, with one teen providing two confessions and one teen refusing to be videotaped. They were all officially arrested on April 22, 1989, for attempted murder in the second degree, rape in the first degree,

²² Brian Gallini, “Police ‘Science’ in the Interrogation Room: Seventy Years of Pseudo-Psychological Interrogation Methods to Obtain Inadmissible Confessions” *Hastings Law Journal* 61 (February 2010): 529; Lauren Rogal, “Protecting Persons with Mental Disabilities from Making False Confessions: The Americans with Disabilities Act as a Safeguard” (*New Mexico Law Review* 47, no.1 (Winter 2017): 64-98; David E. Zulawski and Douglas E. Wicklander, *Practical Aspects of Interview and Interrogation*. (Ann Arbor: CRC Press; 2001). *Reid Technique* - The RIED technique was developed by psychologist John E. Ried as a trademark method of interviewing and interrogation of criminal suspects. This technique possessed three phases of gathering information from a suspected criminal. The phases are fact analysis, behavioral analysis during a non-accusatory interview and then application of the techniques nine interrogation steps. These steps include positive confrontation, blame-shifting, inferring guilt, alternative questioning allowing suspect to choose assumed beneficial options and documenting of suspects admission of crime. It has been argued that this technique allows for false confessions with persons that are non-English speakers, the young and reduced mental capacity.

²³ *Miranda v. Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436 (1966) Under the Fifth Amendment, any statements that a defendant in custody makes during an interrogation are admissible as evidence at a criminal trial only if law enforcement told the defendant of the right to remain silent and the right to speak with an attorney before the interrogation started, and the rights were either exercised or waived in a knowing, voluntary, and intelligent manner.

sodomy in the first degree, sexual abuse in the first degree, riot in the first degree, and assault in the second degree. Standard police procedure stipulated that the names of criminal suspects under 16 were to be withheld from the media and the public. This policy was ignored when the names of the arrested juveniles were released to the press before they had been formally charged, arraigned, or indicted, including one 14-year-old who was ultimately not charged.²⁴ The media's decision to print the names, photos, and addresses of the juvenile suspects while withholding Meili's identity was cited by the editors of the *City Sun* and the *Amsterdam News* to explain their own continued use of Meili's name in coverage of the story.

The pre-trial hearing began in October 1989. At that time, the defendants' lawyers argued that their clients had been coerced into confessing to the crimes that they were accused of.²⁵ In February, the judge denied the suppression of the confessions and ruled that the videotapes were admissible.²⁶ In addition, Judge Galligan allowed the prosecution to group the defendants during the trial. This tactic violated the Fifth and Sixth Amendments, as ruled by the Supreme Court in *Burton v U.S.* A co-defendant could not be a witness, leaving himself vulnerable to self-incrimination.²⁷ The trial began in April 1990, even though in March 1990, the NYPD serologist had evidence that someone other than the accused had raped the jogger and left behind his

²⁴ Burns. The Central Park Five, 26

²⁵ Ibid. 116

²⁶ Ibid. 123

²⁷ Ibid. 125; *Burton v. United States*, 291 U.S. 123 (1968) The Supreme Court ruled that confessions in a joint trial violated both the witness and accused rights and although the "confession was competent evidence against him it was inadmissible hearsay against petitioner and had to be disregarded in determining petitioner's guilt or innocence. In addition, this would violate the right to cross-examination for defendants. The right of cross-examination is included in the right of an accused in a criminal case to confront the witnesses against him, an individual cannot be compelled by the government to provide self-incriminating information secured by the Sixth and Fifth Amendment, and a basic right obligatory on the States by the Fourteenth Amendment.

semen.²⁸ This semen belonged to a rape suspect, Matias Reyes, who was arrested on August 5, 1989. The same individual was familiar with the police, as they had encountered him leaving the park on the night Meili was discovered.

The first trial was *People v. Antron McCray, Raymond Santana, and Yusef Salaam*, which ended in September 1990 with each of the 16-year-olds and younger suspects being sentenced to six to twenty years in a juvenile correction facility. On their 21st birthdays, they would then be transferred to an adult facility. *People v Korey Wise and Kevin Richardson* followed this trial in October.²⁹ Ultimately, both Kevin Richardson and Korey Wise were tried in a second trial, convicted, and faced a maximum of up to 26 years in prison.³⁰ At the sentencing hearings, the suspects continued professing their innocence and were mocked by the judge as “belligerent and arrogant.”³¹

In 2002, Matias Reyes, serving a life sentence for rape and murder, confessed to the Central Park Rape to his lawyer and the New York City District Attorney: “She ran away...That...made me more angry...the violence got more worse over there. I know I struck her with a rock...I left her there...I thought, I left her for dead.”³² Matias Reyes confessed on “Primetime Thursday,” a national television segment. Reyes provided graphic details of the victim and the crime. In addition, he mentioned that after leaving Meili for dead, he was stopped by police while he was wearing her Walkman radio device and had her blood on his pants.

²⁸ Ibid. 127

²⁹ Lizzette Alvarez, “Central Park attackers sentenced to max” *New York Daily News*: nydailynews.com; September 12, 1990.

³⁰ Alice Cantrell, Joseph Mc Namara and Maria Mooshil, “2 Guilty in Jog Case,” *New York Daily News*, April 9, 2013, NYdailynews.com

³¹ Alice Cantwell, “Sentencing in Central Park Attack.” *New York Daily News*, April 9, 2013, NYDailyNews.com

³² “A Monster’s Tale: Gruesome details of Jogger rapist’s confession,” *New York Daily News*, September 26, 2002, NYdailynews.com

However, since he was friendly with the police officers, they only inquired about his knowledge of other teens in the park. He left without suspicion.

After serving approximately thirteen years incarcerated, the last of the accused was released from prison. In 2003, the five formerly accused defendants filed a lawsuit alleging violations of civil rights based on the Fourth, Fifth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Amendments, racially based malicious prosecution, and depriving them of their constitutional rights. They alleged police coercion of their confessions, unlawful detention, arrest, and trial. Their claims centered on the city's lack of probable cause to prosecute them, the city's denial of their due process to suppress illegally obtained confessions, and the prosecution's unlawful act of withholding exculpatory evidence.³³

In newspaper photographs and televised news reports, these boys appeared to be confused with the constant and overtly racialized adult context that they had been literally and physically thrust into. It was reported that these five boys, who were remotely familiar with each other, collectively raped an older White woman. Newspaper stories reminiscent of this case, such as the Scottsboro Boys and the Groveland Four, failed to add skepticism or provoke public scrutiny. This episode presented not just a historical trend but also a customary method that has been used by newspapers to direct and control race relations, political enfranchisement, and the socio-economic gains of Blacks. The newspapers simultaneously reinforced previously established fears in and outside Black communities while reiterating stereotypes that they knew all too well would incite hysteria and moral panic within the greater social environment, as it had for over a century.

³³ Burns, *The Central Park Five*. 224.

Stereotypical images that were constructed during 19th century society and allowed to extend into contemporary times through recurrent usage in newspapers misrepresented Black boys as violent and deviant. These images often informed or replicated other depictions in which the larger American society constructed their assumptions and myths, such as films and novels like *The Birth of a Nation*³⁴ and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.³⁵

These stories are situated in the American South during the Jim Crow Era, and involve interracial sex, rape, and violence. In both stories, the Black male was portrayed as a sexually deviant antagonist and a violent predator of White womanhood that would suffer from their injustice at the conclusion of the story. These stories serve as an element in the cultural and intellectual history of American society and for non-minorities, whose only understanding of and resolution for Black masculinity is defined by movies and distorted imagery.

While the Central Park jogger case has been researched and reviewed primarily through a social justice lens, this study will question the significant role of the newspapers focusing on the five Black and Hispanic boys known as the Central Park Five (CP5), who were accused and convicted of sexually assaulting a White woman. This study will also analyze the historical and social determinants influenced by the news media to create public hysteria and reinforce the racialized social divide. The newspapers' use of racist language invoked old and new racist mores, resulting in a panicked public, a divided city, and the wrongful conviction of a group of Black and Hispanic teenage boys. Furthermore, the negative depictions of Black masculinity and interracial sex in the news encouraged and supported the historical legacy of prosecuting groups of Black boys accused of sexually assaulting White women. This trend began in the early 20th

³⁴ *The Birth of a Nation*, David W. Griffith, (1915; San Fernando Valley, California: David W. Griffith Company), DVD

³⁵ Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Company; 1960)

century with the Scottsboro Boys case in 1931³⁶ and has continued through to the Central Park Five (CP5) jogger case in 1989, and beyond to Gregory Counts and Vandyke Perry in 1992 (NYC),³⁷ Malik St. Hilaire and Dahmeer Bradley in 2016 (Conn.),³⁸ and Christian Cooper in 2020 (NYC). It should be noted that Megan Armstrong, in her study *From Lynching to Central Park Karen: How White Women Weaponize White Womanhood*, refers to this newly emerging phenomenon on an old trope as “Karen, a term for White women” that calls the police on Black males that are not guilty of a crime.³⁹ Armstrong argues that Karen's fears and accusations are often perceived as credible due to the deep-seated racism in American society, where Black individuals are frequently assumed to be engaged in criminal activity.⁴⁰ She states that if Karen, for whatever reason, claims her fears are sexually motivated or alleges sexual harm by a Black man, the consequences are often severe.⁴¹ Because of America’s historical racist roots, such accusations frequently lead to violent reprisals or the wrongful incarceration of Black men.⁴²

This study is twofold. First, it examines how the media has sensationalized rape cases involving White women allegedly attacked by adolescent Black boys to create public hysteria. The newspapers’ continued use of racist and sexist stereotypes has repeatedly introduced new generations of readers to discriminatory rhetoric. It reinforces old ideologies of White supremacy within the current social environment. Second, this study examines the degree to which the

³⁶ Kwando M. Kinshasa, *The Scottsboro Boys in Their Own Words: Selected Letters, 1931- 1950* (Jefferson, North Carolina: Mc Farland and Company, Inc. 2014)

³⁷ Jan Ransom, “26 Years Later, Justice for Men imprisoned for a Bogus Rape,” New York Times, May 7, 2018, NYTimes.com

³⁸ Ashe Schow, “She Lied About Being Raped. Now The Men She accused Are Suing Her.” *The Daily Wire*, October 30, 2018, DailyWire.com

³⁹ Megan Armstrong, “From Lynching to Central Park Karen: How White Women Weaponize White Womanhood.” *Hastings Women’s Law Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Winter 2021) 27

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behavior and practices of the newspapers impacted the accused and their subsequent social disability. Ultimately, this project demonstrates that the newspapers influenced public opinion, which initially resulted in the CP5's civil disability and may have contributed to their permanent social disability. This episode further put these individuals into a new realm of disenfranchisement, eliminating them from gaining social capital or being considered as such. This dissertation argues that the news media uses racist language to increase profits while maintaining America's racial divide. Finally, it queries why this debilitating aspect of Black male criminalization has not been considered a concept within the disability studies framework. This study will highlight how the most nationally circulated newspapers have continued to embed racial stereotypes and socially constructed myths into reporting interracial sex crimes and misrepresenting Black masculinity to the American public. Following Karen Harvey's approach to material culture, nineteenth and twentieth century news articles are utilized as artifacts to provide connections to the Central Park Five case through similar cases.⁴³

Newspaper articles and photographs will be deconstructed in conjunction with a review of criminal, social, media, and race studies to analyze, compare, and evaluate the ongoing debates that continue to question the media's implicit and explicit influence on racial trends in modern society. In addition, this dissertation's arguments intersect with several bodies of scholarship that examine the newspaper industry, Black masculinity, and crime. Subsequently, the new urban Black youth subculture of hip-hop and rap music was added as an additional aggregate. Since rap music was negatively reported in the newspapers, rap lyrics of popular songs before, during, and after the incident are included to end each chapter. This will allow a

⁴³ Karen Harvey, *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to approaching Alternative Sources* (New York: Routledge, 2013)

greater understanding of this genre's emphasis on Black urban youths, their individual and collective expression, and accentuate how this element of Black culture also suffered from journalistic misrepresentation. This project will not investigate musicology as a study. However, it will hopefully afford a visual opportunity of the selected lyrics with respect to their function as an element of anthropology, how youth perceived it in urban environments, and their musical aesthetics in society.

Although other studies focus on larger swaths of the American landscape, this study begins and ends in New York City with the Central Park Five, briefly comparing to a similar case that took place earlier in the century. *Since* by Sarah Burns, a documentary filmmaker, is the first monograph regarding the case that addresses how the media's role was written. Her work and others must be reviewed and referenced. These sources will contribute to the understanding and responses of American social psychology and the media's influence as it pertains to print media.

New York City newspapers' role and methods of reporting the news of the crime significantly impacted this case. They exploited the fears of the public with sex, race, gender, class, and crime. Through this racial hysteria, the media influenced both citizens and the government. A review and interpretation of media sources and studies by scholars in the fields of sociology, history, law, anthropology, linguistic, and cultural studies is paramount to identifying and understanding the media and its interconnections of class, sexuality, and crime as it pertains to Black and White race relations, which the press often emphasizes and exaggerates. Therefore, this study will highlight some of the current scholarships in media studies that reveal the media's implicit and explicit function in American culture and its continued development of racist

narratives, which includes the misrepresentation of Black boys and later men as the uncontrolled national antagonists.

This project will seek to reinforce claims of journalist misconduct and disregard made in *The Central Park Five: A Chronicle of a City Wilding* by Sarah Burns; it provides the basis for this project and is paramount to the study. It examines the events leading up to the trial and the convictions in the Central Park jogger case. From the beginning, this event exemplified the complex psycho-social interconnections between race, sex, crime, and class in New York City. Without substantial evidence or eyewitnesses, four Black boys and one Latino boy were arrested, put on trial, and convicted as adults for a crime they did not commit. Burns argues that newspapers played a central role in the public's perception of the boys, the understanding of the victim's vulnerability, the felt needs ideology that resonated with the outcry, and the need for a severe social justice imposition.⁴⁴ The public accepted these cues without question, relying heavily on the newspapers' often tainted reality. Burns highlights how newspapers promoted social hysteria using old and new assumptions of class and race divisions that have been deeply seated in the consciousness of the national narrative.⁴⁵

This dissertation will depend on much of the theory relating to Black criminology that historian Khalil Gibran Muhammad introduces in his earlier work *Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and the Making of Modern Urban America*, which offers much to our understanding

⁴⁴ Jerry L. Wade, "Felt Needs and Anticipatory Needs : Reformulation of a Basic Community Development Principle," *Journal of the Community Development Society*, Vol 20 # 1 p 116-123 (1989) doin.org www.tandfonline.com

Felt Needs Ideology is defined as a social response to perceived or real anxieties that a community group expresses, in relation to social norm resistance. Felt needs are usually personal individually acknowledged needs, whereas. Anticipatory Needs are planned needs identified by others.

⁴⁵ Burns, *The Central Park Five*.

of how historically Black males have been viewed as a public threat, extending into urban cities from a century old rationale that is rooted in the nation's past southern ideology. This ideology that intertwined race, sex, violence, and crime exacerbated White male and female fears, promoting the believed need to reinforce the social hierarchy of White supremacy. Muhammad's historiographical argument holds clues to how this scenario could mirror a century-old issue and why the case held so many racial, social, and class dichotomies. *Condemnation of Blackness* will serve as a literary guidepost and a point for further exploration of his theories.⁴⁶

Moreover, the arguments made by scholars such as historian Carol A. Stabile in *White Victims, Black Villains: Gender, Race, and Crime News in United States Culture* highlight more recent events to provide a lens on how newspapers are primarily in control of deciding and depicting who are the victims versus the villains. The selective descriptions of each character within a newspaper's crime reporting have evolved into what Stabile refers to as "new categories," which are often built upon stereotypes.⁴⁷ This is further evident in *News for All the People* by historians Juan Gonzales and Joseph Torres, a historical narrative of the American media with an in-depth focus on print journalism. Gonzales and Torres delve deep into American newspaper history to reveal how from the colonial period to the present, American newspapers have played a pivotal role in supporting the national racial divide, implicitly and explicitly.⁴⁸

Furthermore, initial observations by Robert Fowler in *Language in the News* focused primarily on the British press's language usage of particular words and photographs in their

⁴⁶ Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and The Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 2010)

⁴⁷ Carol A. Stabile, *White Victims, Black Villains: Gender, Race, and Crime News in United States Culture* (New York: Routledge; 2006) 4

⁴⁸ Juan Gonzales and Joseph Torres, *News For All The People: The Epic Story of Race The American Media* (Brooklyn: Verso; 2011) 4

newspapers. The parallels of content and context to the practices in American newspapers are noted in their similarity and connections to the public's interpretation and understanding of minorities. Fowler found that newspapers describe and depict reports of crimes involving minorities with words that usually motivate, instigate or direct political and social responses.⁴⁹ *Racial Spectacles: Exploration in Media, Race and Justice* investigates the practices of newspapers in reporting crimes that intersect race, gender, sex, and violence. Historian Jonathan Markovitz argues that newspapers often revitalize racist stereotypes in how news is reported and the pictures chosen to accompany the stories. This work focuses on the impact that the newspapers' practices have in influencing various dynamics that affect social justice outcomes.⁵⁰

Similarly, *Crime, Media and Reality: Examining Mixed Messages About Crime and Justice in Popular Media*, written by Vanessa Garcia and Samantha G. Arkerson, noted that the public often relies on newspaper reports for an interpretation and accurate understanding of past and current events. What newspapers depict are often skewed with mixed messages, stereotypes, personal opinions of the "other" to validate racialized political agendas. This practice has encouraged public behaviors that range from hysteria and violent retribution to social unrest and increased political disenfranchisement.⁵¹ Additionally, the following works will serve as cornerstones for this project and provide a broader understanding of past and present journalistic practices. They support both Sarah Burns' thesis and the thesis suggested initially by James D. Startt and William David Sloan in *Significance of the Media in American History*. These authors argued that historians have ignored the connections between history and the newspapers. They

⁴⁹ Robert Fowler, *Language in The News* (London: Routledge Publishers; 1991) 19

⁵⁰ Jonathan Markovitz, *Racial Spectacles: Exploration in Media, Race and Justice* (New York: Routledge Publishers, 2011) 27

⁵¹ Vanessa Garcia and Samantha G. Ackerson, *Crime, Media and Reality: Examining Mixed Messages About Crime and Justice in Popular Media* (Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018).

suggest that newspapers could and should be utilized not as a chronicle but as a central element that inspires attitudes, behaviors, and responses to particular events.⁵²

Burns found that in her research for the documentary regarding the CP5 that the *Daily News* created a competition amongst their reporters to craft the best insidious headlines. For instance, the use of words such as “wilding,” “savage,” and “wolfpack” became associated with the crime, as well as the accused young boys. She argues that newspapers wrote explicitly racist editorials, fueling resentment in an already polarized nation. Paul Kellstedt explains that the media has “a potential to affect public opinion in a variety of ways.”⁵³ He described this practice as “priming,” an artful practice of news media historically invoking its power to set public agendas and motivate public policies. Generally, what most Americans come to know about groups outside of their immediate social networks is through the “social learning” taught and disseminated by newspapers; this is particularly true regarding Black people.⁵⁴ Kellstedt contends that the news media has “disproportionately” targeted Blacks in adverse reports “that confirm preexisting” stereotypes.⁵⁵ Many of these stereotypes were used to report the Central Park Five case.

The newspapers' portrayal of these five boys significantly impacted the public's understanding of the case, the investigation, the trial, and the subsequent conviction. It exploited the racialized and sexualized threats and historical fears of middle-class and elite American society. The hysterical nuances underscored with sensationalized undertones constructed by

⁵² James D. Startt and William David Sloan, *The Significance of the Media in American History* (Northport, Alabama: Vision Press, 2019) 2

⁵³ Paul M. Kellstedt, *The Mass Media and The Dynamics of American Racial Attitudes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 12

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 118

newspaper reports of the case created, instigated, and reinforced racial myths and deepened existing social conflicts. A prime example of this is the episode on June 17, 2017, when Dylan Roof murdered church members attending a Bible study at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, shouting, “You rape our women and you’re taking over our country. And you have to go.”⁵⁶ The fact that Roof focused his rage and assault on a group comprised mostly of women contradicts his racial epithets and irrational indignation.⁵⁷

Roof’s motives and acts at the time of the incident were questioned as to if they should be considered a crime of hate or terrorism. The state of South Carolina does not have any legal statutes designating charges for either hate crimes or domestic terrorism.⁵⁸ Dylan Roof personified in modern times the national myth of a perceived threat regarding interracial sex and crime created during pre-contemporary eras, which was brought to the fore in the Central Park Jogger Case.

In 1892, Ida B. Wells wrote in her book *Southern Horrors: Lynch law in all its Phases*, that “the south is shielding itself behind the plausible screen of defending the honor of its women.”⁵⁹ According to Wells, during the Civil War, the crime of rape was unknown when the White women of the South were at the mercy of ex-slaves. She argues that rape accusations became the new cry of the southern states in their attempt to terrorize, execute and disenfranchise

⁵⁶ Jamelle Bouie, “The Deadly History of “They’re Raping our Women.” Racist have long used rape to defend their worst racists violence,” June 18, 2015, *Slate Magazine*, www.slate.com; Kinsey Clarke, “A Good Read: A White Woman On ‘Being An Excuse’ For Deadly Racism,”

⁵⁷ June 24, 2015, Code Switch, *National Public Radio*, www.npr.com; Rebecca Carroll, “The Charleston shooting victims: a poet, a politician, a librarian, women of faith,” June 18, 2015, Rebecca Carroll Column, *The Guardian*, www.theguardian.com.

⁵⁸ Julia Dahl, “Was the South Carolina shooting a hate crime or a terrorist attack?” June 19, 2015, *CBS News*, CBSNEWS.com

⁵⁹ Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (New York: New York Age; 1892) 12

Blacks legally.⁶⁰ Wells further stated that “this cry has...closed the heart, stifled the conscienceless, warped the judgement and...[is] the voice of the press.”⁶¹ In his condemnation of his victims, Roof proved to be indicative of the individuals that Wells asserts were involved in the lynching of Black males accused of raping White women. She insists that the political leaders of the time and the social influence of the newspapers allowed this issue to become a part of the nation’s historical narrative.

In doing so, this study looks to build on the previous scholarship and continues the works of Robert Fowler, Natalie Byfield, Vanessa Garcia, and Samantha G. Ackerson, which was built on Kellstedt and Niklas Luhman’s studies on newspapers and race.⁶² In their findings, these scholars argued that journalists write from within their ideology and reflect the values and expression of the most powerful.⁶³ In addition, consumers are socially influenced by the media and its creation of social constructions. Research on wrongful convictions of Black boys nationally revealed that many were based on forced [false] confessions that validate Niklas Luhman’s (2000) methodological process of “observing the observer,”⁶⁴ the words that reporters chose in writing their articles. In addition to influencing the public with sensationalized literary reports of crime stories, the media provided their perception and interpretation of a “symbolic reality”⁶⁵ to the public. The symbolic realities in newspapers have politically, economically,

⁶⁰ Ibid., 12

⁶¹ Ibid., 13

⁶² Fowler, “*Language in The News*”; Ackerson, “*Crime, Media and Reality*”; Natalie Byfield, *Savage Portrayals: Race, Media, and The Central Park Jogger Story*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press; 2014); Kellstedt, “*The Mass Media and The Dynamics of American Racial Attitudes*”; Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media* (Stanford: Stanford University Press; 2000)

⁶³ Niklas Luhmann, “The Paradox of Observing Systems.” *Cultural Critique*, No. 31 (1995) 37

⁶⁴ Ibid., 38

⁶⁵ Ibid., 45

commercially, and socially defined “assailants” as Black, male, violent, and sexually deviant, transforming them into a social identity and social marker in the American consciousness as part of its historical narrative.

Furthermore, Susan Dente Ross and Paul Martin Lester, Juan Gonzales and Joseph Torres, Jonathan Markovitz, Khalil Gibran Muhammad, and Carol A. Stabil add breadth to the studies conducted by media scholars Andrew Rojecki and Robert M. Entman decades earlier. These scholars looked to define the role of media as a medium that provides context through their messages that further “informs, expresses, exchanges and persuade “beliefs, views, attitudes and emotions” concerning social relations.⁶⁶ Rojecki and Entman argue that the “racial skews” in news reporting revealed an overrepresentation of Black people as violent criminals, a trend that reflects how racist ideology and racist politics have become more noticeable if not tolerable in recent media outlets. In this context, print media intentionally “tilts” crimes committed by Blacks in local news with subliminal racial messages interpreted as public threats.

These visual and textual constructions in print media evoke fears in the public psyche while arousing panic in public space. Historically, the press has often played an influential role in shaping public opinions with damaging consequences. For example, “the newspapers have throughout American history contributed significantly in creating, reinforcing and maintaining racial ignorance, group hatred and discriminatory government practices.”⁶⁷ In this context, research theories concerning social responses, collective memory, sexual deviance, Black

⁶⁶ Susan Dente Ross and Paul Martin Lester, *Images That Injure: Pictorial Stereotypes in The Media* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger; 2011); Gonzales and Torres, “*News For All The People*”; Markovitz, “*Racial Spectacles*”; Muhammad, “*Condemnation of Blackness*”; Stabile, “*White Victims, Black Villains*”; Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in The White Mind: Media and Race in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; 2000).

⁶⁷ Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image. in The White Mind: Media and Race in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; 2000). 70

masculinity, and Black criminalization can be traced to the writings of Ida B. Wells and more recently to the Orlando Patterson thesis. Their studies challenge the characteristics chosen to racialize social identifiers of Black boys used by the newspaper, which has a profound role in the public's understanding of Blacks as inherent sexual criminals.⁶⁸

Within this project, a comprehensive investigation and interpretation will be conducted of selected news articles utilizing framing analysis. The concept is described by Robert Entman as "...to select some aspect of a perceived reality in such a way as to promote a particular problem, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendations."⁶⁹ Robert Fowler, Tuen A. van Dijk, Jonathan Potter, and Margret Wetherall emphasize the importance of conducting a discourse and content analysis with particular attention to the language used in news reports and the social conditions in which they were used.⁷⁰ With this in mind, an initial review of highly circulated newspapers and news magazines in New York City provided the foundation for this study. It stimulated the creation of specific questions that encouraged investigation into various theories, including an exploration of "impact evaluation" designs. Impact evaluation provided queries into how the news media's past and current behaviors and practices have taken advantage of "relevant intervention strategies" to address how Black male adolescents are depicted as suspects and the effects of any social responses, as described by Kristen Bording Collin.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ida B. Well, "Southern Horrors"; Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 2018).

⁶⁹ Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993)

⁷⁰ Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993); Fowler, *Language in The News*; Tuen A. van Dijk, "Principles of Discourse Analysis" in *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, ed. S. Taylor, S.J. Yates and Margret Wetherall (London: Sage Publications; 2001; Johnathan Potter and Margret Wetherall, *Discourse and Social Psychology* (London: Sage Publications; 1987).

⁷¹ Kristen Bording Collins, *World Bank, Impact Evaluations in Practice- What is Impact Evaluation?* American University, www.programs.oniine.american.edu; Irno Marini, *Social*

Applying elements of these various methodologies allows a better understanding of the national debates, the ramifications of racialized journalistic practices, and the fundamental questions that concern how newspapers played a critical role in reaffirming racist ideology and the dissemination of racially biased information that has repeatedly been used to influence a racial divide in public psychology and chronicle the national narrative. However, this nuance has not been included within that narrative as a possible aggregate that has precipitated events or provided manipulated implications to the public memory. In addition, why are the historical practices and behaviors utilized by newspapers to misrepresent Black masculinity encouraging stereotypes of men as violent, uncontrolled, and sexually deviant social threats continued? These same practices have often resulted in civil unrest, unequal justice, discriminative public policies, and sometimes extra-legal reprisals.

Furthermore, why was New York City an inevitable prime location to uncover deeply rooted racist mores and the historical relationship with the city's newspapers, which misrepresented the city's Black communities? Most significantly, how did the revelation of the City's inherent response to the social fears concerning sex, race, violence and crime ultimately impact the Central Park jogger case's judicial outcome? This study allows for an examination of how the city's social fears are evident in the newspapers' continued references to the case and the now exonerated five, as well as providing evidence of how the newspapers socially encouraged ethnic divides amongst the formerly accused since their imprisonments.

This exploration will expand the historical narrative regarding the media's role in creating and influencing the public racial divide with sensationalized news laden with myths and

Justice, Oppression and Disability Counseling Those Most in Need, in *The Psychological and Social Impact of Illness and Disability*, Irno Marini and Mark A. Stebnicki, (New York: Springer Publishing Company; 2018).

stereotypes that promote racialized public hysteria. This study seeks to create a new opportunity to reread the Central Park Five jogger case through a lens that underscores the historical criminalization of Black masculinity with the ramifications of social disability. These young men, arbitrarily known as the Central Park Five, were wrongfully accused and convicted. Yet their reentry into society does not automatically grant them a “release of civil disability,” which should categorize them as socially disabled.⁷² While new studies have examined the culture of physical disability into a viable historical narrative, this project seeks to encourage an additional study of the culture of social disability as an essential element of that narrative that should encompass the wrongfully accused. The studies of media, race, sex, gender, law, economics, politics, history, and culture have ignored the intersections of their studies and the social disabling of citizens, such as the CP5 in the American historical narrative.

Chapter 2. Identifies and reviews literature from various disciplines, how the newspapers have enjoined the American public’s psychology influencing ideologies and practices. Media studies, social science, law, and ethnic and historical works will be reviewed, considered, and interpreted to examine the changes regarding race, sex, and crime issues.

Chapter 3. Methodology: Deconstructs and interprets newspaper articles written during the discovery of the victim, the onset of the investigation, and the arrest of the suspects to reveal keywords that reinforce stereotypes. In addition, a review of specific photographs and headlines

⁷² In New York State a Certificate of Relief from Disabilities (CRD) is a way to remove certain collateral consequences of a criminal conviction. Having the CRD can remove bars to applying for jobs, licenses, public housing and more. “S/he will be in a state of civil incapacity in the eyes of law. An individual who has lost his/her civil rights and capacities is accounted dead in law.” Civil Disabilities refers to the status of a person who has been convicted of a crime and who has had their legal right and privileges revoked, such as voting, holding public office and obtaining insurance and pension benefits. (Relief from Disabilities Correction (COR) Chapter 43, Article 23 The Laws of New York)

used in the newspapers believed to sensationalize the story and incite public hysteria was conducted using elements of visual analyses. Finally, a critical review of New York City's major newspapers is conducted by combining Robert M. Entman's *Media Framing Theory* and James E. Gruing's *Situational Theory of Publics* to highlight racialized image-framing practices and how the public understands and responds to those practices.⁷³

Chapter 4. Findings and discussion of the data analysis will focus primarily on identifying trends regarding the dissemination of racial dissent in New York City newspapers using stereotypes, social constructions, and social influence that maintains a micro and macro social divide. The discussion begins with a dialectical comparison of the assaults on Booker T. Washington in 1911 with the Central Park Bird Watcher case in 2020; and the 1989 Central Park Joggers case in New York, with the 1931 Scottsboro Boys case in Alabama. Similarities in each of these incidents are highlighted and noted regarding newspaper reports, suspect and victim depictions, and the focus on race, sex and crime, public responses, and collective memory in relation to Gruing's Situational Theory.

Chapter 5. A brief discussion on the models of disability in America and the evolving themes of academic studies, focusing primarily on the social model and seeking to identify its interconnections to race and criminal justice as a social impairment.

The conclusion will highlight how the newspapers have been allowed to overtly promote racial biases that encourage and perpetuate civil unrest. It will argue that the practices and influences that the newspapers employ have historically created a social landscape for unequal justice that has plagued a substantial portion of the American public. The impact of the CP5 case

⁷³ Robert M. Entman, "Framing Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, 4. (Autumn 1993) 51. James E. Gruing, *A Situational Theory of Publics: Managing Public Relations* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston; 1988)

on the individuals involved and the American society will be reviewed as it relates to disability studies.

It may become apparent how the causations and aftermath of the CP5 case could have evolved near the close of the twentieth century in New York City. This study provides a new opportunity to reread the Central Park jogger Case through lenses encompassing various academic fields that acknowledge the historical implications of Black masculinity, which can intersect or are interconnected with social disability.

The Central Park Five were wrongfully accused and convicted. They were incarcerated from 1990 until 2002 and released as adults to reenter society. What does reentry grant them? Will it inevitably provide them with the grant of “release of civil disability,” and if so, what are the ramifications of that release? The answer to these questions should prove sufficient in the CP5 being assigned a new categorization as socially disabled. This project will encourage an additional study of social disability that includes the wrongly accused and convicted. The studies of disability, media, sex, gender, economics, politics, culture, race, and history have each frequently ignored their implications and intersections in the American historical narrative regarding events such as the Central Park Jogger case.

“Say hello to the bad guy, they say I'm a bad guy
I come from the bottom but now I'm mad fly
They say I'm a menace, that's the picture they paint
They say a lot about me, let me tell you what I ain't
I ain't playin', life's short so I aim
I ain't waiting for life to start portrayin' em
It's twice as hard to get a job as payin' 'em
So I ain't payin' attention to what you're sayin'
hey sayin', I'm a bad guy, why's that?
'Cause when my back's against the wall, I react
Secretly though, I know you admire that
You wish you had the balls to fire back
Say hello, uh uh, hello, uh uh
You wish you had the balls to fire back

They say I'm a bad guy, say hi to the bad guy
I come from the bottom but now I'm mad fly
They say I'm a menace, that's the picture they paint
They say a lot about me, let me tell you what I ain't.”⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Jay- Z, "Say Hello Lyrics." *American Gangsta*, 2007, www.Lyrics.com. Accessed April 20, 2023.

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“Look, we’re all grown-ups here. We heard the facts, didn’t we? Now, you’re not going to tell us that we’re supposed to believe that kid, knowing what he is. Listen, I’ve lived among ’em all my life. You can’t believe a word they say. I mean, they’re born liars.”⁷⁵

“Every movement of his body is an unconscious protest. Every desire, every dream, no matter how intimate or personal, is a plot or a conspiracy. Every hope is a plan for insurrection. Every glance of the eye is a threat. His very existence is a crime against the state!”⁷⁶

“The media’s the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that’s power. Because they control the minds of the masses.”⁷⁷

On May 1, 1989, a full-page advertisement was placed in four major New York City newspapers that read “Bring Back the Death Penalty” after the arrest of five minority (Black and Latino) teenagers accused of sexually assaulting a young White woman. In bold type, the ad read, “I want to hate these muggers and murderers. They should be made to suffer.”⁷⁸ The sentiments expressed in each widely circulated newspaper are evidence of the media’s continued

⁷⁵ Reginald Rose. *Twelve Angry Men* (New York: Penguin Classics. Penguin Publishing Group Kindle Edition) 24

⁷⁶ Richard Wright, *Native Son* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.; 1993) 400

⁷⁷ Ziad Murad, *100 Inspirational Quotes by Malcolm X* (Qana Books; 2022)

⁷⁸ Leonard Green, “Trump Called for Death Penalty after Central Park Jogger Attack, And Still has no Sympathy for Accused despite Convictions Overturned.” *New York Daily News* July 19, 2018, NYdailynews.com

role as an ardent vehicle of racism in the national public, forever archived as a component of the national narrative. One question continually arises: why has the media been allowed and permitted to contribute to the racist ideologies that have continued to divide the nation along race, sex, class, and social justice lines? One must also question the role of the New York City newspapers. Why were these newspapers willing to participate in practices that created a locally and nationally racially hostile environment? The media has long been an effective tool that not only maintained political and economic control of people on the margins but also helped to create and maintain fear in the public's memory through an ideology that claims there is a crisis the public needs to address.

The negative depictions of Black masculinity and interracial intercourse in the news have encouraged and supported what appears to be a historical trend of incriminating groups of Black males accused of sexually assaulting White women. Although in the past individual Black males were being persecuted for sexual crimes against White women, this particular trend of accusing a group of Black males collectively assaulting a White woman began in the early 20th century with the Scottsboro Boys case in 1932⁷⁹ and continued repeatedly up to the Central Park jogger case in 1989.⁸⁰ In Scottsboro, Alabama, nine Black youths ages twelve to nineteen were accused and convicted of sexually assaulting two White women, a crime they had not committed. Their innocence was discovered years after their incarceration and release.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Kinshasa, Kwando M. *The Scottsboro Boys in Their Own Words: Selected Letters, 1931-1950*. (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc. 2014) (jjjj n.d.)

⁸⁰ Burns, Sarah. *The Central Park Five: The Untold Story Behind One of New York City's Most Infamous Crime*. (New York: Vintage Books; 2011) Kindle 1113

⁸¹ Eric Walter Rise. *The Martinsville Seven and Southern Justice: Race, Crime and Capital Punishment in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia; 1955) 62

The historic dogmas against interracial sex and fears of miscegenation endemic to America's racial and social divide helped fuel the hysteria that engulfed the case.⁸² The accused suspects in the Central Park Jogger case were Black and Hispanic teenagers ranging in age from fourteen to sixteen years old. The news media called these adolescents the "Wilding Central Park Five."⁸³ Various headlines such as "Wilding" and "Wolf Pack Prey" accompanied news reports that were crafted with language laden in historical myths that suggested Black masculinity was inherently rooted in immoral sexual deviance. In addition, many headlines included implications of instinctive sexual violence that preyed mainly upon White female victims.⁸⁴ The behaviors and practices of the newspapers represented Black masculinity as sexually deviant and violently criminal. This journalistic practice helped to establish and reinforce national racist stereotypes. The media's role and methods of reporting this crime's news exploited the fears of the public.

Sarah Burns, a film producer possessing an American Studies degree, found that in her research for the documentary about the case, the *Daily News* created a competition amongst their reporters to craft the most insidious headlines.⁸⁵ Burns takes an investigative look at CP5 case.⁸⁶ Burns uncovers and debunks the myth that New York is an unbiased epicenter of the nation's melting pot and that the city lacks a racial and social divide amongst its residents. She reviewed the top commercial newspapers during that period and discovered that out of the *Daily News*,

⁸² Burns, Sarah. *The Central Park Five: The Untold Story Behind One of New York City's Most Infamous Crimes*. (New York: Vintage Books; 2011) 301 (Book)

⁸³ Burns., *The Central Park Five: The Untold Story Behind One of New York City's Most Infamous Crime*. 1083 (Kindle)

⁸⁴ Ibid., 1121

⁸⁵ Sarah Burns, *The Central Park Five: The Untold Story Behind One of New York City's Most Infamous Crime*. (New York: Vintage Books; 2011) 68 (Book)

⁸⁶ The teenagers accused and convicted of raping the Central Park jogger were referred to in the media as the Central Park Five (CP5).

The New York Times, *New York Post*, and *Newsday*, the *New York Post* and *New York Daily News* “screamed the loudest” for a deadly and permanent retribution of the crime.

Most importantly, she noted that during the sensationalism of the media’s racially constructed headlines, none of these papers presented a possibility of innocence for the youth. The photos in the newspapers of the alleged suspects, quoted police allegations, news reporter rumors, and politicians' posturing take full advantage of the situation to further their agendas, causing many New Yorkers and citizens throughout the nation to judge the youths prematurely. In reviewing images of the youths that accompanied many newspaper articles written, Burns found that the captions included a unique language of keywords to describe them and define their assumed actions, providing the first critical look at the CP5 case.⁸⁷

A. Encouraging social responses

The words “Wilding,” “Savage,” and “Wolfpack” became associated with the reported crime, as well as the youths. These animal-like terms have been applied to Black people as a means of separating them “[from the rest of society] ...and degrading their status” as human beings. Most major newspapers were writing explicit editorials, demanding the most severe penalty allowed in the criminal justice system, the death penalty. This is evidence of the American legal system’s racial disparity regarding capital punishment, as “the tradition of death as punishment for rape has historically been reserved for...the rape of a White woman by a Black man.”⁸⁸ Burns argued that while the newspapers fueled racial resentment in the racially polarized nation that young deviant Black males had savagely assaulted a White woman, those

⁸⁷ Ibid., 72 (Book)

⁸⁸ Burns, *The Central Park Five: The Untold Story Behind One of New York City’s Most Infamous Crime*. 1164 (kindle)

same identified newspapers purposely failed to inform the public that the criminal justice system does not execute sexual offenders.⁸⁹

Mass communication researchers Heather Black and Elizabeth Skews conducted a comparative study of *The New York Times* and the Athens, Ohio newspaper.⁹⁰ In their content analysis of both papers, they found that neither newspaper paid particular attention to social relations but did find issues relating to threats of the status quo or “social change deviances that were heavily reprinted in the newspapers, especially *The New York Times*.”⁹¹ A case such as the Central Park jogger case, which involved a mixture of race, crime, sex, and class, represented the threat of “normative deviance” that the newspaper could present with the visual and verbal content.⁹² Normative deviance is defined as the relationship between legal and social norm violations. When accompanied by social changes that may have cultural misgivings or misunderstandings, an event can very quickly become newsworthy enough to demand status as a major headline.⁹³ What is defined as deviant and who are identified as deviant are the unknown, unaccepted, usually unrepresented and those that participate in “unexpected” behaviors. The authors argue that this assumption of deviance becomes the building block to what the newspaper readership envisions as deviant news. It is usually connected to an individual’s understanding of deviance.⁹⁴ In most news reports relating to the case, the accused Black youths were depicted as deviants of civil society, and the newspapers permeated this concept into the public’s psychology.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 91 (Book)

⁹⁰ Elizabeth Skews and Heather Black, *What’s News In the United States in News Around the World: Content, Practitioners and the Public* (United Kingdom, Taylor and Francis, 2012) 311

⁹¹ Ibid., 315

⁹² Ibid., 316

⁹³ Ibid., 318

⁹⁴ Ibid., 325

Professor of sociology Ronald Jacobs explains in his study how the relationship between civil society, culture, and spaces of representation in newspapers are combined to become a public sphere, where the demand for the state is expected to engage in public debate and respond to public concerns.⁹⁵ This aspect of society becomes a politically motivated public space historically established and maintained by the media. Media is significant in maintaining a fractured, disconnected public space and civil society. The news provides information about other cultures that private citizens rely on and increases inter-subjectivity amongst groups about people with whom they may or may not or will not ever have direct contact.⁹⁶ Black and Skews add to Jacobs, stating that the news is deficient in providing a conducive public sphere. Instead, it influences the public agenda.⁹⁷ Focusing on civil society, culture, and the form of representation helps to define how each engages with the media, primarily newspapers, and uses both sociological and chronological historiography of American newspapers and their independent objectives.⁹⁸

In addition, Jacobs encouraged comparative research and analysis by reviewing media discourses. He examined how racial issues are reported using narrative analysis of racial crisis from 1965 to 1992 in several newspapers from three major cities, including *The New York Times*.⁹⁹ He argued that it is necessary to understand the role that “narratives play in constructing identities and enabling social actions.”¹⁰⁰ For one thing, narratives allow readers to deeply

⁹⁵ Ronald N. Jacobs, *Race, Media, and the Crisis of Civil Society: From Watts to Rodney King* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 2

⁹⁶ Ibid., 3

⁹⁷ Ibid., 4

⁹⁸ Skews and Black. *What's News In the United States in News Around the World: Content, Practitioners and the Public.* 318

⁹⁹ Jacobs, *Race. Media and the Crisis of Civil Society.* 8

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 8

consider an event's cultural significance. The journalist often used keywords that can pose consequences attached to social identities and support specific social actions. Depending on the narrative and intended audience, these factors can significantly influence the understanding of an event, how individuals are viewed, and how forces outside of the event respond. A sense of crisis can develop when the narrative of an event creates a sharp division within the social sphere. This narrative becomes a news media event that is conveyed to the public. In doing so, the divisions surrounding what should or should not be and what is not, who is to be targeted, and what is needed to overcome the tragedy and resolve the crisis are made.¹⁰¹

B. Managing public understanding

Vincent Sacco, a sociology professor at Queens University in Ontario, Canada, stated that crime is both a private and public issue. This can be viewed as a building block for Jacobs. Although these dimensions can be distinctive, they are often interconnected.¹⁰² He argued that public exposure to sensationalized crime in overdramatized newspaper reports usually exacerbates fear in individuals, increasing the relationship of their personal issues with stated social problems.

