

I Have a Dream
Some stories behind this famous speech

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First Draft

Contact information

I Have a Dream

Stories behind this famous speech

an episode of
Re-Imagined Radio

Written and produced by John F. Barber

Synopsis

Re-Imagined Radio celebrates the anniversary of the famous "I Have a Dream" speech, by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 28 August 1963, and considers some stories behind its origins, context, delivery, and reception.

We explore the connection between poetry, prose, and preaching in three sections of this speech, the introduction where Dr. King sets up the overarching metaphor, the "dream" section, where Dr. King outlines his vision of racial justice and equality in America, and the "let freedom ring" section which concludes the speech on an uplifting note.

An estimated 250,000 people heard Dr. King's speech live. Radio storyteller Jean Shepherd was there and tells of his experience.

We remind listeners that sixty years after its delivery, because of entrenched racism and social injustice, Dr. King's dream is still unrealized.

"In his grave, we praise him for his decency—but when he walked amongst us, we responded with no decency of our own. When he suggested that all men should have a place in the sun—we put a special sanctity on the right of ownership and the privilege of prejudice by maintaining that to deny homes to Negroes was a democratic right.

"Now we acknowledge his compassion—but we exercised no compassion of our own. When he asked us to understand that men take to the streets out of anguish and hopelessness and a vision of that dream dying, we bought guns and speculated about roving agitators and subversive conspiracies and demanded law and order. We felt anger at the effects, but did little to acknowledge the causes. We extol all the virtues of the man—but we chose not to call them virtues before his death.

"And now, belatedly, we talk of this man's worth—but the judgement comes late in the day as part of a eulogy when it should have been made a matter of record while he existed as a living force. If we are to lend credence to our mourning, there are acknowledgements that must be made now, albeit belatedly. We must act on the altogether proper assumption that Martin Luther King asked for nothing but that which was his due... He asked only for equality, and it is that which we denied him."

--Rod Sterling

from a letter to *The Los Angeles Times* in response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., April 8, 1968.

Color Code

Yellow highlighted text = sound effect(s), either pre-recorded or created for episode. Pre-recorded audio is used as content in this episode.

~~**Magenta highlighted text with strike through**~~ = text deleted for episode timing

MUSIC = pre-recorded

MUSIC = bespoke, created for this episode

COLD OPEN

SFX: MLK#1 FROM I HAVE A DREAM

SPEECH

WHEN WE ALLOW FREEDOM RING, WHEN WE
LET IT RING FROM EVERY VILLAGE AND
EVERY HAMLET, FROM EVERY STATE AND
EVERY CITY, WE WILL BE ABLE TO
SPEED UP THAT DAY WHEN ALL OF GOD'S
CHILDREN, BLACK MEN AND WHITE MEN,
JEWS AND GENTILES, PROTESTANTS AND
CATHOLICS, WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN
HANDS AND SING IN THE WORDS OF THE
OLD NEGRO SPIRITUAL: FREE AT LAST.
FREE AT LAST. THANK GOD ALMIGHTY,
WE ARE FREE AT LAST.

THEME AND ANNOUNCER

MUSIC: RIR THEME

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program
about radio storytelling. I'm Jack
Armstrong. With each episode we combine
dialogue, sound effects, and music to
engage your listening imagination. This
episode is no different, and here to
tell you about it is John Barber,
producer and host.

HOST OPEN

HOST

Thank you Jack. Hello everyone. Welcome.

You just heard the ending of the "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., sixty years ago, August 28, 1963, in Washington, DC.

In his speech, Dr. King, the nation's leading civil rights activist, called for equality. For civil and economic rights for all people. And, for an end to racism in the United States.

This episode of Re-Imagined Radio celebrates the anniversary and considers stories behind this famous speech.

We'll start with a look at the context of the time period, and consider some of the decisions King made in preparing his speech.

We'll listen to and consider the beginning, where Dr. King sets up the overarching metaphor for his speech.

The "dream" section, where Dr. King outlines his vision of racial justice and equality in America.

And, the "let freedom ring" section, which concludes his speech on an uplifting note.

We'll explore earlier iterations of the "I have a dream" and "let freedom ring" sections of Dr. King's speech, and how, when he left his prepared script and spoke the "I have a dream" section from his heart his speech became so compelling.

We'll learn what it was like to be present the day Dr. King delivered his speech. Jean Shepherd was there and

provides observations and perspective from the crowd of marchers.

KXRW SHOUT OUT

HOST Our episode originates from KXRW-FM, Vancouver, Washington's community radio station. We thank them for their support.

And we thank YOU for joining us as Re-Imagined Radio presents "I Have a Dream: Stories behind this famous speech."

MUSIC: OPENING TRANSITION

CONTEXT

HOST It's Wednesday, August 28, 1963. Regularly scheduled buses, trains, and airplanes arrive filled with passengers. Additionally, more than 2,000 chartered buses, 21 chartered trains, 10 chartered airliners, and uncounted automobiles bring people to Washington, DC, the nation's capital city (Branch 876).

They have come to participate in a civil rights demonstration, The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Participants are asked to gather around the Washington Monument, on the National Mall, by 10 AM. Pre-printed protest signs are provided by the United Auto Workers Union. Folk singers Peter, Paul and Mary, Joan Baez (who traveled to Washington from Spain), Bob Dylan, and

The Freedom Singers entertain the growing crowds.

SFX: #1 WASHINGTON CROWD MARCHING.
ESTABLISH, THEN DUCK UNDER THE
FOLLOWING AND OUT.

HOST At 12 noon, people march down Independence and Constitution Avenues to the Lincoln Memorial (Harbster).

SFX: DUCK UP CROWD, MARCHING, THEN
DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING

HOST Marchers gather in front of the Lincoln Memorial, around the Reflecting Pool, and across the lawns back to the Washington Monument, and beyond.

This peaceful show of solidarity for civil rights is the largest in American history at this time.

At 2:00 PM, the main program begins at the Lincoln Memorial. Noted opera singer Marian Anderson is scheduled to lead the singing of the national anthem, but is stuck in traffic and unable to arrive in time. Camilla Williams, another noted opera singer, performs in her place. The Reverend Patrick O'Boyle, the Archbishop of Washington, delivers the invocation. Opening Remarks are delivered by labor unionist, civil rights activist, and Director and Founder of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, A. Philip Randolph (National Archives).

