
HANDOUT ONE, LESSON THREE

FILM CLIPS TRANSCRIPTS

CLIP 1: DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO THE LEGACY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

BARACK OBAMA: It was here in Springfield, where North, South, East, and West come together, that I was reminded of the essential decency of the American people. Where I came to believe that through this decency, we can build a more hopeful America. And that is why, in the shadow of the Old State Capitol, where Lincoln once called on a house divided to stand together, where common hopes and common dreams still live, I stand before you today to announce my candidacy for President of the United States of America.

AL SHARPTON: When he made the announcement that day in Illinois, at the same time in Virginia there was a Black Agenda Conference. I was there. (ARCHIVAL) I wish all of this about our friend Barack announcing today, I wish Obama had announced here. Because Lincoln — Lincoln did not free us, the abolitionist movement freed us. (INTERVIEW) And I was not yet there supporting him. (ARCHIVAL) We've got to quit giving the wrong people credit for our history.

MICHAEL ERIC DYSON: Black leaders were kind of resentful because he kind of did an end run around Black leadership. Most Black people who rise in Black communities have to come through and kiss the ring of the Black political dignitaries and potentates. Obama leapfrogged over them.

BARACK OBAMA: By ourselves, this change will not happen. Divided, we are bound to fail. But the life of a tall, gangly, self-made Springfield lawyer tells us that a different future is possible.

CORNEL WEST: He makes the announcement at Springfield, tied to the legacy of Abraham Lincoln, which is a rich one. So, we understood — okay, I mean political calculation; every politician has to do that. And you don't want to alienate your White fellow citizens coming out of the box.

BARACK OBAMA: He tells us that there is power in words. He tells us that there's power in conviction. That beneath all the differences of race and region, faith and station we are one people.

CORNEL WEST: (ARCHIVAL) He's got large numbers of White brothers and sisters who have fears and anxieties, and he's got to speak to them in such a way that he holds us at arm's length enough to say he loves us, but doesn't get too close to scare them off. So, he's walking this tightrope.

BARACK OBAMA: I want us to take up the unfinished business of perfecting our union and building a better America!

CORNEL WEST: I'm not for or against him as a brother; if there's any White supremacist perception of Barack, I defend him. Why? 'Cause I hate White supremacy. But he's gotta be accountable. And starting off in Springfield, Illinois, is not impressive to me. Hey. (INTERVIEW) He called me up. He said "Professor West, I — I heard what you said about my speech, why did you say it?" I said, "I said it because I believed it." He said "I was wondering whether you would work with me?" I said "I've got one question. What is your relation to the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.? And how will your campaign enact the struggle against poverty, militarism, racism, and materialism? Those are the evils that Martin Luther King, Jr. saw right before he was murdered."

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.: I can still sing We Shall Overcome; we shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice.

BARACK OBAMA: ...bends towards justice. It bends towards justice.

CORNEL WEST: He was very honest with me and he said "Professor West, you know that I'm not as radical as you are, but I do see myself directly connected to the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr." I said, "That sounds wonderful to me."

CLIP 2: THE JOSHUA GENERATION

Lower Third: Selma, AL, March 4, 2007

REPORTER: Forty-two years ago, it would have been unimaginable. Two Democratic presidential contenders, one a woman, another an African American. Courting Black voters in Alabama, preaching to overflowing churches.

HILLARY CLINTON: Are you ready to march?

DAVID REMNICK: Every year, there's a commemoration of Selma, a great encounter between the forces of the Civil Rights Movement led by John Lewis and others and police with truncheons. And Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama want to make an impression in Selma.

CYNTHIA BOWERS: Many Black voters say they're torn between voting for the African American, Obama, or sticking with the Clintons, who've supported civil rights for years. That's the agonizing choice for John Lewis, bludgeoned during the Selma March, and now a congressman.

JOHN LEWIS: It was tough, it was very — it was tough. I supported President Clinton and got to know Hillary. It was one of the tough decisions of my political life.