Sacco states that the news media is a conduit in which personal issues or troubles are investigated and invested for public consumption. This dynamic process usually has consequences because crime news provides limited information about the victims and the accused. This information is also not indicative of what may have happened.¹⁰³ There is an

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 9

¹⁰² Vincent Sacco, "Media Construction of Crime." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (May 1995) 142., Cathrine Happer and Greg Philo, The Role of the Media in the Construction of Public Belief and Social Change, *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, Vol. 1. No. 1 (2013)

¹⁰³ Ibid., 143

implied relationship between crime news and police news and how the police's perspective is ultimately advanced.¹⁰⁴ Sacco found that crime news beliefs perceived by the public relied heavily on the construction of news articles presented through framing, including photos and selected language to describe a crime event. In other words, crimes that had been reported as increasing may not be growing as much as the newspapers report to the public.¹⁰⁵ In looking at news articles and crime reports, news framing implies "different" attributes and prospective solutions through the legitimization and marginalization of which crime news is reported and how it is featured in a newspaper.¹⁰⁶ He exposes consequences that create the fear of victimization within the public conscience, as public fears are media constructed and based. This heightens the public's anxieties, which evolves into hysteria based on the frequency of the news purporting to audiences that they should be fearful.¹⁰⁷ Readers can then understand the news based on their own experiences of predispositions to crime and criminals.¹⁰⁸ Sacco and Jacobs serve as a foundation for Skews and Black; each argues that how people experience crime often determines how they internalize or externalize those experiences.

Michael Schudson, a professor of history, asserts that newspapers, by American tradition, are political apparatuses, and their business of disseminating information to the public is primarily to sell newspapers.¹⁰⁹ The fact that newspapers printed articles laden with stereotypical depictions of the city's Black residents is evidence that these newspapers were not neutral or objective in providing information to the public. The original intent of American newspapers was

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 146

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 147

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 149

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 151

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 152

¹⁰⁹ Michael Schudson. *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books; 1978) 4

to represent the ideals and views of the owners, editor, and intended audience.¹¹⁰ Schudson also adds breadth to the understanding of why *The New York Times* would print certain headlines by defining and contrasting the newspaper's use of objectivity and sensationalism. Examining newspapers such as *The New York Times* through a lens of American social history, Schudson found that not only are the economic and political veins overlapping, but also the social and cultural lives of the journalist are intertwined in the manner the news is reported. He also provides a solid base for Skews and Black's normative deviance argument by explaining the rationale for how objectivity and sensationalism are used. The choice to use one or the other, to mix the two, or to use one to counter the other depends solely on the article's purpose.

However, John D. Stevens, a communications professor and co-author of *The Rest of the Elephant: Perspectives on the Mass Media*, maintains that newspapers use scandals because the reading public likes to be shocked, especially if the scandal involves some form of deviance to affirm the reader's values. He calls this "Deviance Theory," following Durkheim's model, which states that individuals believe deviance defines and challenges what a social group has determined is acceptable by most of their society.¹¹¹ This usually reaffirms society's current standards and values. Stevens further defines sensationalism as a practice used by news reporters in their writings to "label or categorize and stigmatize subjects"¹¹² that the majority do not like or

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 5

¹¹¹ John D. Stevens, *Sensationalism and the New York Press*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991) 4

The Rest of The Elephant: Perspectives on the Mass Media, co-authored with William E. Porter., This book looks at many elements of the mass media that are believed to be ignored, such as audiences and ethics when studying the media. Stevens and Porter analyze the interactions between the media and the audience. Stevens writes two chapters, "The Media and their Audiences" (with a subsection, Communicating with The Urban Poor, written by Carl E. Black) and "The Journalist and His Commitments."

¹¹² Ibid., 4

understand. In doing so, reporters often emphasize adverse reports to arouse strong reactions that will influence readers to have a particular impression of the individuals involved. Exaggerated and lurid details usually provoke superficial but highly intense emotional responses, as in the Central Park case.¹¹³

Stevens evaluated the evolution of the various New York City newspapers that thrived on “crime and disorder,” the growth of police reporting in the newspapers,¹¹⁴ and the racial constructs that were a staple in newspapers like the *Daily News*.¹¹⁵ He explains how newspaper editors and reporters use an “inverted pyramid”¹¹⁶ in their writing style to attack readership with the most horrible elements of a news story. The assumption was that this practice offered more objectivity than writers’ subjectivity of an event.¹¹⁷

Similarly, Steven J. Mexal, a professor of English and journalism, found that news journalists are particularly guilty of using this practice in reporting crime. News reports of crime often contain the bulk of sensationalism in contemporary newspapers. He found that newspapers were not informing the public but allowing the reading public to be confronted with societal issues. Issues of crime utilized framing practices with pictures and keywords in their reporting language and developed into a modern form of sensationalism. Mexal explores George Juergen's three dimensions of sensationalism: emphasis on personalities, preference for trivial over important news, and the use of colloquial personal language.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Ibid., 5

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 12

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 105

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 114

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 114

¹¹⁸ Stephan J. Mexal, “The Roots of Wilding” Black Literary Naturalism, The Language of Wilderness, and Hip Hop in the Central Park Jogger Rape” *African American Review*. 46, no. 1, (Spring 2013) 5

In reviewing articles written during the 1980s, he recognizes that Black people, especially Black culture, began to be perceived as a threat to American culture. The newspapers heightened this phenomenon by repeatedly positioning the Central Park jogger rape case within the contextual parameters of race, sex, class, and culture. Adding to Burns' argument, Mexal states that the use of animalistic language such as "savage and wild"¹¹⁹ in newspaper accounts influenced the public by their implications that there was, in fact, a crisis. This was not just how the journalist envisioned the reported details of the crime, but also how the public would understand the severity of the crime. It was also in how the suspects would envision themselves in their imagination.¹²⁰ He also questioned if the young suspects ever actually stated that they were "wilding," or did a member of the "gatekeeping" law enforcement and journalists assume a creative license in attributing the word to the youths.¹²¹

Prior to Sacco and Stevens, Kirk Johnson, a senior policy analyst at the Maryland Public Policy Institute, used a socio-economic lens to determine that since the media is often viewed as a public defense of official state abuses and have been celebrated for its investigative integrity, the question arises if the editors have contributed to Black male participation in crimes, through biases and newspaper misrepresentations while helping to destroy the Black community's social and economic advancement. The public perceives news reporting as objective and factual, although it uses "separatism standards" of subjectivity in reporting crimes involving Black males.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 104

¹²⁰ Ibid., 105

¹²¹ Ibid., 106

¹²² Kirk A. Johnson, "Objective News and Other Myths. The Poisoning of Young Black Minds," *The Journal of Negro Education*. Vol. 60, No.3 (Summer, 1991) 328

In referencing the CP5 as an example, Johnson comprehensively reviews the news coverage and what variables determined newsworthiness, particularly in White-owned newspapers. He states that the newsworthiness was based on the value of the incident that confirmed and fueled racial and sociology—economic stereotypical implications and attributes of race and class. In his study of articles published in Boston newspapers, Johnson found that the White-owned and printed newspapers “reinforced negative stereotypes of violence, crime and family issues.” Black-owned newspapers combined the same types of stories with news that depicted advancement in community development and social relations.¹²³ White-owned newspapers portrayed themselves as charitable public institutions, while they continued to present Blacks with racialized assumptions without underlining race as a significant social issue.¹²⁴ Clearly, “the news is a product of subjective as well as objective decisions.”¹²⁵ News reporters simultaneously write articles informing the public about the news while providing references to old issues and giving opinions to illustrate, which they refer to as normal or abnormal, using words that symbolize their preferences.

Johnson further argues that news reporting is an art, crafted by a reaction to incite or encourage the reader to adopt or support their personal judgments, mood, and feelings. Often these same immediate feelings cross over into race and class, eventually evolving into distorted reporting of an episode. This leads to determining what newsworthiness is, how the news is reported, and how the report’s subjects are represented. This latent confirmation of personal or institutional assumptions helps to solidify subjective news reporting.¹²⁶ He concludes that the

¹²³ Ibid., 329

¹²⁴ Ibid., 330

¹²⁵ Ibid., 330

¹²⁶ Ibid., 331

news has a widespread influence on race relations in America through its implied and explicit value judgments, subjective news reporting, reinforcements of stereotypes, and social misrepresentations of Blacks, and the Black community's lack of challenge allows racial divides to continue.¹²⁷

In fact, the media has constantly manifested skepticism in society by creating a fear of Black people, portraying them as dysfunctional within and to the social order. The media's use of prejudicial and stereotypical descriptions of Blacks was unearned, insulting cultural assumptions, and that these are the sentiments of the reporters and the media's producers. Eric Deggan, a journalist and media analyst, argues that the primary news network practices are developed to appease their predominately White male consumers.¹²⁸ To illustrate this, he reviews the geographic locations of the most significant portion of viewers of the Fox News channel. He reveals that most of their viewers live in rural areas and rely heavily on the networks' interpretations of Black culture and society. These findings also indicate that many of these individuals have had limited personal interactions with Black people, further allowing their and others' perceived and imagined stereotypes to be accepted as factual and embedded in their minds.

Writing from his work experiences as a media critic for major media corporations like *The Huffington Post*, Deggans contends that despite the Fox Network Channel being a televised program, the Fox conglomerate also owns several newspapers that frequently portray racial misrepresentation of out-of-control lawless Blacks people. In this way, the media can influence the public by strategically focusing on cases involving Black people and crime, ultimately

¹²⁷ Ibid., 339

¹²⁸ Eric Deggans, *"Race-Baiter" How the media welds dangerous words to divide a nation*, (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 77

influencing public policy regarding the lives of this less politically powerful group by the dominant White group. In owning several media venues, such as print and televised technology, the producers can exaggerate stereotypes to a broader audience and further exploit other racial groups.¹²⁹ One major concern arising from the media's capacity and practices to exaggerate is the public fascination with crime and justice stories. The news media sources each engage in “profit-driven journalism”¹³⁰ that is mostly racially biased, based on the social constructs of American culture.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 85

¹³⁰ Ibid., 85

1. The Newspaper's Historical Misrepresentation of Black Masculinity as a Violent Threat to American Society

A. Newspaper narratives historically misrepresent Black males.

*"This is the press, an irresponsible press...If you aren't careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed and loving the people who are doing the oppressing."*¹³¹

In his work reviewing early film animation, Christopher Lehman, a professor of ethnic studies, argues that Black male representation has been traditionally produced with anthropomorphic animals to portray an image of animalistic creatures. This was based on many ethnic stereotypes of Blacks. He contends that most immigrant groups suffered this type of social attack upon entering America; however, Black Americans native to the United States were primarily and continually targeted with representations that "belittled, desexualized, infantilized and ultimately dehumanized" them to appeal and pleasure mainstream racist White audiences.¹³² This can only be understood if there is knowledge of whom the newspaper's intended audience is and what ideology the news source represented. News reporting usually represents the social, economic, and political ideals of its producers and its target audience--in other words, the dominant social group.¹³³

¹³¹ George Brietman, "*Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*" speech at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem; December 13, 1964 (New York: Grove Weidenfeld) 93

¹³² Christopher P. Lehman, *The Colored Cartoon: Black Representation in American Animated Short Films 1907- 1954* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press; 2007)

¹³³ Robert Fowler, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* (London, Routledge, 1991). 2

Robert Fowler, a linguistics professor and author of *Language in the News*, argues that authors who write news stories write with their ideology based on their own experiences; their stance is mainly a product of their society.¹³⁴ News media often reflects the values and expressions of the social order, its members, and those that are in control or are most powerful. Another critical point is that before the turn of the twenty-first century and long after Wells reported her concerns on this type of rhetoric, she and others continued to be ignored because most of the public was influenced socially by the media. The newspaper constructs events, episodes, and individuals: “It is a creation of a journalistic process.”¹³⁵ American social relationships are class-based, sexually rooted, and racially divided economically and politically.

Fowler found in his review of British and American newspapers that the biases and racial focuses in the media are centered on the media’s economic values. Fowler claims that news is made, and stereotypes are another socially constructed image. These are constructed categories that are referenced to understand others, and the news media contributes to our process of that understanding by reiterating racially stereotypical categories. Race issues in the media sell, and issues associated with the dominant group's ideological perspectives increase profits for media producers. Fowler notes that news reports containing primitive animalistic words such as “wilding” offered to the public an association that the suspects possessed a savage, uncivilized nature. As Mexal would later state, incorporating elements of the new rap music verbiage (rhythm and poetry), coupled with the nature of the crime, and the fact that the crime took place in a park, modeled as a pristine landscape of nature, only exaggerated the tropes of

¹³⁴ Ibid., 4

¹³⁵ Ibid., 12

race and class as the underlined implications.¹³⁶ There are conflicts of objectivity, stereotypes, and relying on official sources in reporting the news, especially regarding Blacks.

Moreover, in *The White Press and Black America*, professor of journalism Carolyn Martindale refers to the news industry as the “fourth estate,”¹³⁷ a democratic assumption that is an element of the government that represents the people. It is to provide society with information to make well-informed and proper decisions on issues that are of public concern.¹³⁸ She compared the practices of newspapers to the issues identified in the Kenner Commissions report, underlining deficiencies that are still present in news reports focusing on race and crime¹³⁹ and highlighting the news reporting deficiencies and suggesting how coverage of Blacks could improve.¹⁴⁰

Martindale states that journalists are influenced first by their colleagues and supervisors, then by the desire for acceptance and reward. Usually, considerations relating to social responsibility are separate from how a reporter reports the news or with which intent his or her stories are stated.¹⁴¹ Looking at previous studies of British and American newspapers that compared the two explains that color prejudice is exhibited in both. However, the rationale varies between the two countries. In British newspapers, race is “characterized” by White superiority;

¹³⁶ Mexal, *The Roots of Wilding*, 103

¹³⁷ Martindale, Carolyn, *The White Press and Black America* (Conn, Greenwood Press, 1986) 15

¹³⁸ Ibid., 15

¹³⁹ Ibid. 3; The Kerner Commission Report were the findings and recommendations of a federal report conducted to review riots and disorders that took place during the summer of 1967. On The Media and Race Relations states that the “white press”— a press that repeatedly, if unconsciously, reflects the biases, the paternalism, the in difference of white America. This maybe understandable, but it is not excusable in an institution that has the mission to inform and educate the whole of our society.”

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 10

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 21

in American newspapers, race is justification for White supremacy. Prejudice against Blacks in America and American newspapers is an artifact of American culture.¹⁴² Newspapers have historically championed themselves as “community commandos”¹⁴³ through sensationalism and or hysteria by reporting usually fabricated concerns to appeal to their readership, thus forming a psychological relationship with their readers and public policymakers. This resolve can be a responsive or proactive relationship that the media believes is right to reiterate and highlight the values and needs of their audience. Or, to put it differently, the felt needs of their readership.

B. The language to promote Fear in news reports.

John E. Richardson, a professor in communications and media studies, argues that the media produces stories full of sensationalism and sentimentality that will evoke one or both reactions based on the media’s reporting practices.¹⁴⁴ Richardson finds in his review of print media that specific words such as “scum, hooligans, lowlife and ‘scum of our society’ “were often chosen to mark out and represent the guilty as being different to US.”¹⁴⁵ Journalistic practices such as this can very quickly promote ‘vigilantism’ and the sense of public duty for the readership to take action. Many newspapers' front pages feature mostly Black males. For example, on April 23, 1989, the *Daily News* front page read “Rape Suspect’s Jailhouse Boast: She Wasn’t Nothing” beside a photo of Antron McCray at the police station. Images framed with headlines such as this are clear demonstrations of implicit racism and criminality, thereby creating an association in the public consciousness of Blackness with crime and antisocial behaviors. The sensationalism intrigues the public, while the sentimentality forces the reader to

¹⁴² Ibid., 21

¹⁴³ John E. Richardson, *Analyzing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Palgrave Macmillan; 2007). 119

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 121

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 123

look backward at their past comfort zones, such as corporal punishment, discrimination, segregation, and containment of certain groups.

Looking at the language and word choices in news articles concerning race and crime, Richardson finds phrases to describe groups, events, and places. These practices by journalists were found to intentionally direct the public attention and public opinion, and if not a specific public response, then an affirmation of using stereotypes. Therefore, an ad appealing to a modern-day lynching in the Central Park jogger case could be circulated and disseminated into the public sphere without repercussions.

Christopher Johnston and Brandon Bartels, both political scientists, reviewed the media's role in influencing how the public perceived the judicial system. They defined the media's influence within two categories and distinguish their medium output.¹⁴⁶ The "Sensationalist" (radio and cable television) and "Sober" (newspapers and News networks) are methods of the media that are disseminated differently and those that are exposed react differently to the news that they receive.¹⁴⁷ These two categories are further directed into sub-groupings of "diffuse" (spread out) and "specific" (more defined) to determine the "sophistication" of the audience.¹⁴⁸ Individuals described as less sophisticated (local persons) were less responsive to the media. This becomes the basis for media sensationalism to reach a broader, more sophisticated audience. In turn, this prompts negative attitudes towards the court's ability to "do the right thing,"¹⁴⁹ which pressures the courts to follow through on media-influenced public opinion.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Christopher D. Johnston and Brandon Bartels, "Sensationalism and Sobriety Differential Media Exposure and Attitudes Towards American Courts" *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 74. No. 2 Oxford University (2010)

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 266

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 268

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 273

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 276

As Mexal put forth, historically non-White persons have been perceived as individuals derived or extracted from a non-civilized “wild space.”¹⁵¹ In other words, most minorities, especially Blacks, were understood as savage inhabitants of the wilderness. Members of the White socio-economic hierarchy were to be viewed as the supreme civilized group.¹⁵² He found that historically, Blacks have been routinely characterized as thieves and rapists, and during the late twentieth century, that characterization also included Blacks being an “inauspicious predator.”¹⁵³ Kelly Welch, a professor in criminology, adds that the images of Blacks have been presented as more than just threatening.¹⁵⁴ Mexal found in 1989 that pre-existing fears about “race, class, gender, urbanity” and sex exacerbated the notion of youth, predominantly minority youth, marauding in the park. A park designed to simulate nature, a civilized natural landscape for a civilized society, was now being degraded by a sub-civilized group from the margins. This group was designated to represent the degradation of the marginalized minority generations.¹⁵⁵

Using objectivity in news reports was to seek out and “reveal, condemn and legitimize public opinions,”¹⁵⁶ whereas sensationalism was usually employed to attract the “socially homogeneous” elite readership.¹⁵⁷ However, the lack of objectivity made the use of subjective news reports possible. This practice allowed journalists and editors to report the news based on their values and give the newspapers considerable power to influence their readers instead of providing just the facts of a particular event. New York City’s racial and social history, coupled

¹⁵¹ Mexal, *The Roots of Wilding*, 110

¹⁵² Mexal., *The Roots of Wilding*. 110

¹⁵³ Ibid., 110

¹⁵⁴ Kelly Welch, “Black Criminal Stereotypes and Racial Profiling” *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 23, no. 3 (August 2007) 277

¹⁵⁵ Mexal., 109

¹⁵⁶ Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*. 7

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 5

with the newspapers' practices in the event known as the CP5 case,¹⁵⁸ became a sensation not just because it encompassed the usual complications of race, sex, and crime, but also a newfound cultural element.¹⁵⁹

The Central Park Jogger incident happened during the time that hip hop and rap music, a new phenomenon created by and for minority youth, began to gain popularity. It was misunderstood by older persons, especially within groups not considered minorities and in a city where African Americans were historically viewed through a derogatory political, social, and economical lens. Reports from the police further mystified and generated aspersions from the previous generations because the accused were said to have claimed that their attack was motivated by the lyrics of a rap music song that personified "wilding."¹⁶⁰ To the larger public, outside of the cultural parameters of the suspects, "wilding" was unfamiliar and symbolized uncontrolled behavior. The understanding of this new term "wilding...applied to the sort of horrific violence suffered ... [and]...seemed to radically reimagine ...an irrational, fundamentally savage ...violence without motive."¹⁶¹ Ironically, middle-class anxiety concerning the poor and "violent underclass" is why Central Park was created. The natural (park) landscape was believed to "promote good morals and good order." However, the park was created only to sustain White civility and civilization.¹⁶²

Initially, the park's landscape was home to approximately 1,600 unskilled labor immigrants and African Americans who were considered a "wild underclass" subsisting in the wilderness. The city officials displaced these individuals through eminent domain to create a

¹⁵⁸ Burns, *The Central Park Five*.

¹⁵⁹ Mexal., 101

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 101

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 102

¹⁶² Burns., 110

“civilized park.”¹⁶³ This can be interpreted as what Mexal and Burns refer to as the nexus of space and race to be understood as wilderness. The foundational myth associated with the park’s conception was that it would civilize the underclass’s behavior of lawlessness and savagery. The park’s design resembled the aristocratic major landscapes of the nineteenth century European estates. It was believed that the unfortunate would be civilized by experiencing a controlled conquered wilderness.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Ibid., 111

¹⁶⁴ Mexal, *Roots of Wilding*. 111; Burns, *Central Park*. 111

2. Sensationalized Crime Reporting: How Newspapers Use Keywords to Perpetuate Racial Divisions and Stereotypes

A. Sensationalism and Stereotypes

“If you don't read the newspaper, you're uninformed. If you read the newspaper, you're mis-informed.”¹⁶⁵

According to feminist historian Estelle Freeman in her article focusing on the intersection of race and sexuality, she highlights that newspapers have spread “brutal images of African American men accused of raping [W]hite women.”¹⁶⁶ This practice provided credence to the ideology of the White male as protector of White women against Black men and their primitive nature to rape. This has, in part, supported the illusion of the civilized White woman attacked by the uncivilized Black man in a truth-effect phenomenon. The wide publication of these often-false reports has proven to be an element in provoking public policy responses.¹⁶⁷

Furthermore, newspapers have only helped create these derogatory images and solidified stereotypes of the Black male as an animalistic being. This ideology has provided White males with a sense of entitlement in determining racial and social divides. This was achieved both physically and psychologically by way of lynching and the ability to control both Black men through fear of reprisals, and White women by controlling their bodies.¹⁶⁸ In *Crimes Which Startle and Horrify: Gender, Age, and The Racialization of Sexual Violence in White American*

¹⁶⁵ Unknown, originally thought to be a quote made by Mark Twain however, it has been determined that there is no proof that Mark Twain made the quote.

¹⁶⁶ Estelle B. Freeman, “Crime which startle and horrify”: Gender, Age, and the Racialization of Sexual Violence in White American Newspapers, 1870-1900” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, No. 3 (September 2011) 467

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 467

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 468

Newspapers, 1870-1900, Freeman states that the idea of “sexual violence rather than...factual accounts” were reported in many of the newspapers that she reviewed. The news reporting and coverage of these stated crimes were repulsive with “melodramatic,” explicit, and sometimes lurid scenes for the readers to envision if it was printed without an actual photo.¹⁶⁹

“Sensationalistic euphemism” was employed with keywords to generate empathy, sympathy, and other emotional and social responses from the readership. Keywords and phrases such as “fiendish outrage,” “brutal ravage,”¹⁷⁰ “horrifying,” “revolting crimes,” and “infamous outrage” were often used to describe the crime and the accused.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, the victims were described as precious, and the invasion of their bodies in the act of rape was a violation of the womanly possession that had been “wrestled from her.”¹⁷² This implied both force and a violent force; usually, these words suggest a violent response.¹⁷³ Freeman refers to this as a tactic of sensational entertainment in journalism. She argues that not all Black men were lynched but adds that White men faced lesser charges and punishment, mainly because the woman’s character or lineage defined the question of rape by White men. However, she found that Black men were overrepresented as reported rapists in crime news reports and depicted as natural predators. The term “rape” became associated with a “Negro” crime beginning in 19th-century newspapers.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 467

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 470

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 471

¹⁷² Ibid., 471

¹⁷³ Ibid., 471

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 472

B. Reinforcing Race Divisions

Elliot M. Rudwick, a professor of sociology, wrote in *Race Labeling and the Press* about the practice of using race indicators in reporting crime news to describe Black suspects, particularly in southern newspapers. Most interestingly, he found that a few non-southern state newspapers, such as *The New York Times* and the *New York Daily News*, also practiced these same behaviors. He argued that this practice often misled the public and encouraged readers to assume that Blacks have a higher rate of criminal behaviors and that race as an indicator in news reporting should only be used to provide details that aid in capturing a suspect.¹⁷⁵ Rudwick also found that many newspapers used race to create conflict and confusion, which too often evolved into a public panic targeted at a particular group to influence judicial and original interventions, thus likely motivating extra-legal social responses.¹⁷⁶

This type of outcome is often accomplished through sensationalist practices, especially involving sex crime news. In doing so, reporters constantly reaffirm racial stereotypes pre-established in each group concerning other racial or ethnic groups. What is most interesting is that in the newspapers Rudwick analyzed, he emphasized that this phenomenon was not just a southern practice but also a practice in many large northern metropolises, such as New York City. Rudwick states that the *New York Daily News* often “buried” their stories in racial details.¹⁷⁷ He contends that this journalistic behavior supposedly mirrors American social thoughts but may be more focused on the results of constructions of social influence, which often compound social disorder by inciting racial conflict.

¹⁷⁵ Elliot M. Rudwick, “Race Labelling and the Press” *The Journal of Negro Education* 31 no. 2 (Spring 1962) 177

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 178

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 177

Rudwick added that newspapers are central to how many Americans conduct and understand race relations. News reports influence how the public interprets, fears, or represses its response to issues instead of “deliberately trying to improve race relations.”¹⁷⁸ Since newspapers play a critical role in American racial and social relations, they should deliberately attempt to strengthen those relations. News reporting has a strong influence on how the public perceives others. It promotes attitudes and fears, while implying understanding on rationales that might otherwise be ignored.¹⁷⁹ Carolyn Martindale builds on Rudwick's argument in *The White Press and Black America* that race prejudice is endemic to American society. It often shifts paradigms depending on the local citizenry's time period, region, and social customs, and endorses the values of that specific greater society.¹⁸⁰ The news significantly shapes the public consciousness, understanding, and response to race. She found that the newspapers often encouraged hostility instead of understanding and acceptance of “others.”¹⁸¹ Blacks rarely are portrayed as a part of society that contributes or adheres to the values established within the primary cultural environment.¹⁸²

The information disseminated to the public and the images accompanying the reports are used to emphasize and stimulate a particular behavior that, in turn, pushes the creation of a public policy to address what is believed to be a public threat or concern. This imagined threat can sometimes cause the real issues or facts to be ignored, such as grievances against institutional responses and the frustration of the lack of resources available to their

¹⁷⁸ Carolyn Martindale, *The White Press and Black America* (Conn: Greenwood Press; 1986) 1

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 2

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 21

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 26

¹⁸² Ibid., 26

communities.¹⁸³ Martindale states that our racial culture responds more attentively to conflict and controversy, intersected by violence and the prominence of the individuals involved.¹⁸⁴ The journalistic values which perpetuate race distortion in news reporting is “objective”¹⁸⁵ by using the facts; however, newspapers mirror the society in which they operate and journalists often believe that they only present the facts, and this allows them to maintain that they are objective in their reporting.¹⁸⁶

However, Martindale and Rudwick contend that journalists are often more subjective in reporting the news based on their social environment and personal beliefs and experiences. Furthermore, Freeman’s work builds on Rudwick and Martindale, providing evidence to highlight the variations in newspaper accounts of Black and White male crime suspects. She accomplishes this by focusing on the details in news reports, the keywords used, and how the local community responded to the crime, suspects, and victims. Therefore, using keywords in newspaper accounts to describe Black men accused of crimes was often subjectively sensationalized. This is especially true if the reported victim was White.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 27

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 36

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 40

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 40

3. How New York City Newspapers' Historical Practices Shaped Racial Constructs and Perpetuated Racism in Public Psychology and the National Narrative

A. The Perpetual Racist Constructs of New York City Newspapers.

"Now no one can fault the conqueror for writing history the way he sees it, and certainly not for digesting human events and discovering their patterns according to his point of view. But we can fault him for not owning up to what his point of view is."¹⁸⁷

To fully understand prominent New York City newspapers and their complicity in applying the same practices of Southern states almost eighty years later, it is necessary to understand the history of the city's race relations. Historically, Jim Crow is commonly associated with southern states, but in recent years New York City is becoming increasingly recognized as a northern Jim Crow state. Most of the scholarship dedicated to Jim Crow omits issues and activities in northern states following the Reconstruction period. Its racial, legal, social, and cultural context has rarely included New York City and newspapers.

Since the nation's early years, New York City newspapers portrayed African Americans in the most derogatory social and linguistic terms they could. The minstrel show's Jim Crow character began its debut in London; however, it appears to have effectively supplanted itself not just in the American psyche or a city's social culture but in the culture of the reporting of the news.¹⁸⁸ Early newspapers helped catapult racial stereotypes portrayed on stage into the consciousness of its residents. Jim Crow achieved in New York City what it had in the southern

¹⁸⁷ Toni Morrison, *The Source of Self-Regard: Selected Essays, Speeches, and Meditations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Publishers; 2019) 44

¹⁸⁸ David N. Gellman and David Quigley, *Jim Crow in New York. A Documentary History of Race and Citizenship* (New York, New York University Press; 2003) 3

states; it became synonymous with the legalized racial separatism between Black and White residents.

Many of the city's newspapers began as penny presses that supported the politics, business, or commerce of slavery. However, in time, many newspapers made a point to focus on the news-gathering process instead of political beliefs and policies.¹⁸⁹ There was a rise in informational reporting, which usually possessed significant factual gaps primarily because of the reliance on "official sources." Marginalized people absent from politics and the business industry usually lacked presence in newspaper reports.¹⁹⁰

This is especially true for the city's Black population. Historians David Gellman and David Quigley found evidence in a review of reports during the Civil War in NYC that revealed Black voices were silenced, and their presence was ignored, except in cases of rumors that likened Blacks to criminality.¹⁹¹ *Jim Crow in New York: A Documentary History of Race and Citizenship* provides a thorough mapping of how the political, social, and economic elite struggled and wrestled throughout the city's history, first with slavery and then with the freedom of its (as referred to by the scholar) African American residents. This struggle included the editorial opinions, advertisements, and African American misrepresentational caricatures published in various newspapers before the Revolutionary War.¹⁹²

Gellman and Quigley posit that New York City is the most northern urban city that the American people equate with the ideals of freedom. A review of the city's history proves that the ideals and social practices toward Black residents aligned more with Southern states. The city's

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 33

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 34

¹⁹¹ Jacobs., *Race, Media, and the Crisis of Civil Society.*, 35

¹⁹² David N. Gellman and David Quigley, *Jim Crow in New York. A Documentary History of Race and Citizenship.* 36

allegiance to the South's institution of slavery and the forced marginalization of this group is documented by articles well within its most widely circulated and oldest newspaper.¹⁹³ They uncovered issues concerning slavery and its contentious discourse that were highly debated in American magazines and newspapers since the beginning of the New Nation and continued well after emancipation. Many of these debates centered on the fears of Black masculinity and racial stereotypes, with one pull quote from a northern Democrat saying "Black men would like nothing more than to subject white womenfolk their unbridled lust."¹⁹⁴

These newspapers circulated throughout the city and distributed the city's social, political, and economic knowledge to the greater public nationally. They served as a precursor for the entrenchment of nationally accepted racial policies, attitudes, understanding, and practices. As in the South, immediately after slavery, many Northerners adopted the ideology that particularly Black men were criminal, violent, and deviant. Most White people believed that Black people were "a danger to America greater and more insuperable than any..." other group in or coming to America in the nineteenth century.¹⁹⁵ A few years after the Civil War, Blackness and crime became synonymous with "racial inferiority and sexual deviance."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Ibid., 7

¹⁹⁴ Mia Bey, *The White Image in the Black Mind: African American Ideas About White People, 1830-1925*. (New York: Oxford University Press; 2000) 89

¹⁹⁵ Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and The Making of Modern Urban America*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 2010) 15

Peter W. Bardaglio in "Rape and the Law in the Old South: Calculated to excite Indignation in every heart," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 60. No. 4 Southern Historical Association (Nov. 1994) 752

Provides insight into the legal systems of the South before and after Emancipation regarding interracial rape cases.

¹⁹⁶ Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and The Making of Modern Urban America*. 3

Challenging the racialized crime discourses, in *In Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and The Making of Modern Urban America*, historian Khalil Gibran Muhammad argues that the ideology of African American criminology became the basis of racial violence, criminalization, and discrimination, beginning in the nineteenth century.¹⁹⁷ This ideology was widely accepted politically and disseminated socially through newspapers. Reviewing the shift in American crime statistics at the turn of the twentieth century, he finds that, unlike other groups, Black people could not shed their criminal pasts or racial category that undoubtedly identified them as criminals.¹⁹⁸

Muhammad builds nicely on the scholarship of Ida B. Wells's research and collections of statistics on the lynching of Black men accused of crimes of sexual assault on White women in *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*.¹⁹⁹ A nineteenth-century independent investigative journalist and educator, Wells composed her case studies by identifying several instances where Black men were used as scapegoats for crimes that they had not committed but were accused and lynched for regardless. Although Wells gathered her information and clues from various newspapers detailing the lynching of Black men, her efforts were never recognized by the dominant elite or politically powerful.²⁰⁰ Since these advertisements and articles were printed publicly, one must ask how and why this type of reporting was acceptable.

Both Muhammad and Freeman argue that the association of race, rape, and lynching appears after emancipation to limit social equality, but also race mixing and racial anxieties that

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 4

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 5

¹⁹⁹ Ida B. Wells. *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All its Phases* (Reprinted in the New York Age June 25, 1982) Kindle copy.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 61

excused lynching. At the same time, it deterred the notion of Black self-determination.²⁰¹

Furthermore, they add that the language used for White rapists in newspapers usually defined them as community outsiders, using terms such as tramps and hobos. If the accused were men of means, then the crimes of rape were described as seductions or debauchery.²⁰²

Racial constructs were created and presented in the Southern states and Northern presses utilizing racist, violent rhetoric. The press often voiced support for the lynching of Black men accused of raping White women.²⁰³ Freeman highlights sexual news headlines to provide examples of racialized rape accusations and vigilante mob violence emphatically reported by newspapers with racially violent, animalistic, and anger-provoking cliches.²⁰⁴ She suggests that the ideal rape victim was characterized as “a young, white woman who valiantly fought off”²⁰⁵ her attacker, risking her life to preserve her innocence to validate that her attack was non-consensual. The victim’s presence as passive helped her appear as an actual victim.²⁰⁶ Then and now, newspapers reported descriptions of the White female victim using words such as “respectable” and that they came from a “good family.” Newspaper reporters presented these women as chaste victims. The images portrayed White women as especially vulnerable outside of the home or when no White males were available, particularly if the accused was a Black male.²⁰⁷ Freeman states that in this way, the newspapers’ rape narratives added gender to race. As an example, on April 24, 1989, a *New York Times* article’s headline read “Official Says Youth Admit Role in Attack” of the Central Park jogger. This article, like so many others printed

²⁰¹ Freeman, “Crimes which startle and horrify.” 473

²⁰² Ibid., 478

²⁰³ Ibid., 480

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 482

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 483

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 483

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 484

about the rape, repeatedly described the victim as a young woman and investment banker. Newspapers have historically associated Black men and Black women with rape and promiscuity, which have been used to justify White supremacy. The press helped construct and permeate the violent Black male rapist of White women into the consciousness of the American public and the American historical memory.²⁰⁸

B. Black Masculinity, Criminality, and Culture

Historian Randall Kennedy focuses his study on reviewing the history of African American criminology and its precepts to Black masculinity as a historical national antagonist. He questions America's racialized legal discrimination, conflict, and racial fiction by highlighting historical cases such as the Scottsboro Boys.²⁰⁹ Blacks are characterized as “mendacious” inherently, which he argued had become a (trait) factor as a “legal disability” since slavery.²¹⁰

He states that many apologists have justified lynching Black men for raping White women with claims that the crime is especially heinous. It eliminated the accused from escaping what was deemed a just punishment.²¹¹ Kennedy maintains that Blacks before the Civil War and Reconstruction were not usually viewed as predators. Still, with the end of social control by enslavement, Blacks had become as they were once considered before slavery: primitive, uncontrollable, and criminal. Black men were portrayed as preying with a sexual fiendish lust for White womanhood. “The claims that a negro had raped a white woman... represented the most

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 497

²⁰⁹ Randall Kennedy, *Race, Crime and the Law* (New York: Vintage Books Inc.; 1997) xii

²¹⁰ Ibid., 37

²¹¹ Ibid., 45

emotionally potent cause” of lynching. Kennedy contends that lynching based on interracial sex crimes is one of American history's most racially uninterrupted memories.²¹²

On the other hand, historian Ibram Kendi refers to Ida B. Wells’s argument that White men were “shielding” themselves behind White women’s honor for lynching Black men, whom they claimed had raped White women.²¹³ He found that newspapers customarily portrayed Blacks as criminals even if they were victims. In addition, White criminals were often depicted as victims concerning crimes against Blacks.²¹⁴ Equally important, he found that regarding the Central Park jogger case, the media’s purported theory that rap music lyrics motivated the teens involved into committing the crime.

What is more, Black criminal masculinity now included culture intertwined with race, gender, and sexuality. Rhetoric and cultural studies professor Bryan McCann analyzed rap music in *The Mark of Criminality: Rhetoric, Race, and Gangster Rap in the War on Crime*. He looks at the racialized discourse which has associated criminality with Black males and the assumptions of the dominant political and cultural representations of Blackness that have been proliferated with criminology in American culture. He presents examples of several cases of crimes that were committed by White victims themselves, who fabricated details about Black male suspects.²¹⁵ Due to the initial mainstream’s resistance to rap culture, these individuals (reporters) were able to further manipulate the fears of the public by inferring that rap music and Blackness were synonymous. Subsequently, the media presented Black male criminology as linked to rap songs

²¹² Ibid., 47

²¹³ Ibram Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racists Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books; 2016) 275

²¹⁴ Ibid., 314

²¹⁵ Bryan J. McCann, *The Mark of Criminality: Rhetoric, Race, and Gangsta Rap in the War on Crime Era* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press; 2017) 2

to the mainstream that already held misconceptions and was confused, resistant, and fearful of the new genres' public.

This allowed for the mainstream hyperbolic public imagery of Black criminality to continue to permeate our public psychology and media discourses concerning race representation.²¹⁶ McCann argues that it is necessary to understand the ideology of how and why rap music is believed to represent Black life and culture, as opposed to an individual Black expression. This was particularly important when considering the case of the Central Park jogger because the media alluded to the public that the suspects related the crime to a rap song's lyrics.²¹⁷ The rhetorical discourses that prevailed during the late 1980s regarding rap music created a new "racialized moral panic" of perceived threats, sensationalistic fear, and surveillance, adding the need to increase judicial confinement, particularly of Black males.²¹⁸ As the voice of social, economic, and political oppression for many young Black males, rap became further associated with crime and "wildly" uncontrollable.²¹⁹

Historians Wells, Kennedy, Muhammad, and Kendi provide a path toward understanding how race, crime, sex, gender, culture, and the law have formed recent negative results for Black masculinity. Using a comparative content analysis of newspaper articles from 1983-1990, Gregg Barak, Paul Leighton, and Allison Cotton found that with other musical genres, newspapers used no threatening photos of performers. This gave readers the impression that cultural genres such as rock and roll sought to incorporate and assimilate into the present culture.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 4

²¹⁷ Ibid., 15

²¹⁸ Ibid., 16

²¹⁹ Gregg Barak, Paul Leighton and Allison Cotton, *Class, Race, Gender and Crime: The Social Realities of Justice in America* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield; 2015) 58

However, sociologists Crystal Kelly and Scott Appleroth found in their studies regarding rap music that the genre was framed in newspapers as breaking totally from conventional practices. It was deeply tied in narration and images as a racialized urban cultural expression that resisted assimilation and used its own “semantic disorder.” Its performers were usually presented as aggressive in posture, appearance, attitude, and language and associated with lawlessness.²²⁰ Their findings revealed that *The New York Times* articles constantly linked rap music to violence, crime, and Black youth with headlines such as, “Have Rap Concerts Become Inextricably Linked to Violence.”²²¹ In addition to the *Newsweek* magazine article “America’s Slide into the Sewer”²²² that unapologetically linked rap music to the Central Park Jogger Rape Case in 1989²²³ and young Black males²²⁴ with animals and the wilderness as we can imagine it.