RANDOLPH: OPENING REMARKS

SFX: RANDOLPH, SAMPLE FROM OPENING REMARKS

FELLOW AMERICANS. WE ARE GATHERED HERE FOR THE LARGEST DEMONSTRATION IN THE HISTORY OF THIS NATION. LET THE NATION AND THE WORLD KNOW THE MEANING OF OUR NUMBERS.

WE ARE NOT A PRESSURE GROUP, WE ARE NOT AN ORGANIZATION OR A GROUP OF ORGANIZATIONS, WE ARE NOT A MOB. WE ARE THE ADVANCED GUARD OF A MASSIVE, MORAL REVOLUTION FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM. THIS REVOLUTION REVERBERATES THROUGHOUT THE LAND TOUCHING EVERY CITY, EVERY TOWN, EVERY VILLAGE WHERE BLACK MEN ARE SEGREGATED, OPPRESSED AND EXPLOITED. BUT THIS CIVIL RIGHTS REVOLUTION IS NOT CONFINED TO THE NEGRO, NOR IS IT CONFINED TO CIVIL RIGHTS FOR OUR WHITE ALLIES KNOW THAT THEY CANNOT BE FREE WHILE WE ARE NOT.

AND WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE NO FUTURE IN A SOCIETY IN WHICH 6 MILLION BLACK AND WHITE PEOPLE ARE UNEMPLOYED AND MILLIONS MORE LIVE IN POVERTY. NOR IS THE GOAL OF OUR CIVIL RIGHTS REVOLUTION MERELY THE PASSAGE OF CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION. YES, WE WANT ALL PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS OPEN TO ALL CITIZENS, BUT THOSE ACCOMMODATIONS WILL MEAN LITTLE TO THOSE WHO

CANNOT AFFORD TO USE THEM. YES, WE WANT A FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE ACT, BUT WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO IF PROFIT-GEARED AUTOMATION DESTROYS THE JOBS OF MILLIONS OF WORKERS BLACK AND WHITE?

WE WANT INTEGRATED PUBLIC SCHOOLS, BUT THAT MEANS WE ALSO WANT FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION, ALL FORMS OF EDUCATION. WE WANT A FREE, DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY DEDICATED TO THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT OF MAN ALONG MORAL LINES. NOW WE KNOW THAT REAL FREEDOM WILL REQUIRE MANY CHANGES IN THE NATION'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHIES AND INSTITUTIONS. FOR ONE THING WE MUST DESTROY THE NOTION THAT MRS. MURPHY'S PROPERTY RIGHTS INCLUDE THE RIGHT TO HUMILIATE ME BECAUSE OF THE COLOR OF MY SKIN.

THE SANCTITY OF PRIVATE PROPERTY TAKES SECOND PLACE TO THE SANCTITY OF THE HUMAN PERSONALITY. IT FALLS TO THE NEGRO TO REASSERT THIS PROPER PRIORITY OF VALUES, BECAUSE OUR ANCESTORS WERE TRANSFORMED FROM HUMAN PERSONALITIES INTO PRIVATE PROPERTY. IT FALLS TO US TO DEMAND NEW FORMS OF SOCIAL PLANNING, TO CREATE FULL EMPLOYMENT, AND TO PUT AUTOMATION AT THE SERVICE OF HUMAN NEEDS, NOT AT THE SERVICE OF PROFITS FOR WE ARE THE WORST VICTIMS OF UNEMPLOYMENT. NEGROES

ARE IN THE FOREFRONT OF TODAY'S MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL AND RACIAL JUSTICE, BECAUSE WE KNOW WE CANNOT EXPECT THE REALIZATION OF OUR ASPIRATIONS THROUGH THE SAME OLD ANTI-DEMOCRATIC SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES THAT HAVE ALL ALONG FRUSTRATED OUR ASPIRATIONS.

AND SO WE HAVE TAKEN OUR STRUGGLE INTO THE STREETS AS THE LABOR MOVEMENT TOOK ITS STRUGGLE INTO THE STREETS, AS JESUS CHRIST LED THE MULTITUDE THROUGH THE STREETS OF JUDAEA. THE PLAIN AND SIMPLE FACT IS THAT UNTIL WE WENT INTO THE STREETS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS INDIFFERENT TO OUR DEMANDS. IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE STREETS AND JAILS OF BIRMINGHAM WERE FILLED THAT CONGRESS BEGAN TO THINK ABOUT CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION. IT WAS NOT UNTIL THOUSANDS DEMONSTRATED IN THE SOUTH THAT LUNCH COUNTERS AND OTHER PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS WERE INTEGRATED.

~~IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE FREEDOM RIDERS WERE BRUTALIZED IN ALABAMA THAT THE 1946 SUPREME COURT DECISION BANNING DISCRIMINATION IN INTERSTATE TRAVEL WAS ENFORCED AND IT WAS NOT UNTIL CONSTRUCTION SITES WERE PICKETED IN THE NORTH THAT NEGRO WORKERS WERE HIRED. THOSE WHO DEPLORE OUR MILITANTS, WHO EXHORT PATIENCE IN THE NAME OF A FALSE PEACE, ARE IN~~

FACT SUPPORTING SEGREGATION AND EXPLOITATION. THEY WOULD HAVE SOCIAL PEACE AT THE EXPENSE OF SOCIAL AND RACIAL JUSTICE. THEY ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH EASING RACIAL TENSION THAN ENFORCING RACIAL DEMOCRACY.

THE MONTHS AND YEARS AHEAD WILL BRING NEW EVIDENCE OF MASSES IN MOTION FOR FREEDOM. THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON IS NOT THE CLIMAX OF OUR STRUGGLE, BUT A NEW BEGINNING NOT ONLY FOR THE NEGRO BUT FOR ALL AMERICANS WHO THIRST FOR FREEDOM AND A BETTER LIFE. LOOK FOR THE ENEMIES OF MEDICARE, OF HIGHER MINIMUM WAGES, OF SOCIAL SECURITY, OF FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION AND THERE YOU WILL FIND THE ENEMY OF THE NEGRO, THE COALITION OF DIXIECRATS AND REACTIONARY REPUBLICANS THAT SEEK TO DOMINATE THE CONGRESS.

