

MAYCOMB COUNTY TRIBUNE

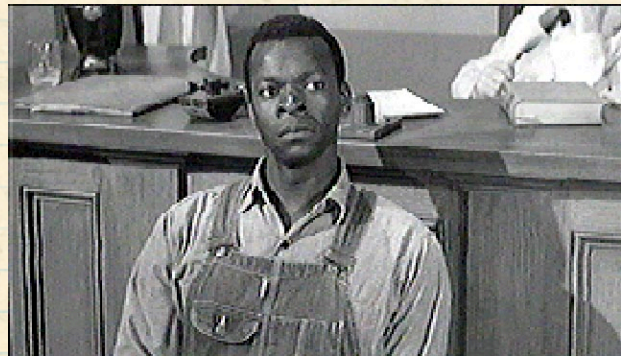
LOREM IPSUM:
TEMPOR NOSTRA MAECENAS
1234 Main Street
Anytown, State ZIP
TELEPHONE
(123) 456-7890
FACSIMILE
(123) 456-7891

Tom Robinson's Death Should Be No Surprise

- Dolphus Raymond

The result of this trial is no mystery to any of us who have grown up and live in Macomb County, Georgia. Even though some of us might wish that events had turned out differently, in reality, the sad case of Tom Robinson could not have been expected to end any other way, for this trial happens to be just a repeat of every other trial we have had in these parts involving a Negro. The Negro never has a chance, because there is no justice if one is not white. There is no justice here in Macomb County, in much of the South, and indeed, in a good part of the United States because our society is dictated by prejudice. A racist society can not be a just society. It explains why I am so proud to be considered an outcast by this community. It's the only respectable thing to do.

On what grounds do I assert that Tom Robinson, like many other



Negroes, did not get a fair trial? We always take the white man for his word, no matter how absurd it is, and discount the Negro's side. It ain't right, but it happens all the time. It is not that the Negro's case is always weak, it is that prejudice blinds us from seeing the truth. In this case in particular, all of the facts were in Mr. Robinson's favor, yet the jury of honest, upstanding white people found him guilty. This was absurd. It was obvious to everyone, as Atticus Finch made clear in his cross examination, that Mayella Ewell's testimony was not remotely consistent with the facts. How could Tom have so battered the right side of her face if Tom has a useless maimed left arm, yet her father is left handed? Likewise, how can anyone have any faith in the testimony of Miss Mayella when her memory of the events of that night seems to change with the time of day? And finally, if Miss Mayella was beaten up so badly, why didn't the father immediately go get the doctor like a concerned parent would normally do instead of getting the sheriff? The Ewells claims against Tom just make no sense.

Who are the Ewells to be making a claim against anyone? The Ewells are a family who have earned the respect of almost no one. Unlike

me, who pretends to do shameful things to become an outcast, the Ewells are outcasts because they are truly shameless and devoid of any dignity. They even live apart from the rest of the community and live by their own rules because no one will have them live near them. As a family, they are as close to being amoral as a family could get. Why would anyone listen to them? Tom Robinson, on the other hand, is a respectable man who tries his hardest to support his family. Link Deas vouched for the praiseworthy character of this man. Yet the jury couldn't hear of it, because Tom was a Negro.

Finally, the fact that Tom Robinson attempted to escape from jail in no way validates the rightness of this conviction. Tom knew this town as well as any of us and knew he could expect no justice. The fifteen gunshots in his back are a stark testimony to that. Now his poor wife, Helen, must support her poor family by herself.

Now a fair-minded person may attempt to argue that I am being too harsh on the good people of this county. They would argue that Tom Robinson did have a chance to have justice served in his case. Wasn't he represented by Atticus Finch, one most respected lawyers in

all of Alabama and wasn't he allowed by Judge Taylor to represent him to the best of his abilities and extent of the law? Furthermore, one might also argue that the jury embraced their civic responsibly by deliberating over many hours before reaching their verdict. But these defenses do not hold up. The conclusion was never in doubt because of the color of Tom Robinson's skin.

You, the good people of Maycomb County should all be ashamed of what has been done in their name. You have convicted an innocent man just as you have done thousands of times, wasted youths with many possibilities, murdered all that was pure and good in our society because you are ruled by prejudice. You do this time and time again, then go on living your lives as if nothing happened. You fail to see that every person is a human being just like you and me. Do you really believe that the color of one's skin should make that much of difference? This may describe how people in the South lived in the past, but this need not be permanent. Let us not let Tom Robinson die in vain. Let the injustice of his death and our good will help motivate us to create an America where there truly is justice for all.