One main problem with this conceptualized theory is that Central Park has never been known to allow the “unfortunate”²²⁵ to associate or experience its “freedom of space.”²²⁶ Stephen J. Mexal writes that the park’s very existence represented “idyllic, liberal-republican selfhood” that “equated civilized nature” with that same selfhood and perceived security in opposition to those on the margin and their culture. Using the word *wilding* not only positioned the youth to be represented in animalistic terms but also as a cultural threat against an assumed supreme White civilized hierarchy and not merely a White woman as a rape victim.²²⁷

²²⁰ Crystal Kelly and Scott Appleroth, “Rap, Race and the Re-production of Boundaries” *Sociological Perspectives* 56. No. 3 Sage Publications, Inc. (Fall 2013) 307

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 312

²²² *Ibid.*, 313

²²³ *Ibid.*, 313

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 314

²²⁵ Mexal., “*The Roots of Wilding.*”, 111

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 111

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 112

Conducting a cultural review of the language used in the newspapers provided evidence of rap music's threat to the political capital and culture of White America. This music genre simultaneously fueled White people's social assumptions and provided a public platform for young marginalized Black youth to express their discontent with public policies.²²⁸ Likewise, he echoes Muhammad regarding the importance of Black criminology in forming the urban city space, equating Black masculinity with representations of violence and deviant sexuality. This new aspect further contributes to and allows the media to present Black males as more than capable of crime and perpetually culpable.²²⁹

Kelly and Appleroth also explored the relationship between systemic and social boundaries, identifying that music often serves many roles within the social order, including a sub-cultural resistance to a status quota. Music can utilize a symbolic force to establish and sustain shared identities. The authors expound on the Durkheim theory of "informative insights" on religion, asserting that like religion, music styles often create contention between groups within and outside of society's margins.²³⁰ Music's potential to challenge pre-established cultural boundaries often creates societal problems if the style is perceived as non-traditional or unconventional. They maintain that the concepts accompanying traditional parameters are usually objectively personal, like rap music.

Like many other genres, rap music received applause from its marginalized intended audience and criticism and censure by the "boarding social hierarchy."²³¹ One significant difference applied to the genre of rap that was not imposed on other genres in the past, such as

²²⁸ McCann, *The Mark of Criminality*., 16

²²⁹ Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*., 114

²³⁰ Scott Appleroth, *Rap, Race and Reproduction of Boundaries*. 301

²³¹ Ibid., 302

jazz, rock and roll, and rhythm and blues, is that rap music's lyrics and understanding of its culture were intrinsically woven and constructed to denote race. Blackness, Black culture, Black communities, Black lifestyles, and Black representational aesthetics were further racialized by the greater social understanding of rap music.²³²

Many Black males will engage in unconventional socialization settings such as “the street” to congregate for recreation. This is especially prevalent in urban areas where these youth lack economic or traditional association with public and semi-public institutions.²³³ This is a result of the historical racial discrimination that has prevented them from accessing adequate education and how current policies, such as the war on drugs, impact their daily lives. The war on poverty and the war on crime has targeted them during contemporary times.²³⁴ Sociologist William Oliver, in his study *The Streets: An Alternative Black Male Socialization Institution*, argues that this racialized and systematic oppression forces Black males to seek and adopt a socially constructed identity for their masculinity characterized by sex, violence, and crime. He believes this drives the pursuit of Black males' dependence on “street culture” to endow them with personal, social, and economic significance.²³⁵ He agrees with the claims made by McCann that for many Black males, “street culture” has been understood as an aspect within the African American culture that can signify a rite of passage. Thus, “the streets” sometimes support Black males psychologically and socially.²³⁶

²³² Ibid., 302

²³³ William Oliver, “The Streets: An Alternative Black Male Socialization,” *Institution Journal of Black Studies* 36. No. 6 Sage Publication (2006) 919

²³⁴ Ibid., 920

²³⁵ Ibid., 921

²³⁶ Ibid., 922

C. Newspapers, Public Psychology, and the National Narrative

The origins and history of news media's racial constructs must be examined to fully grasp how these racial constructs were established and persisted into contemporary times. *News For All The People*, written by two retired journalists, provides a cultural and historical perspective on the history of news media and its unethical practices, such as fomenting racial violence²³⁷ and permeating segregation in the United States.²³⁸ By chronicling the beginnings of various print newspapers, the team conducted an in-depth look at the writers, the owners, and the consumers, providing insight into a lesser known and told part of the American experience.

From its beginning, the authors contend that the media has significantly influenced the public mind and substantially impacted political powers and public policymakers. As influential shapers in public opinion, the newspapers have been central in American race relations. During the nineteenth century, many newspaper creators and founders were either once slaveholders, supporters of the slave industry, or believed in the racial hierarchy just like many of the Founding Fathers. Thus, racialized reporting or violent retribution pleas printed in the newspapers were commonplace and a widely used practice for a country attempting to carve out its own supreme identity.

The connections formed between the media and the United States' government allowed the newspapers to create and continue racial biases expressively. This work focuses on the governmental ideology concerning minorities, and those connections to the practices of the media that were often consciously misinforming and misdirecting the public's race-based assumptions. These newspapers and reporters usually wrote with a subjective perspective based

²³⁷ Juan Gonzales and Joseph Torres, *News For All The People: The Epic Story of Race and The American Media* (Brooklyn; Verso; 2011) 4

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3

on their education, personal experiences, and social backgrounds. The media's stereotypes often negatively affected the targeted groups, especially Blacks.²³⁹ As the primary and constantly only information outlet during various periods, they (media), with the government, supported each other's agendas by constructing rationales for racial prejudices that they simultaneously engineered and projected. The union between media outlets and the government ensured that the country's narrative would exclude other groups and solidify White supremacy as the identity to be crafted into a national narrative.

While Torres and Gonzales offer historical and generalized notions of the newspaper's practices, Natalie Byfield adds to their findings with her study. Utilizing her personal experience as a journalist during the time of the Central Park Case, coupled with her voice as a sociologist, Byfield reflects on her role and the role of other media professionals, using an autoethnographic lens to view the portrayals of the accused and victim. She reviews how the young Black males were racially constructed as violators of the victim's idealized White womanhood. She argues that race is historically symbiotic to the growth of the country's capitalistic ideals and the American media.

In providing information concerning the development of sociolinguistics, Byfield offers an opportunity for readers to grasp an understanding of the components and content language of a news story. Additionally, the author looks to identify how many news stories were developed and marked as "internal and external"²⁴⁰ realities, which are then meted out to the public. Following Luhman's methodological process of "observing the observer," she critically reviews the words that reporters chose in writing their articles.

²³⁹ Ibid., 4

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 178

4. Media's Influence on Collective Memory: Shaping Society's Responses to Race, Sex, and Crime

“The most tragic error into which older people can fall is one that is common among educators and politicians. It is to use youth as scapegoats for the sins of their elders.”²⁴¹

A. Priming the public

Jacobs contends that focusing on narrative communication allows for defining and interpreting its structural components. First is the plot, which is the selection and evaluation of an event. It compares narrative rationale, the collective memory of past events, and the ability to influence an understanding of the event. This relationship can be positive for some and negative for others, such as newspaper articles referencing the Scottsboro rape case.²⁴² Next are the characters. Newspaper narrators are usually indicative of one of the characters in the story. The narrators will often seek to champion a character they have aligned with and create a disparage in the public psychology of the “others.”²⁴³ Using keywords in a narrative representation such as dangerous, out of control, and irrational usually targets a presumed enemy to be viewed and understood as perverse and against the established cultural structure.²⁴⁴ A semiotic discourse system evaluates and determines those identified in the narrative as social enemies. Finally, the genre is the influencing factors that create a relationship between the narrator, character, and audience concerning a particular event.

²⁴¹ Shirley Chisholm, *Unbought and Unbossed* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers; 1970)

²⁴² Jacobs. *Race, Media and Civil Society*., 10

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 11

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11

Previously, Martindale stated that framing is employed at each part of printing a news article based on what is covered and how much space, time, facts, and frequency of a story's attributes should be published. These are subjective decisions that direct the news reports and influence the readership.²⁴⁵ Since most news reports lack neutrality, it allows "a reporter to produce a story that is factually accurate, and sound objective, and give the reader an entirely erroneous impression."²⁴⁶ This problem is believed to be caused by "the over reliance"²⁴⁷ on official sources, especially during heightened conflicts that involved race and crime. This is also the case in reporting on class and crime issues. The police are considered the public's safety establishment, which is assumed to be a reliable source of information and understanding.

Blacks are portrayed in newspapers more often than Whites as criminals in the North and South. In the South, Blacks accused of sex crimes were front-page stories regardless of whether the crime was a local incident. The newspapers usually emphasized the conflict, implying that Blacks were a hazardous societal element.²⁴⁸ These images become deeply embedded as the popular lore²⁴⁹ of Black masculinity. Blacks are characterized as savages "synonymous for sexual prowess, dangerous and impulsiveness."²⁵⁰ With the continued imagery accompanying stereotypes, newspapers prevent positive race relations and encourage racial violence. Journalists rarely seek opportunities to counter racial stereotypes and objectively report on Blacks accused

²⁴⁵ Martindale. *The White Press and Black America*. 41

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 42

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 42

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 56

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 56

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 57

of crimes.²⁵¹ Martindale concludes that newspapers wielding power create more divisiveness and “interracial hostility” than positively strengthen the social climate in American society.²⁵²

Similarly, a recent study conducted by journalist Vanessa Garcia and crime writer Samantha Ackerson has shown that in addition to influencing the public with sensationalized literary reports of crime, the media creators also provide their perception and interpretation of a “symbolic reality”²⁵³ to the public. The understanding of reality is drawn from personal experiences, information from those we trust, and mostly the media we interact with. The symbolic realities in the news have politically, economically, commercially, and socially defined assailants as Black, male, violent, and sexually deviant, which has transformed into a social identity and social markers in the American consciousness and the American narrative.²⁵⁴ Sheila T. Murphy, a professor in communications, found in her 1998 study *The Impact of Factual versus Fictional Media Portrayals on Cultural Stereotypes*, that fictional information such as stereotypes in newspapers influences how we judge others. Looking at the O.J. Simpson Trial, she highlights how subliminal racist pictures were used to influence the case and force the reader to question instead of reconsider what they interpreted as factual. Murphy explains that this is “perceptual baggage” understood by personal experiences, desires, and culturally shaped beliefs.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ Ibid., 58

²⁵² Ibid., 49

²⁵³ Vanessa Garcia and Samantha G. Ackerson, *Crime, Media and Reality: Examining Mixed Messages About Crime and Justice in Popular Media* (Colorado, Rowman and Littlefield, 2018) 21

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 33

²⁵⁵ Sheila T. Murphy, “The Impact of Factual Versus Fictional Media Portrayals on Cultural Stereotypes.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. The Future of Fact. Vol. 560 (Nov. 1998) 166

Significantly, Jennifer Eberhardt, a psychologist that works with police departments educating officers on how biases affect our society, especially in the criminal justice system, found that most law enforcements operate implicitly and explicitly based on information that is media-created. According to Eberhardt, biases are based on and shaped chiefly by the stereotypes people face daily. She reveals that during her college years, she had been stopped and arrested without committing a crime, probably because she was Black. She offers many personal and professional narratives as examples of biases based on stereotypes and how they have become a significant problem in culture. The acceptance of stereotypes or the rejection of stereotypes is usually based on who people are or are not. These fictional cultural generalizations will continue to be believed factual by the public until their beliefs are motivated to change. This motivation must be initiated by a source that the public believes is accurate, such as the newspapers.²⁵⁶

Eberhardt agrees with Khalil Gibran Muhammad²⁵⁷ that Blackness is “statistically and stereotypically”²⁵⁸ intertwined with crime and has become a visible marker of criminality to many.²⁵⁹ She adds that, based on her research, she found, “[In] cases involving White victims, the more stereotypically Black the defendant is perceived to be, the more likely it is that the suspect will receive the death penalty.”²⁶⁰ The cultural biases endemic to American culture have been long-rooted and have lasting effects on how race and crime are addressed. These biases also overflow into the criminal justice system's policies and practices.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 170

²⁵⁷ Muhammad. *The Condemnation of Blackness.*, 5

²⁵⁸ Jennifer Eberhardt, *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice that Shapes What We See, Think and Do* (New York, Penguin; 2019) 113

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 112

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 128

Susan Dente Ross and Paul Lester define the role of the media as one that serves as a medium or message of a subject or an object that “informs, expresses, exchanges and persuades beliefs, views, attitudes, and emotions.”²⁶¹ That is to say, the media and news reports provide images as an accent to the narratives they wish to convey and have supported. *Images that Injure: Pictorial Stereotypes in the Media* supports previous scholarship that has argued the media provides conflicting and multiple effects on society.²⁶² These contributors critically review stereotypical messages and devices used by the media to communicate ideologies to the public. It is a collection of images that intersect with race, memory, and identity discourse. In addition, it increases knowledge concerning how and why specific photos are used in the news to convey messages of human value and beliefs in human degeneration and racial hierarchy. The contributions of a legal scholar in media law and journalism with a communications professor add breadth to this study, given its expansive focus.²⁶³ This study adds to Fowler’s earlier study that the media is not neutral; it is a discourse practiced to intervene with facts to construct a social reality. It reflects the ideology and expressions of the writer’s and reader’s emotional experience and mental understanding.

In a like manner, evidence from media and public affairs research, focused on the racial skews in news reporting conducted by Robert Entman and Andrew Rojecki, revealed an overrepresentation of Blacks as violent criminals. Race ideology and racial politics have become increasingly acceptable in the media recently. This study revealed that entertainment and advertising had harmed racial equality, and the media has not been challenged for their influence

²⁶¹ Susan Dente Ross and Paul Martin Lester, *Stereotypes, The Media and Photo Journalism in Images That Injure: Pictorial Stereotypes in the Media* (California, Praeger; 2011) 37

²⁶² Ibid 37

²⁶³ Fowler, *Language in the News.*, 4

on racial division. The media intentionally “tilts”²⁶⁴ crimes committed by Blacks in local news with racial messages interpreted as public threats. The visual images and textual constructs used usually evoke fears in public psychology and memory and arouse hysteria in public spaces.²⁶⁵

B. Influencing social justice

In supporting Rojecki’s claim, Welch states that the term “criminal predictor”²⁶⁶ has been used as a supplemental pronoun in describing young Black masculinity. Due to this and other historical racial euphemisms associated with young Black males, the American criminal justice system has nationalized its use of racial profiling and mass incarceration. Young Black males are overwhelmingly represented as a clear and present danger in American society. The public consciousness is ingrained with a perceived connection that links Black masculinity with criminality, so much so that Black racial identity had become synonymous with criminality. In American society, discussing a crime is theoretically like having a conversation about race. This is not a new phenomenon. Most Americans throughout history have believed that Blacks, male and female, are inherently criminal. The stereotyping of Black masculinity as a criminal began before emancipation and has continued.²⁶⁷

Professor of rhetoric and African American studies Tracey Owens Patton and professor of communication Julie Snyder-Yuly argue that the “mythological constructions of rape and race is an enduring legacy that shares an interdependence between race and criminal scapegoating.”²⁶⁸ In their study, Patton and Yuly focused on one case of false accusation of rape

²⁶⁴ Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; 2000) 78

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 70

²⁶⁶ Welch., “*Black Criminal Stereotypes and Racial Profiling*.” 276

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 277

²⁶⁸ Tracey Owens Patton and Julie Snyder-Yuly, “Any Four Black Men Will Do: Rape, Race, and the Ultimate Scapegoat” *Journal of Black Studies*. Vol. 37. No. 6 (July 2007) 861

involving a White female and four Black males to examine its impact on the community. They support the findings of Welch, Rojecki, Ross and Lester, Murphy, and Muhammad that the stereotypical portrayals in the news are usually skewed and serve to represent the character of the accused.²⁶⁹ Due to the racialized publicity in the newspapers about Black on white rape cases, those reports claimed that the Black males confessed, resulting in their murder or conviction. Often afterward, it would be discovered that they were innocent.²⁷⁰

Johnathan Markovitz argues that the social responses generated by the news have been historically formed by past struggles and social movements based on “racial spectacles.”²⁷¹ For his theory, we need only look to Wells’ *Southern Horrors*. Markovitz asserts that these images have become part of society's collective memory and shaped contemporary social identities. He refers to the use of visual images as racial spectacles, which shape popular understanding for some and collective memories for others of the social lives of the public and how each group views and responds to the other. These understandings and memories are usually not chosen by the individuals themselves but are instead imposed structured social identities assigned to groups. Viewing past political campaigns and exploring the origins of past social movements reveal that

Carol A. Stabile, *White Victims, Black Villains: Gender, Race, and Crime News in US Culture* (New York: Routledge; 2006) 168

Provides details about the beating of motorist Rodney King incident that sparked the Los Angeles race riot in 1991. King was pulled over during a highway traffic stop by a White husband and wife. Tim and Melanie Singer, California Highway Patrol Officers. Reportedly, when instructed to exit his vehicle, King “began to shake and gyrate his fanny in a sexually suggestive fashion.” The white female Patrol Officer experienced “a mixture of fear and offense” by King’s supposed sexual gyration. 168-169.

²⁶⁹ Tracey Owens Patton, *Any Four Black Men Will Do: Rape, Race, and the Ultimate Scapegoat*. 865

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 866

²⁷¹ Johnathan Markovitz, *Exploring the Myth of The Black Rapist: Collective Memory and the Scottsboro Nine in Racial Spectacles: Exploration in Media, Race and Justice*, (New York, Routledge; 2011) 3

the media often reconfigures the collective memory regarding race, sex, and crime, which impacts different groups and social relationships in society.²⁷²

In *Exploring the Myth of the Black Rapist: Collective Memory and the Scottsboro Nine*, Jonathan Markovitz found in his study of the collective memory that issues regarding race, sex, and crime have proven to be a large segment of the national identity establishment. With the Scottsboro Boys case in the 1930s, the reports about the individuals accused of the crime were described with words like "horrific black brute rapist"²⁷³ that were accompanied by White supremacists' narratives, echoing the nineteenth century. Markovitz argues that various newspaper headlines are evidence of the media's contribution to discrimination and stereotypes in the language. The racialized constructs of that memory alone have often determined how many contemporary groups have viewed subsequent high-profile cases involving race, sex, and crime, like the Central Park jogger case.

There have been countless reports of Black sexual assault criminals supposedly boasting about or admitting to their crime with no remorse before their lynching or legal execution. Newspapers reported the teens suspected in the Central Park crime were jovial, talking amongst themselves about the incident. Most disturbing, they were said to boast about their crime spree in unison. However, another study looked at prisoners serving time for rape and former prisoners considered immoral by society.²⁷⁴ They argue that the narratives about prisoners distinguish

²⁷² Ibid., 27

²⁷³ Ibid., 27

²⁷⁴ Lois Presser and Sveinung Sandberg, *Narrative Criminology, Understanding Stories of Crime* (New York, New York University Press; 2015) 55

between what the authors call “proper criminals”²⁷⁵ and “rapists,”²⁷⁶ and that this may be the basis of other harmful attitudes in civil society.

Lois Presser and Sveinung Sandberg, a sociologist and a criminologist, explore how these narratives concerning the teens accused in the Central Park rape case evolved. What is most interesting is that several widespread television crime shows frequently depict co-defendants in separate cells, unable to communicate with each other. This knowledge encompassed with the study suggests that not only was the possibility of the defendants bragging about their crime highly unlikely due to the culture within the prison system, but it would also have been extremely dangerous. Relying heavily on Foucault’s *Discipline and Punishment* (1995),²⁷⁷ they explore previous studies of prison hierarchy and prisoners determined to be “proper criminals and rapists.”²⁷⁸ Narrative criminology offers a valuable array of studies that interconnect culture and criminology. Although it does not exactly speak to this study's focus, it provides additional insights into new studies in criminology.²⁷⁹

C. Collective memory

Steve Herbert and Katherine Beckett, professors in law, sociology, and geography, assert that “banishment” is “archaic and primitive”²⁸⁰ and is used mainly as a political, social control mechanism.²⁸¹ It has been used in past societies and has resurfaced in contemporary times. They question how banishment is justified by the public and practiced. In addition, they look at

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 29

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 27

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 9

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 29

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 157

²⁸⁰ Kathrine Beckett and Steve Herbert, *Banished: The New Social Control in Urban America* (New York, Oxford University Press; 2009)

²⁸¹

specific groups that are generally targeted. They argue that “banishment”²⁸² is used to punish individuals believed to be criminal and deviant, leading to social separatism as an element of social disability.²⁸³ Katheryn K. Russell, a professor of criminology, found that Blacks are the most significantly delineated ethnic group when Americans think about crime or imagine criminality. She argues that the association of “Blackness and criminality are routinized”²⁸⁴ differently than with other ethnic groups. In her exploration of images and realities of a crime, she identifies how the newspapers racialized their portrayals of Black life, especially Black males.

Russell focuses her study on the relationship between Black males and the criminal justice system, and she analyzes the historical role of race in *The Color of Crime: Racial Hoaxes, White Fears, Black Protectionism, Police Harassment, and other Macro-aggressions* in the American justice system. Using widely circulated newspaper reports of crimes later discovered as racial hoaxes, she highlighted how Black males were traditionally reported as the culprits or suspects of the crime. The practice of Black males as subjects of criminal accusations is a frequent occurrence of law enforcement and non-Black victims. It allows newspapers to widely accept the reported facts and report them to their readers as a factual accounting of an episode.

Katherine Russell also found that this often creates hysteria, incites violence, and influences public responses that are often socially damaging, lawfully punitive, or used as rationale to support extra-legal measures like lynching. Her investigation of racial hoaxes, particularly involving interracial sex crimes and the public’s initial response, reveals that actions

²⁸²Ibid., 11

²⁸³ Ibid., 11

²⁸⁴ Katheryn K. Russell, *The Color of Crime: Racial Hoaxes, White Fears, Black Protectionism, Political Harassment, and Other Macro Aggressions* (New York, New York University Press; 1998) XIV

such as lynching were more about exerting White male masculinity than White feminine protection.²⁸⁵ In her review of the impact of interracial sex crime hoaxes using the Scottsboro case, she argues that in the newspaper accounts, the victims were reported as the “symbols of southern white womanhood.”²⁸⁶ It was later revealed that the nine supposed perpetrators were wrongfully accused and convicted; they were innocent teenagers who were incarcerated until adulthood.²⁸⁷

Additionally, neither the public nor the teens’ own community ever questioned or challenged the crime's details, the suspects' culpability, the investigation of law enforcement officials, or the language and practices of the newspapers. This may have resulted from both public perceptions of the crime and the community's collective memory. The newspapers gave readers a perception that crime was a social problem based on a social condition within the teens' community.²⁸⁸ Many news commentators still referred to these teens as “primitive and savages.”²⁸⁹ They insisted that they should be punished by death. The public “found the narrative(s) of gang rape by Black and Latino teenagers from Harlem so compelling,” and to add emphasis, news reporters often recalled to memory other cases involving race and rape.²⁹⁰ Psychologists Henry Roediger and Andrew DeSoto argue that collective memory can be facts,

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 21

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 79

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 79

²⁸⁸ Valerie J. Callanan, “Media Consumption, Perceptions of Crime Risk and Fear of Crime: Examining Race/Ethnic Differences” *Sociological Perspectives* Vol. 55, No.1 Sage Publications Inc. (Spring 2012) 94

²⁸⁹ Burns., *The Central Park Five.*, 234

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 170

interpretations, or remembrances of a group's past. It can also be how a group collectively forgets past painful memories.²⁹¹

Collective memory is “shared individual or personal memories and representations of the past including text, ceremonies and physical symbols such as monuments and memorials.”²⁹²

Christina Simko, a professor of sociology, found that scholars are beginning to highlight memories created by communities and focus on the traumas that that community has experienced. It investigates a group's complicated past concerning silence, denial, shame, regret, and widespread dissent to an event. This framework of the study is a combination of Durkheim’s theory and Halbwach’s theory, postulating that social power and solidarity and particular commemorative rites and rituals that recall to the conscience mind a shared grief or emotion make memories collective and represent the past in a social context that influences a group.²⁹³

Historian Paul Doolan focuses his study on what he has termed as “collective memory and unremembering.”²⁹⁴ He argues that collective memory is “mediated in symbolic representations,”²⁹⁵ and the trauma of that memory can be passed from generation to generation.

²⁹¹ Henry L. Roediger, III, and K. Andrew DeSoto, The Power of Collective Memory, What do Large groups of people remember and forget? *Scientific American* (June 28, 2016) Scientificamerican.com., Justin D. Levison, Forgotten Racial Equality: Implicit Bias, Decisionmaking, and Misremembering, *Duke Law Journal*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Duke School of Law, Nov. 2007)

²⁹² Christina Simko, *Definition of Collective Memory*, Oxford Bibliographies.com 9/30/2019., Alon Confino, Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 102, No. 5, (Oxford University Press: Dec. 1997)

²⁹³ Jan Assman and John Czaplicka, Collective Memory and Cultural Identity; *New German Critique Cultural History Cultural Studies*; (Duke University Press: Spring- Summer, 1995) 127. Amos Funkenstein, Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness, *History and Memory*, Vol.1, No.1. (Spring-Summer, Indiana University Press; 1989) 7.

²⁹⁴ Paul M. M. Doolan, *Collective Memory and Unremembering in Collective Memory and the Dutch East Indies: Unremembering Decolonization*; (Amsterdam University Press: 2021) 15.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15

It can also be a process of forgetting and concealment as unremembering.²⁹⁶ The newspapers deliberately produced images of the CP5 to resemble images of the Scottsboro suspects fifty years earlier. In doing so, Doolan states that in this manner, “the society itself seemingly ignores the memory of the event, their scars, their silences, and inarticulate utterances,”²⁹⁷ and become part of a painful unremembering. The silence from the community signaled the presence of shared traumatic experiences that had not been forgotten.²⁹⁸ This can also be viewed as “social forgetting or collective amnesia,” described by sociologist Larry Griffin in “Generations and Collective Memory” Revisited: Race, Region, and Memory of Civil Rights.”²⁹⁹ However, Elizabeth Cychosz adequately provides a rationale for the community’s non-action. Her study explores interpersonal and intercommunity relationships and finds that historical narratives highlight important events in a particular group's memory. She writes, "Collective Memory refers to how groups think about and find meaning in their history... [it is a] intersection between identity issues and debates over historical facts.”³⁰⁰ This selective history informs people about their group's past and the possible meanings of future actions.³⁰¹

Collective memory can also prohibit actions that may not be acceptable to a group or their needs, which are considered primary, thus limiting any collective action.³⁰² The individual past experiences and memories of events passed through generations that resulted in reprisals

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 15

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 18

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 18

²⁹⁹ Larry J. Griffin, "Generations and Collective Memory" Revisited: Race, Region, and Memory of Civil Rights” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Aug 2004) 544

³⁰⁰ Elizabeth Cychosz, "Collective Memories." *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: (Sept. 2016) 2

³⁰¹ Ibid., 4

³⁰² Ibid., 4

against the community at large may have affected the community's responses and the social justice that the teens received. Paul Kellstedt's study reinforced this process by explaining how the media has "a potential to affect public opinion in a variety of ways."³⁰³ He describes this practice as "priming," an artful practice of the newspapers to invoke its power to disseminate social learning, set public agendas, and motivate public policies regarding Black people.³⁰⁴ The media's language and practices ensured those teens' convictions before they entered a courtroom.

In her manuscript about the Central Park Five, Burns concludes that after the courts and the public realized that these young men had been wrongfully convicted, the media continued to refer to them as "beast, feral and animals,"³⁰⁵ especially since the victim was a successful White woman almost twice their age.³⁰⁶ Black and Latino males will continue to be defined by historical racial assumptions and characterized by stereotypes that resurface in the newspapers. Additionally, they will continue to be banished socially, politically, and racially as America's sexual deviants.

The purpose of this review is to identify, investigate, and examine the studies across disciplines that have focused on the newspapers as a historical agent in influencing the public on issues of Black masculinity and the suspicions of crime. The newspapers' racist portrayals and misrepresentation of Black males has repeatedly encouraged unfair social justice practices and policies. Much of the research found examined the historical origins and contemporary uses of the phenomena that intersect Black masculinity and criminality. It is clear from the research that there are a significant number of contributions to evaluate within the fields of media and social

³⁰³ Paul M. Kellstedt, *The Mass Media and The Dynamics of American Racial Attitudes* (New York: Cambridge University Press; 2003) 54

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 14

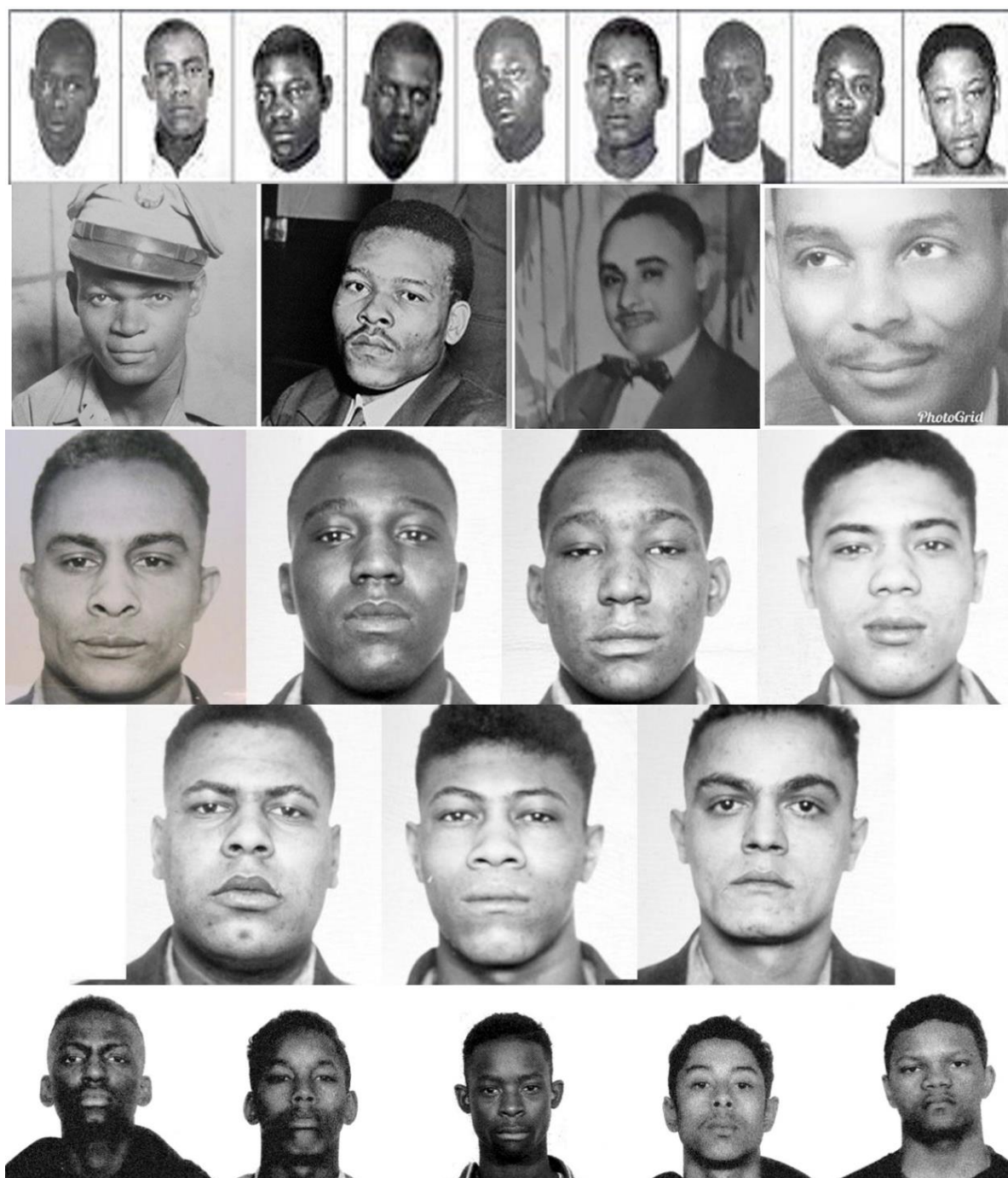
³⁰⁵ Burns, 236

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 236

sciences. However, most research fails to identify the role of newspapers as a historical contributor and actor in maintaining this phenomenon. It is vital to conduct historical and interdisciplinary studies on the role of newspapers as historical creators, navigators, and maintainers of stereotypes and racial issues in America.

“Off to the clink with this bitch ass cop
They gotta nigga locked like the dread on my head, jack
And if I try to fight back, well then I'm dead, black
I got the right to an attorney and to stay silent
They got the right to try to burn me if I play violent
I know the game so I just roll with the procedure
Illegal search and seizure, somethin that they're doin at their leisure
Down at the station, interrogation is takin place
Overcrowded jails but for me they're makin space
it's the whole black race that they're fuckin with
One For All and In God We Trust got me sent upstate
Who keeps them on a level that's minimum
That's the number one reason (They claimin' I'm a criminal) This time and day”³⁰⁷

³⁰⁷ Brand Nubian, “Claiming I’m a Criminal.” *In God We Trust*. 1993. www.Lyrics.com. Accessed Jan. 15, 2023.



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³⁰⁸ Adrienne Moses Ridley, Photo collage of newspaper prints Scottsboro Boys, Groveland Four, Martinsville Seven and Central Park Five.

Methodology

*“This is the press, an irresponsible press (....) If you aren’t careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.”*³⁰⁹

Situational Theory Conceptual Framework

Several factors contribute to the unequal social practices in America, including the misrepresentation of Black masculinity in the news. The news reporting practices and stereotypical attitudes disseminated continuously by New York City newspapers greatly impacted the Central Park jogger case. To make sense of how newspaper reports are a central factor contributing to public influence and public response by way of sentiment, understanding, social justice, and collective memory, it is necessary to have a framework that allows one to view these newspapers as a central contributing factor. For this study, the researcher utilized J.E. Grunig’s 1984 Situational Theory of Publics conceptual framework lens as it applies to media effects for the collection of data and data analysis, concerning how managing public relations interfaces with newspaper practices.³¹⁰

What is Situational Theory?

Grunig’s Situational Theory claims that people are divided into groups of “publics.” These groups can be further divided into subgroups based on everyone’s knowledge of a

³⁰⁹ “Malcolm X. on the press” BrainyQuote, 2001-2022, www.brainyquote.com

³¹⁰ James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt. *Managing Public Relations*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston; 1984. 149

situation and everyone's willingness to address a particular social problem. Grunig's theory explains that information is communicated to the public when it is most effective, and that each member of the public is a "[member] of a different public concerning different problems."³¹¹ He theorized that three identifiable variables decide to which of four publics an individual can be assigned. These variables are problem recognition, constraint recognition or level of involvement, information seeking, and information processing.³¹² Additionally, these variables can be further distributed into non-publics, latent publics, aware publics, and active publics.³¹³ Communication researchers and public relations professionals have used the situational theory of publics to identify or develop messages to motivate and inform specific groups of people.³¹⁴ Likewise, newspapers as a public relations apparatus can be viewed as an entity that follows this structure in developing news reporting, motivating, and influencing their audience.

Although commonly applied to studies focused on public relations, the situational theory conceptual framework is adequate to identify and examine the behaviors of selected newspapers and their audiences. Utilizing this framework allows researchers to identify elements of active and passive information in newspaper reports that were disseminated to motivate reader

³¹¹ Peter K. Hamilton, Grunig's "Situational Theory: A Replication, Application, and Extension". *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 4:3 (1992) 123-149 www.tandfonline.com

4. James E. Gruing. *Managing Public Relations*. 149

According to Gruing Theory: Non Publics are individuals that do not recognize a problem or situation. Latent Publics are individuals that may see a situation, but do not recognize obvious problems with the situation. Aware Publics recognizes a problem within a situation and can identify elements that are missing. Active Publics is the group that unite to remedy the problem or situation.

5. Ann Marie Major. The Utility of Situational Theory of Publics for assessing public response to a disaster prediction. *Public Relations Review* Vol. 24, #4 (1998) 489-508 www.science-direct.com. 489

³¹⁴ James E. Grunig. *A situational theory of publics: conceptual history, recent challenges and new research* in Danny Moss, Toby MacManus and Dejan Vercic, *Public Relations Research: An International Perspective*. London: International Thomson Business Press Company; 1997.

responses affected by factors such as socio-economic demographics that, in turn, determined how readers perceived the news reported and the reader's understanding of that situation or problem. Situational theory has been used in studies emphasizing many highly publicized controversial issues in major news reporting, and it also employs the element of problem-solving. By adding the element of problem-solving, situational theory has moved on to Situational Theory of Problem Solving (STOPS), which has been used to explore public responses to “hot issues” in the public and how these same issues or problems can be socially addressed.³¹⁵

The conceptualization of situational theory is coupled with news outlet behaviors that examined how news reporting practices affect the public. This influence is often “consequential and long lasting” in messages embedded in the framing and repeated exposure of content that directs beliefs and public opinions of an issue.³¹⁶ Adam Shehata found that these effects can be best understood by focusing on news effects' time, duration, and frequency.³¹⁷ Shehata argues that societal beliefs are constructed by structured representations of “issues, events, and actors.”³¹⁸ He found that the “situational models of specific actors and events are constructed immediately . . . as people consumed news stories” and these same models influence how people are represented or misrepresented.³¹⁹ Findings were generated from four variables: 1) Belief

³¹⁵ Jeong-Nam, Kim, Lan Ni, Sei-Hill, Kim and Jangyul Robert Kim, “What makes people hot? Applying the Situational Theory of Problem Solving to Hot Issue Public” *Journal of public Relations Research*, 24: 2 (2012): 144-164

³¹⁶ Adam Shehata, Dennis Andersson, Isabelle Glogger, David Nicolas Hopmann, Kim Andersen, Sanne Kruikermeier and Johannes Johansson, “Conceptualizing long-term media effects on societal beliefs”, *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 45:1(2012): 75

³¹⁷ Ibid., 75

³¹⁸ Ibid., 77

³¹⁹ Ibid., 79

position: individual public perceptions of social issues,³²⁰ 2) News frame: exposure to negatively framed news (on the current research topic),³²¹ 3) Belief certainty: certain beliefs that specific individuals are in specific social positions,³²² and 4) Time: the number of times individuals were exposed to particular news frames that influence how they understood and communicated their understanding.³²³ Furthermore, Shehata identified how perceptions are formed and influence the public's understanding of an event and its actors. For this study, each of these variables and the definition constructed by Shehata will be utilized to collect and analyze data where appropriate.³²⁴

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to (1) explore how the New York City newspapers played a critical role in maintaining a nationally racialized public using sensationalized news reports laden with stereotypes about Black masculinity and (2) assert why an acknowledgment of this practice should be included in the historical narrative as a significant cultural phenomenon that continues to encourage public hysteria.

Reviewing the Central Park jogger case newspaper reports from the date of the event (4/19/89) until the sentencing hearings of the defendants. The first sentence hearing was for McCray, Salaam, and Santana in August 1990, and the second sentence hearing regarded Richardson and Wise concluded in December 1990. Using a historical lens offers a new opportunity to reread the case and identify it as a historical and cultural phenomenon. A review

³²⁰ Ibid., 82

³²¹ Ibid., 85

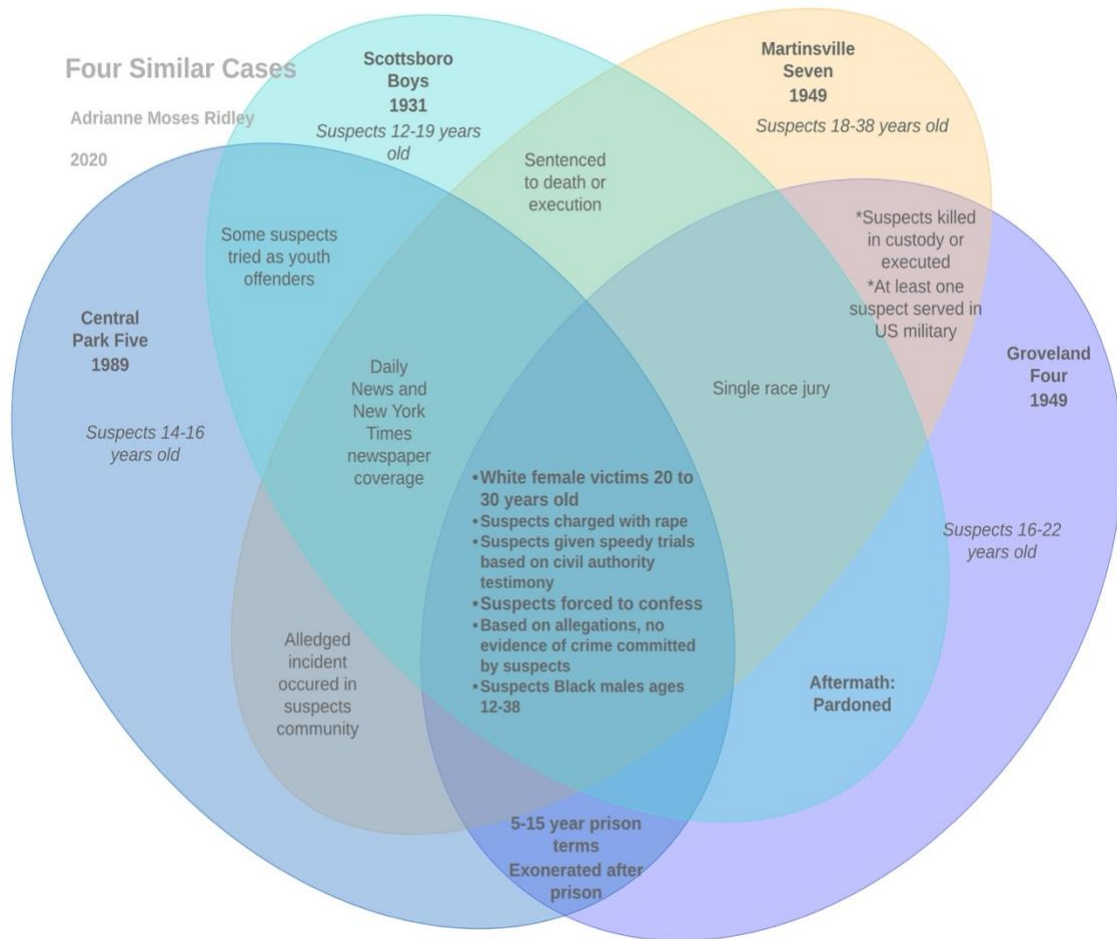
³²² Ibid., 87

³²³ Ibid., 88

³²⁴ Ibid., 81

such as this provides a better understanding of contemporary national debates concerning race and crime, underscores the ramifications of racialized journalistic practices regarding hysteria and public divide, denotes a public response that further socially marginalizes Black masculinity, and highlights how local newspaper accounts continued to encourage the construction and assignments of racial stereotypes. Ultimately, this study provides evidence of how the Black males who were reported by local newspapers to be the suspects, in this case, were victims of a historical criminalization of Black masculinity, which resulted in their wrongful convictions. Although this event occurred in New York City, the journalistic practices yielded nuances particularly indicative of southern states before the Civil Rights Movement.