WE MUST DEVELOP STRENGTH IN ORDER THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO BACK AND SUPPORT THE CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAM OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY. IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THESE FORCES, ALL OF US SHOULD BE PREPARED TO TAKE TO THE STREETS. THE SPIRIT AND TECHNIQUES THAT BUILT THE LABOR MOVEMENT, FOUNDED CHURCHES, AND NOW GUIDE THE CIVIL RIGHTS REVOLUTION MUST BE A MASSIVE CRUSADE, MUST BE LAUNCHED AGAINST THE UNHOLY COALITION OF DIXIECRATS AND OF THE RACISTS THAT

~~SEEK TO STRANGLE CONGRESS. WE HERE~~
TODAY ARE ONLY THE FIRST WAVE.

WHEN WE LEAVE, IT WILL BE TO CARRY
ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS REVOLUTION HOME
WITH US INTO EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY
OF THE LAND, AND WE SHALL RETURN
AGAIN AND AGAIN TO WASHINGTON IN
EVER GROWING NUMBERS UNTIL TOTAL
FREEDOM IS OURS. WE SHALL SETTLE
~~FOR NOTHING LESS, AND MAY GOD GRANT~~
~~THAT WE MAY HAVE THE COURAGE, THE~~
~~STRENGTH, AND FAITH IN THIS HOUR OF~~
~~TRIAL BY FIRE NEVER TO FALTER~~
(SPEECH BY A. PHILIP RANDOLPH,
MOTOWN RECORDS, YOUTUBE).

MUSIC: TRANSITION

RANDOLPH: INTRODUCES MLK

HOST

Prayers, performances, pledges, and benedictions follow. Civil rights activists give speeches.

Dressed in suits and dresses, after long hours of traveling and standing surrounded by overwhelming crowds, people are hot and tired. Many soak their feet in the Reflecting Pool, or fan themselves to keep cool (Harbster).

Despite the heat, and their fatigue, the crowd waits. Patiently. Politely. Anticipating the final speaker.

He stands now on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, a preacher, prophet,

and poet (Miller 11), the nation's leading civil rights activist.

He glances at his prepared speech. Tentatively titled "Normalcy, Never Again" (Anonymous, "Dream Songs"), it is a political call to arms for economic equality and civil rights for Black Americans. Much of it he has committed to memory.

He is introduced by A. Philip Randolph.

SFX: #2-INTRO OF MLK BY RANDOLPH.
FADE UP APPLAUSE, MAINTAIN
MOMENTARILY AFTER PREVIOUS, BEFORE
RANDOLPH SPEAKS.

At this time I have the honor to present to you . . . the moral leader of our nation. A great, dedicated man. (Applause) A philosopher of a non-violent system of behavior in seeking to bring about social change for the advancement of justice and freedom and human dignity. I have the pleasure to present to you Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Applause) (A. Philip Randolph For Jobs and Freedom)

SFX: ESTABLISH APPLAUSE, THEN FADE
OUT UNDER THE FOLLOWING SO THAT IT
ENDS WITH THE BEGINNING OF KING'S
SPEECH.

MLK: "FIVE SCORE YEARS AGO"

HOST

The crowd applauds, waves signs, handkerchiefs, and their hands. Slowly, sonorously, Dr. King begins his speech.

SFX: MLK#2 FIVE SCORE YEARS

"FIVE SCORE YEARS AGO, A GREAT AMERICAN, IN WHOSE SYMBOLIC SHADOW WE STAND TODAY, SIGNED THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION. THIS MOMENTOUS DECREE CAME AS A GREAT BEACON LIGHT OF HOPE TO MILLIONS OF NEGRO SLAVES WHO HAD BEEN SEARED IN THE FLAMES OF WITHERING INJUSTICE. IT CAME AS A JOYOUS DAYBREAK TO END THE LONG NIGHT OF THEIR CAPTIVITY."

HOST

With his first paragraph, Dr. King references President Lincoln, without mentioning his name.

One hundred years earlier, January 1, 1863, Lincoln abolished the practice of slavery in America, and freed all Black Americans then enslaved, when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The setting for Dr. King's speech, the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, signals listeners to think of President Lincoln.

Dr. King uses poetic word combinations to help his audience visualize what he is saying: "symbolic shadow," "great beacon light of hope," "flames of

withering injustice," and "long night of captivity."

According to Jason Miller, Professor at North Carolina State University, and author of *Origins of the Dream: Hughes's Poetry and King's Rhetoric*, Dr. King understands that, quote like songs and poems, speeches do not live on paper unquote (Miller 8). Instead, their presence and power is found in the voice of the speaker.

We hear this to be true as Dr. King continues his speech . . .

MLK: "100 YEARS LATER"

SFX: MLK#3-100 YEARS LATER

"BUT 100 YEARS LATER, THE NEGRO STILL IS NOT FREE. ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER, THE LIFE OF THE NEGRO IS STILL SADLY CRIPPLED BY THE MANACLES OF SEGREGATION AND THE CHAINS OF DISCRIMINATION. ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER, THE NEGRO LIVES ON A LONELY ISLAND OF POVERTY IN THE MIDST OF A VAST OCEAN OF MATERIAL PROSPERITY. ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER THE NEGRO IS STILL LANGUISHED IN THE CORNERS OF AMERICAN SOCIETY AND FINDS HIMSELF IN EXILE IN HIS OWN LAND. AND SO WE'VE COME HERE TODAY TO DRAMATIZE A SHAMEFUL CONDITION. IN A SENSE WE'VE COME TO OUR NATION'S CAPITAL TO CASH A CHECK."

MUSIC: TRANSITION

HOST

In 1963, racial segregation and discrimination are openly practiced throughout the nation. Despite Lincoln's proclamation one hundred years earlier, and the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution after the Civil War, Dr. King reminds his audience that Black Americans are still denied full civil equality.

MLK: "WHEN THE ARCHITECTS"

SFX: MLK#4-WHEN THE ARCHITECTS.

"WHEN THE ARCHITECTS OF OUR REPUBLIC WROTE THE MAGNIFICENT WORDS OF THE CONSTITUTION AND THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, THEY WERE SIGNING A PROMISSORY NOTE TO WHICH EVERY AMERICAN WAS TO FALL HEIR. THIS NOTE WAS A PROMISE THAT ALL MEN — YES, BLACK MEN AS WELL AS WHITE MEN — WOULD BE GUARANTEED THE UNALIENABLE RIGHTS OF LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS.