DAVID REMNICK: The Clintons felt that they had deep inroads with the African American community and with — with reason. You'll remember in a certain New Yorker magazine, Toni Morrison wrote that Bill Clinton was the first Black president, said with some irony, said with all kinds of — but mostly with admiration, too. Obama gives his speech at Brown Church. And Hillary is down the street at another church.

HILARY CLINTON: Yes, that long march to freedom that began here has carried us a mighty long way.

DAVID REMNICK: It's — it's a contest.

BARACK OBAMA: Thank you, thank you. Oh, giving all praise and honor to God for bringing us here today. I just want to talk a little bit about Moses and Aaron and Joshua because we are in the presence today of a lot of Moseses. We're in the presence today of giants whose shoulders we stand on.

DAVID REMNICK: He begins paying tribute to what he calls the Moses Generation. Who's Moses? Martin Luther King — who did not see — famously says it in his speech, "I might not get there with you."

BARACK OBAMA: As great as Moses was, despite all that he did, leading a people out of bondage, he didn't cross over the river to see the Promised Land. God told him, "Your job is done. We're going to leave it to the Joshua Generation to make sure it happens. There are still some battles that need to be fought; some rivers that need to be crossed."

DAVID REMNICK: Obama pronounces himself the head of the Joshua Generation. That's incredibly nervy.

BARACK OBAMA: Moses told the Joshua Generation, "Don't forget where you came from." And I worry sometimes that the Joshua Generation in its success forgets where it came from; thinks it doesn't have to make as many sacrifices.

SHERRILYN IFILL: You think people in the 1940's and 1950's woke up and said, "We are the civil rights generation, let's do this," as though it was, you know, fantastic? Our nostalgia has made us look back at that period of time as though it was great, but it was not great getting hit in the head on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. These weren't fun times. These were times of commitment, when people decided that they weren't gonna take it anymore and that they could make this country better.

BARACK OBAMA: Folks complaining about the quality of our government, I understand there's something to be complaining about. I'm in Washington. I see what's going on.

SHERRILYN IFILL: It means we can't sit out elections. It means we can't just vote for people and then not show up to hold them accountable. It means we can't think that government is something other people do.

BARACK OBAMA: But I'll tell you what. I also know that, if Cousin Pookie would vote, if Uncle Jethro would get off the couch and stop watching SportsCenter, and go register some folks and go to the polls, we might have a different kind of politics. That's what the Moses Generation teaches us. Kick off your bedroom slippers. Put on your marching shoes. Go do some politics. Change this country! That's what they teach.

CLIP THREE: THE MOVEMENT AND MISSION COME TOGETHER

AL SHARPTON: I decided to call a Watch Night service like we do on New Year's Eve, down at Martin Luther King's church in Atlanta.

JOHN LEWIS: This election is not the Promised Land, but I tell you, it is a major down payment on the Promised Land.

AL SHARPTON: And when it flashed across that screen, Obama won Ohio, I was in my fifties, and it was the first time in my life that I could honestly tell a kid, you could be president.

WOLF BLITZER: We're only a few seconds away from the top of the hour when these states will be closing and there are some big ones. And presumably, we'll be able to see what's going on and make, perhaps, a major projection at that point. This is a moment that a lot of people have been waiting for. This is a moment that potentially could be rather historic... And CNN can now project that Barack Obama, 47 years old, will become the president-elect of the United States. We project he now has enough electoral votes.

JOHN LEWIS: I never thought that I would live to see a Black man or a Black woman as president of the United States of America. My own mother, my own father, my grandparents didn't become registered voters until after the Voting Rights Act was passed and signed into law on August 6, 1965. And to live to see Barack Obama become president of the United States of America was almost too much. I jumped up so high I didn't think my feet were going to touch the floor, and I started crying.

JESSE JACKSON: It was the moment the movement and the mission all came together. Man, to my mind came the martyrs. Our warriors fight for civil rights in America, we're soldiers too. Fighting for freedom in America is risky, it's very dangerous. And those who made it possible were not there. I wish Dr. King, Medgar Evers, for a moment just — just, God gave them 15 seconds to look at their work. This is their work: he's the result of our work.