A. Comparative Chart and Analysis



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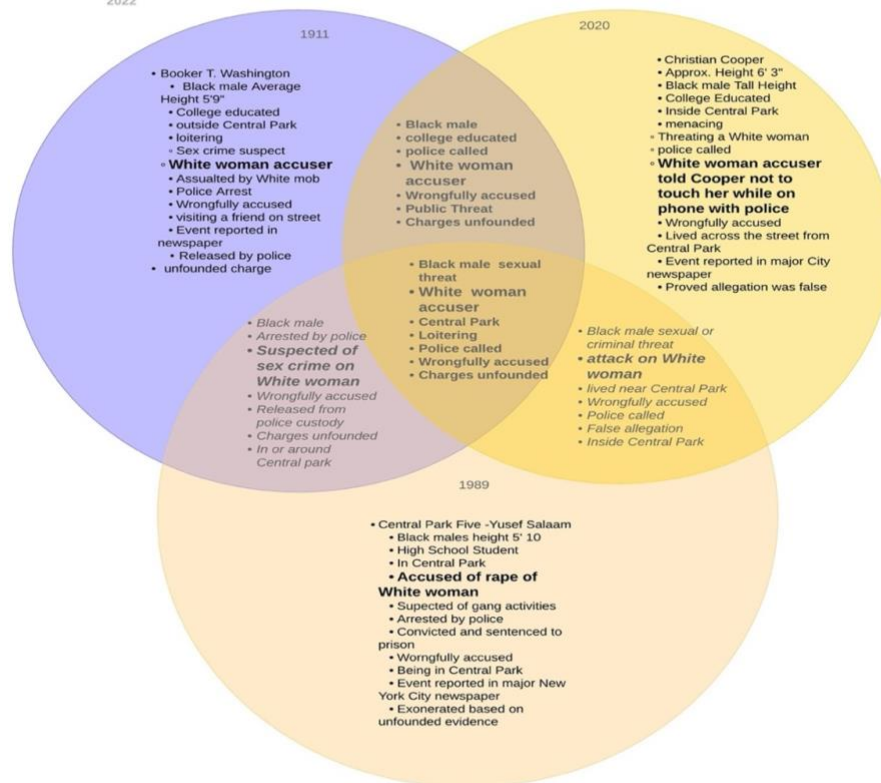
Figure 1. Venn Four Color Diagram of Four Highly Publicized Similar Cases.

³²⁵ Four Similar Cases. Venn Four Color Diagram of highly publicized cases in newspapers that involved the sexual assault of a White woman reportedly by a group of Black males. In each of these cases the alleged suspects trails resulted in convictions and or executions.

Booker to Cooper

Adrienne Moses Ridley

2022



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Figure 2. Venn Three Color Diagram of Four Highly Publicized Events In or Outside Central Park, New York

³²⁶ One Hundred Years of Central Park, Black Masculinity, Sex, Crime, the National Narrative and The New York City Newspapers. Venn Diagram comparing similarities of reports in New York City Newspapers regarding Black Masculinity as a threat in and around Central Park by White women. Only Yusef Salaam was chosen from the suspects of the 1989 incident for compassion since he was the most photographed, the tallest and possessed the darkest complexion. Demographic characteristic information regarding height and education concerning other Black males mentioned in Chapter 1 accused of sexually assaulting White women such as VannDyke Perry, Gregory Counts, Malik St. Hilaire and Dahmeer Bradley (from New York City) were unavailable to use in chart. Christian Cooper was used since the incident happened during the conducting of this project and to highlight the widely known reactive stimuli of the Black male threat used by White women. The chart reveals that a person such as Booker T. Washington who was nationally known during the end of the 19th century into the 20th century was presumed a threat as a Black male. Likewise, Christian Cooper's accuser sought to weaponize the threat of a Black man to assert her superiority, despite being the one violating the law that Cooper had reminded her of. The Washington, Cooper and Salaam incidents were similarities centered around Central Park, a White woman and the threat of Black masculinity.

Research Method Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. How have the major New York City newspapers played a critical role in reaffirming racist ideology by disseminating racially biased information, which has continued to influence and encourage a national racial divide?
2. What historical practices and behaviors have New York City newspapers utilized in to portray individual and collective Black masculinity as a violent, uncontrolled, and sexually deviant social threat?
3. Why was New York City an inevitable location that would highlight the relationships between the city's newspapers' misrepresentation of Black communities, widespread social fears of Black masculinity, and the Central Park jogger case?
4. When newspapers are used to chronicle the national narrative, why has this narrative not included the role of the newspaper's use of sensationalism as a possible aggregated nuance that often precipitates events, resulting in an unchallenged collective memory, which in turn motivates public response?

Mixed Methods Study Design

This study explores the rationale of newspaper practices and encourages the expansion of the historical narrative to include the role of newspapers in creating and influencing a public racial divide. Newspapers are the oldest media outlet in American history, and New York City newspapers, in conjunction with their syndicated associations, have the widest circulation in the nation.³²⁷ The ability of these newspapers to produce and disseminate sensationalized news laden

³²⁷ Eric Alterman. "The News Business Out of Print." *The New Yorker*, March 24, 2008. www.newyorker.com accessed 2/1/2025.

with myths and stereotypes has and continues to influence the social psychology and encourage a racially divided public. This study assumes a pragmatic paradigm of mixed methods, allowing methodological pluralism to recognize and understand that several principles exist and must be uncovered through quantitative and qualitative inquiry. John Creswell claims that this paradigm enables the researcher to utilize several approaches to understand a specific phenomenon and its inherent problems and consider the consequences of those actions.³²⁸ Quantitative data collection of repetitive and negative newspaper displays were analyzed utilizing an integrative model of content analysis, visual analysis, discourse II analysis, narrative analysis, and rhetorical analysis methods following *The Content Analysis Guidebook*.³²⁹

A phenomenological approach was applied using a survey to identify if newspaper reporting influenced readers' beliefs that the accused in the Central Park jogger case were guilty of the crime, and to determine which specific characteristics in the news reporting were most effective, text or visual images.³³⁰ Qualitative data was collected and analyzed for newspaper practices, reader understanding, and collective memory of an audience.³³¹ The data analysis process includes both inductive and deductive analysis. Data was collected and analyzed using an explanatory sequential design embedded in the conceptual framework of Grunig's situational

³²⁸ John Creswell, *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research* (Los Angeles: Sage Publication, 2015).

³²⁹ Kimberly Neuendorf. *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2002)

³³⁰ Gillian Rose. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2012)

³³¹ Michael Pickering. *Research Methods for Cultural Studies* (Edinburgh, London: Edinburgh University Press, 2013) 73

Figure 3. Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design

³³² James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt, *Managing Public Relations* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984). John Creswell, *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research* (Los Angeles: Sage Publication, 2015)

³³³ Figure 1. Explanatory Sequential Design involves collection of quantitative data and analysis from survey, focus group and interviews used to identify significant findings. Qualitative data collections and analysis were developed from those findings to help to further examine and explain quantitative results. This design was chosen to help interpret any unexpected contrary findings.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

1. Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The researcher searched and reviewed newspaper articles about the Central Park Jogger rape incident using the ProQuest search engine. The period of the chosen pieces ranged from April 1989, the date of the incident, until July 1989. The artifacts selected for this project were articles, front pages, and photographs featured in New York City newspapers with the most significant local and national circulation. *The New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Newsday*, and *New York Post* were determined to have been the newspapers that reported daily, in several editions, the event best known as the Central Park jogger assault and rape crime. Additionally, select newspaper photographs without articles were collected by conducting a general internet search.

The selection of assembled photographs was reviewed to ensure that these articles were produced by New York City newspapers, even if these photographs were featured in newspapers outside the project's catchment area. The images selected usually depicted the crime scene and alleged suspects and were used to investigate newspaper framing practices and audience responses. In doing so, the researcher could glean newspaper reports, headlines, and images that support the researcher's claims of sensational journalistic procedures and practices that ultimately influenced, encouraged, and perpetuated the public's hysterical response toward Black masculinity.

Kimberly Neuendorf defines content analysis as "a systematic, objective, and quantitative analysis of a message's characteristics, including examinations of human interactions, character

portrayals, and word images in newspapers for public consumption.”³³⁴ Following Neuendorf’s Rhetorical and Narrative Content Analysis methods, each item was treated as material culture and reviewed to identify how messages were conveyed. The researcher sought to know if stereotypes and metaphors were explicitly used or inferred, and if so, which distinctions were made to identify the victims and suspects specifically.³³⁵ A review of these items allowed the researcher to identify variables such as keywords that draw attention, reveal visual aspects, recognize word counts in articles, and acknowledge the significance of the item’s location in the newspaper.

Articles

The articles selected were easily accessible from the ProQuest Search engine.³³⁶ The initial search and selection were articles published by *Newsday* and *The New York Times* from a date range between April 19th and December 1989. It was later determined to reduce the date range from April 19th to June 30, 1989. An effort was made to ensure that the titles of articles were not replicated across both newspapers. This resulted in eight articles from each newspaper,

³³⁴ Kimberly Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications; 2002) 1

- A. The Content analysis method applied here looks at words and the way those words were used to identify and determine inferred messages.
- B. Rhetorical analysis method focused on how particular characters were described in reporting the story and what distinctions were used to differentiate the victim and suspects. Were there any distinctions used to motivate the readership by inflaming a particular emotion and should the message be further challenged by applying a cultural analytical method?

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5

- C. The narrative analysis reviews the language used to delineate each character’s representation and identifies if there are any inconsistencies in representation. This aids in underscoring underlying ideologies that may be embedded in a story that reveals the larger cultures’ knowledge transfers and collective memory. Robert Fowler, *Language In The News* (London: Routledge Publishers; 1991)

³³⁶ ProQuest Search Engine. www.proquest.com

with 16 articles reviewed for words the researcher found that were distinct and believed to incite a particular emotion in readers. Articles selected for this list were grouped into four categories: a) articles with pictures, b) articles without pictures, c) front pages, and d) articles with complete page layouts. These groups were further divided into subgroups chronologically based on the publisher. Additionally, each article was read to identify figurative language or inflammatory words, stereotypes, and explicit or implicit cultural terms to determine if the article's intent could be classified as 1. Diagnostic, 2. Prognostic, 3. Symptomatic, 4. Motivational, or 5. A combination of any of the first four categories.³³⁷ This list contained six articles that were reviewed for keywords, identified based on their frequency of use and recorded to be later used for coding purposes following Neuendorf's Integrative Model of Descriptive³³⁸ and Prescriptive Content Analysis methods.³³⁹ A newspaper analysis graph was created to include name of the newspaper, day of the week articles that were published, article page number within the publication, section of the newspaper it was featured in, article word length, type of story (i.e.,

³³⁷ As defined by Maxwell T. Boykoff, in the "Cultural Politics of Climate Change Discourse in the United Kingdom Tabloids" *Political Geography* (2008) 27 pages 549- 569 that newspaper article content can be distributed into five categories 1). Diagnostic - identifies a problem and assigns blame, 2). Prognostic – may offer strategies to address an issue, 3). Symptomatic- provides an explanation to a situation and its consequences, 4). Motivational - presents a moral rationale to motivate and influence others to take action, and 5). Other - may approach a situation differently or with a combination of categories listed.

³³⁸ Neuendorf. *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, 53.

A. Descriptive Content Analysis looks to identify how many times a particular word or phrase is used, placement, image and if a relationship can be denoted between particular words, characters, the event reported, and the audience intended.

³³⁹ Ibid. 55

B. Predictive Content Analysis assist in determining if characteristics found during the Descriptive Content Analysis might motivate reader response and or influence how subsequent articles were constructed. Integrating these two model during content analysis allows the researcher to answer research questions in conducting both quantitative and qualitative inquiry.

editorial), author, frequent keywords, source, and article skew (i.e., political, civil, governance or cultural).

Each article was then entered into the Voyant Tools data mining software. Voyant Tools is a web-based text analyzer that uses data mining to create a corpus of word frequency.³⁴⁰ This was done to highlight keywords that could be compared to keywords the researcher identified during self-data mining, and to extract other keywords the researcher may have missed and needed to be acknowledged. By utilizing Voyant Tools, the researcher could generate a corpus of selected articles.

Voyant Tools allowed the researcher to generate a Cirrus of the most frequently used words.³⁴¹ These words and their frequency were denoted by the size and color of selected words. A picture of the document summary of the articles was captured and reviewed to note the most frequent and chosen distinctive word by Voyant Tools.³⁴² Each publisher was then grouped, and a spreadsheet was created of specific words generated by Voyant Tools and self-data mining. There were eight articles from *The New York Times* (NYT) newspaper and eight from the *Newsday* (ND) newspaper, totaling 16 articles entered into Voyant Tools and reviewed. All words in articles were counted, with distinctive words counted separately and then entered into a

³⁴⁰ Voyant-Tools.org, is a web-based text reading and analysis environment. Voyant Tools provided an opportunity to combine and review several articles using the computer to identify and highlight words most used and determined the sources of the word frequencies.

³⁴¹ Figure 2. Voyant Tools Cirrus of the frequency of words most used in 16 articles from both newspapers. Figure 3. Summary of how many times words identified in cirrus are used in articles.

³⁴² Figure 4. Cirrus of eight articles selected from the New York Times (NYT). Figure 5. Shows documents length and corpus identified distinctive words in articles. Figure 6. Shows Document trends and the distribution of words in cirrus NYT articles. Figure 7. Cirrus created from eight articles selected from Newsday (ND). Figure 8. Shows documents length and corpus identified distinctive words in articles. Figure 9. Shows Document trends and the distribution of words in cirrus ND articles.



Figure 5. Summary of frequency of words used in sixteen articles created by Voyant.



Figure 6. Cirrus of word frequency in selected eight articles in the *NYT*.

Document Length: 

- Longest: Central Park Case Puts... (1968); Gan Attack: Unusual for... (1662); For East Harlem Teen-Ager... (1435); 2 Are Indicted In Brutal... (1230); Harlem Residents Fear... (953)
- Shortest: Attack on Jogger Underlin... (400); The Jogger and the Wolf... (467); Lunging for Death Publica... (557); Harlem Residents Fear... (953); 2 Are Indicted In Brutal... (1230)

Vocabulary Density: 

- Highest: The Jogger and the Wolf... (0.540); Lunging for Death Publica... (0.528); Attack on Jogger Underlin... (0.502); Harlem Residents Fear... (0.462); For East Harlem Teen-Ager... (0.416)
- Lowest: Central Park Case Puts... (0.314); Gan Attack: Unusual for... (0.384); 2 Are Indicted In Brutal... (0.402); For East Harlem Teen-Ager... (0.416); Harlem Residents Fear... (0.462)

Average Words Per Sentence: 

- Highest: Gan Attack: Unusual for... (29.7); 2 Are Indicted In Brutal... (25.6); Central Park Case Puts... (25.2); Harlem Residents Fear... (25.1); For East Harlem Teen-Ager... (21.1)
- Lowest: The Jogger and the Wolf... (13.7); Lunging for Death Publica... (15.5); Attack on Jogger Underlin... (20.0); For East Harlem Teen-Ager... (21.1); Harlem Residents Fear... (25.1)

Readability Index: 

- Highest: The Jogger and the Wolf... (12.176); Central Park Case Puts... (11.576); Harlem Residents Fear... (11.019); Lunging for Death Publica... (10.547); 2 Are Indicted In Brutal... (10.462)
- Lowest: Attack on Jogger Underlin... (8.654); For East Harlem Teen-Ager... (10.348); Gan Attack: Unusual for... (10.440); 2 Are Indicted In Brutal... (10.462); Lunging for Death Publica... (10.547)

Most **frequent words** in the corpus: said (107); youths (48); park (48); new (44); year (40)

Central Park Case Puts Focus on Tough Juvenile ...

Central Park Case Puts Focus on Tough Juvenile Law Author: Ralph. Salvo
 Publication info: New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast), New York, N.Y. (New York, N.Y.) 15 May 1989, B.1.

When five 14- and 15-year-olds were arrested in the rape and attempted murder of a jogger in Central Park last month, they came under a special category of criminal law that exists only in New York State.

When five 14- and 15-year-olds were arrested in the rape and attempted murder of a jogger in Central Park last month, they came under a special category of criminal law that exists only in New York State.

Their cases, rather than being tried automatically in Family Court, where proceedings are cloaked in confidentiality and the emphasis is on treatment and rehabilitation, are being held in adult criminal courts under adult rules.

The law under which the suspects are being prosecuted was enacted nearly 11 years ago in response to a series of violent crimes by minors and a public outcry over what was perceived as lenient treatment of juveniles in Family Court.

Lawmakers were convinced that district attorneys were better equipped to prosecute violent juveniles and insisted on more stringent punishment. But since the law was enacted, many juvenile cases have been transferred to Family Court, usually with the district attorney's consent. Juvenile Felony Arrests Rise

The law, many experts say, carries the toughest penalties in the country for people under 16 convicted of felonies. It empowers the state to try boys and girls ages 13 to 16 in State Supreme Court for murder, attempted murder, robbery, rape, assault.

Terms:

Summary Documents Phrases

Title	Words	Types	Ratio	Words/Sentence
1 The Jogger and the Wolf Pack Publication info:	467	252	54%	13.7
2 Attack on Jogger Underlines Need to Deal With U...	400	201	50%	20.0
3 Lunging for Death Publication info: New York Ti...	557	294	53%	15.5
4 For East Harlem Teen-Agers, Poses Mean Violenc...	1,435	597	42%	21.1
5 Gun Attack: Unusual for its Viciousness Pitt, D...	1,662	639	38%	29.7
6 Central Park Case Puts Focus on Tough Juvenile ...	1,968	617	31%	25.2
7 Harlem Residents Fear Backlash From Park Rape M...	953	440	46%	25.1
8 2 Are Indicted in Brutal Rape in Central Park A...	1,230	484	40%	25.6

Contents Bubbleslines Correlations

Document	Left	Term	Right
The Jog...	and outrage: A pack of	teen	-agers rampages through Central Park
The Jog...	and outrage: A pack of	teen	-agers rampages through Central Park
The Jog...	savagery? How could so many	teen	-agers lose all sense of
The Jog...	did the gang of white	teen	-agers who beat blacks and
this explosion of savagery? Are	teen	-agers more prone to violence	
For East Harlem	teen	-Agers, Poses Mean Violent Pit	
as listening to rap music,	teen	-agers say: it has its	
as listening to rap music,	teen	-agers say: it has its	

Summary Documents Phrases

123



Figure 9. Cirrus of frequency in identified words in eight *ND* articles.



Figure 10. Shows document length and word distribution in *ND* articles.

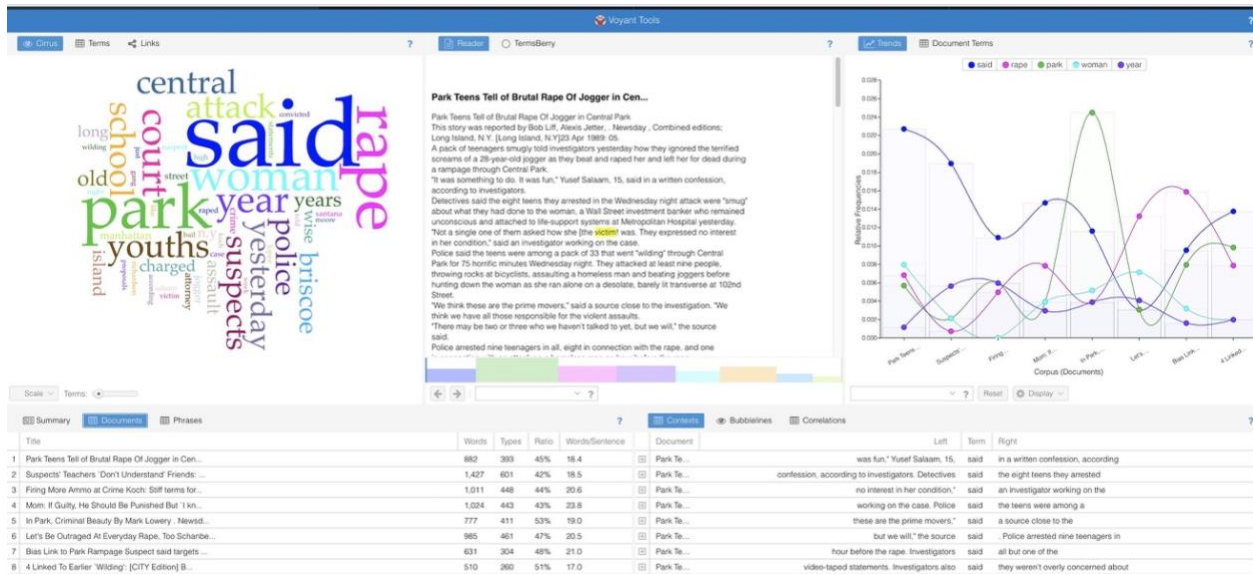


Figure 11. Shows document trends and distribution of identified words in ND articles.

New York Times	4/24/89	4/25/89	4/26/89	4/27/89	4/27/89	5/4/89	5/9/89	5/15/89	Category of Words	
Attack (ed)	xxxxxx	xxxxxx	x	xxxxxx	x		x		word of truth	18
Youth	xxxxxxxxxx	xxxx		xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	x		xxxxxx		antagonist	25
teenagers	xxxxxx						xx		antagonist	9
Rape (d) (Ing)	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	xxx	x	xxxxxx	x	x	xxx		act of	24
Accused	xxx	x		xxx					word of truth	7
Arrest (ed)	xxx		x	xxxxxx			xxxxxxxxxx		word of truth	13
Assult (ing)	xxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxx	x	xxx	xx	x	xxxxxxxxxx		act of	27
Rampage	x	xxxx	x	xx					described by zoomorphism	6
Brutual (lize)(lizing)	x		x		x	xxx	x	x	act of	8
Crime/ Criminal	xxx	xx	xx	xxxx	xx	xx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx		words of truth	29
Gang/Mob/Posse	xxx	xxx	x	xx			xxxxxxxxxx		antagonist	5
Suspects	x	xxxxxx		xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx			x	x	word of truth	12
Central Park	x	xxxxxx	xx	xxxx			x	xx	place	14
Attempt & Murder	xx	x		xx		xxx	x	xxxxxx	word of truth	4
Invest. Bank. /victim	xxxxxx	xxx		xxxx			x		protagonist	5
Juvenile offenders	x			x			xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx		antagonist	20
Wilding	x	xxxx		x			x		described by zoomorphism	6
Wolf Pack/ Pack	xx	xxxxxxxxxx	xxx	x			xx		described by zoomorphism	12
Violent/Violence		xxxx	x				xx	xxxxxx	word of truth	9
Savagely		x	xxx				x		described by zoomorphism	5
Convicted							xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx		word of truth	13
Outrage (d)			x		xx	xxx			word of truth	6
Execution						xxxx			word of truth	4
CATEGORY	D	D	D	D	M	P	D	S		
SKEW	S	G	G	G	S	G	S	G		
Word Count	953	1662	467	1230	400	557	1435	1968		

Figure 12. Self-mined words in selected eight articles of NYT, not identified by Voyant.

Newsday	23-Apr-89	4/25/89	4/26/89	4/26/89	4/28/89	5/14/89	6/10/89	6/23/89	Category of Words	
Charged	x	x			x				words of truth	3
Rape (d) (ing)	xxxxxxxx	xx	xxxxxxxxxx	xxxx	xxxxxxxxxx	xxxxx	xxxx	xxxxxxxxxx	act of	59
Assault (ed) (ing) (s)	xxxxxxxx	xx	xxxxx	xx	xxx	xx		xxx	act of	26
Guilty		x	x						word of truth	2
Pack	xxx	xx							described by zoomorphism	5
Gang	xxx	xxxx			x		xx	x	antagonist	11
Arrested	xx		x		x	x	xx		word of truth	7
Teen (s) (agers)	x	xxx		x		xxx			described by zoomorphism	8
Wilding	xx	xxx					xxx		described by zoomorphism	8
Savagery					xx				described by zoomorphism	2
Violent, Violence	x	xx				xx		xx	word of truth	7
Suspect (s)	xx		xxxxxxxxxx				xxxx	xxx	word of truth	20
Victim	xx		x	xx	xxxxx	xx	x	x	protagonist	15
Woman	x	x	xxxx	x					protagonist	7
Attack (ed) (s)	xxxxxxxxxx	xx	xxxx		x	xx	xxx	xxxxxxxxxx	word of truth	34
Accused		xx	xx						word of truth	4
Crime			xx		xxx	xx	xx	xxx	word of truth	12
Convicted					xxxx	xxxxxx	xx		word of truth	12
Predators						xxx			described by zoomorphism	3
Criminal			x	x	x				antagonist	3
Attempted Murder	xx	x	x	xx		x			act of	7
Investment Banker	x	x	xx	xx			xxx	x	protagonist	10
Central Park	x		x		x	xxxxx	xx	x	place	11
WORD COUNT		999	1406	1696	948	1008	1163	629	756	
Category	M	D/S	O	D/M	M	P/M	S	D		
Skew	G	S	C	G	G	P	G	G		

Figure 13. Self-mined words in selected eight articles of *ND*, not identified by Voyant.

Front Pages

The selected front pages were copies of the *Daily News* obtained from an internet query of the incident and date range. Four front pages from the *Daily News* newspaper covers were obtained during data search and collection. The covers retrieved were produced during April and June of the incident and examined for specific keywords used in the headlines and the highlights of each cover story. Special attention was given to the print size of the related and unrelated headlines and photos featured. Each front page was explored at a macro and micro level, identifying the date of the publication, specific language, if a photograph was presented and how many pictures were present, whether the photo(s) used associated with the headline, classifying which readership did the headline address based on the edition of newspaper or location of the article, determining if the surrounding articles or images presenting biases, and if any part of the page layout were salient. These front pages were entered into a spreadsheet and categorized as

descriptive or prescriptive, applying content analysis methods. In doing so, where applicable, the researcher determined if inferences and deductions could be assigned to each page.³⁴⁵ (shown in chapter 4).

Full Page Layout

Entman posits that “Frames become embedded within and make themselves manifest in a text...framing influences thinking.”³⁴⁶ Robert Entman says frames “define problems, diagnosis causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies.”³⁴⁷ A framing analysis was conducted of full-page layouts that featured articles relating to the topic using Entman’s method, focusing on the four main properties of a newspaper’s layout. Following Entman’s methodology allowed further analysis to reveal the publisher’s beliefs, the keywords (i.e., stereotypes and judgments) that are used or not used, perceive audience interpretation, and better understand the discourse commonly accepted within social groupings.³⁴⁸ For this study, “framing” is used to investigate and interpret newspaper whole page layouts that featured news reports of the event and its possible relationship, if any, to other surrounding items. Pages were then reviewed to identify if text and images were used to persuade, influence, or construct and affirm common social views.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ See figure 12. in Chapter 4. Front Pages

³⁴⁶ Robert M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm” *Journal of Communication* (1993) 51

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 52

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 52

Entman explains how framing analysis identifies perceived realities and how people understand situations. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” He states that the structure of delivery and promoting interpretations influence behaviors, confirm status quo’s, direct public attention, opinions and suggest remedies.

³⁴⁹ See figure 13. in chapter in Chapter 4. Full Pages Layout

In addition, there was an effort to examine each page's layout to determine if it was centered on differences and authority or implied causation of effects.³⁵⁰ In doing so, all frames on the page were evaluated to pinpoint implicit or explicit surrounding articles that may have offered a latent view and remedy. Further exploration was conducted to see if the same or a similar article is featured in other newspapers or a different subsection. If so, did it provide varying subjectivity?³⁵¹ A chart was developed to conduct a frame analysis of five full-page layouts, three from the *Daily News* and two from *The New York Times*. The objective was to identify and examine elements of priming, agenda setting, and emphasis framing using a rhetorical content analysis methodology. The rhetorical method of content analysis allowed the researcher to look at the words and images on each page and determine if explicit or implicit messages were inferred and if metaphors and stereotypes were used. Additionally, page layouts were examined to evaluate if articles were written in a Normative or Proscriptive style and if unrelated articles on the page were optimistic, pessimistic, or neutral, which may have influenced the understanding of the article related to the project.³⁵²

³⁵⁰ Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodology: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication, 2007) 147. Visual Analysis looks at the choices made on selected photos that appeared in the newspapers. Discourse Analysis II focuses on the possible intentions of selected photographers, page layout and location within the newspapers. This method assists in identifying practices and behaviors of recognized institutions such as newspapers.

³⁵¹ Ibid, 224

³⁵² Jim A Kuypers, "*Framing Analysis in Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action*," (Lexington Press 2009) 181; Kuypers offers a detailed conception for framing analysis from a rhetorical perspective. According to Kuypers, "Framing is a process whereby communicators, consciously or unconsciously, act to construct a point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be interpreted by others in a particular manner. Frames operate in four key ways: they define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. Frames are often found within a narrative account of an issue or event and are generally the central organizing idea."

Susan T. Fisk and Shelly E. Taylor, *Social Cognition* (New York: McGraw Hill; 1991):78 According to Susan T. Fiske and Shelley E. Taylor, human beings are by nature

Photographs

The selected newspaper photos of the location and characters of the incident were obtained through an internet search query. Elements of Gillian Rose's Visual Methodology of visual culture content analysis allowed the researcher to critically examine "social power"

"cognitive misers," meaning they prefer to do as little thinking as possible. Frames provide people a quick and easy way to process information. "People will use the previously mentioned mental filters (a series of which is called a schema) to make sense of incoming messages. This gives the sender and framer of the information enormous power to use these schemas to influence how the receivers will interpret the message."

A recently published theory suggests that judged usability (i.e., the extent to which a consideration featured in the message is deemed usable for a given subsequent judgment) may be an important mediator of cognitive media effects like framing, agenda setting, and priming. (15)

Giorgio Reta, "Trying Cases in the Media: A Comparative Overview," Law and Contemporary Problems, The Court of Public Opinion: The Practice and Ethics of Trying Cases in the Media. Vol. 71, No. 4. (Duke University School of Law: Autumn, 2008)

Robert M. Entman and Kimberly A. Gross, "Race To Judgement: Sterotyping Media and Criminal Defendants, Law and Contemporary Problems, The Court of Public Opinion: The Practice and Ethics of Trying Cases in the Media, Vol.71, No. 4, (Duke University School of Law: Autumn, 2008). Looks at how the media's stereotyping of minority criminal defendants usually supports a pro prosecution slant that is conveyed through framing and priming techniques.

95. The ability of the press to reproduce and continuously circulate articles that used animalistic words or images of the alleged suspects in the Central Park incident being escorted and restrained by law enforcement communicated to the public that the presumed guilty racialized threat was contained.

Robert M Entman, "Framing Bias: Media in Distribution of Power" *Journal of Communication* 57 (2007) 163-173, is applied to news that purportedly distorts or falsifies reality (distortion bias), some-times to news that favors one side rather than providing equivalent treatment to both sides in a political conflict (content bias), and sometimes to the motivations and mindsets of journalists who allegedly produce the biased content (decision-making bias)

Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." (1993) "We can define framing as the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation. Fully developed frames typically perform four functions: problem definition, causal analysis, moral judgment, and remedy promotion. Framing works to shape and alter audience members' interpretations and preferences through priming. That is, frames introduce or raise the salience or apparent importance of specific ideas, activating schemas that encourage target audiences to think, feel, and decide in a particular way.

relations, social categories, inclusion or exclusion of characters, and social differences.³⁵³ Rose defines visual culture as a “production and exchange of meanings between members of a society and making sense of the world.”³⁵⁴ In doing so, it was possible to determine “reception, meaning, and content”³⁵⁵ by examining the position of the image to viewers, the scene depiction, and whether the pictures influenced or elicited thoughts of power for the viewers of the subjects pictured.

Each photograph was examined, and categories were created to indicate race, power, group size, the vantage point of the image, aggressive activity shown (police, guns, etc.), location, what is often pictured or what is rarely seen in photographs, and if these pictures can be interpreted as effects of truth.³⁵⁶ Incorporating elements of Theo Van Lucerne and Carey Jewett’s methods of Visual Analysis, such as “social distancing,”³⁵⁷ “behavior,”³⁵⁸, and “image act analysis,”³⁵⁹ this study examines how characters shown in photographs are depicted, represented, and can be interpreted.³⁶⁰

Newspaper pages with photographs of characters associated with the event were reviewed to examine visual and inferred framing effects and to identify if the main points were political, civil, governance, or cultural. In the *Handbook of Visual Analysis*, Theo Van Lucerne provides a methodology for a visual content analysis of images. Lucerne argues that “visual content analysis is a systematic observational method used for testing hypotheses about how the

³⁵³ Rose, *Visual Methodology: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. 2

³⁵⁴ Ibid. 2

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 39

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 20

³⁵⁷ Theo Van Lucerne and Carey Jewett. *Handbook of Visual Analysis*. (Thousand Island, California: Sage Publications, 2001) 29

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 30

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 31

³⁶⁰ See figure 14. in Chapter 4 - Photographs

media represents people, events, and situations.”³⁶¹ Following cues from this methodology, photographs were reviewed as individual material culture artifacts. Three inquiry questions were considered: 1) Are different kinds of images used or are the same images repeated? 2) What positive or negative representations are presented in the images? 3) Are there any historical modes of representation present regarding gender, class, and race?

This allowed for the creation of three subcategories: 1) A listing of represented individuals by gender and race, 2) The represented roles of each individual, and 3) The photograph's setting.³⁶² Lucerne contends that these photographs can be coded like textual articles by noting camera angles to determine if the images have any relatable connotations,³⁶³ encourage the viewer to relate to the image, perceive that they are somehow interacting through the image employing “social distancing” of represented individuals,³⁶⁴ and interpret represented individuals actions in the image.³⁶⁵

Furthermore, Rose’s Discourse Analysis II methods for each image and the social modality these images may have produced are applied and interpreted.³⁶⁶ Photographs were noted and coded if the photos were used more than once within the collection,³⁶⁷ dress of individuals in the photo, the location of the image, effects of truth (handcuffs, police, etc.), and what is not seen within images (family members, etc.).³⁶⁸

³⁶¹ Ibid., 14

³⁶² Ibid, 16

³⁶³ Ibid, 20

³⁶⁴ Ibid, 29

³⁶⁵ Ibid, 31

³⁶⁶ Rose. *Visual Methodology*. 146

³⁶⁷ Ibid, 157

³⁶⁸ Ibid, 161

2. Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis Instruments

Survey

In January 2019, a roundtable discussion and PowerPoint presentation with individuals between 15 and 82 was conducted to determine whether the dissertation topic was valid. These participants represented different ethnic and racial backgrounds, educational levels, professions, religious affiliations, birthplaces, and places of residence during the 1980s. The group was comprised of individuals who were either employed or retired lawyers, police officers, clergy, military, unemployed, nurses, doctors, civil service administrators, correction officers, elected officials, public servants, college students, high schoolers, married, single, parents, and non-parents (results are shown in figure 14).³⁶⁹ The purpose was to demonstrate the existence of and obtain evidence to support the argument that newspapers greatly influence public opinion using misinformation.³⁷⁰ The ultimate objective for this test was to provide a better understanding of the collective memory of the Central Park Jogger Rape (CPJR) trial, prior alleged gang rape trials, the individuals involved, and the group participants' understanding of how they believed each episode affected American society and race relations.

³⁷⁰ See Appendix A. Powerpoint slide image page 217.

YOB	POB	Reside at time of event	Occupation in 1989	Education	Present Occupation
1973	New York	Mt Vernon	High school	Post Grad	attorney
1985	Tacoma	California	baby/ na	some college	exe. Asst
1940	North carolina	New York	Nurse	Masters	
1928	Meneola	New yOrk	retired	graduate	retired
2000	White Plains	N/A unborn			College Student
1946	New York	Bronx, NY	Police Detective	some college	Investigator
1944	Nesmith, SC	Bronx , NY	Nurse	Masters	retired
1947	Haiti	Bronx , NY	Nurse	Bachelor	retired
1961	NYC	Wash DC	Letter Carrier	Masters	
1964	Manhattan	Bronx, New York	Secretary	some college	
1957	Bronx, NY	Bronx NY	teacher	College	retired
2000	New York			High School	
1999	Geneva, New York			College Grad	
1936	North carolina	New York City	retired	some college	retired
1999	New York	N/A unborn	N/A	High School	College Student
1940	Carribean	New York	Nurse	college	Retired
1998	Queens, NY	N/A unborn	N/A	High School	College Student
1944	Waynesboro , Ga	Bronx, NY	Nurse	Bachelor	retired

Figure 14. Participant demographics self-entered information on pink index cards to compile demographics of group

Each participant was given six colored index cards to indicate their answers to questions before the PowerPoint presentation. The first session of the PowerPoint presentation began with a chronological review of previous high-profile American racial conflicts that involved Black masculinity, violence, sex, and crime since the beginning of the twentieth century. It was decided to focus on events involving an individual or several young Black males suspected of raping a White woman. Historically well-documented race riots or lynchings were selected using newspaper headlines and photographs of each incident. These episodes occurred in Duluth, Min. 1920; Tulsa, Ok. 1921; Rosewood, Fla. 1923; Scottsboro, Ala. 1931; Martinsville, Va. 1951; and

Groveland, Fla.1949.³⁷¹ Afterward, questions were posed regarding the Central Park jogger case, knowledge of the incident, belief in the guilt of those involved, and the social response that followed.

Initially, the plan was to conduct a follow-up round table discussion to ascertain how participants interpreted newspaper articles regarding race, crime, and Black masculinity. However, due to the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic (COVID-19) pandemic and international regulations for social distancing, it was decided to forego a group activity and, in its place, develop a cold call survey conducted with new participants using questions from the 2019 presentation. Before each survey, participants were asked if they had viewed any televised documentaries focused on the CP5 case; if so, their response sheets were indicated. Telephone calls via FaceTime or Zoom computer applications were used to conduct several surveys.³⁷² Participants were asked not to retrieve information digitally but to provide honest, rapid responses to the query. This data will provide valuable information on how some members of the public viewed, perceived, and remembered news reports and facts about the CP5 case.

In doing so, analyzing and deconstructing the content printed in various newspapers regarding the CP5 will provide insight into the “meaning and relationships” of the keyword usage in news stories regarding the CP5 case to determine if there are underlying racial messages. Upon conclusion, a connection will be made to the theory that the news media’s social influence impacted CP5’s trial and its aftermath. The news media’s continued use of racialized propaganda has repeatedly created a social fear encumbered with stereotypical myths that vilify

³⁷¹ Appendix A. PowerPoint images page 215- 258

³⁷² Appendix B. PowerPoint images on pages 216 and 220 for Cold Call questions.

Black masculinity. This historic nuance has contributed to the accused's psychological, physical, and political impairment, thus rendering them socially disabled.

Limitations

1. Primary and Secondary Data Collection

This research study has limitations. First, it used mixed-methods research methodology. During the initial planning phase, it was assumed that access to primary documents would be available at archival institutions such as the New York Public Library and the New York City Historical Society. The data collection process was limited because it began just as the COVID-19 declared a multi-continent public health emergency crisis, forcing the government to order the public to stay at home.

Large depositories of primary documents and identified scholarly works that had been conducted could not be accessed. Online archival newspaper accounts for *The New York Times*, *Daily News*, *Newsday*, and the *New York Post* helped to overcome this issue. However, the only primary sources found were ones published by *Newsday* and *The New York Times* newspapers.

2. Survey Data

Subsequently, while the quantitative data was obtained from primary and secondary sources, the qualitative data was obtained from a questionnaire. The questionnaire was presented to respondents during a focus group discussion about their opinions, understanding, and memory of the topic. The decision to conduct a focus group was to explore social behaviors in community knowledge sharing, concerning collective memory by presenting other historical examples of the subject. Approximately 50 participants were invited to the focus group, resulting in 22 attendees being surveyed.

Since the participant population was limited, it took a lot of work to determine the reliability of the quantitative data provided by the participants. Many participants relied on other participants' verbal and non-verbal responses to answer or not answer questions. However, using qualitative data analysis allowed the researcher to make inferences using a deductive approach from a sample population. COVID-19 public health restraints also prohibited conducting additional focus groups to obtain sample data from a larger population.

3. Methods

Furthermore, this research study utilizes a multidisciplinary approach, combining media, communication, social, legal, cultural, historical, and disability studies. There is an attempt to try to identify any interdisciplinary study literature that links the disciplines and provides a methodology to follow.

4. Personal Biases

As a young mother at the time of the incident, I was never convinced that these boys were guilty when the incident happened. In newspaper photographs and televised news reports, these boys appeared to be confused with the constant and overtly racialized adult context they had been literally and physically thrust into. It never made much sense to me that five boys remotely familiar with each other would collectively decide to rape an older White woman. My knowledge of earlier cases that included a group of Black males and a White woman, such as the Scottsboro Boys and the Groveland Four, only added to the skepticism. I believed then, as I believe now, that this episode is in some way not just a historical trend but also a traditional method used to direct and control race relations, political enfranchisement, and the socio-economic gains of Blacks. The newspapers simultaneously reinforced previously established

fears in and outside Black communities while recapitulating stereotypes, which they knew would incite hysteria and moral panic within the greater social environment, as it had for over a century.