"IT IS OBVIOUS TODAY THAT AMERICA HAS DEFAULTED ON THIS PROMISSORY NOTE INsofar AS HER CITIZENS OF COLOR ARE CONCERNED. INSTEAD OF HONORING THIS SACRED OBLIGATION, AMERICA HAS GIVEN THE NEGRO PEOPLE A BAD CHECK, A CHECK WHICH HAS COME BACK MARKED INSUFFICIENT FUNDS.

"BUT WE REFUSE TO BELIEVE THAT THE
BANK OF JUSTICE IS BANKRUPT.

"WE REFUSE TO BELIEVE THAT THERE
ARE INSUFFICIENT FUNDS IN THE GREAT
VAULTS OF OPPORTUNITY OF THIS
NATION. AND SO WE'VE COME TO CASH
THIS CHECK, A CHECK THAT WILL GIVE
US UPON DEMAND THE RICHES OF
FREEDOM AND THE SECURITY OF
JUSTICE."

HOST

Dr. King references the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, comparing both to a promissory note, from which all citizens were to benefit.

But Dr. King says the country has not honored its promissory note, so, "we've"--and here King references everyone gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial--"come to Washington to collect what is owed."

Professor Miller says Dr. King's speech can be divided into sections (Miller 200). One is this introduction, where Dr. King establishes the metaphor of marchers coming to Washington to cash a check, to demand their long denied freedom and equality.

JFK: CIVIL RIGHTS ADDRESS

HOST

Dr. King takes great pride in his sermons and speeches. He crafts each for best effect, writing them in longhand,

paying attention to the sounds his words will bring.

This speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom is the most important of his career as the nation's leading civil rights activist. Thousands of people are present, with more watching on television or listening on radio, including President John F. Kennedy, who, on June 11, 1963, two months earlier, aware that his speech might cost him re-election, courageously addressed the nation on civil rights.

SFX: JFK CIVIL RIGHTS ADDRESS

Good evening my fellow citizens.

This afternoon, following a series of threats and defiant statements, the presence of Alabama National Guardsmen was required on the University of Alabama to carry out the final and unequivocal order of the United States District Court of the Northern District of Alabama. That order called for the admission of two clearly qualified young Alabama residents who happened to have been born Negro.

~~That they were admitted peacefully on the campus is due in good measure to the conduct of the students of the University of Alabama, who met their responsibilities in a constructive way.~~

I hope that every American, regardless of where he lives, will stop and examine his conscience about this and other related incidents. This Nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened.

Today we are committed to a worldwide struggle to promote and protect the rights of all who wish to be free. And when Americans are sent to Vietnam or West Berlin, we do not ask for whites only. It ought to be possible, therefore, for American students of any color to attend any public institution they select without having to be backed up by troops.

It ought to be possible for American consumers of any color to receive equal service in places of public accommodation, such as hotels and restaurants and theaters and retail stores, without being forced to resort to demonstrations in the street, and it ought to be possible for American citizens of any color to register and to vote in a free election without interference or fear of reprisal.

It ought to be possible, in short, for every American to enjoy the privileges of being American without regard to his race or his color. In short, every American ought to have the right to be

treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated. But this is not the case.

The Negro baby born in America today, regardless of the section of the Nation in which he is born, has about one-half as much chance of completing high school as a white baby born in the same place on the same day, one-third as much chance of completing college, one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man, twice as much chance of becoming unemployed, about one-seventh as much chance of earning \$10,000 a year, a life expectancy which is 7 years shorter, and the prospects of earning only half as much.

This is not a sectional issue. Difficulties over segregation and discrimination exist in every city, in every State of the Union, producing in many cities a rising tide of discontent that threatens the public safety. Nor is this a partisan issue. In a time of domestic crisis men of good will and generosity should be able to unite regardless of party or politics. This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone. It is better to settle these matters in the courts than on the streets, and new laws are needed at every level, but law alone cannot make men see right.

We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures

~~and is as clear as the American
Constitution.~~

~~The heart of the question is whether all
Americans are to be afforded equal
rights and equal opportunities, whether
we are going to treat our fellow
Americans as we want to be treated. If
an American, because his skin is dark,
cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to
the public, if he cannot send his
children to the best public school
available, if he cannot vote for the
public officials who represent him, if,
in short, he cannot enjoy the full and
free life which all of us want, then who
among us would be content to have the
color of his skin changed and stand in
his place? Who among us would then be
content with the counsels of patience
and delay?~~

One hundred years of delay have passed
since President Lincoln freed the
slaves, yet their heirs, their
grandsons, are not fully free. They are
not yet freed from the bonds of
injustice. They are not yet freed from
social and economic oppression. And this
Nation, for all its hopes and all its
boasts, will not be fully free until all
its citizens are free.

We preach freedom around the world, and
we mean it, and we cherish our freedom
here at home, but are we to say to the
world, and much more importantly, to
each other, that this is a land of the

free except for the Negroes; that we have no second-class citizens except Negroes; that we have no class or cast system, no ghettos, no master race except with respect to Negroes?

Now the time has come for this Nation to fulfill its promise. The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them.

~~The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South, where legal remedies are not at hand. Redress is sought in the streets, in demonstrations, parades, and protests which create tensions and threaten violence and threaten lives.~~

We face, therefore, a moral crisis as a country and a people. It cannot be met by repressive police action. It cannot be left to increased demonstrations in the streets. It cannot be quieted by token moves or talk. It is a time to act in the Congress, in your State and local legislative body and, above all, in all of our daily lives.

~~It is not enough to pin the blame on others, to say this is a problem of one section of the country or another, or deplore the fact that we face. A great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation, is to make that revolution,~~

~~that change, peaceful and constructive for all.~~

~~Those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognizing right as well as reality.~~

~~Next week I shall ask the Congress of the United States to act, to make a commitment it has not fully made in this century to the proposition that race has no place in American life or law. The Federal judiciary has upheld that proposition in a series of forthright cases. The executive branch has adopted that proposition in the conduct of its affairs, including the employment of Federal personnel, the use of Federal facilities, and the sale of federally financed housing.~~

~~But there are other necessary measures which only the Congress can provide, and they must be provided at this session. The old code of equity law under which we live commands for every wrong a remedy, but in too many communities, in too many parts of the country, wrongs are inflicted on Negro citizens and there are no remedies at law. Unless the Congress acts, their only remedy is in the street.~~

I am, therefore, asking the Congress to enact legislation giving all Americans the right to be served in facilities which are open to the public – hotels,

restaurants, theaters, retail stores, and similar establishments.

