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## HANDOUT TWO, LESSON THREE

### A SURVEY OF OBAMA'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

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#### PERSONAL INTERVIEW

*"My mother had inculcated in me the sense that being African American was a wonderful thing. You know, that it was special in some way. My mother really was somebody who identified so greatly with the Civil Rights Movement that that was almost our civil religion. She was constantly talking about King and Malcolm, and I think that most of my influences are not so much people that I knew personally as people whose words I've internalized."*

#### SPEAKING AT THE 2004 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

*"Tonight, is a particular honor for me because, let's face it, my presence on this stage is pretty unlikely. I stand here knowing that my story is part of the larger American story, that I owe a debt to all of those who came before me, and that, in no other country on earth, is my story even possible."*

#### SPEAKING IN SELMA, AL, 2007 CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENT

*"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. 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. 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."*

#### NATIONAL ACTION NETWORK SPEECH, NOVEMBER 2008

*"I am proud to be a candidate for the presidency of the United States of America. I am mindful that I wouldn't be here if it had not been for Reverend Al Sharpton running for president, and Carol Moseley-Braun running for president, and Jesse Jackson running for president, and Shirley Chisholm running for president."*

#### SELMA 50TH ANNIVERSARY, MARCH 7, 2015

*"There are places and moments in America where this nation's destiny has been decided. We gather here to honor the courage of ordinary Americans willing to endure billy clubs, the chastening rod, tear gas, and the trampling hoof; men and women, who despite the gush of blood and splintered bone, would stay true to their North Star and keep marching towards justice. If Selma taught us anything, it's that our work is never done. The American experiment in self-government gives work and purpose to each generation. And this is work for all Americans, not just some. Not just Whites, not just Blacks. If we want to honor the courage of those who marched that day, then all of us are called to possess their moral imagination. All of us will need to feel as they did, the fierce urgency of now."*