More importantly, as a 21st century mother of five Black sons, including one that would introduce me to the disabled culture, I became increasingly aware of how print and photographic images in the newspapers were the images that American society assigned to my disabled son, my other sons, and other Black boys. Images constructed during 19th-century society have been allowed to extend into contemporary times through recurrent usage in newspapers that misrepresented Black boys as violent and deviant. These images often informed or replicated other depictions in which the larger American society constructed their assumptions and myths, such as fictional novels and films like *Birth of Nation* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Although these stories are situated in the American South during the Jim Crow Era and involve interracial sex, rape, and violence, in both of these considered classical stories the Black male was portrayed as a sexually deviant antagonist and a violent predator of White womanhood who would continue to suffer from injustice long after the incident, either through the extra-legal method of mob lynching³⁷³ or the legal method of capital punishment in the form of execution.³⁷⁴

These stories serve as an element in American society's cultural and intellectual history for non-minorities, whose only understanding of and resolution for Black masculinity is defined by movies and distorted imagery. As I gaze upon personal photographs during the late 1980s of the Honorable David Dinkins (the first and only Black Mayor of New York City) with myself and other family members, I am forced to consider the social and political motivations, the

³⁷³ James W. Clarke, "Without Fear or Shame: Lynching, Capital Punishment and the Subculture of Violence in the American South," *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 28, No. 2 (April, 1998): 280

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 285

complicity of the newspapers and question how it was possible that an almost century-old southern phenomenon could materialize in New York City. In addition, I am compelled to admit that my historical knowledge of interracial rape and Black masculinity serves as a marker for my own inherited generational collective memory. In doing so, I must also acknowledge my current elevated understanding of the limits this collectiveness may impose upon the community, especially in restricting deliberate actions of recourse that may have been needed to aid and protect the five accused youths from being racially attacked in the newspapers and from unequal social justice that is parallel to wrongful convictions.

This exploration will hopefully expand the historical narrative regarding the media's role in creating and influencing the public racial divide with sensationalized news laden with myths and stereotypes to influence the social psychology of a hysterical public. It seeks to provide a new opportunity to reread the CP5 jogger case through a lens that encompasses the historical criminalization of Black masculinity with the ramifications of social disability. The young men known as the CP5 were wrongfully accused and convicted. Yet, their reentry into society does not automatically grant them a release of civil disability, and this categorizes them as socially disabled. While there have been new studies to include the culture of physical disability into the historical narrative, I seek to encourage additional research on social disability as an element of that narrative that encompasses the wrongly accused. The studies of media, race, sex, gender, economics, social justice, politics, culture, communication, and history have ignored the intersections of their studies and the social disabling of citizens, such as the CP5 in the American historical narrative or as an interdisciplinary study that explores other cases which may be centered on Black masculinity, interracial sex, and crime.

A study such as this that explores other cases through newspaper reports from arrest until release from a penal institution could provide greater insight into how the public views “hot topics”³⁷⁵ like the Central Park jogger case and how a situation like this can influence the public’s response.³⁷⁶ A more comprehensive survey with a larger population could also yield information on how the public understands the ramifications of the newspaper industry’s historical ability to direct public policy, social justice, and community culture and the implications of its continued role in maintaining a racial divide in American history and memory.

“Here's a letter to the New York Post
The worst piece of paper on the east coast
Matter of fact the whole state's forty cents
In New York City fifty cents elsewhere
It makes no goddamn sense at all
America's oldest continuously published daily piece of bullshit
It always seem they make our neighborhood look bad
Here's a letter to the New York Post
Ain't worth the paper it's printed on
Founded in 1801 by Alexander Hamilton
That is 190 years continuous of fucked up news”³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Kim, *What Makes People Hot?* 159

³⁷⁶ “ *The Power of Media Coverage: How it Shapes Jurors’ Perceptions and How Scientific Jury analysis Can Help Mitigate Bias,*” Jury analyst online May 19, 2023, [www. Juryanalyst.com](http://www.Juryanalyst.com)

³⁷⁷ Public Enemy, “A Letter to the New York Post.” Lyrics.com The [Public Enemy](#) song "A Letter to the *New York Post*" from their album [Apocalypse '91...The Enemy Strikes Black](#) is a complaint about what they believed to be negative and inaccurate coverage blacks received from the paper.

Results and Discussion

*“The great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do.”*³⁷⁸

*“I’m for truth, no matter who tells it. I’m for justice, no matter who it is for or against. I’m a human being first and foremost, and as such, I’m for whoever and whatever benefits humanity as a whole.”*³⁷⁹

This study’s purpose was to add to the discourse of understanding the significant role of newspapers in influencing racial biases in American history by exploring the language used in New York City newspapers that reported on the 1989 Central Park jogger rape incident. These newspaper accounts were circulated nationally, often presenting stereotypical euphemisms interconnecting Black masculinity, Black American culture, sexual deviance, and crime.

Historically, newspapers have been a primary source of racial constructs and stereotype assignments that encourage unequal social justice responses to crimes involving race that result in racial divisions, public hysteria, and wrongful convictions of Black males. Applying the situational Theory of Publics allowed newspaper reporting practices and the responses from the collective public memory of this incident to be better understood, utilizing a convergent design of mixed methods.

The Situational Theory of Publics (STOP) allowed the researcher to apply the social marketing theory that newspaper journalists and publishers employed to identify subjective

³⁷⁸ James Baldwin. *The Price of a Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985* (Boston; Mass.: Beacon Press, 1985)

³⁷⁹ Malcom X Quotable Quote in Goodreads, Inc. 2023 GoodReads.com

skews in news reporting. This framework aids in recognizing why some newspaper consumers have a differing understanding of the reported event. Looking at this event through the lens of several academic methodologies and the STOP theory can reveal the intentions of news reporters as public relations agents and how their actions influence the public.³⁸⁰ The influence of newspapers on the public may also affect the public's collective memory.

A. Focus Group Survey: The Central Park Jogger Case, Black Collective Memory, and Historical Unremembering.

The first set of survey questions presented to the focus group was targeted at four well-known legal cases that have stood as a representation of how the newspapers have written about Black males accused of interracial sexual assaults and how that social phenomenon has continued to impact the American historical narrative. The survey was administered before the PowerPoint presentation to understand what participants most remembered about the Central Park Jogger Case and which elements presented in the newspapers served as “truth” in their positions on guilt or innocence. The study's focus group participants were from various socioeconomic backgrounds, educational levels, age groups, gender, and professions. The survey consists of general questions centered on three previous widely publicized interracial rape cases in United States history: The Scottsboro Case (1931), The Groveland Four Case (1949), and The Martinsville Seven Case (1951). Each of these cases presented in the survey had some similarities to the Central Park jogger Case, such as the race, age, and number of suspected individuals, as well as the alleged victims, the crime's date and location, and the outcome of the incident.

³⁸⁰ James E. Grunig, *A Situational Theory of Publics: Managing Public Relations*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston; 1984)

The next set of questions was aimed at the Central Park Jogger Case and which newspapers each participant usually read.

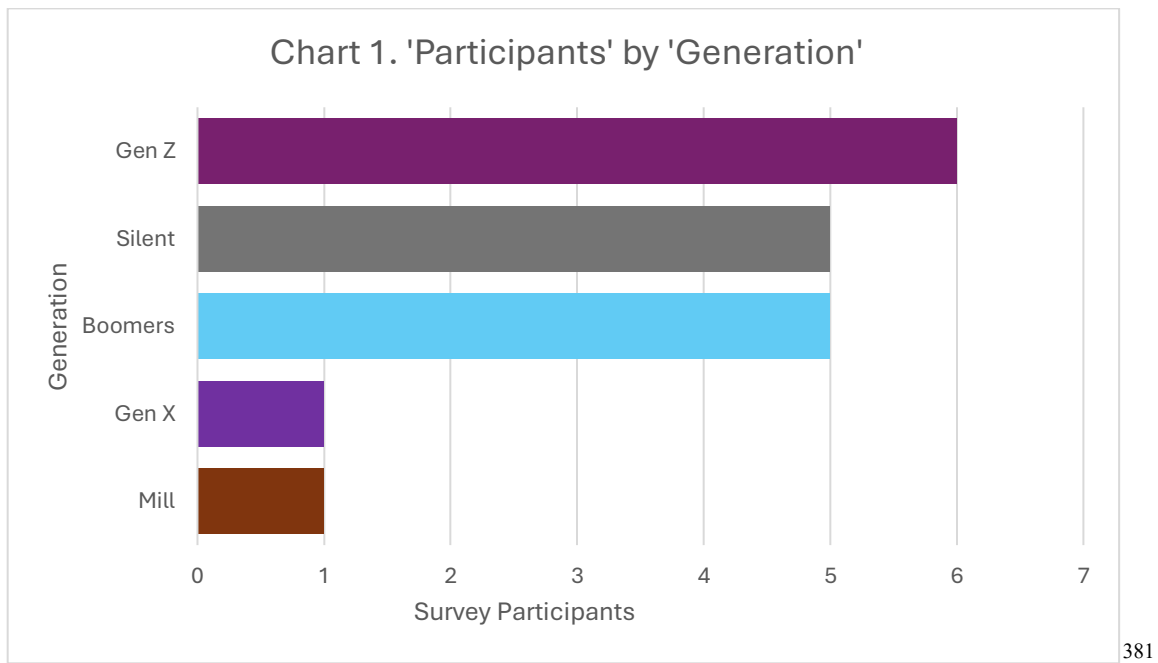


Figure 15. Focus group participant demographics sorted by generation.

The chart above provides the generational breakdown of focus group and survey participants. Since there was an extensive age range among the participants, the researcher believed it was best to group participants by generation in the hope that the results yielded from the survey would offer more insight into cross-generational commonalities, differences,

³⁸¹ Focus group survey participant separated by classifications of generations to provide insight into what is known and remembered by sub-groups within a community. See presentation attachment. Color codes selected from PPG Generational color palettes series designed to reflect the culture and character of that particular era. www.ppgpaints.com

their individual and collective memory, and understanding of incidents that may impact their communities. A significant number of Generation Z participants in the table shows that the Silent Generation and the Baby Boomer Generation participants were equal in value. (Fig. 15). Participants were further divided by self-reported place of birth to determine if cultural nuances such as social economics, traditions, and domestic proximity dictated their responses to questions. What is most interesting about the chart below is that although most participants are from New York State or New York City, those responses presented participants with regional differences. However, participants from North Carolina, New York City, New York West (Westchester County), and New York unspecified have the highest rate of participant representation by Place of Birth. (Fig.17).

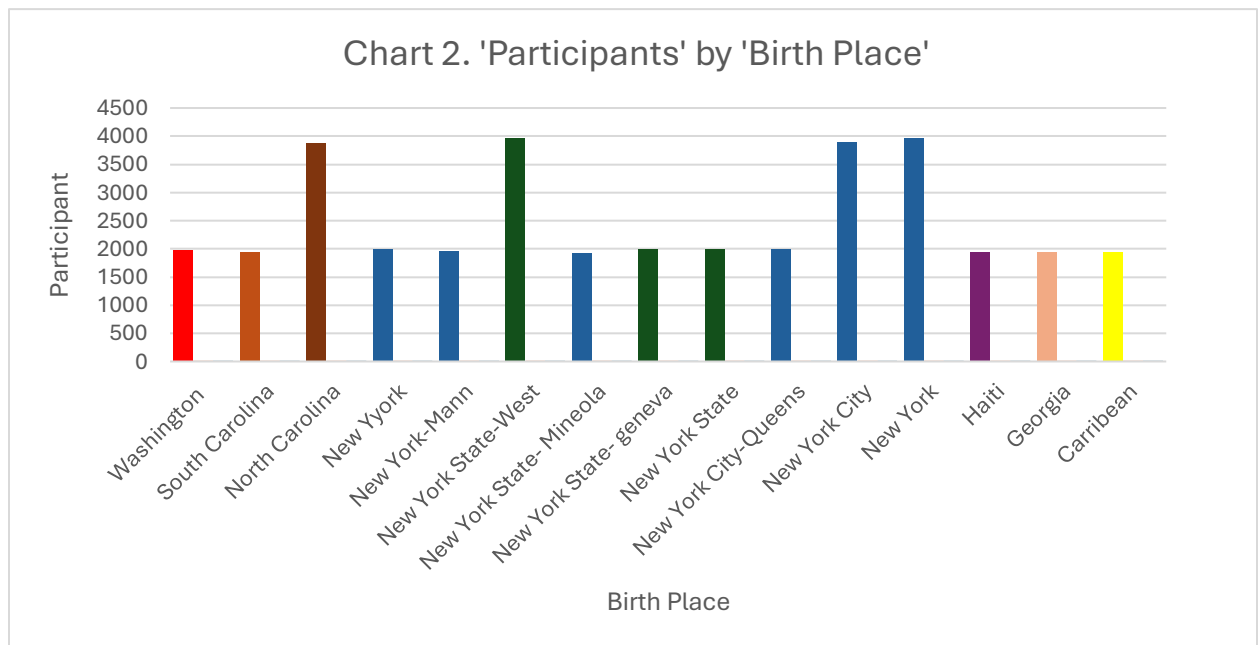


Figure 16. Focus group participant sorted by place of birth.

When asked to answer the question concerning their highest educational level in 1989, 20 responses were collected and compiled with each respondent's generational data. This data revealed that most respondents had earned an undergraduate college degree. However, respondents from the Silent Generation category earned a graduate degree, and most of those who answered were employed as nurses and teachers.

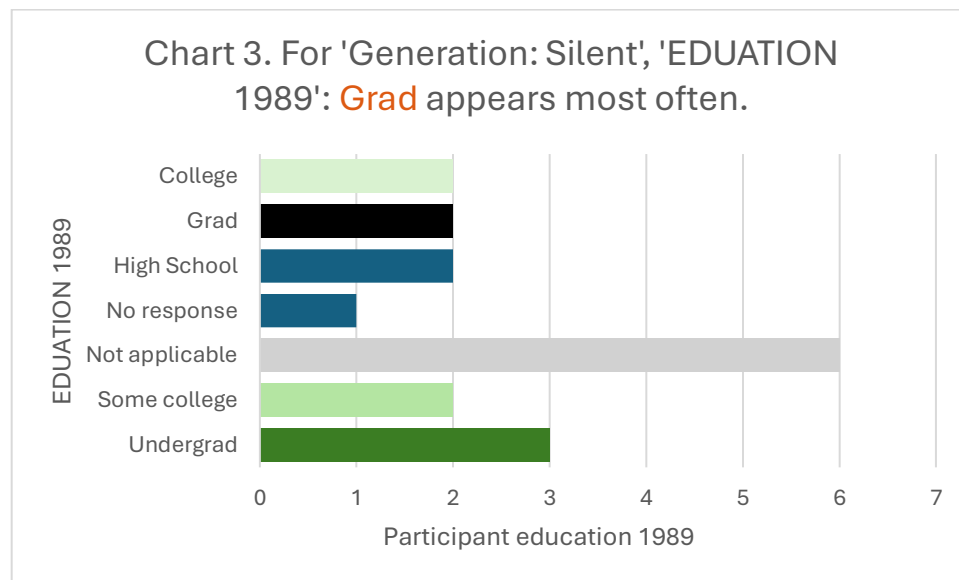


Figure 17. Group participants sorted by education level in 1989.

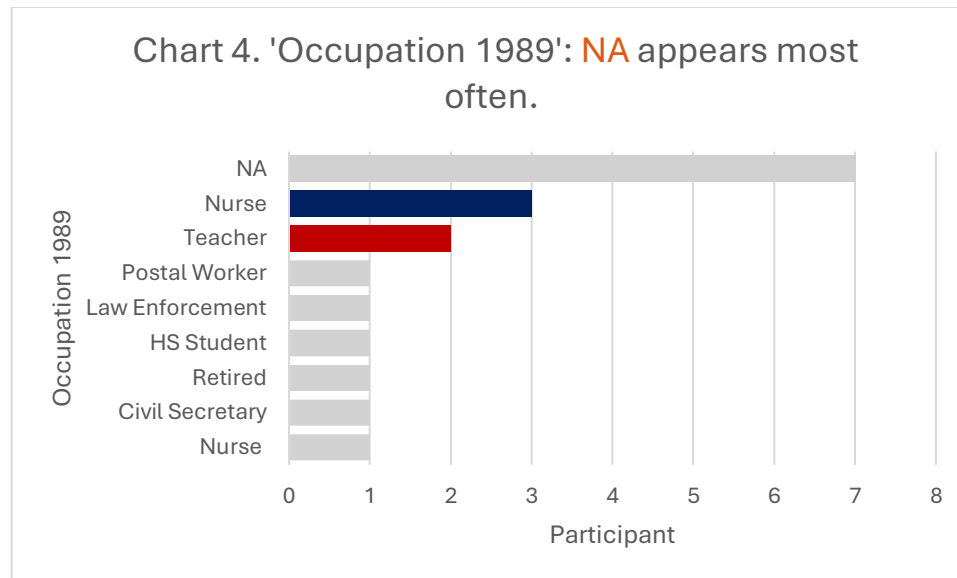


Figure 18. Group participants sorted by occupation in 1989.

Reviewing the responses to the question of highest education in 2019, the charts below revealed that participants “with some college” without a degree ranked higher overall (Fig. 17). In addition, participants from Generation Z and Baby Boomer generations were the most employed (Fig. 18). Since most participants were categorized as Generation Z in Table 1, respondents who indicated Not Applicable (NA) were either adolescents or unborn. However, by 2019, it appears that there was an increase in the number of participants who had undergraduate or graduate college experience (Fig. 19).

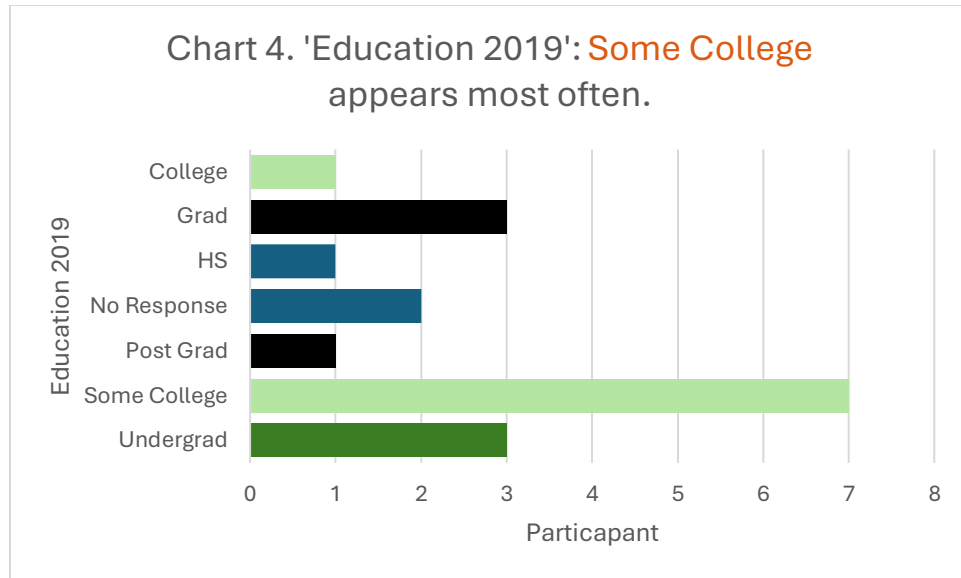


Figure 19. Participant educational level in 2019.

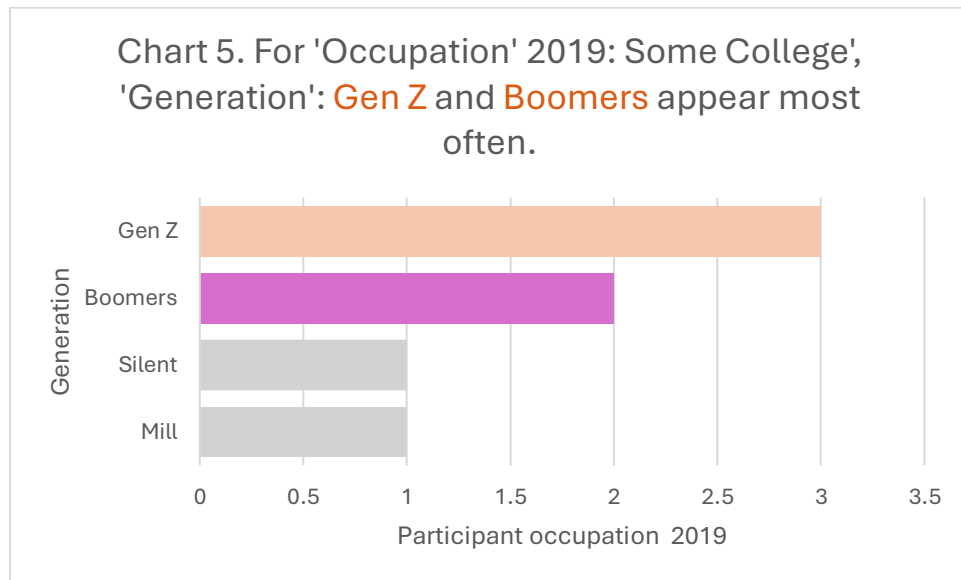


Figure 20. Participants employed in 2019.

B. Presentation: *Media's Hysteria of Race, Class, Sex and Crime: A Review of American Newspapers and its Historical Influence on Social Psychology and Public Policy through Race, Sex, and Crime in the Case of The Central Park Five Native Sons of New York City.*³⁸²

Quantitative data from primary historical sources in a PowerPoint presentation was presented to the participants to stimulate topic discourse and direct further data collection. Participant responses focused on words used in newspaper articles to describe individuals and characterize “truth” in crime reports. Words such as “brute,” “fiendish,” and “savage” elicited strong responses and displeasure. The PowerPoint presentation introduced participants to quotes from literature written by highly regarded 19th and early 20th century authors. In addition, excerpts from newspaper articles, headlines, and photographs focused on the earlier-mentioned cases to reveal similarities in news reporting content and newspaper publishing style. It should be noted that only the Central Park jogger case, reported by northern journalists and published by a northern city newspaper, was used as part of the slide show. Photo elicitation was core to observing participants' responses to images that reveal personal and social understanding of journalists' and newspaper publishers' values, practices, and objectives. The researcher's objective was not to direct the discussion but to allow participants to express their shared or independent memories, experiences, and understanding of the content and context of each image. In a qualitative research study using photo elicitation, Diane Kettle, a professor in education, found that photo-elicitation allowed her to develop inquiry and structure a narrative to

³⁸² Adrienne Moses, (2018) “*Media's Hysteria of Race, Class, Sex and Crime: A Review of American Newspapers and its Historical Influence on Social Psychology and Public Policy through Race, Sex and Crime in the Case of The Central Park Five Native Sons of New York City.*” PowerPoint Presentation, New Rochelle, New York. January.

communicate how people interact with the context of images.³⁸³ (See appendix PowerPoint Presentation)

1. Qualitative Results and Discussion

The results found from the focus group and survey questions provided insight into the collective memory of a small group of Blacks throughout New York City. It permitted a narrative to be formed based on individual and community perspectives and perceptions. Here, the researcher created a narrative from individual participants, their social connections, education, professions, community psychology, and collective memories.³⁸⁴

³⁸³ Diane Ketelle, "The Ground They Walk On: Photography and Narrative Inquiry," *The Qualitative Report* 15, no. 3 (May 3, 2010) www.nova.edu

³⁸⁴ Julie White, and Sarah Drew, "Collecting Data or Creating Meaning? Troubling Authenticity in Ethnographic Research," *Qualitative Research Journal* 11, no. 1 (2011)

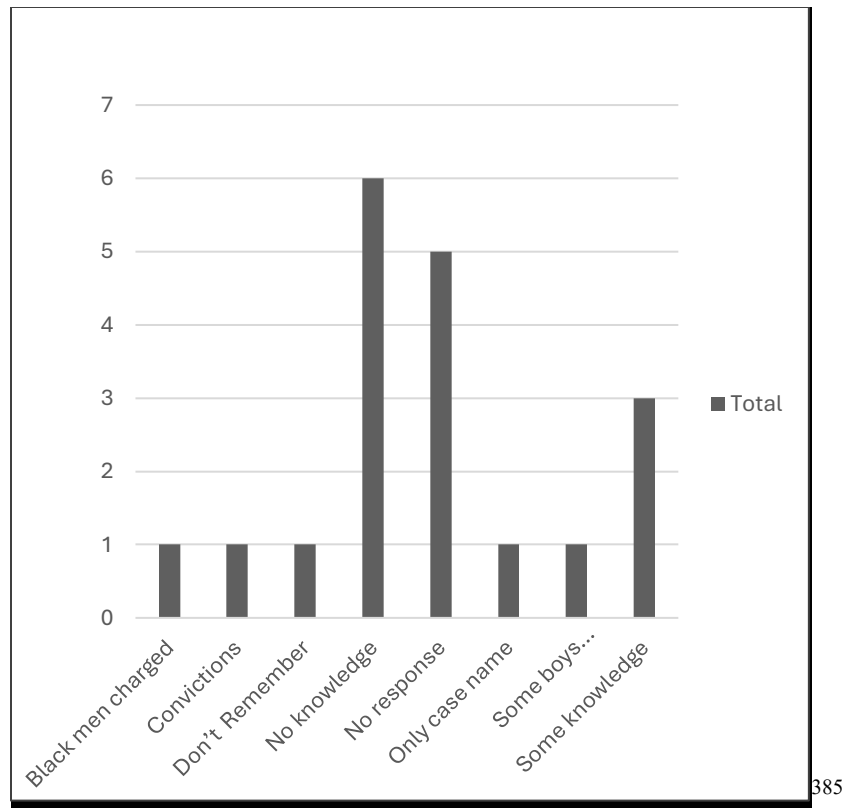


Figure 21. Survey Chart 1. Scottsboro Case – Scottsboro, Alabama, 1931.

It is apparent from this chart that very few participants were aware of the event. When asked what knowledge participants had of the Scottsboro Case, approximately three-quarters said they had “no knowledge” of the case. In addition, half of that number stated that they had “some knowledge,” while about two-thirds of the group did not respond to the question. Several participants provided random answers.

³⁸⁵ Survey Chart 1. Participant answers concerning knowledge of the Scottsboro Case in Scottsboro, Alabama, 1931. See appendix A. PowerPoint slide image on page 219 for survey questions asked. Participants' responses were self-recorded on white 5 x 7 index cards.

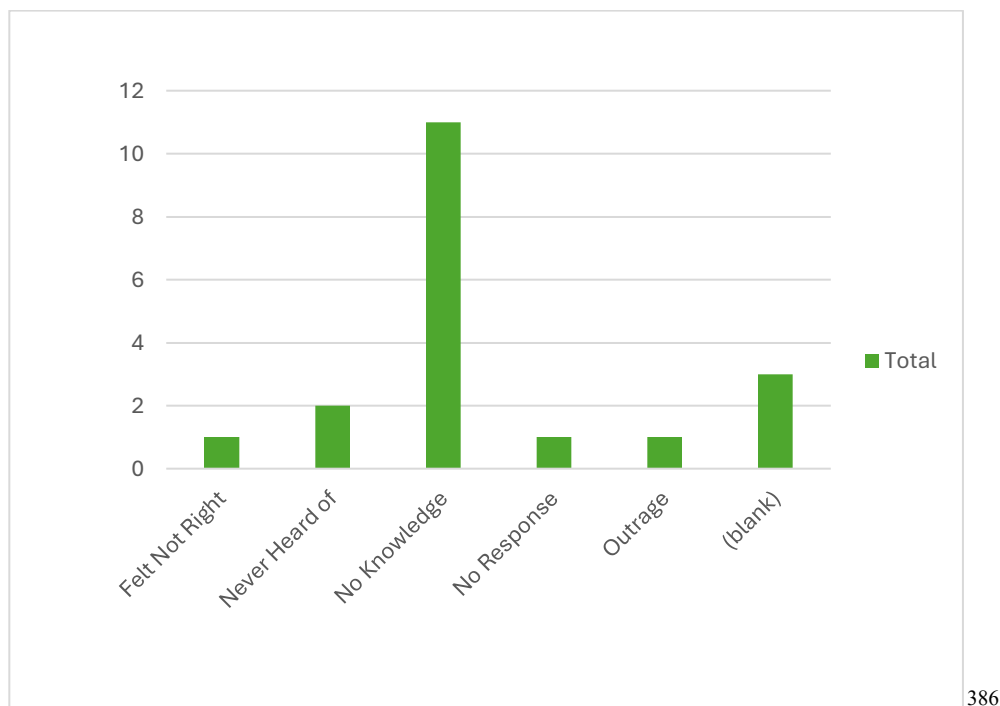


Figure 22. Survey Chart 2. Groveland Case- Groveland, Florida 1949.

There was no noticeable change in the number of responses when participants were asked what knowledge they had of the Groveland Case; most responded that they had “no knowledge” of the case. The other two most provided answers by participants indicated that participants had “never heard of” the subject or the question was left “blank.”

³⁸⁶ Survey Chart 2. Participant answers concerning knowledge of the Groveland Case in Groveland, Florida, 1949. See appendix A. PowerPoint slide image on page 220 for survey questions asked. Participants recorded their responses on green 5 x 7 index cards.

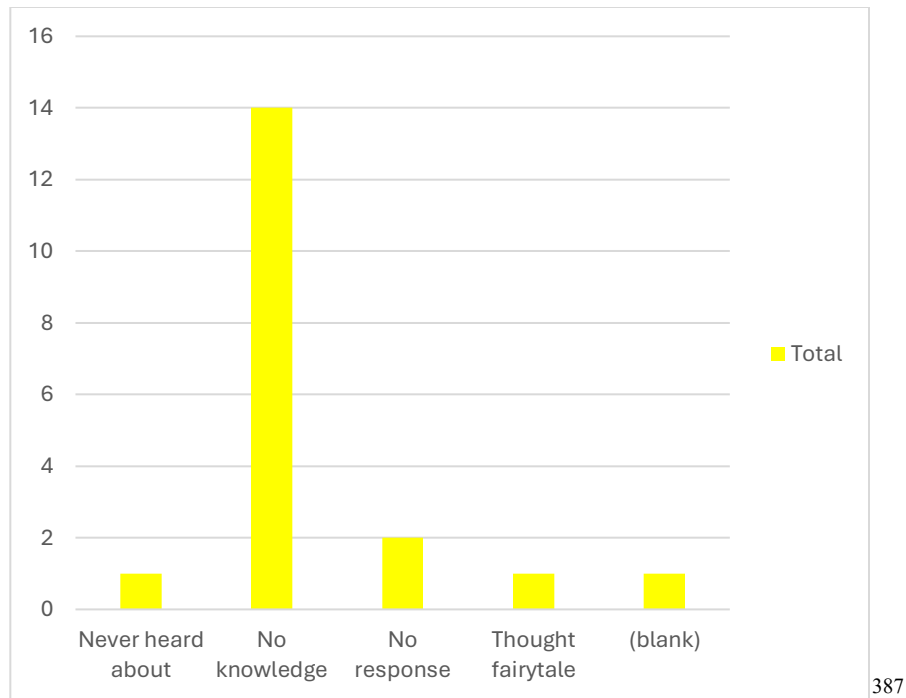


Figure 23. Survey Chart 3. Martinsville Case- Martinsville, Virginia, 1951.

Likewise, responses were relatively the same when participants were asked about their knowledge of the Martinsville Case. Approximately three-fourths of the group had “no knowledge” of the case, and the other most noted answer was “no response.

³⁸⁷ Survey Chart 3. Participant answers concerning their knowledge of Martinsville Case in Martinsville, Virginia, 1951. See appendix A. PowerPoint slide image on page 221 for survey questions asked. Participants recorded their responses on yellow 5 x 7 index cards.

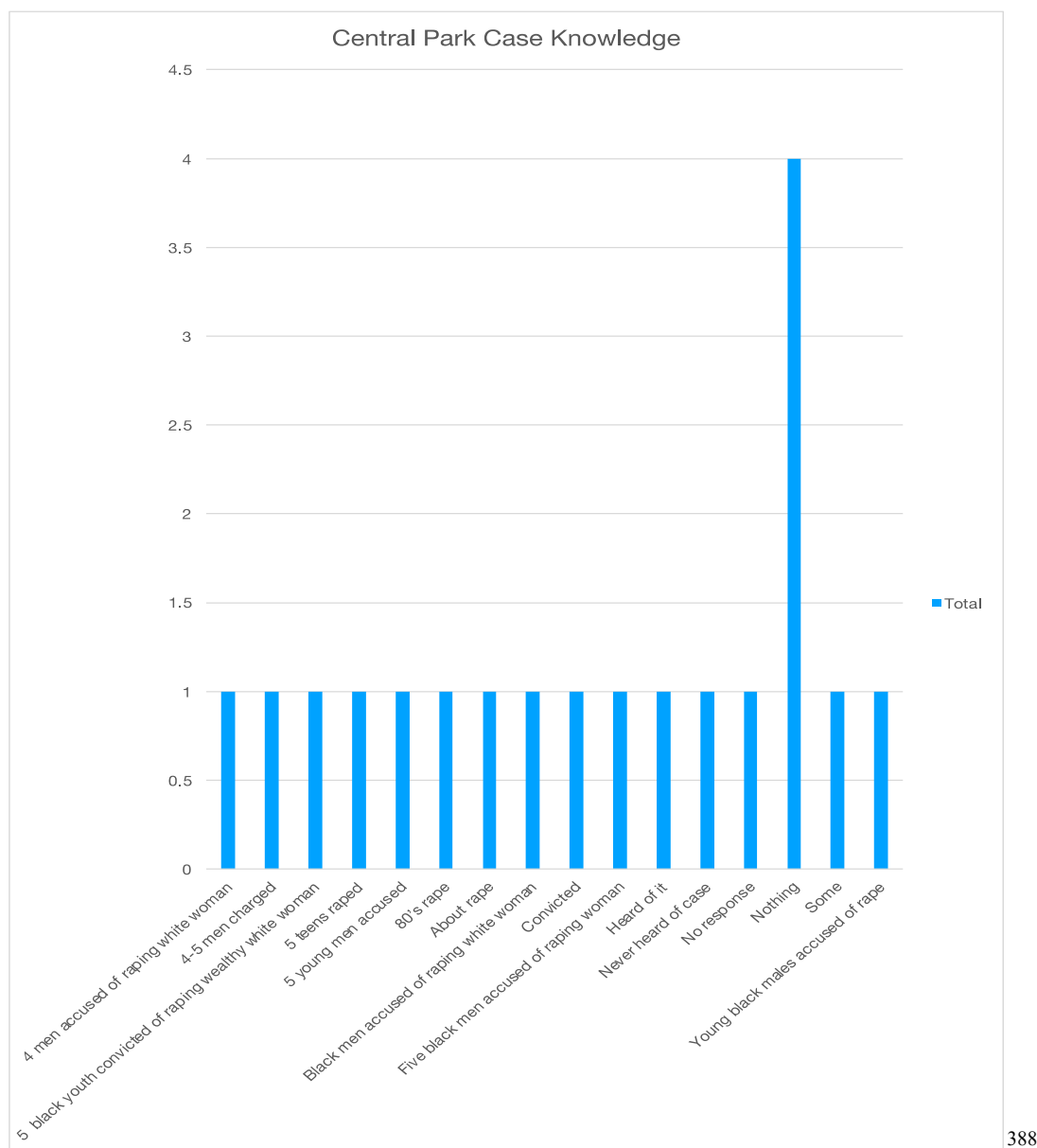


Figure 24. Survey Chart 4. Central Park Case New York, New York 1989.

³⁸⁸ Survey Chart 4. Participant answers concerning their knowledge of Central Park Case in New York City, New York, 1989. See appendix A. PowerPoint slide image on page 222 for survey questions asked. Participants recorded their responses on blue 5 x 7 index cards.

However, the most surprising results of comparing the central questions based on knowledge of each of the four cases were that when asked to provide their understanding of the Central Park Case, most group participants answered that they knew “nothing” about it. However, a few participants offered varying responses to the question, “What persons were involved in the case?” Many participants appeared to know or guess the race and gender of the people involved but not much else.

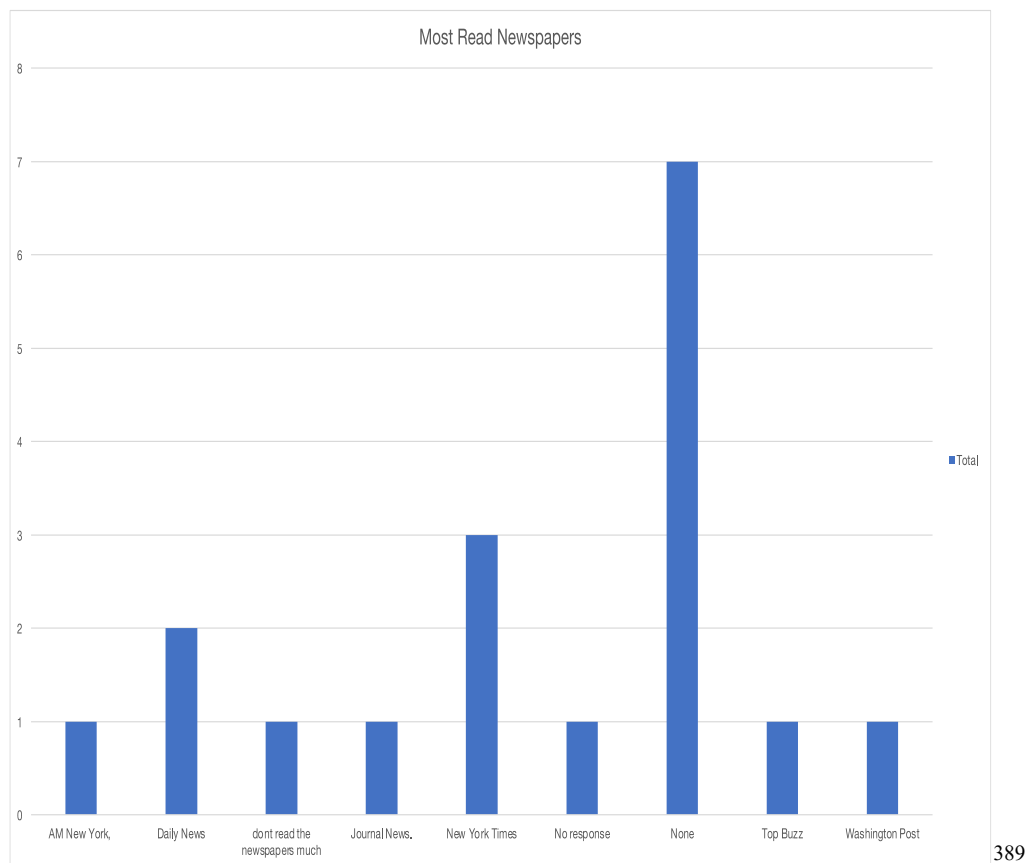


Figure 25. Survey Chart 5. Most read newspapers by participants.

³⁸⁹ Survey Chart 5. Participants answered to identify which New York City newspapers they read the “most.” See appendix A. Powerpoint slide image on page 217 for survey questions. Participant answers were compiled from questions asked on 5 x 7 red index cards.

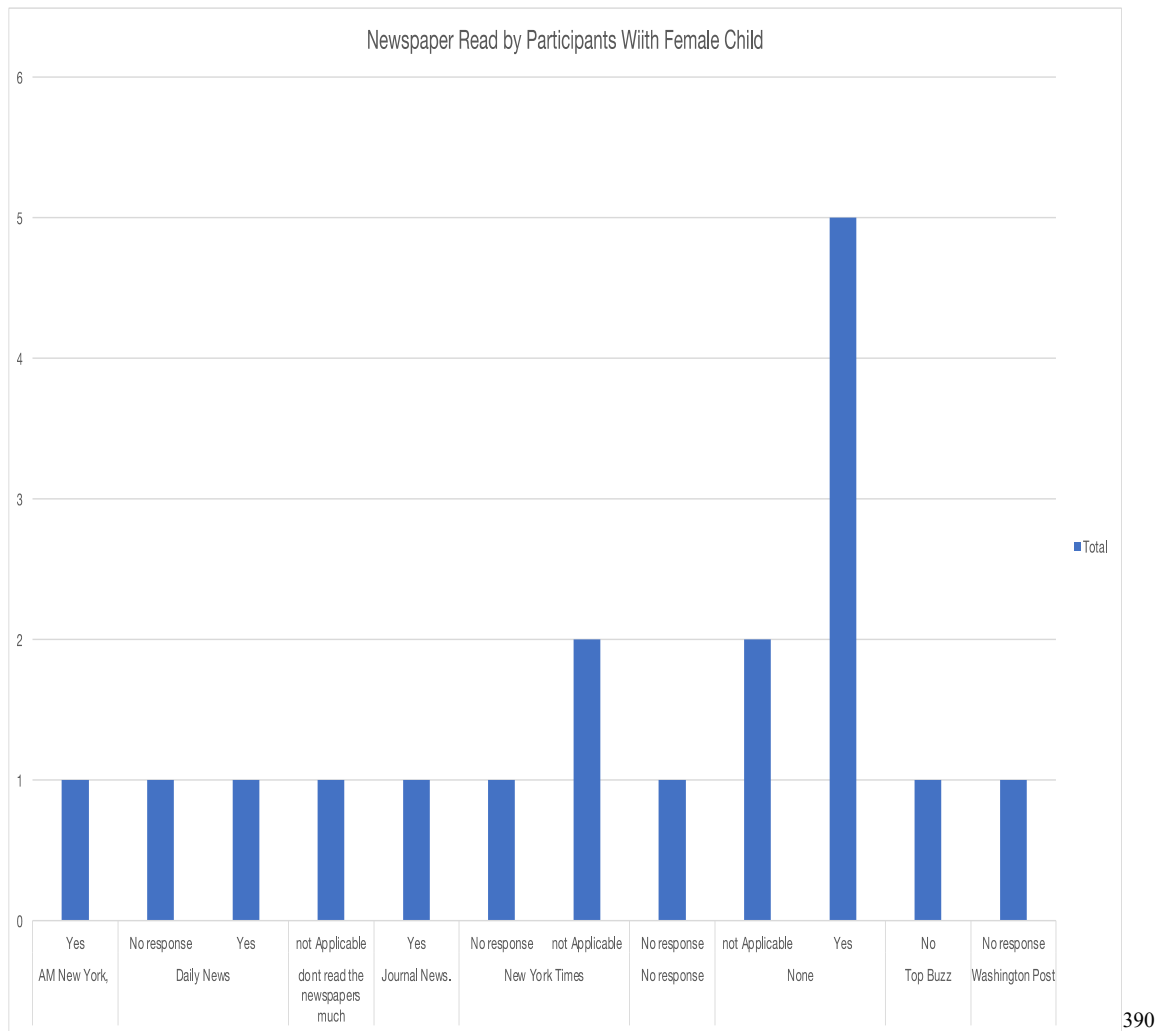


Figure 26. Survey Chart 5. Most read newspapers by participants with female child.