This seems to me to be an elementary right. Its denial is an arbitrary indignity that no American in 1963 should have to endure, but many do.

~~I have recently met with scores of business leaders urging them to take voluntary action to end this discrimination and I have been encouraged by their response, and in the last 2 weeks over 75 cities have seen progress made in desegregating these kinds of facilities. But many are unwilling to act alone, and for this reason, nationwide legislation is needed if we are to move this problem from the streets to the courts.~~

~~I am also asking Congress to authorize the Federal Government to participate more fully in lawsuits designed to end segregation in public education. We have succeeded in persuading many districts to desegregate voluntarily. Dozens have admitted Negroes without violence. Today a Negro is attending a state-supported institution in every one of our 50 States, but the pace is very slow.~~

~~Too many Negro children entering segregated grade schools at the time of the Supreme Court's decision 9 years ago will enter segregated high schools this fall, having suffered a loss which can never be restored. The lack of an~~

~~adequate education denies the Negro a chance to get a decent job.~~

~~The orderly implementation of the Supreme Court decision, therefore, cannot be left solely to those who may not have the economic resources to carry the legal action or who may be subject to harassment.~~

~~Other features will be also requested, including greater protection for the right to vote. But legislation, I repeat, cannot solve this problem alone. It must be solved in the homes of every American in every community across our country.~~

~~In this respect, I want to pay tribute to those citizens North and South who have been working in their communities to make life better for all. They are acting not out of a sense of legal duty but out of a sense of human decency.~~

~~Like our soldiers and sailors in all parts of the world, they are meeting freedom's challenge on the firing line, and I salute them for their honor and their courage.~~

My fellow Americans, this is a problem which faces us all – in every city of the North as well as the South. Today there are Negroes unemployed, two or three times as many compared to whites, inadequate in education, moving into the large cities, unable to find work, young

people particularly out of work without hope, denied equal rights, denied the opportunity to eat at a restaurant or lunch counter or go to a movie theater, denied the right to a decent education, denied almost today the right to attend a state university even though qualified. It seems to me that these are matters which concern us all, not merely Presidents or Congressmen or Governors, but every citizen of the United States.

This is one country. It has become one country because all of us and all the people who came here had an equal chance to develop their talents.

We cannot say to 10 percent of the population that you can't have that right; that your children cannot have the chance to develop whatever talents they have; that the only way that they are going to get their rights is to go into the streets and demonstrate. I think we owe them and we owe ourselves a better country than that.

Therefore, I am asking for your help in making it easier for us to move ahead and to provide the kind of equality of treatment which we would want ourselves; to give a chance for every child to be educated to the limit of his talents.

As I have said before, not every child has an equal talent or an equal ability or an equal motivation, but they should have the equal right to develop their

~~talent and their ability and their
motivation, to make something of
themselves.~~

~~We have a right to expect that the Negro
community will be responsible, will
uphold the law, but they have a right to
expect that the law will be fair, that
the Constitution will be color blind, as
Justice Harlan said at the turn of the
century.~~

This is what we are talking about and
this is a matter which concerns this
country and what it stands for, and in
meeting it I ask the support of all our
citizens.

Thank you very much.

HOST

"The events in Birmingham" to which President Kennedy refers occurred in May, when Birmingham, Alabama, City Commissioner Theophilus Eugene "Bull" Connor, ordered police to use high-pressure fire hoses and dogs to clear people from Kelly Ingram Park, a central staging area for civil rights demonstrations. Millions of people watched on television as protesters were attacked and arrested. As result, the struggle for racial equality now holds the nation's attention.

MLK: "WE HAVE ALSO COME"

HOST

Dr. King and his advisors meet late into the night, August 27, discussing ideas

for his speech. Its mission is to "meet the expectations of multiple audiences" (Patton 114). He must support President Kennedy's new civil rights initiatives. He must respond to calls for action from Black Americans. He must appease the more radical Black Nationalist movements. He must court collaboration with moderate Whites. And, he must follow his own dream for racial equality.

Alone in his hotel room, Dr. King hand writes the speech he will deliver at the March on Washington. His speech is then typed. Copies are distributed to the press. One copy is on the podium. Reading from that copy, Dr. King tells his audience . . .

SFX: MLK#5-WE HAVE ALSO COME.

"WE HAVE ALSO COME TO THIS HALLOWED SPOT TO REMIND AMERICA OF THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW. THIS IS NO TIME TO ENGAGE IN THE LUXURY OF COOLING OFF OR TO TAKE THE TRANQUILIZING DRUG OF GRADUALISM.

"NOW IS THE TIME . . . TO MAKE REAL THE PROMISES OF DEMOCRACY. NOW IS THE TIME . . . TO RISE FROM THE DARK AND DESOLATE VALLEY OF SEGREGATION TO THE SUNLIT PATH OF RACIAL JUSTICE. NOW IS THE TIME . . . TO LIFT OUR NATION FROM THE QUICK SANDS OF RACIAL INJUSTICE TO THE SOLID ROCK OF BROTHERHOOD. NOW IS

THE TIME . . . TO MAKE JUSTICE A
REALITY FOR ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN."

HOST

"Now is the time . . ." Dr. King repeatedly reminds his audience, "It is a time to act." This rhetorical device of repeating a phrase to begin successive sentences is called anaphora. In using this device, Dr. King foreshadows the most memorable, and remarkable, part of his speech, which we will hear in just a moment.

Also, by repeating the phrase, "Now is the time," according to Jason Miller, quote, "Dr. King references President Kennedy's earlier speech and suggests that both he and the president are stating the same idea," unquote (Miller 178).

Dr. King goes on to say the urgency of "now" should not be overlooked. He concludes with a biblical reference to Amos.

MLK: "WHIRLWINDS OF REVOLT"

SFX: MLK#6-WHIRLWINDS OF REVOLT.

"THE WHIRLWINDS OF REVOLT WILL
CONTINUE TO SHAKE THE FOUNDATIONS
OF OUR NATION UNTIL THE BRIGHT DAY
OF JUSTICE EMERGES."

"THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE ASKING THE
DEVOTEES OF CIVIL RIGHTS, WHEN WILL
YOU BE SATISFIED? WE CAN NEVER BE

SATISFIED AS LONG AS THE NEGRO IS
THE VICTIM OF THE UNSPEAKABLE
HORRORS OF POLICE BRUTALITY. WE CAN
NEVER BE SATISFIED AS LONG AS OUR
BODIES, HEAVY WITH THE FATIGUE OF
TRAVEL, CANNOT GAIN LODGING IN THE
MOTELS OF THE HIGHWAYS AND THE
HOTELS OF THE CITIES.

"WE CANNOT BE SATISFIED AS LONG AS
A NEGRO IN MISSISSIPPI CANNOT VOTE
AND A NEGRO IN NEW YORK BELIEVES HE
HAS NOTHING FOR WHICH TO VOTE.

"NO, NO, WE ARE NOT SATISFIED, AND
WE WILL NOT BE SATISFIED UNTIL
JUSTICE ROLLS DOWN LIKE WATERS, AND
RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A MIGHTY
STREAM."

MUSIC: RIR THEME FOR BREAK

THE FUSEBOX BREAK

HOST

This is Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber, producer and host. We'll return to Dr. King and his famous speech in just a moment. But first I want to tell you about The Fusebox Show . . . It's a different kind of radio storytelling, full of quirky conversation and comedy, and its own form of oratory. Here's a sample . . .

SFX: THE FUSEBOX SHOW TEASER

HOST

Learn more at *The Fusebox Show* website, thefuseboxshow dot com.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, FADE UNDER AND
OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING**

IN THE CROWD

SFX: #1 WASHINGTON CROWD MARCHING.

HOST

Reportedly, 250,000 people are reported gathered in Washington, D.C., for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Most are keen to hear the featured speaker, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Jean Shepherd, host of "The Jean Shepherd Show," broadcast on New York's WOR radio, 1955 to 1977, is in the crowd.

Shepherd and others traveled six hours by chartered city bus from New York City to Washington, DC, to participate in the March on Washington.

The next day, back in New York, Shepherd recounts his experiences for his radio listeners.

MUSIC: FLOURISH FOR TRANSITION

SHEPHERD: MARCH EXPERIENCES

**SFX: SHEPHERD-MARCH ON WASHINGTON.
SAMPLES FROM JEAN SHEPHERD'S REPORT
ON THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON.**

SFX: NOTE: KING SPEECH OUTAKES, ARE
DUCKED UNDER THE FOLLOWING, TO
SOUND AS IF HEARD AT THE SCENE.

MUSIC: TRANSITION

MLK: "DREAM" REFRAIN

HOST

As he follows the speech script, building momentum and feeling the energy of his audience, Dr. King delivers a passionate plea for civil rights.

Then, everything changes.

Before I tell that story, however, I need to tell you something of the "dream" refrain of Dr. King's speech. It's another of the speech sections Professor Miller referenced earlier.

According to Professor Miller, Dr. King needed quote, "a memorable way to communicate the civil right's movement's goal of integration," unquote. His "dream" was quote, "both inspirational and unforgettable," unquote (Miller 165).

The inspiration came from the poem "Harlem," by Langston Hughes. Published in 1951, as part of Hughes's book *Montage of a Dream Deferred*, the 11-line poem begins . . .

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

~~Or fester like a sore~~

~~And then run?~~

~~Does it stink like rotten meat?~~

~~Or crust and sugar over~~

~~like a syrupy sweet?~~

~~Maybe it just sags~~

~~like a heavy load.~~

~~Or does it explode?~~

MLK: ROCKY MOUNT "DREAM"

Dr. King, inspired by Hughes, wrote and rewrote his own prose poem, the so-called "I have a dream" refrain. It was his vision for a just and equitable country.

Dr. King perhaps first shared his dream during a fifty-five minute speech to the Rocky Mount Voters and Improvement League, in the Booker T. Washington High School Gymnasium, in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, November 27, 1962. Here is a recording of Dr. King speaking his "dream" refrain.

SFX: MLK#7-ROCKY MOUNT SPEECH.

SAMPLE.

AND SO MY FRIENDS OF ROCKY MOUNT, I
HAVE A DREAM TONIGHT.

IT IS A DREAM ROOTED DEEPLY IN THE
AMERICAN DREAM.

I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY DOWN IN
SASSER COUNTY, GEORGIA, WHERE THEY
BURNED TWO CHURCHES DOWN A FEW DAYS
AGO BECAUSE NEGROES WANTED TO
REGISTER AND VOTE, ONE DAY RIGHT
DOWN THERE LITTLE BLACK BOYS AND
LITTLE BLACK GIRLS WILL BE ABLE TO
JOIN HANDS WITH LITTLE WHITE BOYS
AND LITTLE WHITE GIRLS AND WALK THE
STREETS AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY RIGHT
HERE IN ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH
CAROLINA, THE SONS OF FORMER SLAVES
AND THE SONS OF FORMER SLAVE-OWNERS
WILL MEET AT THE TABLE OF
BROTHERHOOD, KNOWING THAT OUT OF
ONE BLOOD GOD MADE ALL MEN TO DWELL
UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY MEN ALL
OVER THIS NATION WILL RECOGNIZE
THAT ALL MEN WERE CREATED EQUAL AND
ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH
CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS.

I HAVE A DREAM TONIGHT. ONE DAY THE
WORDS OF AMOS WILL BECOME REAL:
"LET JUSTICE ROLL DOWN LIKE WATERS
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A MIGHTY
STREAM."

I HAVE A DREAM TONIGHT. ONE DAY EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE EXALTED AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL SHALL BE MADE LOW. CROOKED PLACES WILL BE MADE STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH PLACES WILL BE MADE STRANGE, THE GLORY OF THE LORD WILL BE REVEALED AND ALL FLESH SHALL SEE IT TOGETHER.

I HAVE A DREAM TONIGHT. ONE DAY MEN WILL DO UNTO OTHERS AS THEY WOULD HAVE OTHERS TO DO UNTO THEM.

I HAVE A DREAM TONIGHT. ONE DAY MY LITTLE DAUGHTER AND MY TWO SONS WILL GROW UP IN A WORLD NOT CONSCIOUS OF THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN BUT ONLY CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT THEY ARE MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RACE.

I HAVE A DREAM TONIGHT ~~THAT SOMEDAY WE WILL BE FREE. WE WILL BE FREE.~~

HOST Our thanks to Professor Jason Miller, who discovered the original recording, had it restored and digitized, and allowed us to include it in this episode of Re-Imagined Radio.