³⁹⁰ Survey Chart 5-1. Participant answers to identify which participants with female children read which New York City Newspapers. See appendix A. Powerpoint slide image on page 217 for survey questions asked.

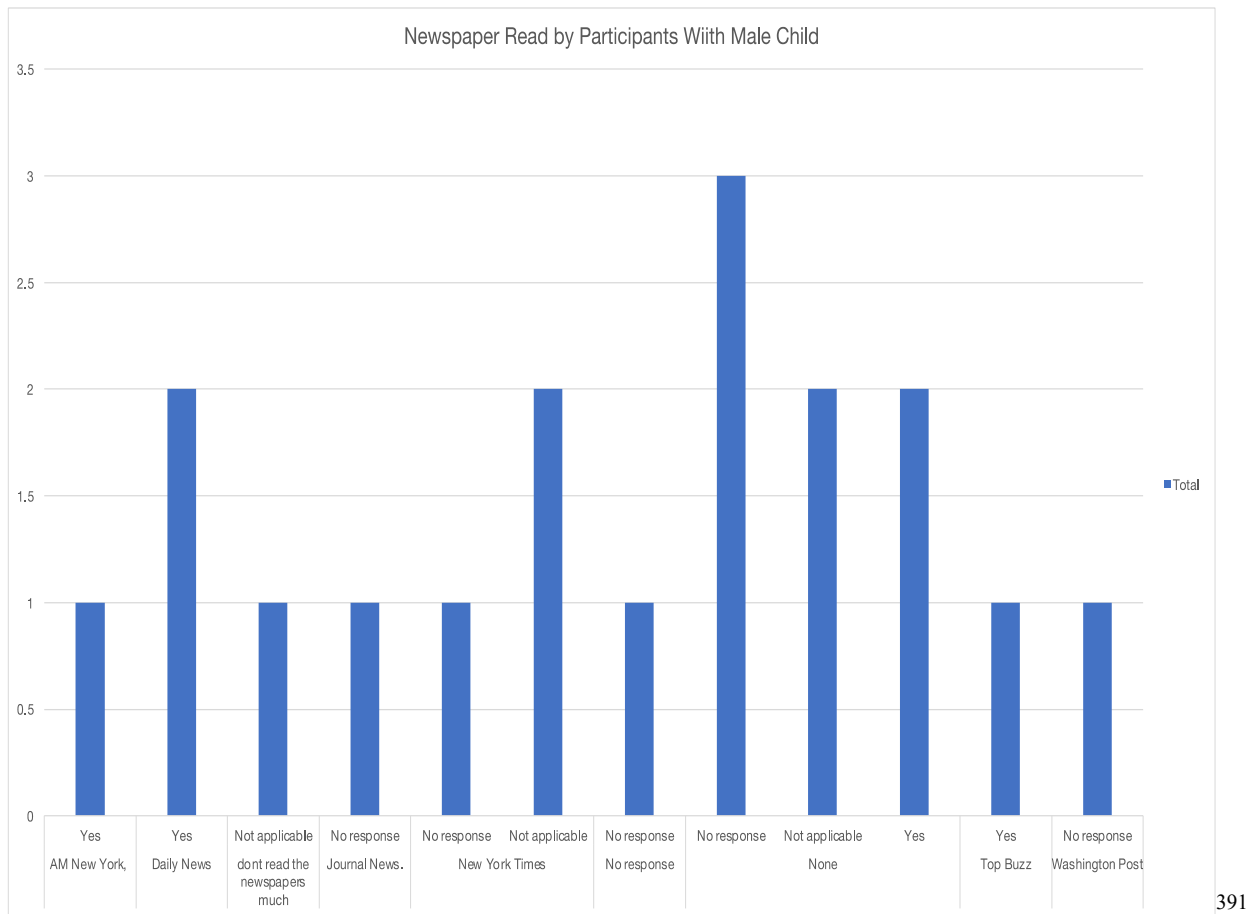


Figure 27. Survey Chart 5-2. Newspapers read by participants with male child

Of the three focus group charts (A, B, and C) less than half of the participants stated that they read *The New York Times*, and a third answered that they read the *New York Daily News*. However, in looking at participants who have daughters versus sons, participants with daughters tended not to read newspapers, whereas those with sons stated that they read the *New York Daily News*. What is most interesting is that when asked about the Central Park case, chart four

³⁹¹ Survey Chart 5-2. Participant answers to identify which participants with male children read which New York City Newspapers. See appendix A. Powerpoint slide image on page 217 for survey questions asked.

indicates that most participants answered that they lacked knowledge of the Central Park case and the people involved in the case.

What was most surprising was that participants who were expected to have had some knowledge of specific events expressed that they did not. For instance, participants born before the 1950s possessed as much information about all four events as the younger participants. Psychologist Paul Doolan argues in *Collective Memory and Unremembering* that this usually results from how individuals and groups portray and maintain the memory. He states that remembering and unremembering are related and based on how the historical narrative supports the memory of the event and determines how different groups remember the event. The trauma of wrongful convictions and executions related to the outcomes of those events may have forced many Blacks to collectively unremember those past historical and social experiences.³⁹² Therefore, many members of the communities related to the event will block out details while disassociating themselves consciously and subconsciously from community members involved in the incident.

³⁹² Paul M. M. Doolan, *Collective Memory and Unremembering in Collective Memory and the Dutch East Indies: Unremembering Decolonization*. (Amsterdam University Press; 2021)

C. New York City newspapers continue to construct Black males as violent and deviant in crime reports.

1. Quantitative Results and Discussion

Language- Keywords

Schudson and Fowler examined newspaper articles and found that newspapers frequently used stereotypes and keywords when speaking about Blacks accused of crimes.³⁹³ This study aimed to identify keywords selected based on race and counted the number of times those keywords were used during the first weeks of the reported case. Utilizing the Voyant, a web-based text mining program, they only identified the most commonly used words, such as suspects' names, names of law enforcement officers, and civil authority words like "courts" and "charged."³⁹⁴ The Cirrus failed to highlight keywords with a high ratio as it did with police officers or victims, nor did it highlight keywords that were used as descriptive adjectives to report about the suspects.

According to Neuendorf, using a rhetorical analysis would allow the researcher to identify and focus on how each Central Park Case character was described and depicted in newspaper reports of the crime. This analysis method permitted the researcher to collect data from several articles in *The New York Times* and *Newsday*.³⁹⁵

The results of this study found several keywords that were repeatedly used in both *The New York Times* and *Newsday* that could be categorized into four groups: A) Protagonist

³⁹³ Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1978); Robert Fowler, *Language in The News* (London: Routledge Publishers; 1991)

³⁹⁴ Rockwell, Stefan Sinclair and Geoffrey. 2016. *Voyant Tools*. Accessed 2022. www.voyant-tools.org. Voyant see figures 12 and 13 pages 124-125 .

³⁹⁵ Kimberly A. Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc. 2002)

Instances of Use, B) The Act of Instances of Use C) Described by Zoomorphism and D) Word of Truth.³⁹⁶ *The New York Times* referred to the accused in animalistic terms. It stated that the individuals accused attempted to murder the victim, while *Newsday* focused more on the act of “rape” of “an investment banker.” Although *Newsday* throughout the first three months of the case reported more on the crime, only *The New York Times* mentioned that the accused individuals should be executed for their suspected crime of rape.

The graph in Table A provides a visual accounting of the number of times that the victim was described as the protagonist who was raped, brutalized, and assaulted woman, an investment banker.

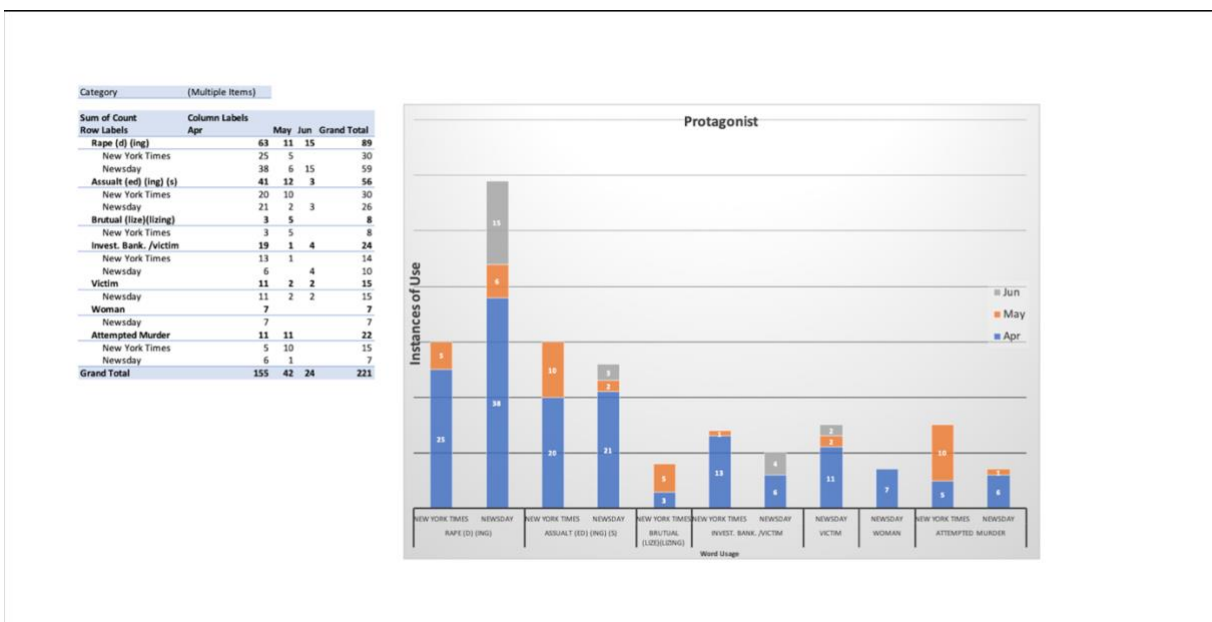


Table A. Shows the rate at which the victim was described as the protagonist.

However, in contrast to Table A, *The New York Times* uses more animalistic phrases when describing the suspects in Table B. Using animal words to describe a person implies that

³⁹⁶ Adrienne Moses, “*Media’s Hysteria of Race, Class, Sex and Crime.*”

the suspects have animal-like behavioral qualities and characteristics. Descriptive words like “wolfpack” and “savagery” were used throughout several articles to give readers a viewpoint of the crime being especially vicious. (See example D.).

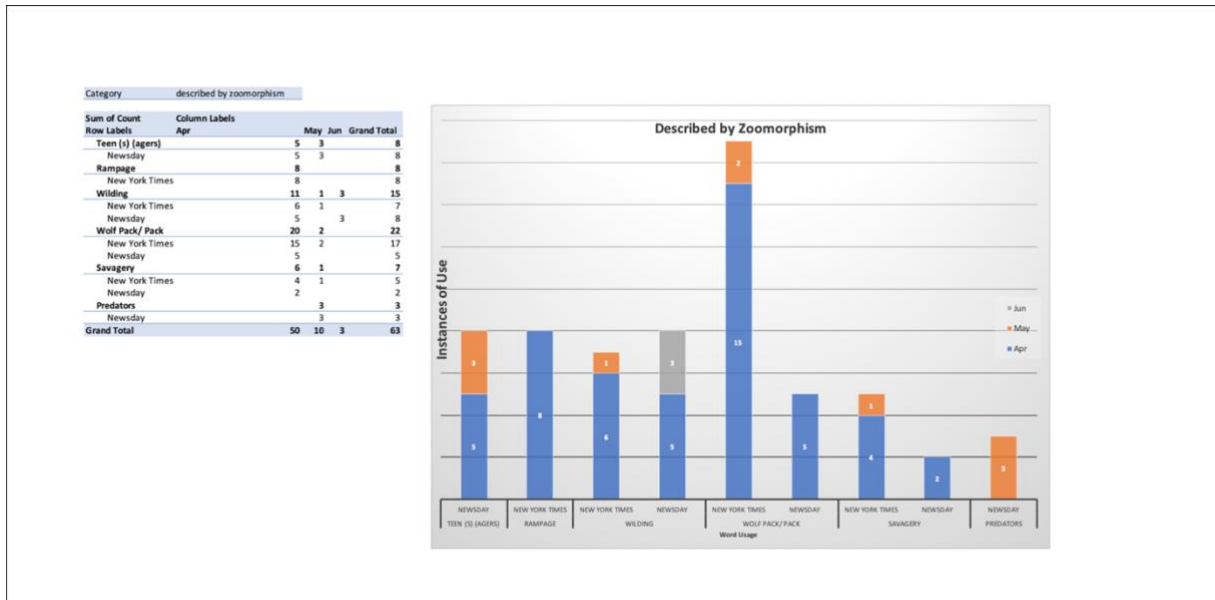


Table B. Shows how the teenage suspects were described in animalistic terms in news reports.

Further results showed that during the first month of the incident, *The New York Times* used zoomorphic terms more than twice as much as *Newsday*. Similarly, looking at Table C allowed the researcher to examine how many times the “act of” rape, assault, brutalizing, and attempted murder was mentioned in both *The New York Times* and *Newsday* during the first three months after the date of the incident. The findings show a high rate of saturation of words such as “rape,” “assault,” “brutalize,” and “attempted murder” used to sensationalize newspaper reports of the case.

Act Of

Act Of	Apr	May	Jun
RAPE (20) (ING)	23	5	0
ASSAULT (15) (ING) (S)	20	10	0
BRUTAL (5) (LIE) (LONG)	9	5	0
ATTEMPTED MURDER	9	10	0

Category: Multiple Items

Size of Count	Column Labels	May	Jun	Grand Total
Size of Count	Column Labels			
Size Labels	Age			
Attack (n)	56	6	26	88
New York Times	2	2	2	4
Norwidley	30	4	26	66
Rape (n)	65	11	15	89
New York Times	25	5	5	35
Norwidley	38	6	15	59
Assault	15	1	1	17
New York Times	7	1	1	9
Norwidley	4	0	0	4
Arrest (n)	13	16	2	31
New York Times	5	5	1	11
Norwidley	4	1	1	6
Assault (n) (n)	41	12	5	58
New York Times	20	10	10	40
Norwidley	21	2	5	28
Brutal (n) (n)	3	5	8	16
New York Times	1	5	6	12
Criminal (n)	21	29	5	55
New York Times	13	27	40	80
Norwidley	8	2	15	25
Sexual (n)	60	2	7	69
New York Times	27	2	2	31
Norwidley	13	2	20	35
Murder/Violence	8	5	18	31
New York Times	5	2	12	19
Norwidley	4	15	2	21
Convicted	13	13	13	39
New York Times	4	6	2	12
Norwidley	4	6	2	12
Charge	3	5	8	16
New York Times	3	3	5	11
Norwidley	3	2	3	8
Execution	4	4	4	12
Charged	3	3	3	9
Shooting	2	2	2	6
Guilt	2	2	2	6
Norwidley	3	3	3	9
Attempted Murder	13	11	20	44
New York Times	5	10	15	30
Norwidley	7	1	5	13
Grand Total	279	121	62	462

Word of Truth

Instances of Size

Word of Truth

Legend: Apr (blue), May (orange), Jun (grey)

160

1. Framing

Melissa Hickman Barlow, a criminal justice professor, found studies that supported her theory that criminals, by definition, equated with “young black males.”³⁹⁷ This study found that full-page articles reporting the incident used language representing young Black males as salient criminals. Although Barlow argues that crime and violence became associated with Blackness during the urban unrest and civil rights movements of the 1960s, this differs from a host of other studies.³⁹⁸ Barlow recognizes that the criminalization of Black men has become symbolic and linked to moral panic.³⁹⁹ Rudwick, Freeman, and Muhammad’s studies found that Black males were portrayed as a public threat long before the civil rights movement.⁴⁰⁰ This idea was a social construct of 19th-century writers and journalists.

A review and analysis of framing practices in selected articles revealed how the words, typesetting, and images were used to emphasize to the public that this incident represents a social threat. For example, Figures E and F are featured across pages 2 and 3 with one headline.

³⁹⁷ Melissa Hickman Barlow, “Race and the Problem of Crime in “Time and “Newsweek” Cover Stories, 1946 to 1995” *Social Justice* 25, no. 2 (72), *Defending Rights and Just Futures in the Real World Order* (Summer 1998), 149

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 151

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁴⁰⁰ Elliot M. Rudwick, “Race Labelling and the Press,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 31 no. 2 (Spring, 1962) 177-181.; Estelle B. Freeman, “Crimes which startle and horrify” Gender, age, and The Racialization of Sexual Violence in White American Newspapers, 187- 1900,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, no.3, *Intersections of Race and Sexuality* (September 2011) 456-497.; Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 2010).

2
DAILY NEWS
Friday, April 21, 1989

Yogi's son in a coke tag

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A drug sweep in New Jersey yesterday tagged ex-major league baseballer Dale Berra, son of Hall of Fame Yankee catcher Yogi Berra, with a charge of conspiracy to buy cocaine.

The younger Berra, 32, of Glen Ridge, N.J., was among 23 cited in warrants capping a six-month probe of drugs, according to Morris County Prosecutor Lee Trumbull.

Nabbed at his home, Berra was arraigned and released after he posted a \$5,000 bond.

He was charged with conspiracy to violate state narcotics laws.

According to Lt. John Dempsey, Berra is accused of meeting several times with John Bailey to buy cocaine.

Bailey is key to distribution of up to \$20,000 in cocaine weekly, lawmen said. The cocaine went to street-level pushers and "corporate types" buying for personal consumption, it was alleged.

More than 100 lawmen staged the sweep through Morris, Essex, Passaic, Somerset and Union counties early yesterday.


Ex-Pirate, Yankee

Berra played for the Yankees and the Pittsburgh Pirates. His career ended last season when he was released from the Baltimore Orioles' International League AAA farm team in Rochester.

The younger Berra was among major leaguers called to testify in a September 1985 trial of two suspects in a baseball drug case. He and six other players were suspended Feb. 28, 1986, by then Commissioner Peter Ueberroth for using drugs.

Yogi Berra, now a Houston Astros coach, learned of his son's arrest in Atlanta, where the Astros played Wednesday. Astros owner John McMullen said Yogi was "shocked," and would make no comment until he has additional information.

INVESTMENT BANKER, 28, BEATEN TEEN GANG



WOMAN JOGS past police car in Central Park near spot where investment banker was raped.

Lived a dream life

By MARK KRIEGLER
Daily News Staff Writer

She lay unconscious, her body viciously broken, under intensive care. And all anyone could remember about her was grace, cheer and success.

The young woman whose life was jeopardized by marauding teenagers, lived the way most of us dream.

She grew up in Upper St. Clair, Pa., an affluent suburb of doctors, lawyers and professionals, 10 miles south of Pittsburgh, far from the steel mills.

Her mother is a member of the school board and former Republican committeewoman. One brother was said to be a lawyer in Hartford, another an assistant district attorney in Dallas.

After graduating from high school in 1978, she headed east for Wellesley College, an exclusive women's college near Boston.

She majored in economics and graduated Phi Beta Kappa. She was much more than a brain.

In her yearbook photo she appears as a pretty blond in a turtleneck sweater with an engaging smile and eyes gleaming with promise.

By September 1983, when she attended her first graduate class at Yale, she had worked for the State Department in Zimbabwe, for Braxton Associates and for former Rep. James Shannon, who went on to become attorney general of Massachusetts.

Faculty and administrators at Yale were crestfallen yesterday.

'A neat, little gal'

"This is such a neat, little gal — a sparkling personality and a lovely smile. She was very well liked," remembered Jeanne Stone, an administrative assistant at Yale.

On May 26, 1986, she graduated with a master's degree from a joint program at the university's Schools of Organization and Management and International Affairs.

In the Yale yearbook she appears more serious, more intense. But the trademark smile still shines and her eyes reflect intelligence.

She was headed for the big time: New York, Salomon Brothers, Wall Street.

She became the top-rated new hire in the firm's management program, before settling into an associate's job with Salomon's energy group.

She also was an avid jogger, competing in last summer's New York Road Runners Manufacturers Hanover Corporate Challenge race.

Her job as an investment banker was to give financial advice to companies in the energy business.

A secretary broke down in tears speaking of her.

"I am shocked," said Ranji Nagaswami, a classmate at Yale. "Oh God, I hope she doesn't die."

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Example A. "Lived a Dream Life," *New York Daily News*, April 21, 1989. Article framing in newspaper about victim's life.

⁴⁰¹ Example A. Mark Kriegel and David Handschuh, "Lived a Dream Life," *New York Daily News*, April 21, 1989, www.nydailynews.newspapers.com

Friday, April 21, 1989 DAILY NEWS 3

AND LEFT UNCONSCIOUS BY A DOZEN YOUTHS RAPES JOGGER



POLICE CHECK Central Park area where jogger was attacked by gang on Wednesday night. RICHARD EDWARDS

'She put up terrific fight'

By DON SINGLETON and DON GENTILE
Daily News Staff Writers

A 23-year-old investment banker who regularly jogged in Central Park was repeatedly raped, viciously beaten and left for dead by a wolf pack of more than a dozen young teenagers who attacked her at the end of an escalating crime spree yesterday.

After savagely assaulting the woman about 10 p.m. Wednesday, the gang left her bleeding, bound, nearly nude and unconscious in a remote area at the north end of the park, where she was found by two other joggers at 1:30 a.m.

"She put up a terrific fight," said Chief of Detectives Robert Colangelo.

The victim, a "brilliant" financier who was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wellesley College, is employed in the corporate finance department of Salomon Brothers investment banking firm.

She remained unconscious on life-support systems and in extremely critical condition in the intensive care unit of Metropolitan Hospital last night.

One source said the woman had suffered "massive brain damage."

Six suspects, ages 13 to 17, were in custody yesterday, but none had been formally arrested in the case. Police said they were searching for at least seven others.

A police source said the woman had been raped at least three times. One youth admitted to rape and several others told police they sexually abused her, another source added.

"They are giving each other up," said one officer involved in questioning the youths.

Parents arrive

The woman is not being identified by the Daily News because she is a rape victim.

At 5:45 p.m., her parents arrived in the hospital at 88th St. and First Ave. from their Pennsylvania home, accompanied by police. As officers explained what had happened to their daughter, the director of the intensive care unit led them toward her ninth-floor room.

More than a dozen friends and relatives joined the parents at the hospital and several of them gave blood for the victim.

Colangelo said the suspects, Harlem teenagers who knew each other but were not members of a formal gang, had "spontaneously" decided "to come downtown and cause trouble."

As many as 30 people may have been in the wolf pack when it entered the park shortly after 9 p.m. However, not all took part in the crime spree, police said.

Rocks thrown at taxi

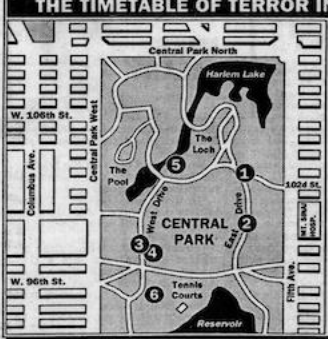
About 9:10, after throwing rocks at a taxi, the group attempted to rob a 52-year-old man carrying groceries at 102d St. and the East Drive.

"They tried to take his money but didn't get it," Colangelo said.

See **JOGGER** Page 29

This story was reported by Daily News Staff Writers SHARON BROUSSARD, NATALIE BYFIELD, LARRY CELONA, LYLE V. HARRIS, JOHN MAGZULLA, KETTY MOORE, PATRICE O'SHAUGHNESSY, MIKE SANTANGELO and CLAUDE SERANT.

THE TIMETABLE OF TERROR IN CENTRAL PARK



KEY
(Times are approximate)

1. Wednesday, 9:10 p.m. - Teenage gang attempts to rob a 50-year-old man at 102d St. and East Drive in Central Park.
2. 9:15 p.m. - Further south on East Drive the gang attempts to assault a couple riding a tandem bicycle.
3. 9:55 p.m. - On West Drive, the teenagers assault a man with a pipe.
4. 9:55 p.m. - The man witnesses the gang attacking another person.
5. 10:00-10:55 p.m. - The gang attacks a woman jogger. They drag her approximately 200 ft. north of the 102d St. transverse near a small water body called The Loch where they beat, rape and leave her unconscious. She is found at 1:30 a.m., Thursday.
6. 10:50 p.m. - Five of the gang members are arrested near the West Bridge Path and 96th St. for the earlier incidents.

TRINE SHAFER/DAILY NEWS

Example B. Article in newspaper about victim being "savagely" assaulted while jogging.

402 Example B. Don Singleton and Richard Edwards, "She put up a terrific fight," New York Daily News, April 21, 1989, www.nydailynews.newspapers.com

The images attached to these articles offer implicit and explicit messages. The image of a woman jogging in the park, passing a police vehicle, under the title “Teen Gang,” presents a sense of fear and safety to the public. The researcher recognized that the article about the jogger is next to another article that discusses a criminal drug charge. It is assumed that the article layout about a gang on the same page as an article layout concerning a drug arrest is not coincidental. Although the drug arrest article is much smaller in length because it is framed in the first column of the page and is related to a popular sports figure, it would attract the attention of a large majority of male consumers.

The race of the suspects is not explicitly stated in the article, but because specific words are used to detail the events of the crime before and after the victim was discovered, it communicates a message to readers that the suspects are Black males. The article's source of information is a police detective who implies that the suspects, “Harlem teenagers,” should not have “come downtown and cause trouble.”⁴⁰³ Since this statement was made by a member of the civil authority, the public is left to assume that some individuals should not have the liberty to enter Central Park. In addition, to sensationalize the event, the writer explains how the victim fought off her attackers. These articles express the ethos of the journalist and the publisher at the same time by trying to stimulate the readers' moral ideas about social behaviors.

In much of the same manner, Figure C frames the Central Park crime article on the first page of the business section. Framing the article on the front page in the center of the page allows the reader to zoom in on the article first. The surrounding articles focus on political, economic, and health dilemmas that use familiar keywords in the titles and the body, such as

⁴⁰³ Don Singleton and Don Gentile, “She put up a terrific fight” *New York Daily News*, April 21, 1989, www.nydailynews.newspapers.com.

“fight” and “scrap.” The two images on the page exemplify Entman’s framing and agenda-setting theories. In *Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power*, Entman explained that framing and agenda-setting slant news articles to influence individuals with power and often highlight those marginalized individuals without power.⁴⁰⁴ As the graph in Figure D shows, *The New York Times* articles communicated to the reader that they represent the “words of truth” based on their sources. The images of the crime scene and police officers exemplified the newspapers' influence on public interpretations of the crime.

⁴⁰⁴ Robert M. Entman, Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power. *Journal of Communication* 57 (2007). Robert M. Entman, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 2000).

Likewise, in Figure 30, a picture of a Black male patient is seated in a wheelchair in front of a doctor's station in an AIDS ward. This agenda-setting action was a strategic measure of the newspapers. First, it presents the image of the location of the Central Park Rape and an article that describes that the violence of the teenage suspects left the victim critically injured. In the following article, the public is reminded of a current public health crisis linked to illicit sex, death, and the poor. In the featured articles, both the Central Park victim and the AIDS patient were receiving treatment at the same medical facility. In this way, the newspapers encouraged individual moral judgments, political attention, and action in addressing these two societal issues.

2. Newspaper sensationalism stimulated social responses and unequal social justice.

A. Content Analysis of Article Results and Discussion.

As mentioned in the literature review, newspapers printed subjective articles depicting the accused suspects in a way that would encourage a specific reaction. In an analytical assessment of selected articles, the findings were consistent with Steven's earlier study on the use of sensationalism to arouse the public.⁴⁰⁶ These results found that stereotypes and metaphors were used repeatedly and inferred a cause and remedy to address or prevent the event from reoccurring. Many of the words selected in the articles were usually inflammatory and speculative.

In addition, featuring these articles in sections such as the sports or business sections suggests that males are the intended audience. The results showed that the victim and suspects were portrayed with different word choices and the articles presented the suspects as a problem in maintaining the city's social order.

B. Headlines and Front Pages Visual Analysis Results and Discussion

Similarly, Schudson's earlier study found that each article or headline is determined for a specific purpose by sensationalizing newspaper headlines. These results support the findings of Schudson's study on how news reporters and editors project their values into the news articles and Mexal's survey on how the newspapers connected crime with the misrepresentation of Black males and Black culture.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ John D. Stevens, *Sensationalism, and the New York Press*, (New York: Columbia University Press; 1991) 4

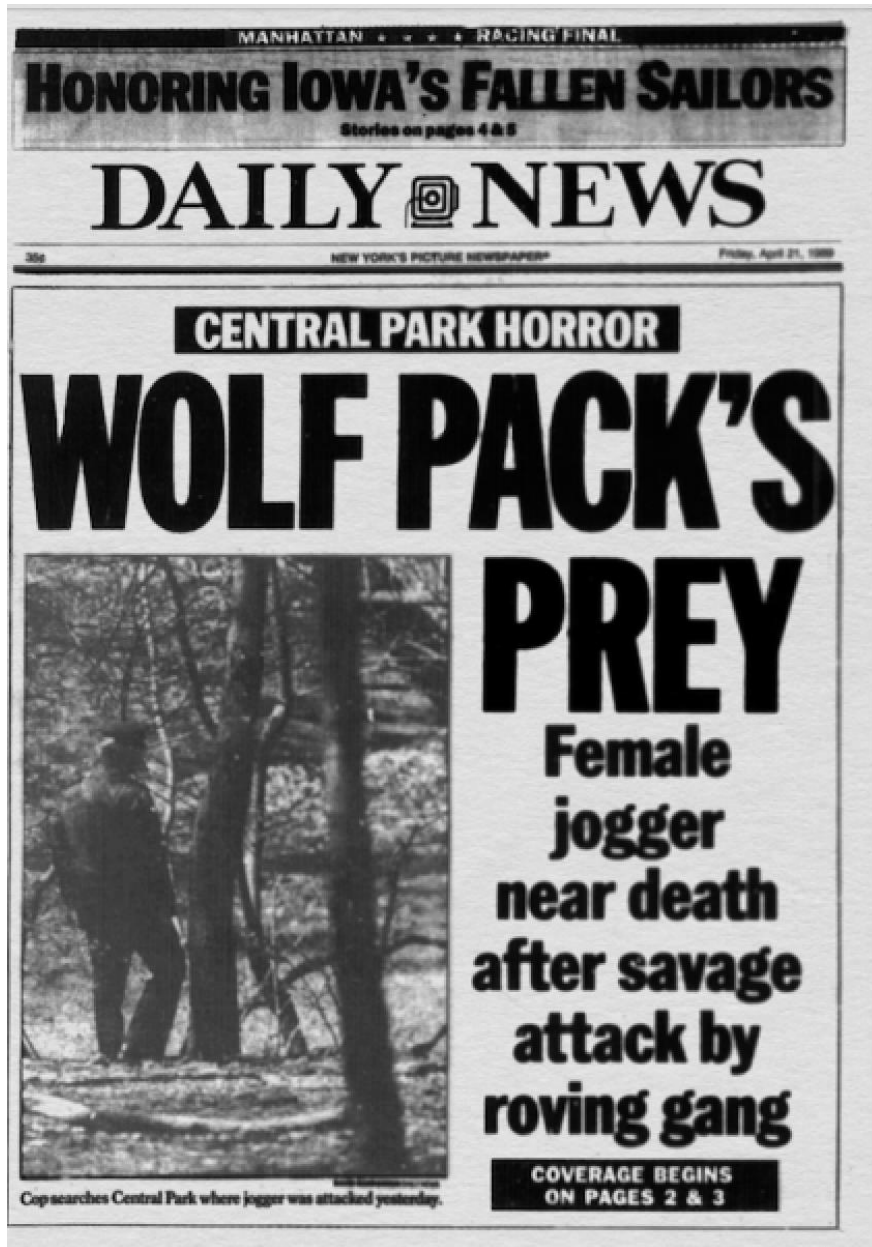
⁴⁰⁷ Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books; 1978) 4; Stephan J. Mexal, "The Roots of Wilding" Black Literary Naturalism, The Language of Wilderness, and Hip Hop in the Central Park Jogger Rape" *African American Review*. 46, no. 1, (Spring 2013) 5

Likewise, the results showed that many headlines were laden with animalistic terms to describe the suspects that serve as explicit racial sentiments of the publisher and their support of racial separatism.⁴⁰⁸ What was most surprising is that during the search for headlines and articles about the event, the researcher could not locate any front-page headlines with images of the public that were of the same racial and social group as the suspects. The front pages and headlines were written to direct public opinion to believe that the five suspects were guilty during the first weeks of the investigation.

Comparatively, conducting rhetorical analysis of both content and visual aspects of the selected newspapers, the researcher agrees with psychologists Shelley Taylor and Susan Fiske in their explanation of *Social Cognition* and how newspapers write headlines with easy euphemisms so that people can create mental pictures that provide references and can be interpreted quickly. Similarly, these results support Jim Kuypers's, a professor in communications, study on rhetorical criticism of newspaper framing. Newspaper headlines such as the *New York Daily News* emphasize metaphors to construct a relationship between animal behaviors and suspects.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁸ Johnathan Markowitz, *Exploring the Myth of The Black Rapist: Collective Memory and the Scottsboro Nine in Racial Spectacles: Exploration in Media, Race and Justice*, (New York: Routledge; 2011) 27.

⁴⁰⁹ Shelley E. Taylor, and Susan T. Fiske, *Social Cognition*. (New York: McGraw Hill; 1991). Jim A. Kuypers, "Framing Analysis in Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action" in *Doing News Framing Analysis*. (New York: Routledge; 2010).



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Example D. Front page Daily News, Wolf Pack's Prey.

⁴¹⁰ Example D. WOLF PACK'S PREY Female Jogger near death after savage attack by roving gang." *Daily News* . April 21, 1989. www.dailynews.com

In addition, this study revealed front pages with headlines about the targeted case and other news stories that primed and framed an idea of nostalgia on the same page.⁴¹¹ This is evident in a review and analysis of the *Daily News*'s front page on Thursday, April 27, 1989, with the announcement of the death of Lucille Ball from the *I Love Lucy* series. The *I Love Lucy* television show was an early American situation comedy broadcast by the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) in 1951. The "We Loved Lucy" headliner on the front page with the headline of the suspect's indictment reveals a subtle message of agenda-setting.⁴¹² This show's older fans may remember only one Black actor has ever had a role in this program. In the 1955 the fifth episode of the fifth season "The Great Train Robbery,"⁴¹³ aired when Sam Mc Daniel was featured as the tall, dark-complexioned server on the train.⁴¹⁴ Prior to the 1960s civil rights movement, Blacks, particularly Black males, were portrayed "as servants,"⁴¹⁵ playing into negative stereotypes⁴¹⁶ that the newspapers used to influence public opinion.⁴¹⁷ The photo below of a popular post-World War television program has a headline of the incident that highlights criminal behavior, reinforcing White peoples' beliefs about Black individuals and perpetuates racial stereotypes.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹¹ Paul M. Kellstedt, *The Mass Media and the Dynamics of American Racial Attitudes*. (New York: Cambridge University Press; 2003).) 14

⁴¹² Kirk A. Johnson, "Objective News and Other Myths. The Poisoning of Young Black Minds," *The Journal of Negro Education*. 60, no. 3 (Summer, 1991): 330

⁴¹³ *I Love Lucy*, season 5, episode 5, "The Great Train Robbery," directed by James V. Kern, October 31, 1955, CBS Entertainment. En.wikipedia.org

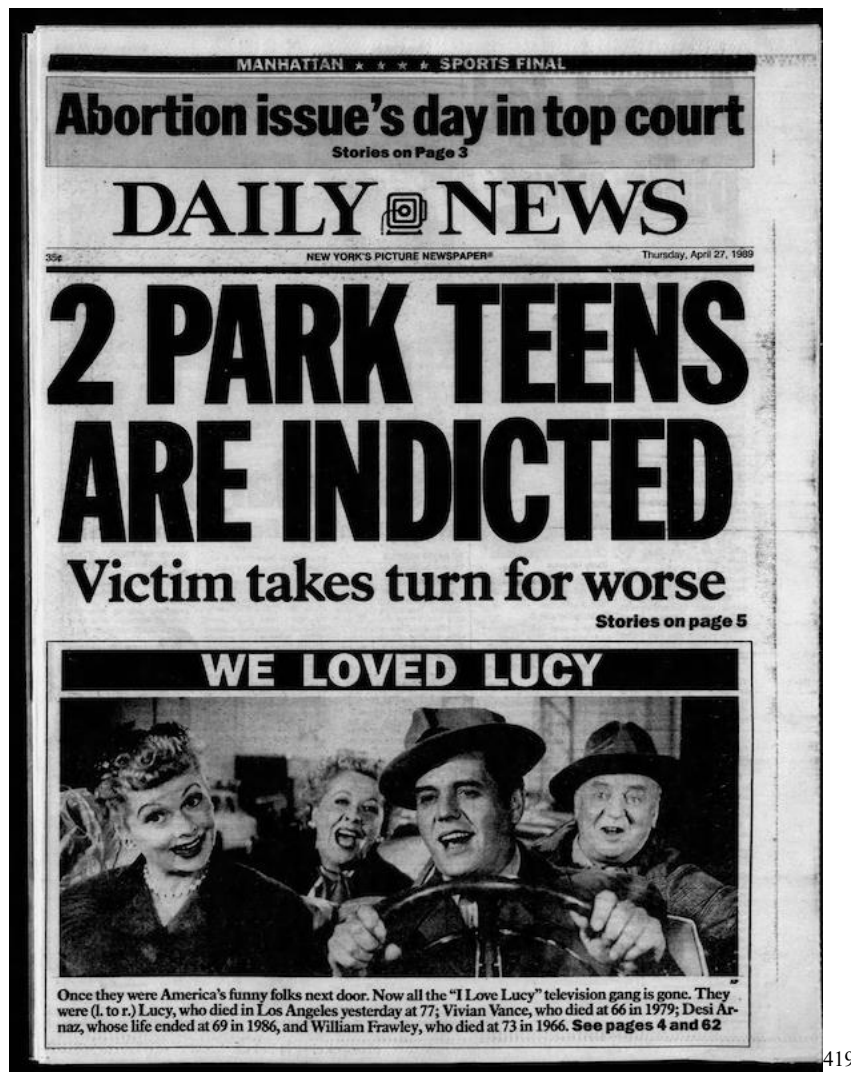
⁴¹⁴ *I Love Lucy*, season 5, episode 5, "The Great Train Robbery," directed by James V. Kern, featuring Sam McDaniel as "Sam the Porter," aired October 31, 1955, on CBS.

⁴¹⁵ Paul M. Kellstedt, *The Mass Media and the Dynamics of American Racial Attitudes*. 15

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 16

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 104

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17



Example E. Daily News front page framed with nostalgic program

C. Photographs

Following the visual methodology of Gillian Rose, this study found that several images and photographs of the suspects revealed what Rose referred to as the social effects of visual images.

A critical examination of each image allowed the researcher to identify visible and invisible

⁴¹⁹ Example E. "2 Park Teens Are Indicted." And "We Loved Lucy." *Daily News*. April 27, 1989. www.dailynews.newspapers.com.

racial differences, social power relations, and socially constructed categories in how individuals were pictured.⁴²⁰ Results showed that only the suspects' mothers were pictured in the newspapers, and no fathers were pictured. Only one suspect was photographed more often than the others. Yusef Salaam's picture is widely printed, usually with police officers escorting him in handcuffs, and rarely are these images in color.⁴²¹ Looking closely at one image, two suspects are handcuffed and escorted by the police, but from the audience's vantage point, Yusef Salaam appears to be more in front than the other suspect. In several photographs, Salaam appears taller than other persons pictured, and usually, he is flanked by more than one police officer. This can be viewed as a show of restraint by the police and a need for control of the suspect.

⁴²⁰ Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodology: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications; 2007); Johnathan Potter and Margret Wetherall, *Discourse and Social Psychology*. (London: Sage Publications; 1987) 7

⁴²¹ Kelly Welch, "Black Criminal Stereotypes and Racial Profiling" *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 23, no. 3 (August 2007) 277



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Figure 28. Photo of suspects in police custody

⁴²² Figure 28. Yusef Salaam, 15 and Raymond Santana, 14 are led from the 24th Precinct by a detective after their arrest in connection with the rape and beating of a woman jogging in Central Park (Ap Photo David Burns).



Figure 29. Suspect Y. Salaam with armed police entering court building

Salaam is rarely photographed with his parents or in a frame with other Black people; he is only in images with White police officers beside him. Likewise, framing Example E features the five suspects in an arrest booking photo plaques. A close review of this photo raises questions regarding the authenticity of these images created at the New York City Police Department Central Booking and how this photo was obtained by the press.⁴²⁴ However, these photos were made to look as if they were guilty before being convicted. This photograph infers a presumption of guilt to the viewer. It has been widely used by newspapers during 1989 and continues to be a source when referring to the Central Park Jogger suspects.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Figure 29. Yusef Salaam accused in case of the rape of a Central Park Jogger, enter the Manhattan Supreme Court for deliberations, 1990 (Photo by Clarence Davis/ NY Daily News Archives).

⁴²⁴ New York Daily News Archives Photo accessed 10/3/2022.

⁴²⁵ See figure 30. On page 176



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Figure 30. Suspects in arrest booking photo

However, an image of the White female prosecutor who presented the case to the grand jury is pictured with White people and accompanied by White males.