MLK: DETROIT "DREAM"

HOST Dr. King delivered a second iteration of his "dream" at the Detroit Walk for Freedom, Detroit, Michigan, June 23, 1963, just two months before the March on Washington. This was the first time Dr. King spoke about his dream on a national stage. As you will hear, his

"dream" was revised, more fully developed as a poetic vision. His dynamic and rhetorical delivery was more polished, more powerful.

SFX: MLK#8-DETROIT "MARCH TO FREEDOM" SPEECH. SAMPLE

AND SO THIS AFTERNOON, I HAVE A DREAM. (GO AHEAD) IT IS A DREAM DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE AMERICAN DREAM.

I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY, RIGHT DOWN IN GEORGIA AND MISSISSIPPI AND ALABAMA, THE SONS OF FORMER SLAVES AND THE SONS OF FORMER SLAVE OWNERS WILL BE ABLE TO LIVE TOGETHER AS BROTHERS.

I HAVE A DREAM THIS AFTERNOON [I HAVE A DREAM] THAT ONE DAY, [APPLAUSE] ONE DAY LITTLE WHITE CHILDREN AND LITTLE NEGRO CHILDREN WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN HANDS AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

I HAVE A DREAM THIS AFTERNOON THAT ONE DAY, [APPLAUSE] THAT ONE DAY MEN WILL NO LONGER BURN DOWN HOUSES AND THE CHURCH OF GOD SIMPLY BECAUSE PEOPLE WANT TO BE FREE.

I HAVE A DREAM THIS AFTERNOON [I HAVE A DREAM] THAT THERE WILL BE A DAY THAT WE WILL NO LONGER FACE THE ATROCITIES THAT EMMETT TILL HAD TO

FACE OR MEDGAR EVERS HAD TO FACE,
THAT ALL MEN CAN LIVE WITH DIGNITY.

I HAVE A DREAM THIS AFTERNOON
[YEAH] THAT MY FOUR LITTLE
CHILDREN, MY FOUR LITTLE CHILDREN
WILL NOT COME UP IN THE SAME YOUNG
DAYS THAT I CAME UP WITHIN, BUT
THEY WILL BE JUDGED ON THE BASIS OF
THE CONTENT OF THEIR CHARACTER, NOT
THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN. [APPLAUSE]

I HAVE A DREAM THIS AFTERNOON THAT
ONE DAY RIGHT HERE IN DETROIT,
NEGROES WILL BE ABLE TO BUY A HOUSE
OR RENT A HOUSE ANYWHERE THAT THEIR
MONEY WILL CARRY THEM AND THEY WILL
BE ABLE TO GET A JOB. [APPLAUSE]
[THAT'S RIGHT]

YES, I HAVE A DREAM THIS AFTERNOON
THAT ONE DAY IN THIS LAND THE WORDS
OF AMOS WILL BECOME REAL AND
"JUSTICE WILL ROLL DOWN LIKE
WATERS, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A
MIGHTY STREAM."

I HAVE A DREAM THIS EVENING THAT
ONE DAY WE WILL RECOGNIZE THE WORDS
OF JEFFERSON THAT "ALL MEN ARE
CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE
ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH
CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT
AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY AND
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS." I HAVE A
DREAM THIS AFTERNOON. [APPLAUSE]

I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE EXALTED, AND EVERY HILL AND MOUNTAIN SHALL BE MADE LOW; THE ROUGH PLACES WILL BE MADE SMOOTH AND THE CROOKED PLACES WILL BE MADE STRAIGHT; AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE REVEALED, AND ALL FLESH SHALL SEE IT TOGETHER."
[APPLAUSE]

I HAVE A DREAM THIS AFTERNOON THAT THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN WILL BECOME A REALITY IN THIS DAY. AND WITH THIS FAITH I WILL GO OUT AND CARVE A TUNNEL OF HOPE THROUGH THE MOUNTAIN OF DESPAIR.

WITH THIS FAITH, I WILL GO OUT WITH YOU AND TRANSFORM DARK YESTERDAYS INTO BRIGHT TOMORROWS. WITH THIS FAITH, WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THIS NEW DAY WHEN ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN, BLACK MEN AND WHITE MEN, JEWS AND GENTILES, PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS, WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN HANDS AND SING WITH THE NEGROES IN THE SPIRITUAL OF OLD: FREE AT LAST! FREE AT LAST! THANK GOD ALMIGHTY, WE ARE FREE AT LAST! [APPLAUSE]

MLK: "I HAVE A DREAM"

HOST

Dr. King has written and talked about his dream for years. He wants to talk about his dream at the March on Washington. His advisors advocate instead that Dr. King stick to the immediate mission of influencing Congressional leaders to vote for civil

rights legislation introduced by President Kennedy.

But then . . . everything changes.

Mahalia Jackson, the great gospel singer, seated nearby the podium, calls out to Dr. King to tell about his dream (Hansen 57, *History*, "Mahalia Jackson," *History*, "March on Washington").

Dr. King departs from his prepared script and describes his dream. Crafted through earlier iterations, what we hear in Washington is the master opus of the master American orator of the twentieth century.

SFX: MLK#9-I HAVE A DREAM REFRAIN

"SO EVEN THOUGH WE FACE THE DIFFICULTIES OF TODAY AND TOMORROW, I STILL HAVE A DREAM. IT IS A DREAM DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE AMERICAN DREAM. I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY THIS NATION WILL RISE UP AND LIVE OUT THE TRUE MEANING OF ITS CREED: WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL"

"I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY ON THE RED HILLS OF GEORGIA, THE SONS OF FORMER SLAVES AND THE SONS OF FORMER SLAVE OWNERS WILL BE ABLE TO SIT DOWN TOGETHER AT THE TABLE OF BROTHERHOOD."

"I HAVE A DREAM . . . THAT ONE DAY
EVEN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, A
STATE SWELTERING WITH THE HEAT OF
INJUSTICE, SWELTERING WITH THE HEAT
OF OPPRESSION WILL BE TRANSFORMED
INTO AN OASIS OF FREEDOM AND
JUSTICE.

"I HAVE A DREAM . . . THAT MY FOUR
LITTLE CHILDREN WILL ONE DAY LIVE
IN A NATION WHERE THEY WILL NOT BE
JUDGED BY THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN
BUT BY THE CONTENT OF THEIR
CHARACTER. I HAVE A DREAM TODAY.