⁴²⁶ Figure 30. Yusef Salaam, Kevin Richardson, Raymond Santana, Khary Wise and Antron McCray suspected of raping the female jogger in Central Park. 1989 (photo *Daily News* Archive).



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Figure 31. New York City Prosecutors and Detectives arriving to court.

The visual interpretation of this image supports Estelle Freedman's study on White male protectionism for White females.⁴²⁸ These results support the original claims of this research project that the newspapers misrepresent Black masculinity, influencing the public to believe that Black males are a threat to American civil society.⁴²⁹ In doing so, the New York City newspapers influenced the social psychology that resulted in the wrongful convictions of the suspects in the Central Park jogger case.

⁴²⁷ Figure 31. Elizabeth Lederer (left) and Linda Feinstein (right) case prosecutors for the Central Park Jogger Rape trial are flanked and escorted to the courthouse by White male police officers. No Black individuals are noted in frame. *New York Post* Archive www.nypost.com

⁴²⁸ Estelle Freedman, "Crimes which startle and horrify."

⁴²⁹ Douglas J. Flowe, *Uncontrollable Blackness: African American Men and Criminality in Jim Crow New York* "Justice, Power and Politics." (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; 2020)

Despite the limitations of the focus groups' size, participant ages, and knowledge of previous and most recent events, the groups' responses still provide valuable insight into what Paul Doolan refers to as "memory that can be erased by individuals and groups."⁴³⁰ The events highlighted during the focus group were highly publicized legal sexual crimes that members from the Silent Generation and the Baby Boomer Generation should have known. This is an important finding when looking at community trauma, the collective memory that has impacted that community directly, and how or if that community responds. The continued exposure of the incident was framed intentionally to present the alleged suspects as individuals in a specific social position, which posed a specific social problem that the public should perceive as a significant societal issue.

The newspapers' sensationalized reporting provided readers an interpretation and understanding of the characters involved, often by misrepresentation as a motivator to move members from one classification of Publics to another. Many newspaper articles and headlines were presented as words of truth to hopefully attract more readers that could be identified in the group's unresponsive latent public, non-public, and aware public, who typically would not offer any substantial response. In doing so, the newspapers used public relations tactics to encourage some of those members to adopt a more active position and ready themselves to use varying measures as a remedy for the problem.

However, responses from participants of the focus group concerning sensationalism, constant negative exposure, use of misrepresentation, and stereotypes of the alleged suspects may have had a differing effect. Although the intention of news reports may have been to

⁴³⁰ Paul M. M. Doolan, *Collective Memory and Unremembering: Unremembering Decolonization in Collective Memory and the Dutch East Indies*. Amsterdam University Press (2021) 18

motivate these members into an active public by stirring their emotions and increasing their awareness, the opposite appears to have happened. It becomes evident that due to their shared societal, cultural, and racial connections, these same tactics forced some of them to be more passive in communicating with others about reading newspaper reports and directly remembering the details of the incident. For this reason, these participants can be viewed as representatives of public members who are aware but unresponsive and to become disengaged or concerned about the event. Since this group appeared to share a collective unremembering of this event and other “traumatic” events previously reported in the news, it can be assumed that this group may have identified the situation as a problem and felt powerless in offering either input or support.

The analysis of the framing layout of the articles reviewed word content, language context associated with the park as nature, headlines using animalistic terms, and the photographs that convey displaced alternating messages of fear, nostalgia, security, and control. This practice by the newspapers forced the public to revisit information “stored away in symbolic form” that they viewed and interpreted.⁴³¹ The Central Park jogger case, when directly compared to other historical cases such as the Scottsboro case in the newspapers, the trauma experienced by the suspect’s communities in the past may have contributed to not just the silence of community members but also how and why they ignored the details of the event consciously and unconsciously. Taken together, these findings provide evidence of tenets such as attitudinal and institutional barriers that have historically accompanied racial, sexual, and legal inequality indicative of models of social disability.⁴³²

⁴³¹ Ibid. 16

⁴³² Kimani Paul-Emile, Blackness as Disability? *Flash: The Fordham Law Archive of Scholarship and History*. Vol. 106 No. 293 Fordham University School of Law (2018) 295-296

Overall, the findings in this research can identify and demonstrate how newspapers follow the Situational Theory of Publics framework to frame articles, headlines, and photos in specific sections of their newspapers. The use of animalistic phrases and stereotypical language printed in the business and sports sections of the newspapers next to political, economic, and health issues indicates that a specific audience is targeted. In this instance, the use of STOP highlighted that the Black males accused of raping a White woman in Central Park was a situational problem that needs to be remedied, and the targeted audience must activate immediately to restore the “social order.”

Therefore, the findings of this study can best be understood as further validation that the Situational Theory of Publics utilized by the newspapers directly influences how the public responds to social justice regarding race, sex, and crime. The zoomorphism language describing the crime and the suspects was used to illicit a particular response. Taking advantage of the convergent design of mixed methods allowed the researcher to consider several vantage points of how information about the incident was reported and how the public collectively remembered the event's details. These findings show a strong correlation between the sensationalism of news reports regarding the incident, the racial misrepresentation of the accused Black males, the social challenges facing the city, and the public's response regarding social justice.

Most importantly, the results provide evidence of the newspapers' role in influencing the public and maintaining a racial divide by perpetuating stereotypes of Black masculinity. For this reason, newspapers should not be used solely as primary manuscripts that provide historical information about past events, but also as material articles of influence that served as elements to instigate or direct event outcomes that can redesignate individuals to a category of social disability.

Public Enemy
 Caught you lookin' for the same thing
 It's a new thing, check out this I bring
 They claim that I'm a criminal
 By now I wonder how
 Some people never know
 The enemy could be their friend, guardian
 I'm not a hooligan
 Clear all the madness, I'm not a racist
 Preach to teach to all
 'Cause some they never had this
 Number one, not born to run
 About the gun
 I wasn't licensed to have one
 The minute they see me, fear me
 I'm the epitome, a public enemy
 Used, abused without clues
 I refused to blow a fuse
 They even had it on the news
 es to them, but to me I'm a different kind
 We're brothers of the same mind, unblind
 Caught in the middle and
 Not surrenderin'
 I don't rhyme for the sake of of riddlin'
 Some claim that I'm a smuggler
 Some say I never heard of 'ya
 A rap burglar, false media
 We don't need it do we?
 It's fake that's what it be to 'ya, dig me? Don't believe the hype.⁴³³

⁴³³ Public Enemy, "Don't Believe the Hype Lyrics," *It Take A Nation of Millions To Hold Us Back*. 1988. www.lyrics.com, Accessed April 20, 2023.

*“A forgotten past is a past that is yet to be. A forgotten history is a memory missing from our collective conscience. An incomplete history is like an incomplete mind that has forgotten who it is and where it came from.”*⁴³⁴

*“Parents with well children look at the world through their own eyes and introduce their children to the world,” he said. “Parents with disabled children look at the world through their child’s eyes and introduce the world to their children.”*⁴³⁵

Disability Studies

Disability studies as an academic field began with the disability rights movement. It defined disability as “with respect to an individual: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities of such an individual, a record of impairment or being regarded as having such an impairment.”⁴³⁶ In the past, many scholars did not consider this topic one that academics needed to examine, or a subject worth the social conscience necessary for a critical analysis. However, in time, the interconnections of disability and other disciplines of study, such as race or gender, were recognized as necessary and obvious. Although members of academic groups focused their research on distinct social issues, such as race or gender, they were reluctant to have their focus paired with the problems of disability groups. Initially, disability studies advocates looked to the past, just focusing on the oppressive barriers that many

⁴³⁴ A.E. Samaan Quote on Goodreads, www.Goodreads.com

⁴³⁵ Gianni Ridley, in “*Tappan Hill a Sothern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services (SWBOCES) Dedicates Bench in Honor of Steven Moses a Student Who Passed Away Last Summer*” January 6, 2017, www.echalk.com 2015-2018

⁴³⁶ Lennard J. Davis, “Crips Strike Back: The Rise of Disability Studies.” *American Literary History* Oxford University Press 11 no. 3 (1999) 507

disabled individuals faced, ignoring what could be revealed if disability were examined in the same way that race has been identified as a social construct.

Disability studies was primarily designed to explain the varying theories and models used to understand disability and how those models are integrated into the field's study.⁴³⁷ The medical model focused on how disability was historically viewed as a treatable condition. The medical model treats disability as a treatable aspect. In contrast, the social model surveys how a community assigns a disability.⁴³⁸ Disability studies adopted the rationale of the political tenets of the civil rights movement.⁴³⁹ Disability studies materialized during the 1980s and has grown for more than forty years,⁴⁴⁰ focusing its analysis through the lens of political and social scientists.⁴⁴¹ During the later decades of the 20th century, disability studies began to utilize the humanities through literary and cultural means, with more focus on individualized experiences and expressions.⁴⁴² The Social Model looked at how disability possesses limitations or physical incapacities. The social model of disability developed in the 1990s offered an additional lens of disability as something that “unnecessarily” isolates and excludes individuals from fully participating in society.⁴⁴³ This model, unlike the medical model, which defined disability solely as a physical or physiological impairment, focused on barriers and exclusions that created social

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 507

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 505

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 505

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 506

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 508

⁴⁴² Ibid., 508

⁴⁴³ M. Berghs, K. Atkins, H. Graham, et al. “Implications for public health research of models and theories of disability: A scoping study and evidence synthesis.” Southampton, U.K. *National Institute of Health R Journals Library*, no 48 (2016) 14

oppression.⁴⁴⁴ Often, this social oppression is revealed in how one cannot self-determine one's life or obtain adequate economic well-being.

Social disability is one of the main renderings of disability studies in many academic institutions and it is often examined by looking at structural and institutional barriers.⁴⁴⁵ However, looking at disability through a social lens allows for several disciplines to explore and interpret how disability not only possesses limitations on the physical side but also how it can impact an individual or a particular group socially and force those experiencing these limitations to assimilate characteristics formerly attributed to the physically disabled. Since the social model offers “flexibility and innovation”⁴⁴⁶ in how it can be applied, many situations have arisen where individuals who were once socially fit have been reassigned into a new characterization of being socially unfit, thus socially disabled. This project positions the Social Model to stimulate inquiry into how it can be used as identification of another socially constructed impairment that is historically social, economic personal, racial, and gendered and lacks both social action and social justice.⁴⁴⁷ In this way, scholars can view how social forces shape how we understand disability.⁴⁴⁸

Historians and Disability Studies

Many historians are now beginning to take advantage of the ways in which the disciplines can be used to survey disability studies in unconventional ways through literary works instead of

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 16

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 7

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 17

⁴⁴⁷ Sara Goering, “Rethinking disability: the social model of disability and chronic disease. Current reviews in musculoskeletal medicine.” *National Library of Medicine: National Center for Biotechnology Information*. 8 no.2 (2015)

⁴⁴⁸ “*A Guide To Disabilities Studies: A Research Guide for Students.*” ResearchGate accessed February 2, 2023, aresearchguide.com.

just previous medical writings. Scholars have found that disability studies began to develop as its own social characteristic, allowing it to become an analytical tool when investigating power and power relationships in historical research.⁴⁴⁹ In doing so, researchers have been able to review historical writings, identify how persons and groups were labeled as imperfect, and recognize how this identification determined these groups' and individuals' places in the social order.⁴⁵⁰ These studies focused on the social and political aspects of disability, exploring need and responsibility, assistance and protection, those capable of producing labor, and those meriting citizenship.⁴⁵¹

Throughout United States history, aligning those without power to those having a physical or mental disability is often how the dissemination of inequality was justified. The fact that historians and those of the social sciences have not taken a close look at how so many have been identified as people with disabilities to explain how and why people were treated lowly or inhuman is proof that the study of disability struggles in identifying the many interconnections that exist. Disability studies, although new for historians, offers an opportunity for scholars to explore new paths in looking at how and why people can be displaced within categories where their disability is purely a social construction by power-wielders. Using this lens allows for the examination of how disability has been used to discredit and disenfranchise groups throughout history in many Western cultures, such as the United States.

⁴⁴⁹ Kudlick, *Disability History: Why We Need Another*. 765

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 766

⁴⁵¹ M. Berghs, K. Atkins, H. Graham, et al. "Implications for public health research of models and theories of disability: A scoping study and evidence synthesis." 16

Critical Disability Theory

Critical disability theory (2019) is a new methodology used to examine and investigate the cultural, historical, and social phenomena, amongst other things, in critical disability studies. One of its main focuses is to interpret “social conditions that concentrate stigmatized attributes in particular populations.”⁴⁵² Utilizing this method of inquiry allows scholars to identify socio-political constructions of disability and how these constructions interconnect with oppressed populations in the hope that an intersectional analysis can transform the circumstances in which oppressed populations exist that are divided between politics and power. In other words, this theory drives to uncover “the social relation of the human subject to the historical conditions of production or alienation.”⁴⁵³ With relation to race, many argue that critical disability theory situates practices of racism and the understanding of ableism side by side making both indicative of each other, with clear indications of the intersectionality of critical disability and critical race theory.⁴⁵⁴ Furthermore, critical disability theory offers space within its analysis to highlight disability as an “identity category”⁴⁵⁵ to further flesh out critiques in social, historical, and political studies.

In doing so, many theorists have found that this methodology reveals how racism and sexism can be entangled with constructions of exclusion, abnormality, hierarchies of power, and disability. Just as ableism “prefers and prioritizes” who is categorized as disabled, it is interconnected to stigmatizing power structures that have defined race and disability.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵² Melinda C. Hall, “Critical Disability Theory”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Winter 2019): 1 accessed May 2023. [Plato.stanford.edu](https://plato.stanford.edu).

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 3

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 11

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 2

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 5

Sociology and Disability Studies

A recent study (2020) found that many sociologists were teaching the sociology of disability.⁴⁵⁷ This new subfield has grown within sociology, making attempts toward an interdisciplinary philosophy that engages the literature written by disabled individuals about their experiences and how those experiences interconnect with other marginalized intersectionality. Within this field, many scholars have found topics that allow further research into many theories, such as the construction of disability. Since this is a relatively new subfield, it will enable the development of critical objectives, perspectives, and challenges to curriculum consistency.⁴⁵⁸

This study revealed that some of the most common themes being taught were topics like disability politics, legal claims, and the social disability model. This study found that although the social model of disability played a significant role in the sociology of disability, it was not identified as a theme of study.”⁴⁵⁹

Disability and the Humanities

Likewise, scholars have found that the humanities have a closer relationship with disability studies than was first thought. Both fields of study examine the common areas that inform other disciplines of the experiences and perspectives of the disabled movement and disabled persons.⁴⁶⁰ This relationship between the two fields has allowed scholars to reveal the social-cultural, linguistic, artistic, and philosophical implications that began and continue to fuel

⁴⁵⁷ Allison C. Carey and Cheryl Najarian Souza, “Constructing the Sociology of Disability: An Analysis of Syllabi.” *Teaching Sociology: American Sociological Association* 49, no. 1 (2020):17

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 19

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 22

⁴⁶⁰ Anne Marie Callus, "The Contribution of Disability Studies to the Humanities.” ResearchGate (2021) 70, Reseachgate.net accessed August 2024

the discipline.⁴⁶¹ Although initially the field was grounded in research in the social sciences, it now has begun to evolve and permeate other disciplines, such as psychology and, more recently, history.⁴⁶² This unfolding of the traditional disability studies that primarily focused on first-person accounts has provoked the field to expand on individual and group social disabilities and not just personal examples of social barriers.⁴⁶³ Many academics use literary criticism, media, visual arts, and cultural studies to examine historical and philosophical disciplines and “amplify evolving reflections about moral personhood.”⁴⁶⁴ Viewing disability through a humanities lens allows for the review of disability throughout history. It is an opportunity for all nondisabled persons as “others” to reconsider traditional thoughts about the topic of disability, identification, and its representation in society.⁴⁶⁵

This researcher sought to identify and review college disability studies that provided online access to their course syllabus. The researcher looked for trends in topic structure, themes, student learning objectives, and required and recommended readings. The following universities were chosen and used for comparison: University of California at Fullerton (Fullerton), University of California at Irvine (Irvine), Ohio State University (OSU), Delaware State University (DSU), Florida State University (FSU), University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS), Pennsylvania State University (PSU), and Rutgers University (RU).

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 70

⁴⁶² Ibid., 71

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 75

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 78

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 80

Course Readings Comparison Chart

	Fullerton American Studies College of Humanities and Social Science (amst.fullerton.edu)	Irvine -Disability Worlds (sites.socsci.uci.edu)	Penn Disability Studies, Minor (bulletins.psu.edu)	Colorado Foundations of Disability Studies (fases.uccs.edu)	Florida Disabilities in Society(catalog.ufl.edu)	Delaware Disability Histories (udapps.nss.udel.edu)	Rutgers Disability, Work, and Society(smir.rutgers.edu) Labor Studies and Employment Relations Dept.	
Course Description	Explores the meaning history and experience of disability in American Culture. Considers disability identity, family and community relationships, activism, discrimination, representations, intersectionality, sexuality and fashion, etc.	Exploration of disability through methodological and theoretical perspectives utilizing ethnographic works. Focusing on embodiment, access, politics, selfhood and sexuality.	Exploration of the history of disability and disabled persons lived experiences. A review of nineteenth century charities, "freak shows," medical diagnosis, war veterans and the rationale for eugenic cleansing.	Disability history that informs the theoretical models and frameworks. Provides foundational understanding of current policies and cultural beliefs about disabilities for the disabled and people that are not disabled.	Focus on historical treatment of persons with disabilities in the United States. Course is both chronological and topical in nature examining particular disabilities and their treatment over time medically, legally and the social context in which they exist. Also, it will investigate government policies and the social construction disabilities.	Introduces students to the historical variability of disability and disabled persons to offer new interpretations of classic themes in American history. Explore disability as a cultural and historical phenomenon associated with broader cultural attitudes and developments.	Examines the historical, political, economic, social and cultural aspects of disability. Covers 2000 years of historical view on social construction, civil rights, equity, race/gender, social barriers, supports, criminal justice and community and family.	
Course Objective	Interdisciplinary course to introduce students to theoretical, cultural and political models of disability. It is intended to sensitize students to issues surrounding disability and inform them about the disability rights movement.		Historical themes of disability that address various disabilities acquired at birth, from warfare, visible deformities and invisible disabilities such as deafness. "To understand how and why change occurs within societies and cultures.	To understand that Disability Studies is not the study of disability. Become familiar with disabilities multiple and interdisciplinary approaches of understanding the topic and the key social phenomena of deviance, globalization, social change, multiculturalism, structural inequality and intersections with other forms of stratification.	This course is multi-disciplinary in nature. This is a course about both persons with disabilities and how these individuals have been treated by "normal" Americans throughout American history. We will focus on how the issues of disabilities relate to major themes in American history.	Introduce students to major themes and trends in disability history scholarship. Familiarize students with nuances of disability definitions and analytical models.	Become familiar with "basic tenets" of disability studies, alternatives to deficit-based models, medical models and the social model. To understand concepts surrounding normality and disability in society and related impacts, etc.	

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Table E. Disability Studies online course offering

⁴⁶⁶ Comparison chart of syllabuses for collegiate disability studies course offerings available online. Summaries of the college course descriptions are annotated above course objectives.

Course Readings Comparison Chart

	Fullerton American Studies College of Humanities and Social Science (amst.fullerton.edu)	Irvine -Disability Worlds (sites.socsci.uci.edu)	Penn Disability Studies, Minor (bulletins.psu.edu)	Colorado Foundations of Disability Studies (fases.uccs.edu)	Florida Disabilities in Society(catalog.ufl.edu)	Delaware Disability Histories (udapps.nss.udel.edu)	Rutgers Disability, Work, and Society(smir.rutgers.edu) Labor Studies and Employment Relations Dept.	
Top Required Readings	Nielson, Kim. <i>Disability History of The United States.</i>	Davis, Lennard, editor. <i>The Disability Studies Reader.</i> ; Kafer, Alison. <i>Feminist, Queer, Crip.</i> ; Kulick, Don, <i>Loneliness and Its Opposite Sex, Disability, and the Ethics of Engagement.</i>	Robert Bogdan, <i>Freak Show: Presenting Oddities for amusement and Profit.</i> Martin S. Pernick, <i>The Black Stork: Eugenics and the Death of Defective Babies.</i> Susan Burch, <i>Signs of Resistance: American Deaf Culture, 1900 to World War II.</i> David Berlin, <i>Replaceable You, Engineering the Body in Postwar America.</i>		<i>Kim Nielsen, A Disability History of the United States., Jack El-Hai, The Lobotomist., Oliver Sachs, Seeing Voices.,Paul Longmore, The New Disability History.</i>	Disability Histories., Making Disability Modern: Design Histories., Between Fitness and Death: Disability and Slavery in the Caribbean.,		
Additional Readings		Nakamura, Karen, <i>A Disability of the Soul: An Ethnography of Schizophrenia and Mental Illness in Contemporary Japan.</i> Titchkosky, Tanya. <i>The Question of Access: Disability, Space, Meaning.</i>	Daniel J. Wilson, <i>Living with Polio: the Epidemic and its Survivors.</i> Paul K. Longmore, <i>Why I Burned My Book: and other Essays on Disability.</i>					
Age of Earliest Material Used	2012	1997	1988- 2001		2001- 2012	2020	2012	
Academic Discipline	Humanities/ Social Science	Anthropology	Culture	Sociology	Education	Arts and Science	Labor and Employment	

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Table F. Online course offering and reading materials required.

This researcher could not identify any courses that specifically addressed social justice as a disability; instead, several courses whose themes center on social disability's relationship to social policies are explored. As a result, social phenomena that can contribute to an individual being re-categorized as disabled or that may experience the same barriers of disability are not

⁴⁶⁷ Comparison chart continuation listing required reading, oldest material used and academic discipline that administers the course.

examined. For this reason, a course topic focused on social disability resulting from social phenomenon should be considered. Many scholars have noted that race issues and disability issues “have a complicated but interconnected history,”⁴⁶⁸ whereas race and disability are normally only compared with subordination and the power of legal rights. This trend, if viewed through situations, can be further scrutinized to reveal how individuals not previously characterized as disabled can be forced to experience social disability.⁴⁶⁹

For instance, in May 2010, a young, tall, Black, autistic man named Reginald Latson sat on the grass outside the public library near his Stafford County, Virginia home, waiting for it to open. The police were called and told that “a suspicious person with a hoodie, perhaps with a gun, was loitering outside the library.”⁴⁷⁰ When the police arrived to question Latson, he did not answer. Attempting to flee the police officers' approach, Latson was arrested and eventually charged by the Commonwealth of Virginia with felony assault on the police officer, malicious wounding of a police officer, and knowingly disarming a police officer in the performance of his official duties, charges for which he could be incarcerated for more than a decade.⁴⁷¹

By March 2011, Latson was found not guilty because of insanity. The trial began with a psychiatrist's testimony regarding his Asperger's, attention deficit, and intermittent explosive disorder. During the trial, the prosecution argued that the police officer suffered from lacerations and a broken ankle from his encounter with Latson. The prosecution further maintained that while Latson was autistic, he also “possessed violent tendencies and racial hate and this hate for

⁴⁶⁸ Jasmine E. Harris, “Reckoning with Race and Disability.” *The Yale Law Journal Forum*, *The Yale Law Journal* Race as Disability (2021) 916

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 916

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 916

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 918

law enforcement that were unrelated to his disability.”⁴⁷² The defense argued that the police officer used racial slurs and kicked Latson several times when he first encountered him. Latson was found guilty of two felony charges and two misdemeanor charges and with a recommendation to be sentenced to prison for ten and a half years. The judge sentenced him to two years in prison.⁴⁷³

Similarly, a hundred years earlier, in March 1911, Booker T. Washington, during one of his many trips to New York City, was assaulted, chased by a mob, and arrested for suspicion of loitering, peeping into an apartment keyhole, and approaching a White woman outside her apartment house. The incident took place on West Sixty-third Street, across the street from Central Park. According to an article written in *The New York Times*, Washington, a negro, was beaten, kicked, and pursued by several White men after one Ulrich claimed that his wife reported that Washington, “a negro loitering along the sidewalk near the house, while she was taking a walk, had spoken to her.”⁴⁷⁴ The husband, Mr. Ulrich, ran out into the hall, yelling at Washington, and chased him as he attempted to flee. As Washington ran along Central Park West, trying to escape harm, he crossed the street to Central Park, where other White male residents joined the chase. The crowd surrounded Washington, beating and kicking him until a policeman intervened, arresting Washington and escorting both him and his accuser to the precinct.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² Ruth Marcus, “In Virginia, a Cruel and Unusual Punishment for Autism,” *The Washington Post*, Nov. 14, 2014. www.washingtonpost.com

⁴⁷³ Keith Epps, “Judges cuts eight years off of assault sentence,” *The Free Lance Star*, May 31, 2011. www.Fredricksburg.com.

⁴⁷⁴ Willard B. Gatewood “Booker T. Washington and the Ulrich Affair,” *Phylon- Clark Atlanta University* 30, 3. (1969) 288 www.Jstor.com accessed April 2024

⁴⁷⁵ Willard B. Gatewood, Booker T. Washington and the Ulrich Affair *Phylon, 1960-.* Vol. 30, No 3 (3rd Quarter, 1969 (Clark Atlanta University, 1969) 286-302 accessed April 16, 2024, www.jstor.org

A policeman nearby broke up the disturbance and escorted Washington and Ulrich to the police precinct, where Ulrich requested that Washington be charged with illegal entry. After identifying himself as Booker T. Washington, of the nationally known Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, Washington, badly beaten and covered in mud, explained to the lieutenant in charge that he was looking for an address where he was meeting a friend. Believing that he had the address committed to memory, Washington searched for the names of his colleague's associates in the vestibule and on the apartment doors.⁴⁷⁶ Eventually, it was determined that Dr. Washington, "a man of national reputation," was mistakenly accused and released; no charges were filed against him.⁴⁷⁷ Dr. Washington was given the option to press charges on Mr. Ulrich for assault, which he declined.

Although this event did not proceed to a trial or the incarceration of Washington, he was still physically and emotionally affected by the incident. While the incident may have raised questions of law and order, it also gave rise to racist criticism of Washington in newspapers across the nation. According to Historian Willard B. Gatewood in *Booker T. Washington and the Ulrich Affair*, Washington, as chairman of the Tuskegee Institute Board of Trustees, had visited New York City several times to gain financial and public support for the school. In his work, he provides further details of the event, explaining that Washington's physician, after attending to his wounds, requested Ulrich be formally charged with assault.⁴⁷⁸ Utilizing newspaper articles about the incident from across the country, Gatewood uncovers the motives and actions of Black

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 302

⁴⁷⁷ "White Man Assaults Booker T. Washington." *The New York Times*, March 20, 1911.
www.nytimes.com

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 298

and White politicians, journalists, public officials, and lawyers in the Northern and Southern States.

The first reporting of the event was by *The New York Times* and circulated to other newspapers that expressed their distinct editorial sentiments in support of Washington's guilt or innocence. Several newspapers "were already citing the affair to prove that no amount of enlightenment could overcome the Negro's brute instinct."⁴⁷⁹ However, in the days immediately after the incident, newspaper reports about legal proceedings to charge Ulrich for assaulting Washington possessed real and imagined details. In turn, New York City's Black political, religious, and social organizations also highlighted the incident as evidence of the city's southern-style racial issues.⁴⁸⁰

Eventually, in November 1911, the Ulrich assault case was heard by a three-judge panel in the New York City Court of Special Sessions, which dismissed the charges. The headlines in many newspapers reported "Ulrich's Acquittal," implying that his actions against Washington were within legal limits.⁴⁸¹ The trial's outcome and aftermath affected Washington politically, physically, and socially. Washington must have realized that he would no longer be viewed as a champion of Negro rights with earlier widespread public respect but as a "Negro, therefore presumed to be an intruder or a criminal."⁴⁸²

Notably, this incident happened in New York City and not a Southern city where most would expect a mob to chase a Black man for an assumed "unpardonable offense"⁴⁸³ against a White woman. Another ironic point to note is the location of the incident, across the street from

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 293

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 296

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 299

⁴⁸² Ibid., 298

⁴⁸³ Willard B. Gatewood "Booker T. Washington and the Ulrich Affair." 302

Central Park. After the incident, in the public space, Washington suffered socially from the gossip and rumors that followed about the incident. He was no longer invited or permitted to speak in political and other public venues that had once greeted and embraced him warmly.⁴⁸⁴

The fact that he did not have any previous issues with the law, that he was not known to seek the company of White women, and that he was considered a respectable person did not exclude him from being accused of not being able to “restrain (his) sexual impulse of the servile race.”⁴⁸⁵ Additionally, Gatewood uncovers a letter in which Dr. Washington writes to a friend about his “rather collapsed condition (resulting from his) unfortunate experience in New York.”⁴⁸⁶ Since he had been labeled as an accused sexual predator, his national reputation suffered, and he experienced enduring psychological trauma that debilitated him throughout the rest of his life.⁴⁸⁷ In his private life, many acquaintances stated that Washington “never fully recovered from the psychological and physical strain” of the ordeal.⁴⁸⁸ If this situation is viewed through a contemporary lens, Washington would be eligible, upon his release, with an arrest and conviction, to apply for relief from civil disability in the state of New York. In this manner, Washington would have suffered not only from civil disability but also from social disability. He would be unable to fully participate in his previous social environments due to barriers indicative of the social disability model.

Civil disabilities are defined as conditions of a person who has had a legal right or privilege revoked because of a criminal conviction.”⁴⁸⁹ Civil disabilities can adversely affect

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 301

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 302

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 302

⁴⁸⁷ Gatewood, *Booker T Washington and Ulrich Affair.*, 302

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 302

⁴⁸⁹ United States District Court Northern District of New York

individuals after they have been released from incarceration. After incarceration, individuals can be denied numerous privileges such as employment, obtaining occupational licenses, and maintaining family relationships. The New York State Courts consider these individuals to be in a state of civil incapacity, and the loss of civil rights and capacities “is accounted dead in law.”⁴⁹⁰ Some scholars have argued that if the State can disable an individual in various forms that may impact that individual permanently, then race should be at the forefront not just in race law but also in reviewing disability law and disability history.⁴⁹¹

Legal historian Kimani Paul-Emile has noted that “understanding Blackness as disabling, brings to the fore a surprising new approach to addressing discrimination and systemic inequality that has been hiding in plain sight.”⁴⁹² Blackness is not itself a disability; however, it has become a trait used to create disadvantages that “are built into structures, norms, and practices” that have often produced disability and impaired individuals, physically and psychologically.⁴⁹³ Nevertheless, this research found no courses within the aforementioned selected disability studies programs that specifically examined the historical interconnection of race, law, and disability or other recharacterizations of individuals not formerly disabled to be grossly affected by these nuances of social disability.

Therefore, an examination of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision application for a certificate of relief from disabilities needs to be reviewed. This certificate’s application indicates that the State has declared individuals who have been convicted of a felony must apply for this certificate to have their civil disability removed

⁴⁹⁰ “Dead in Law” legal definition- Definition.uslegal.com

⁴⁹¹ Kimani Paul-Emile, Blackness as Disability? *FLASH The Fordham Law Archive of Scholarship and History* 106 *Law Journal* (2018) 293

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, 296

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, 298

and certain civil rights restored.⁴⁹⁴ With this certificate, individuals can qualify for employment, housing, and other benefits that would permit them to reenter the social network.

This research maintains that these events are examples of how individuals who were once socially praised or accepted can become marginalized and reclassified into a new category of social disability. Incidents where Black men are falsely accused or wrongfully convicted, particularly of sexual assaults against White women or in situations where White women express fear over the presence of Black men should be considered as part of social disability theory within disability studies. As a result, disability studies in its current form fails to adequately examine the historical intersections of race, sex, crime, and disability, presenting a significant gap in the field. To be truly comprehensive, disability studies should adopt a multidisciplinary approach that thoroughly explores and critiques the complex ways social, racial, and historical impacts have shaped experiences of disability in American history.

⁴⁹⁴ (New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision 2019)



Corrections and Community Supervision

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

DANIEL F. MARTUSCELLO III
Commissioner

Department of Corrections and Community Supervision Certificate of Relief from Disabilities - Certificate of Good Conduct Application and Instructions

This is your application for a Certificate of Relief from Disabilities or for a Certificate of Good Conduct. Please review this information carefully. Then, complete the application as best you can. If you leave out information, it could take longer for the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) to make a decision about your application.

1) How do I know if I am eligible - Who can apply?

The information below can help you understand if you are eligible. For more information, you can read Article 23 (Sections 700-706) of the New York State Correction Law.

I. Eligibility

- A. CERTIFICATE OF RELIEF FROM DISABILITIES: You are eligible for this certificate if you have been convicted of any number of misdemeanors and no more than one felony (two or more felony convictions in the same court on the same day are counted as one felony for deciding which certificate you are eligible for). The term "disability" refers to laws that disqualify people from holding certain jobs or other rights because of their conviction.

- B. CERTIFICATE OF GOOD CONDUCT: You are eligible for this certificate if you have been convicted of two or more separate felonies or if you are seeking a job that is specifically considered a "public office". You must show that you have completed/achieved a certain period of good conduct in the community. You must wait 5 years if the most serious felony on your criminal record is an A or B felony, 3 years if the most serious felony on your criminal record is a C, D or E felony, or 1 year if you only have misdemeanors on your criminal record. The waiting period starts when you were last released from incarceration (prison or jail) to community supervision, or were released from incarceration (prison or jail) by maximum expiration of your sentence, or at the time of your last criminal conviction (which ever of these events comes last). If you were convicted in another state or in federal court, the waiting period will be determined by what the level of the conviction would be considered in New York State.

DOCCS will only consider applications for Certificates of Good Conduct for public office if the application lists a specific public office and includes information about laws that prevent the individual from holding the office they want the Certificate for.

The Harriman State Campus, 1220 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12226-2050 | (518) 457-8126 | www.doccs.ny.gov

Figure 31. New York State Application for Certificate of Relief from Disability



Corrections and Community Supervision

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

DANIEL F. MARTUSCELLO III
Commissioner

Department of Corrections and Community Supervision Certificate of Relief from Disabilities - Certificate of Good Conduct Application and Instructions

This is your application for a Certificate of Relief from Disabilities or for a Certificate of Good Conduct. Please review this information carefully. Then, complete the application as best you can. If you leave out information, it could take longer for the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) to make a decision about your application.

1) How do I know if I am eligible - Who can apply?

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I. Eligibility

- A. **CERTIFICATE OF RELIEF FROM DISABILITIES:** You are eligible for this certificate if you have been convicted of any number of misdemeanors and no more than one felony (two or more felony convictions in the same court on the same day are counted as one felony for deciding which certificate you are eligible for). The term "disability" refers to laws that disqualify people from holding certain jobs or other rights because of their conviction.
- B. **CERTIFICATE OF GOOD CONDUCT:** You are eligible for this certificate if you have been convicted of two or more separate felonies or if you are seeking a job that is specifically considered a "public office". You must show that you have completed/achieved a certain period of good conduct in the community. You must wait 5 years if the most serious felony on your criminal record is an A or B felony, 3 years if the most serious felony on your criminal record is a C, D or E felony, or 1 year if you only have misdemeanors on your criminal record. The waiting period starts when you were last released from incarceration (prison or jail) to community supervision, or were released from incarceration (prison or jail) by maximum expiration of your sentence, or at the time of your last criminal conviction (which ever of these events comes last). If you were convicted in another state or in federal court, the waiting period will be determined by what the level of the conviction would be considered in New York State.
- DOCCS will only consider applications for Certificates of Good Conduct for public office if the application lists a specific public office and includes information about laws that prevent the individual from holding the office they want the Certificate for.

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Figure 32. New York State Application for Certificate of Relief from Disabilities.

⁴⁹⁵ New York State Requirements and Application for Certificate of Relief from Disabilities-Certificate of Good Conduct. Department of Corrections and Community Supervision accessed June 27, 2023, www.doccs.ny.gov.

4) **What can I expect after my application has been submitted to DOCCS for review?**

Once we receive your application, DOCCS will assign a field Parole Officer for an investigation. The Officer will review:

1. Employment history and how you have supported yourself.
2. Proof that you have paid income taxes for the last two years.
3. Proof that you have paid any fines or restitution set by the courts.

After DOCCS has received all necessary documents and records from you, the field Parole Officer assigned to you will contact you to arrange an interview at your home/residence to answer any remaining questions and confirm your current circumstances and living situation. The New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision will then examine your application to decide whether to grant you a certificate. Under the law, DOCCS may choose to remove one, more than one, or all allowable disabilities (restrictions created by law because of your conviction history). Note that, under the law, individuals with certain conviction histories may be ineligible to have their firearm rights restored.

5) **How long will the process take?**

This will vary depending on the complexity of your case. The process will involve a complete review of the information you provide. Processing times depend on how complete the information you provide to DOCCS is. The assigned Parole Officer will review and check all of the information you provide. The process will be completed more quickly if you provide complete and accurate information to the best of your ability and are available to the Parole Officer when he or she contacts you.

The Parole Officer will want to see what you have been doing since your last conviction or release, including information about:

- Going to school – such as a transcript or a letter from a teacher or school administrator;
- Job Training – such as a letter from a program supervisor or administrator;
- Employment – such as letters from supervisors or other people who worked with you;
- Counseling or social service program – such as a letter from a counselor, therapist or doctor;
- Letters from Parole or Probation Officers;
- Letters from clergy;
- Letters from volunteer work

You do **NOT** need all of these items, only those that apply to you. For more examples, visit: http://lac.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/How_to_Gather_Evidence_of_Rehabilitation_2013.pdf

Please note that the process will be delayed if you move any time after you submit your application. It is therefore very important for you to let the Certificate Review Unit know if you move/relocate or change your phone number after you submit your application.

Figure 33. Continuation of figure 31.

I'm tryna keep my faith
We on an ultralight beam
This is a God dream, This is everything
Deliver us serenity, Deliver us peace, Deliver us loving
We know we need it, You know we need it
Pray for the parents, This is a God dream
I'm tryna keep my faith, But I'm looking for more
Somewhere I can feel safe
I'm tryna keep my faith
So why send oppression not blessings?
Why, oh why'd you do me wrong? (More)
You persecute the weak, Because it makes you feel so strong
Don't have much strength to fight, So I look to the light
To make these wrongs turn right, Head up high, I look to the light
Hey, cause I know that you'll make everything alright
And I know that you'll take good care of your child
Oh, no longer am afraid of the night, Cause I, I look to the light
When they come for you, I will shield your name
I will field their questions, I will feel your pain
No one can judge
They don't, they don't know
Im tryna keep my faith,
We on an ultralight beam, This is everything. ⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁷ Kanye West, "Ultra-Light Beam Lyrics." *The Life of Pablo*, 2016.
www.genius.com. Accessed February 9, 2023.

BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY.

BRING BACK OUR POLICE!

What has happened to our City over the past ten years? What has happened to law and order, to the neighborhood cop we all trusted to safeguard our homes and families, the cop who had the power under the law to help us in times of danger, keep us safe from those who would prey on innocent lives to fulfill some distorted inner need. What has happened to the respect for authority, the fear of retribution by the courts, society and the police for those who break the law, who wantonly trespass on the right of others? What has happened is the complete breakdown of life as we knew it.

Many New York families — White, Black, Hispanic and Asian — have had to give up the pleasure of a leisurely stroll in the Park at dusk, the Saturday visit to the playground with their families, the bike ride at dawn, or just sitting on their stoops — given them up as hostages to a world ruled by the law of the streets, as roving bands of wild criminals roam our neighborhoods, dispensing their own vicious brand of twisted hatred on whomever they encounter. At what point did we cross the line from the fine and noble pursuit of genuine civil liberties to the reckless and dangerously permissive atmosphere which allows criminals of every age to beat and rape a helpless woman and then laugh at her family's anguish? And why do they laugh? They laugh because they know that soon, very soon, they will be returned to the streets to rape and maim and kill once again — and yet face no great personal risk to themselves.

Mayor Koch has stated that hate and rancor should be removed from our hearts. I do not think so. I want to hate these muggers and murderers. They should be forced to suffer and, when they kill,

they should be executed for their crimes. They must serve as examples so that others will think long and hard before committing a crime or an act of violence. Yes, Mayor Koch, I want to hate these murderers and I always will. I am not looking to psychoanalyze or understand them, I am looking to punish them. If the punishment is strong, the attacks on innocent people will stop. I recently watched a newscast trying to explain the "anger in these young men". I no longer want to understand their anger. I want them to understand our anger. I want them to be afraid.

How can our great society tolerate the continued brutalization of its citizens by crazed misfits? Criminals must be told that their CIVIL LIBERTIES END WHEN AN ATTACK ON OUR SAFETY BEGINS!

When I was young, I sat in a diner with my father and witnessed two young bullies cursing and threatening a very frightened waitress. Two cops rushed in, lifted up the thugs and threw them out the door, warning them never to cause trouble again. I miss the feeling of security New York's finest once gave to the citizens of this City.

Let our politicians give back our police department's power to keep us safe. Unshackle them from the constant chant of "police brutality" which every petty criminal hurls immediately at an officer who has just risked his or her life to save another's. We must cease our continuous pandering to the criminal population of this City. Give New York back to the citizens who have earned the right to be New Yorkers. Send a message loud and clear to those who would murder our citizens and terrorize New York —
**BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY
AND BRING BACK OUR POLICE!**



Donald J. Trump

725 P.O. Box, NY, NY 10022

Figure 34. Donald Trump's 1989 Newspaper Ad

Conclusion

“The inescapable hurry of the press inevitably means a certain degree of superficiality. We write 365 days a year the first rough draft of history. News is the first rough draft of history.”⁴⁹⁸

*I got a vision I see in my head. A melody buried deep in my soul.
They call us crazy, we cutting the edge. I'm lockin' the future and letting it go.
This is a callin' that's higher. The time i decided our stories are gonna be told.
This is when legends are born, we pavin' the road. The future that favors the bold.
Legendary in the makin, reach out and we take it
Somethin' comin' I can feel it. Deep down in my spirit
Revolution, it's a new day. Time to redefine the letters.
So vivid i could see it, so loud i could hear it
So they callin me a madman, but the future belongs to the fearless
Break the rules, break the laws. This is the moment we change it all.
Bout to emerge, we on the verge and it feels like greatness.
This is the truth, into the light
takin our dreams and we bring em to light
We bout to set the tone
We bout to write the code. We on a new elevation.
We come here to shatter the mode I know you hear it. I know you see it.
We got the fearless, we got the genius
We got the fighters, we got the beacons, we got the truth believe in it.
Legendary in the makin'
And It feels like greatness!⁴⁹⁹*

This study's purpose was to add to the understanding of the significant role of newspapers in influencing American history and the public's psychology by exploring the language and reporting practices used in New York City newspapers that reported on the 1989 Central Park Jogger Rape incident. After a review of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of

⁴⁹⁸ Philip Graham, (March 8, 1953, address to the American Society for Public Administration on the subject of the press).

⁴⁹⁹ Emanuel Vo Williams and Danny Burke, "Greatness," *Greatness*, 2018 Accessed July 14, 2023.

initial newspaper reports of the incident, it can be concluded that the newspapers' reporting practices of misrepresentation of Black masculinity as an uncontrolled sexually deviant social threat have been embedded in the collective memory and national narrative, perpetuating the racial divides.

In addition, situations such as the Central Park jogger case that are the result of Black men being falsely accused and wrongfully convicted, particularly of sexual assaults against White women, usually result in the social disability of those individuals. This consequence should be considered within theories of social disability.

As previously mentioned, Gatewood provides an illustration supporting the thesis and findings of this research in a letter that he uncovers from Booker T. Washington, who writes to a friend about his "rather collapsed condition (resulting from his) unfortunate experience in New York." Once Washington had been labeled as an accused sexual predator, his national reputation suffered, and he experienced enduring psychological trauma that debilitated him throughout the rest of his life.⁵⁰⁰ This project maintains that this event is an example of how an individual who was once socially praised and acceptable can become marginalized and suffer from being assigned to a new category of social disability. Ultimately, the social exclusion of Washington and other Black males based on false accusations of sexually assaulting White women is not dissimilar to the societal barriers to persons with physical impairment disabilities.

Newspaper accounts were widely circulated, presenting stereotypical euphemisms and myths interconnecting Black masculinity, Black American culture, sexual deviance, and crime. This study has highlighted how as part of the American historical fabric, newspapers have

⁵⁰⁰ Willard B. Gatewood. "Booker T. Washington and the Ulrich Affair." *Phylon* (Clark Atlanta University) 30 (3): 302

been a primary source of racial constructs and stereotype assignments that encourage unequal social justice responses to crimes involving sex and race that have repeatedly resulted in racial divisions, public hysteria, and wrongful convictions of Black males. Moreover, this study's results provide key insights into how this type of event could have unfolded in New York City at the close of the 20th century, and why some newspaper consumers have a different understanding and memory of the reported event.

Utilizing the Situational Theory of Publics (STOP) framework allowed this researcher to extrapolate elements of the social marketing theory that newspaper journalists and publishers employed to identify subjective skews in articles. This framework aided in examining this event through several academic methodologies. In doing so, the STOP Theory revealed the intentions of news reporters as public relations agents and how their actions shaped the public by influencing responses and affecting the public's collective memory.⁵⁰¹ The newspapers' use of several rhetorical writing practices, such as repetitive synonymies, to depict the Black males accused of the Central Park crime, reveals how these practices were employed to stimulate and amplify the racist emotions of the public, highlighting that many articles failed to display journalistic integrity in news reporting while constructing a foundation built on media myopia that the public and academics rely on.

As a result of this study's findings, there is a better understanding of why members of the public have sought more information or questioned the widely circulated newspaper reports. The explanation that Doolan provided concerning unremembering and collective memory, is supported by the lack of survey participants' responses to events such as the Central Park Rape

⁵⁰¹ James E. Grunig, *A Situational Theory of Publics: Managing Public Relations*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston; 1984)

Incident and other well-known interracial sex crimes during the twentieth century that had a national impact on the Black community. After analysis, it became evident that older members of the Black community did not retain details of past episodes, and either were unwilling or unable to share those details and experiences.⁵⁰²

This is one of the first studies to approach social disability because of the ramifications involving race, sex, crime, and newspaper reports. It explains how an individual who would not have been customarily considered disabled can be reclassified as disabled because of the implications of the interconnections of these elements. More importantly, this study presents a clear linkage between newspapers' historical construct of Black masculinity, sex, and crime, with the tenets of social disability. Although this study was conducted using a mixed methods design, it did so by following a convergent parallel combining several disciplines and non-academic writings that were deemed relevant in supporting this thesis. The results of this study have important implications for a transdisciplinary study. This research would offer new opportunities to examine and expand the general knowledge of the phenomena that link race, social justice, and disability, along with the reliance on newspapers as primary historical artifacts. It can serve as a foundation for a critical discourse that engages public perception and understanding of newspaper reports with several academic disciplines and non-academic works. This discourse aims to investigate and interpret if those newspaper reports were possible causes of events, how the American public views others, and the influence that newspapers have in directing the social, political and forensic outcomes.

⁵⁰² Paul M. M. Doolan, *Collective Memory and Unremembering* Amsterdam University Press. (2021)

Since newspapers serve as primary documents and have been relied upon as symbols of history and collective memory, they should be scrutinized thoroughly to ascertain their social impact and collective benefit while identifying areas that need to be and can be improved in disseminating information while informing the public. Conducting a broader survey of participants from a larger demographic and cross-cultural landscape may provide additional areas to examine and reveal how groups understand themselves and others. Since the public relies on newspapers to annotate history, the public can influence newspapers to develop more ethical practices in their reporting.

Likewise, this study helps to fill the gaps that would not traditionally be evident without the incorporation of several lenses to highlight how the newspapers have been central in inspiring behaviors, encouraging attitudes, and prompting particular responses to episodes.⁵⁰³ Overall, this field of study would benefit from the in-depth investigation that bottom-up examinations offer through individual and collective social experiences. It would also benefit from the breadth of exploring disability historically and horizontally through the various disciplines associated with annotating the American experience. If the newspaper reports had not falsely accused the CP5, they very well might not have suffered a civil disability due to a wrongful conviction. This is paralleled by the additional consequences of an unequal social justice marker as it relates to Black masculinity that can be understood as a causation of their social disability.

This project identifies and highlights newspaper practices of sensationalizing news reports that encompass sex, race, and crime to create public hysteria that maintains a racial

⁵⁰³ James D. Startt and William David Sloan. *The Significance of the Media in American History*. Northport, Alabama: Vision Press, 2019.

divide in America. The continued use of blatant and explicit stereotypes in newspapers is a tactic used to influence the public's response that is seldom questioned regarding unequal social justice practices and outcomes involving Black males. Black males who have been falsely accused of sex crimes, especially sex crimes involving white women, seldom, if ever, recover civilly or socially.⁵⁰⁴

Future research should consider more carefully how newspapers have played a role in disseminating racial stereotypes and misrepresentations that significantly influenced the public. Further exploration of this issue may aid in the disentanglement of race, sex, crime, and social justice. A good starting point may be reviewing the incident involving Christian Cooper, where Amy Cooper, the woman who attempted to have Christian arrested with a false allegation under the guise of fear of a Black male. Since Amy Cooper was from another country and understood how her allegation would illicit a particular response, it is evidence that there is a universal perception of the Black male, sexual fiend, and criminal that “prowls” Central Park looking for White women. The assumption can be made that Amy Cooper understood the ramifications of her circumstance within the context of historical narratives she read in newspapers.

This aspect of false incrimination and the long-lasting results of the many barriers that Black males will encounter should be included in the disability studies of social disability. Lastly, since the newspapers are considered the “rough draft of history”⁵⁰⁵ within journalism studies, there should be a bookmark for a section that focuses on how newspapers unethically maintain myths and stereotypes that continue to influence how the public perceives the sexuality, culpability, and social capital of Black masculinity. Fortunately for Christian Cooper, Amy's

⁵⁰⁴ Burns, *The Central Park Five*, 197

⁵⁰⁵ Graham, (*March 8, 1953, address*).

Karen tactic was exposed by social media and the lightning speed of virtual journalism. If not, Christian may have suffered from many forms of disability.

Before my time is up I'll make the world remember me.
 Legendary this is legacy.
Bloody and bruised but i made it out . They thought that I would lose I never had a doubt.
Predestined to win I'm the chosen one. That's why I fight the way i fight i go hard till I've won.
 Aim for the top, I never quit, I'm going nonstop
Fresh from the struggle I climb from the bottom so don't give me nothing I'm earning my spot.
I am the one that conquered it all. The one who stood tall when they thought I would fall.
 I fought against the best and never met defeat.
 I climb up-from the bottom still not at my peak,
who I am and what I've done is considered greatness.
No man alive survived what i did to make it! no one!
 Aim for the stars,
came a long still gotta go far. I'm on a mission to conquer so out of my way to whoever you are.
Fought on my own, on my own two feet. I'm in my zone. All on my own
 Stood on my own, ten toes strong.
 I'm number one this is where I belong.
You come for my crown, I'll never back down. I'll fight to the death I knew it was bound.
 Legendary this is legacy.
No man alive question my integrity. The world is mine it was meant for me.
Before my time is up I'll make the world remember me.
 Legendary this is legacy!⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁶ Neahe Ashain and Simon Pettersson, "Legacy." Lyrics.Lyricfind.com 2023. Accessed February 2023. (Pettersson n.d.)

BRING BACK **JUSTICE & FAIRNESS.** **BUILD A BRIGHTER** **FUTURE FOR HARLEM!**

On May 1, 1989, almost thirty-four years ago, Donald J. Trump spent \$85,000 to take out full-page ads in *The New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Post* and *New York Newsday*, calling for the execution of the Central Park Five—an act he has never apologized for, even after someone else confessed to and was convicted of the crime, the convictions of all five of us were overturned, and we were renamed the Exonerated Five.

Instead, Mr. Trump has often doubled-down. A few weeks after taking out the ad, he went on CNN and stated: "I hate these people and let's all hate these people because maybe hate is what we need if we're gonna get something done."

Even after our exoneration and acknowledgment by the government that we had been wrongfully convicted, Mr. Trump continued to incite animus against me, my peers and our families. In 2013—over a decade after our exoneration—Trump called the Ken and Sarah Burns *Central Park Five* documentary "a one-sided piece of garbage," and when asked how he felt now that we were shown to be innocent, responded: "Innocent of what?"

In 2014, the City of New York finally reached a settlement with the members of the Exonerated Five, awarding us compensation to help us rebuild our lives after so many years were taken from us. But even that acknowledgement from the city wasn't enough for Trump to see five young Black and Latino men as anything other than criminals, saying "settling doesn't mean innocence."

Now, after several decades and an unfortunate and disastrous presidency, we all know exactly who Donald J. Trump is—a man who seeks to deny justice and fairness for others, while claiming only innocence for himself.

Being wrongfully convicted as a teenager was an experience that changed my life drastically. Yet I am honored when people express how deeply they connect with my story.

It matters because, while my experience may have been extreme, I have lived through a form of trauma that many of us experience in some way every day throughout our country. My past is an example of systemic oppression imposed by the injustice system.

But the problems our community faced when my name was splashed across the newspapers a generation ago—inadequate housing, underfunded schools, public safety concerns, and a lack of good jobs—became worse during Donald Trump's time in office.

I am trying to change that, by working with so many other dedicated community members to build a better future for everyone, both here in Harlem and across the country.

Here is my message to you, Mr. Trump: In response to the multiple federal and state criminal investigations that you are facing, you responded by warning of "potential death and destruction," and by posting a photograph of yourself with a baseball bat, next to a photo of Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg. These actions, just like your actions leading up to the January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, are an attack on our safety.

Thirty-four years ago, your full-page ad stated, in all caps: "CIVIL LIBERTIES END WHEN AN ATTACK ON OUR SAFETY BEGINS."

You were wrong then, and you are wrong now. The civil liberties of all Americans are grounded in the U.S. Constitution, and many of us fight every day to uphold those rights, even in the face of those like you who seek to obliterate them.

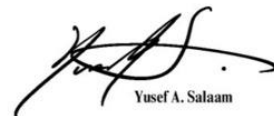
Now that you have been indicted and are facing criminal charges, I do not resort to hatred, bias or racism—as you once did.

Even though thirty-four years ago you effectively called for my death and the death of four other innocent children, I wish you no harm.

Rather, I am putting my faith in the judicial system to seek out the truth. I hope that you exercise your civil liberties to the fullest, and that you get what the Exonerated 5 did not get—a presumption of innocence, and a fair trial.

And if the charges are proven and you are found guilty, I hope that you endure whatever penalties are imposed with the same strength and dignity that the Exonerated Five showed as we served our punishment for a crime we did not commit.

1309 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10029



Yusef A. Salaam

Figure 35. Yusef Salaam's 2023 Newspaper Ad.

Pre- Research Completion: Reflections, Events and Updates

The media has long played a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions, particularly in cases involving race, sex, crime, and justice. In high-profile cases like the Central Park Five and the more recent Bill Cosby trial, in contrast to the Brett Kavanaugh hearings, media narratives have often influenced societal opinions and the course of legal proceedings.

The role of the media in these cases is intertwined with deeper issues of racial bias and the disenfranchisement of marginalized communities, which is further complicated by the rise of digital media and virtual news platforms. The case of Bill Cosby further underscores the media's role in shaping public opinion and influencing justice. Cosby's conviction for sexual assault was followed by extensive media coverage that framed him as a predatory figure, particularly in the context of his race. This stands in stark contrast to the treatment of high-profile White men like Brett Kavanaugh, who was confirmed to the Supreme Court despite accusations of sexual assault. The differences in the media's treatment of Cosby and Kavanaugh highlight the deep racial divide in how justice is applied and perceived in America. While Cosby faced harsh media scrutiny and was sentenced to prison, Kavanaugh's confirmation proceeded without significant disruption, demonstrating how racial bias plays a role in shaping not only public opinion but also legal outcomes.

The news media landscape has changed significantly since the Central Park Five case, especially with the rise of digital platforms and virtual media. Traditionally, print newspapers had a powerful influence on public opinion and were often the primary source of information. Stories like the Central Park Five were reported with the authority of major newspapers, and the narratives shaped by these outlets frequently influenced how the public viewed the accused,

regardless of a person's innocence or guilt. However, the shift to virtual news has fundamentally changed how people receive and consume most news. Online platforms and social media are now providing immediate, often sensationalized content, usually without any editorial processes whatsoever. While this shift has changed access to information and allowed marginalized voices to be heard, it has also introduced new challenges. The speed of digital media has enabled movements like #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo to become another rallying call for demanding racial justice and equality. It has also created a new space which is often filled with biased misinformation.

One such case where media influence intersected with racial bias and injustice is the widely publicized incident involving Christian Cooper in Central Park in 2020. Christian Cooper, a Black man birdwatching in the park, was falsely accused by a white woman, Amy Cooper (no relation), of threatening her when she called the police in a racially charged altercation. The media portrayal of the incident highlighted issues of racial profiling, the criminalization of Black bodies, and the weaponization of White woman privilege. It sparked national attention on the role of media in perpetuating racial stereotypes and how Black individuals are often unfairly positioned as threats despite the lack of evidence or justification. Stories such as this reveal the deep-seated biases against Black men, particularly in cases of sexual violence, and how the media has reinforced harmful stereotypes about Black masculinity. The media's portrayal of Black men as violent, hypersexual, and morally deviant, especially in high-profile cases involving White women, continues to shape societal perceptions and legal outcomes.

These cases are not isolated but rather part of a broader narrative that has shaped and continues to shape Black culture and the national historical narrative. The media's role in

perpetuating racial biases, combined with the criminal justice system's institutionalized racism, creates a cycle of disenfranchisement and social disability that continues to impact Black Americans today. Recognizing the media's role in this cycle and challenging the narratives that fuel racial prejudice is essential to achieving a more just and equitable society. As the media landscape continues to evolve, it is necessary that we challenge news outlets that perpetuate racial injustice and recognize the intersection of media, race, and social disability.

The concept of social disability is crucial in understanding how systemic racism operates within the media and the justice system. Social disability refers to the exclusion, marginalization, and dehumanization of individuals and groups based on societal attitudes, historical narratives, and institutionalized discrimination. Black individuals, especially men, are often subjected to social disability through media portrayals that strip them of their humanity, portraying them as criminals or threats to society. This exclusionary practice impacts their public image and shapes their interactions with law enforcement, the judicial system, and society at large.

In 1997, Mr. Yusef Salaam was released from prison and returned to the Harlem community where he had grown up and was later arrested. However, as a felon, registered sex offender, and unemployed individual, he struggled to rebuild his life while living under what he described as the "shadow of the crime" from 1989. For instance, shortly after his release, while working as a construction laborer for one of the city's government housing projects, it was discovered that he was one of the Central Park Five (CP5). As a result, he was immediately terminated.

Almost 34 years later, in February 2023, Salaam announced his candidacy for the New York City Council, aiming to represent the 9th City Council District. If elected, he would serve

the communities of Harlem, East Harlem, and neighborhoods bordering Central Park—the very area where he had lived at the time of his 1989 arrest for the rape, assault, and attempted murder of a jogger. During the New York City Council election, Mr. Salaam won by a landslide, securing over 98% of the vote and unseating the incumbent by capturing more than half of the Democratic votes. On January 1, 2024, he was officially sworn in as the Council Member for the 9th District. In his role, Salaam serves as the Chairperson of the Committee on Public Safety and is a member of the committees on Civil Service, Aging, and the Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus. However, on January 24, 2024, Councilman Salaam was pulled over by a police patrol car while driving his vehicle in the neighborhood that he represents. The officer at the time of the incident did not provide Mr. Salaam with a reason why he was stopped. The New York City Police department later claimed the stop was due to Salaam’s dark-tinted windows and Georgia license plate. This event was widely reported in the newspapers and questions were raised regarding racial profiling.

The Gate of the Exonerated in Central Park stands as a symbol of the nation and New York City’s historical racism. It is not only a reminder of the wrongful convictions of the Central Park Five and others, but it also exemplifies the ways in which the media has been complicit in perpetuating stereotypes and encouraging racial injustice. Hopefully, it will also serve as a marker to reframe the national narrative and transform the nation’s collective memory of Black masculinity, Black culture and Black communities. Finally, vacated or exonerated; businessman, chairman or councilman; son, husband or father, Yusef Salaam, Raymand Santana, Korey Wise, Antron McCray, and Kevin Richardson will always be collectively remembered for their disability as the Central Park Five.

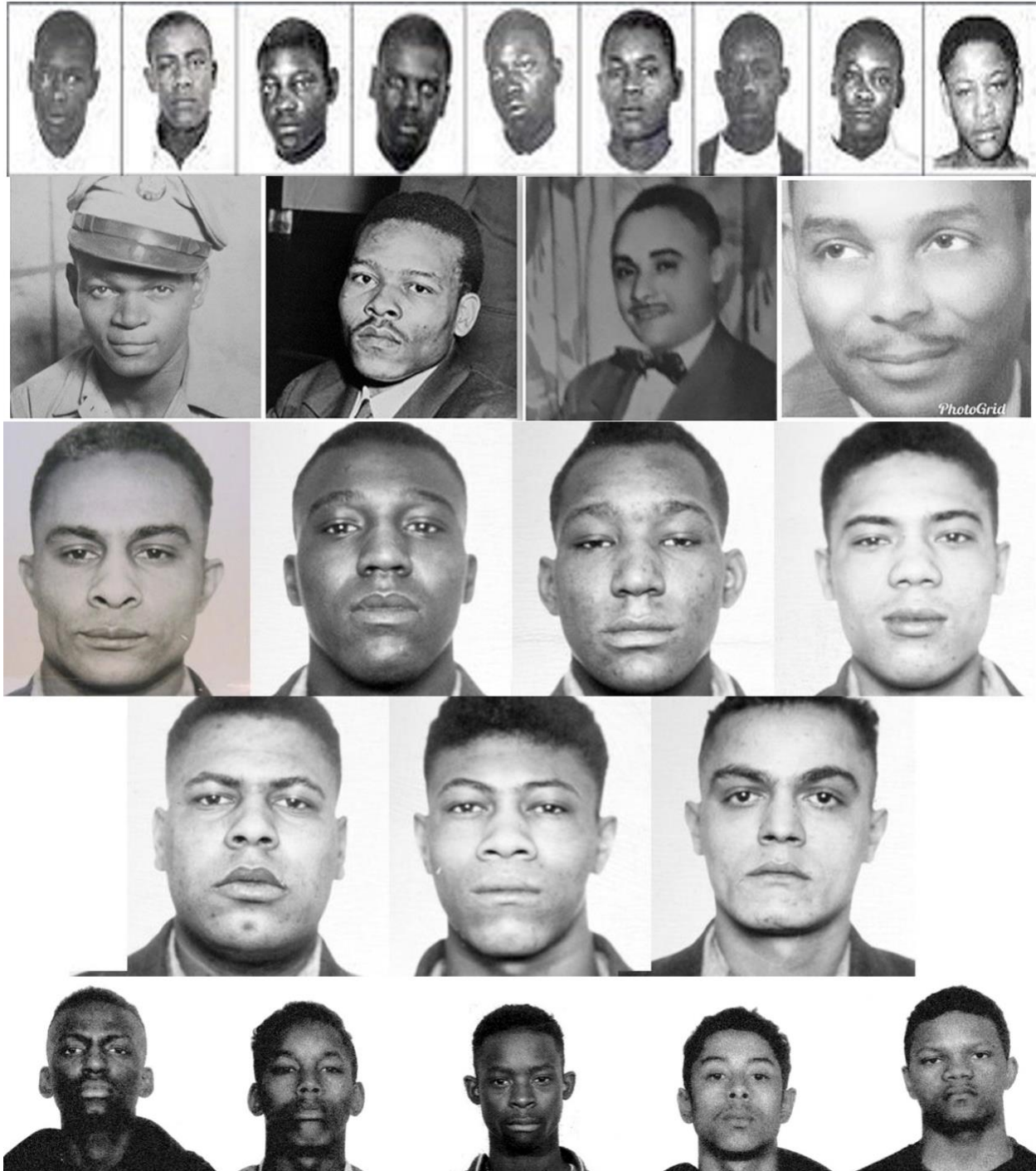


Figure 36. Top row: The Scottsboro Boys. Second row: The Groveland Four. Third and four row: The Martinsville Seven. Fifth row: The Central Park Five.

Appendix

The Central Park Five

The Media's Hysteria of Race, Class, Sex, and Crime.

A Review of American Newspapers and Their Historical
Influence on Social Psychology and Public Policy through
Race, Sex, and Crime in the Case of The Central Park

Five: The Native Sons of New York City.

Excerpts from The National Narrative
and

Inserts of America's Collective Memory.

By

Adrienne Moses Ridley

A focus group was conducted in January 2019. Data collected from participant responses to selected primary sources will serve as the basis for developing research questions, identifying trends, analyzing, and interpreting for both qualitative and quantitative research.

Pink Card Participant Demographics

1. What year were you born?
2. What city were you born?
3. Where did you live in 1989?
4. What is your profession? 1989? _____ Present _____?
5. What is your education level? _____ 1989? _____ Present?
6. What is your gender?
7. Do you have children?
8. Sons? Daughters?
9. What newspaper do you read or read?
10. What news station do you watch on television?

Note Card Questions Participant Demographic Information- Pink

White Card Scottsboro Case

1. What do you know about the Scottsboro Case?
2. Where did it happen?
3. When did it happen?
4. How many people were involved?
5. What were their racial and social status?
6. What were their ages?
7. What details of the case do you remember?

Note Card Questions Scottsboro Case (1930s Alabama) Knowledge- White

Green Card Groveland Four Case

1. What was your first reaction to the Groveland Four Case? (One word).
2. What were the ages of those involved?
3. How many people were involved in the case, assaulted and raped?
4. Where did this event happen?
5. What ultimately happen to the Groveland Four?

Note Card Questions Groveland Case Knowledge (1940s Florida)- Green

Yellow Card Martinsville Seven Case

1. Have you ever heard of the Martinsville Seven Case?
2. What details do you know?
3. How many people were involved?
4. What were their ages?
5. Was this a race related case?
6. When did it happen?
7. In what part of the country did this case take place?
8. What was the outcome of the case?

Note Card Questions Martinsville Case Knowledge (1950s Virginia)- Yellow

Blue Card Central Park Case

1. What do you know about the Central Park Five case?
2. When did it happen?
3. What are the social and racial make-up of the persons involved?
4. What did you first believe about the details of the case?
5. How long was the trial?
6. If you followed the Media, which source did you most believe?
7. What was the outcome of the case?
8. What are your feelings on the case, now?

Note Card Questions Central Park Case Knowledge (1980s New York)-Blue

Discussion: Let's Talk About The Questions.
Why and How Do These Incidents Relate?
What Does It All Mean?
Break for Refreshments

What were some of the commonalities? Why do you think few remember these incidents? Do you know of other incidents that are similar in your hometown, backstories from family members, or stories that are new to you about the past?

A comparison of the statements reveals troubling discrepancies. ...

1. What you heard?
2. Where did you you hear about this?
3. Who provided you this information?
4. When did you first become aware?
5. Why do you think that you do not know or perhaps forgot?
6. How do you know that it is true and how does it make you feel?

Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro.

Frederick L. Hoffman, F.S.S
Statistician to the Prudential Insurance Company of
America. 1892-1896

Prudential Life Insurance And Metropolitan Life Insurance Companies' Assertions

- Blacks healthy during slavery, were inherently unhealthy as freedmen. However, during slavery they were immune to tuberculosis, insanity and tropical diseases.
- Blacks became physiologically inferior as freed people.
- Blacks anatomic development such as "black skin, flat nose", small head proved to be evidence of reduced brain function.
- Since emancipation, Blacks had a high death rate low birth rate and have increased in barbarism and criminality.
- Blacks were prone to venereal disease and their lack of education resulted in illegitimate births.

Prudential hired Frederick L. Hoffman who became their historian and statistician, claiming that Blacks were physically inferior. His assertions became the base for many later race studies his findings reported in late nineteenth century/ early twentieth century In (**"Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro, 1892**). John Haller Jr. (**Race, Mortality, and Life Insurance: Negro Vital Statistics in the Late Nineteenth Century.**) This began the justification for insurance companies to write Black policy holders as an at risk population and promote to the American public that blacks were physically and mentally inferior. The ultimate goal was to prevent financial payout of premiums.



The Negro Beast (1900) by Chas Carroll

Pub. American Book and Bible House. St. Louis Mo. As a Christian authority of the time told its readers that after emancipation in the south negroes were “the great bulk ...in the south (of) crimes of murder and rape.” However, while he contends that this was primarily in the southern states, he tell readers that these murderer or rape fiends have migrated to the northern states increasing the number of these two particular crimes. (loc. 3280) He further states, that “a very large proportion of these crimes are committed by young Negro toughs under 25 years of age.”

America's Greatest Problem: The Negro

R.W. Shufeldt, M.D. 1915
Major, Medical Corps, United States Army

By 1915, Blacks were no longer just an economic problem; now riding on the tails of Hoffman, Shufeldt writes that Blacks had become a sexually charged social problem.

“The obtuseness of the savages (Negro) was such,...their one idea was power,...force that could obtain aa,.. the strong hand that could wrest from the weak.”

“ With the increase of negro crimes... to the fact that negroes nearly always are the frequent occurrence of the crime of rape....upon white women.”

“..Notwithstanding the enormous amount of crime of all kinds committed by the negroes in the United States, the one above all others for which he is held especially responsible ..., is that of his assaults upon white women.

“The sexual side of the negro organization...in those trails wherein the accused is a negro man, charged with rape or assault...and perhaps raped a white woman.” “During these period of sexual madness, the negro has all the active symptoms of animalism.”



Ota Benga, at the Bronx Zoo with monkeys and an Orangutan. He was referred to as "the missing link." (The Jim crow Museum) (with other African natives), was a popular attraction in New York City in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By 1904, he was freed in exchange for a pound of salt and some cloth to work in the Monkey House. In 1906, at age 23, he was placed in New York City's Howard Colored Orphan Asylum. In 1916, at the age of 33, after living and working in a tobacco factory in Lynchburg, Virginia Ota Benga committed suicide.

**The Passing of The Great Race
or
The Racial Basis of European
History
By
Madison Grant, Chairman, New York
Zoological Society
1916**

- Grant supported eugenics, advocating the sterilization of "undesirables", a treatment possibly to be extended to "types which may be called weaklings," and "perhaps ultimately to worthless race types," and "get rid of the undesirables who crowd our jails, hospitals, and insane asylum." Point to note that it is believed that the Nazi's adopted his rhetoric. His writings are used in the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 in the Virginia General Assembly, which prohibited interracial marriage and intimate relations. Not overturned until Loving V. Virginia.

...AROUND BLACKS



Popular 19th Century Images



- Collection.americanantiquarian.org

Newspaper Headlines

“Lynching of the black fiend for outrage committed upon young white girl by negro.”

“Lynching of Two Colored Men near Alexandria, VA.”

“Lynched For Rape.”

“A Fiendish Crime.”

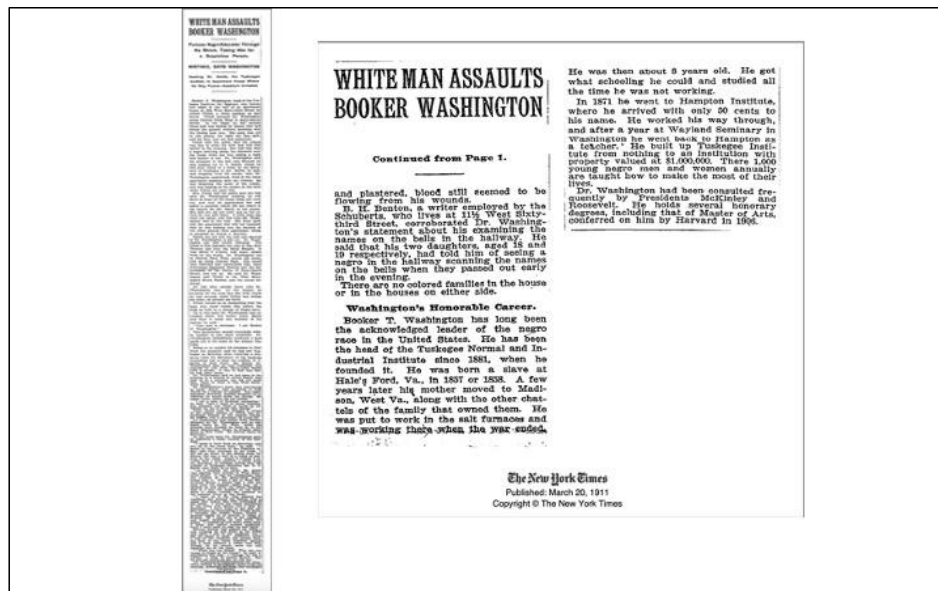
“Black Man Accused”

“Negroes Pay Penalty for Horrible Crime Committed Yesterday”

- The Athens Post (Athens, Texas, 7/24/1868)
- New York Tribune (8/23/1869)
- San Antonio Daily Light (4/25/1888)
- A Fiendish Crime (The Chattanooga News, 1/24/1906)
- The Monitor (Omaha, Neb. 1/13/1921)
- Fort Myers News (Fort Myers News- Press 5/24/1924)



Atlanta 1906- On September 22, after four alleged sexual attacks on white women by black men were reported in the local white press, a mob of approximately 10,000 white men formed downtown. The mob surged through black Atlanta neighborhoods destroying businesses and assaulting hundreds of black men. The violence became so dangerous that the state militia was called in to take control of the city. Still, some white groups persisted in attacking black neighborhoods, and black men organized to defend their homes and families.



- Dr. Booker T Washington accused of looking at a White woman across from Central Park in 1911.



Washington, D.C. On Saturday night, July 19, 1919, in a downtown bar, a group of white veterans sparked a rumor regarding the arrest, questioning, and release of a black man suspected by the Metropolitan Police Department of sexually assaulting a white woman. The victim was also the wife of a Navy man. The rumor traveled throughout the saloons and pool halls of downtown Washington, angering the several soldiers, sailors, and marines taking their weekend liberty, including many veterans of [World War I](#).



In 1920 Duluth (Minn.), Elmer Clayton, Isaac McGhie, and Elmer Jackson were among the one hundred or so townspeople hired to work the John Robinson Circus. Irene Tusken, 19, and James Sullivan, 18, were among the townspeople who attended the circus on June 14. When it ended, the couple walked to the back of the tents for an unknown reason, and it is still unclear as to what happened next. Sullivan later told his father that he and Tusken were held up by three black circus workers at gunpoint, and that Tusken was raped. By June 16, six men were identified and arrested and three were eventually lynched. Although, Sullivan had been examined by a doctor, that found no evidence of sexual assault or rape.



Tulsa 1921-The riot began over Memorial Day weekend after 19-year-old [Dick Rowland](#), a black [shoeshiner](#), was accused of assaulting Sarah Page, the 17-year-old white elevator operator of the nearby Drexel Building. It is alleged that at some time about or after 4 PM, 19-year-old [Dick Rowland](#), a black [shoeshiner](#) employed at a Main Street shine parlor, entered the only elevator of the nearby Drexel Building at 319 South Main Street to use the top-floor restroom, which was restricted to black people. He encountered Sarah Page, the 17-year-old white elevator operator on duty. The two likely knew each other at least by sight, as this building was the only one nearby with a restroom to which Rowland had express permission to use, and the elevator operated by Page was the only one in the building. A clerk at Renberg's, a clothing store on the first floor of the Drexel, heard what sounded like a woman's scream and saw a young black man rushing from the building. The clerk went to the elevator and found Page in what he said was a distraught state. Thinking she had been [assaulted](#), he summoned the authorities.

The [Tulsa Tribune](#), one of two white-owned papers published in Tulsa, broke the story in that afternoon's edition with the headline: "Nab Negro for Attacking Girl In an Elevator", describing the alleged incident.

The same edition of the [Tribune](#) included an editorial warning of a potential lynching of Rowland, entitled "To Lynch Negro Tonight". The paper was known at the time to have a

"sensationalist" style of news writing.



On March 25, 1931, nine unemployed young black men, illegally riding the rails and looking for work, were taken off a freight train at Scottsboro, Alabama and held on a minor charge. The Scottsboro deputies found two white women, Ruby Bates and Victoria Price, and pressured them into accusing the nine youths of raping them on board the train. The charge of raping white women was an explosive accusation, and within two weeks the Scottsboro Boys were convicted and eight sentenced to death, the youngest, Leroy Wright at age 13, to life imprisonment. The case went to the United States Supreme Court in 1937, and the lives of the nine were saved, though it was almost twenty years before the last defendant was freed from prison. The trial of the Scottsboro Boys is perhaps one of the proudest moments of American radicalism, in which a mass movement of blacks and whites—led by

Communists and radicals—successfully beat the Jim Crow legal system.



On the evening of January 8, 1949, Ruby Stroud Floyd accused 13 black men of raping her while she passed through a poor African American neighborhood in Martinsville, [Virginia](#). The police first arrested Frank Hairston, Jr. and Booker T. Millner, and soon picked up James Luther Hairston, Howard Lee Hairston, John Clabon Taylor, Francis DeSales Grayson, then James Henry Hampton as additional suspects. The young men with spotty employment records but no real criminal history soon became known as the Martinsville Seven. Most of the men were between 18 and 20 years old and worked as laborers in small-scale furniture factories and warehouses. At age 37, [World War II](#) veteran Francis DeSales Grayson was the oldest of the defendants.

Floyd identified Grayson and Hampton as her rapists but struggled to identify the others because the attack happened at night. After being questioned by local police officers, the defendants initially confessed to committing or witnessing the crime. By the spring of 1949, all seven men were charged with rape. During the eleven-day trials, juries heard testimonies from both sides, including medical evidence of Floyd's physical injuries and accounts from black witnesses whom Floyd appealed to for help after the assault. Defense lawyers argued that Floyd had consented to sexual intercourse by failing to forcibly resist the men and that the initial confessions were

forced by the local sheriff. All six juries convicted the young men of rape and recommended the death penalty. Four of the Martinsville Seven were electrocuted on February 2, 1951. The remaining three were electrocuted on February 5.

The Martinsville Seven were a group of young black men executed in 1951 after being convicted of raping a white woman. Their trials and the electrocutions became a *cause célèbre* similar to the [Scottsboro Case](#) of the 1930s.



Groveland Four: In July 1949 Four young black men accused of raping a 17 year old white woman Norma Padgett and assaulting her husband Willie Padgett in Groveland Florida. Greenlee and Thomas (Both about 16 years old) were friends arrested at the bus station as Thomas got off the bus coming into town, and it is believed that Irvin and Shepard (both in their early twenties) may have known each other since they were both Veterans of WWII, however there was never any proof that the four of them had been acquainted.

Norma Padgett, a 17-year-old white woman, and her husband Willie, said that on July 16, 1949, they had been attacked by four young black men in Groveland, Florida, who stopped where the couple's car had stalled. Norma said she was taken away and raped, and Willie said he had been assaulted. Ernest Thomas, Charles Greenlee, age 16; Samuel Shepherd, age 22, and Walter Irvin, age 22, were identified by the police as suspects. Shepherd and Irvin were both veterans of service in the Army; and both Thomas and Greenlee were married.

Greenlee and Thomas knew each other, both men were married and looking for work. Shepard and Irvin had both served in WWII and still wore their uniforms. During the events after they were accused, Thomas was killed by a posse during arrest. After the trial: Greenlee was sentenced to life because he was sixteen at the time. Shepard and Irvin were

sentence to death. During their transport to jail the sheriff took both young men to a secluded place and shoot them at point black range claiming that they tried to escape.



Though Shepared died on the spot, Irvin was shot again in the head by the deputiy standing over him. He faked his death until he was in the moruge.

Headlines

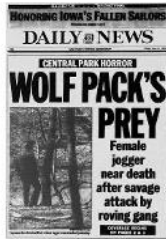
- "Cop Says Suspects Shouted Sex Comments at Detective" Newsday 11/7/89
- "Wave of Anger Grows in New York Over 'Wilding' Gang Rape of Jogger." Toronto Star 4/25/89
- They Went "Wilding." The Washington Post 5/1/1989
- "Wilding." Los Angeles Times 5/3/1989
- "New Yorkers in a retaliatory mood after attack on Central Park Jogger" Houston Chronicle 5/14/1989
- "Factors cant hide reality of an act of personal Evil." Telegram & Gazette Mass. 4/30/1989
- "Jurors Grimace at Grisly Photos of Central Park Jogger." UPI. 7/10/90
- "Risen from Near Death, the Central Park Jogger Makes Her Day in Court One to Remember". People Magazine 7/30/90
- N.Y. Fears Racial Unrest After park Rape." Chicago Tribune 4/27/89
- "Gang rape deeply upset New York joggers." The Vancouver Sun, 5/23/1989
- "Prosecution says It Has Witness in the Park Attack" New York Times, 5/11/1989
- "YOUNG WILDERS AND A SAVAGE HEART," St. Louise Post 5/7/1989
- "Worst of Times in Two Cities" San Francisco 5/4/1989

Headlines from across North America



The **Central Park jogger case** was a major news story that involved the [assault](#) and [rape](#) of Trisha Meili, a [White](#) female jogger, and attacks on others in [Manhattan's Central Park](#) on the night of April 19, 1989. The attack on the jogger left her in a coma for 12 days. Meili was a 28-year-old investment banker at the time. According to [The New York Times](#), the attack was "one of the most widely publicized crimes of the 1980s. five juvenile males – four African American and one Hispanic – were apprehended in connection with a number of attacks in Central Park . The defendants were tried variously for assault, robbery, riot, rape, sexual abuse, and attempted murder relating to Meili's and other attacks in the park, based solely on confessions that they said were coerced and false. Before the trial, the FBI tested the DNA of the rape kit and found it did not match to any of the tested suspects. They were convicted in 1990 by juries in two separate trials. Subsequently, known as the **Central Park Five**, they received sentences ranging from 5 to 15 years. Four of the convictions were appealed and the convictions were affirmed by appellate courts.







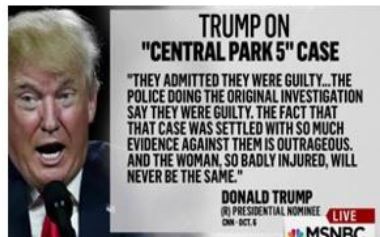
Derogatory terms used to represent the young boys in the media. These terms such as monsters and wolf pack became household names when speaking about the suspects.



Headlines of the New York Post and Daily News newspapers demanding sentencing and stating the verdict of the trial.

"You rape our women, and you're taking over our country, and you have to go." Dylan Storm Roof - Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church Assassin. Charleston, South Carolina

"In that race, in that society, rape is no big deal." (NYPD Arresting Officer of the Central Park Five)



... The accounts given by the five defendants differed from one another on the specific details of virtually every major aspect of the crime—who initiated the attack, who knocked the victim down, who undressed her, who struck her, who held her, who raped her, what weapons were used in the course of the assault, and when in the sequence of events the attack took place. ... In many other respects the defendants' statements were not corroborated by, consistent with, or explanatory of objective, independent evidence. And some of what they said was simply contrary to established fact.....District Attorney Robert Monganathau's Office 2002.

Statement made the Manhattan District Attorney after evidence of innocence of the five now young men exonerated for the 1989 Central Park Jogger Rape Case.



In 2002, Matias Reyes, a convicted murderer and [serial rapist](#) in prison, confessed to raping the jogger, and [DNA evidence](#) confirmed his guilt. He knew facts about the crime that only the offender could have known, and also said he committed the rape alone.^[3] At the time of his confession, Reyes was already serving a [life sentence](#). He was not prosecuted for raping Meili, because the [statute of limitations](#) had passed by the time he confessed. Morgenthau suggested to the court that the five men's convictions related to the assault and rape of Meili and to attacks on others to which they had confessed be [vacated](#) (a legal position in which the parties are treated as though no trial has taken place) and withdrew the charges. Their convictions were vacated in 2002.



Q & A

- What do you think is the most compelling thing that you learned or disagree with from the presentation?

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