"I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY . . .
DOWN IN ALABAMA WITH ITS VICIOUS
RACISTS, WITH ITS GOVERNOR HAVING
HIS LIPS DRIPPING WITH THE WORDS OF
INTERPOSITION AND NULLIFICATION,
ONE DAY RIGHT DOWN IN ALABAMA
LITTLE BLACK BOYS AND BLACK GIRLS
WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN HANDS WITH
LITTLE WHITE BOYS AND WHITE GIRLS
AS SISTERS AND BROTHERS. I HAVE A
DREAM TODAY.

"I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY EVERY
VALLEY SHALL BE EXALTED, EVERY HILL
AND MOUNTAIN SHALL BE MADE LOW, THE
ROUGH PLACES WILL BE MADE PLAIN,
AND THE CROOKED PLACES WILL BE MADE
STRAIGHT, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD
SHALL BE REVEALED, AND ALL FLESH
SHALL SEE IT TOGETHER."

HOST

With these paragraphs, off script but from his heart, Dr. King outlines his vision of racial justice and equality in

America. He shares his dream with anyone who identifies with the fight against segregation, discrimination, racism, and violence.

What we remember most about this speech by Dr. King, says Professor Miller, is this metaphor of his dream. Miller says, quote, "It was poetry, not prophecy, that made this moment memorable," unquote (Miller 14).

MLK: "THIS IS OUR HOPE"

HOST

Now self-assured, poised, Dr. King's personal dream becomes a universal and collective struggle by those yearning for freedom when he shifts from "I have a dream" to "this is our hope."

SFX: MLK#10-"THIS IS OUR HOPE"

"THIS IS OUR HOPE. THIS IS THE FAITH THAT I GO BACK TO THE SOUTH WITH. WITH THIS FAITH, WE WILL BE ABLE TO HEW OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF DESPAIR A STONE OF HOPE. WITH THIS FAITH WE WILL BE ABLE TO TRANSFORM THE JANGLING DISCORDS OF OUR NATION INTO A BEAUTIFUL SYMPHONY OF BROTHERHOOD. WITH THIS FAITH WE WILL BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER, TO PRAY TOGETHER, TO STRUGGLE TOGETHER, TO GO TO JAIL TOGETHER, TO STAND UP FOR FREEDOM TOGETHER, KNOWING THAT WE WILL BE FREE ONE DAY.

"THIS WILL BE THE DAY WHEN ALL OF
GOD'S CHILDREN WILL BE ABLE TO SING
WITH NEW MEANING: MY COUNTRY, 'TIS
OF THEE, SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY, OF
THEE I SING. LAND WHERE MY FATHERS
DIED, LAND OF THE PILGRIMS' PRIDE,
FROM EVERY MOUNTAIN SIDE, LET
FREEDOM RING. AND IF AMERICA IS TO
BE A GREAT NATION THIS MUST BECOME
TRUE."

HOST By changing nouns, from "dream" to "hope," Dr. King re-positions what might be dismissed as idealistic ambition to something possible and achievable (Anonymous, "Summary and Analysis").

MLK: "FREE AT LAST"

HOST Based on these earlier iterations, where he experimented with words, and with the phrase, "let freedom ring," the final phrase of the song "America, The Beautiful," Dr. King returns to anaphora, repeating the phrase as he carries listeners to the joyous and hopeful conclusion of his speech.

SFX: MLK #11, "FREE AT LAST."

"AND IF AMERICA IS TO BE A GREAT
NATION, THIS MUST BECOME TRUE. AND
SO LET FREEDOM RING FROM THE
PRODIGIOUS HILLTOPS OF NEW
HAMPSHIRE. LET FREEDOM RING FROM
THE MIGHTY MOUNTAINS OF NEW YORK.
LET FREEDOM RING FROM THE
HEIGHTENING ALLEGHENIES OF
PENNSYLVANIA. LET FREEDOM RING FROM

THE SNOWCAPPED ROCKIES OF COLORADO.
LET FREEDOM RING FROM THE
CURVACEOUS SLOPES OF CALIFORNIA.
BUT NOT ONLY THAT, LET FREEDOM RING
FROM STONE MOUNTAIN OF GEORGIA. LET
FREEDOM RING FROM LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN
OF TENNESSEE. LET FREEDOM RING FROM
EVERY HILL AND MOLEHILL OF
MISSISSIPPI. FROM EVERY
MOUNTAINSIDE, LET FREEDOM RING.

"AND WHEN THIS HAPPENS, WHEN WE
ALLOW FREEDOM RING, WHEN WE LET IT
RING FROM EVERY VILLAGE AND EVERY
HAMLET, FROM EVERY STATE AND EVERY
CITY, WE WILL BE ABLE TO SPEED UP
THAT DAY WHEN ALL OF GOD'S
CHILDREN, BLACK MEN AND WHITE MEN,
JEWS AND GENTILES, PROTESTANTS AND
CATHOLICS, WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN
HANDS AND SING IN THE WORDS OF THE
OLD NEGRO SPIRITUAL: FREE AT LAST.
FREE AT LAST. THANK GOD ALMIGHTY,
WE ARE FREE AT LAST."

THE RIR BREAK

MUSIC: RIR THEME, OPEN. ESTABLISH,
THEN FADE OUT UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

HOST

This is Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber, producer and host. With each episode we explore radio storytelling using voice, sound effects, and music. Here are some samples . . .

SFX: RE-IMAGINED RADIO AUDIO
TRAILER

HOST

Future episodes include a documentary about the terrorist events of September 11, 2001, a lost episode from the *Dry Smoke & Whispers* series, *Double Dimension X*, two episodes from this earliest adult-oriented science fiction series, and Volume 4 of our annual Christmas sampler.

More information and listening opportunities are available at our website--reimaginedradio DOT net

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MUSIC: RIR THEME, RETURN.

ESTABLISH, THEN DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING

CODA: JFK ASSASSINATED

HOST

This is Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "I Have a Dream: Stories Behind This Famous Speech." As we heard, Dr. King delivered drafts of his powerful speech prior to the March on Washington, but never with the effectiveness, and what Professor Miller calls, quote, "the force of biblical prophecy, visionary conviction, and the skills of a poet," unquote (Miller 186). As result, Dr. King's speech is one of the most powerful in American history, and the turning point of the Civil Rights Movement.

MUSIC: TRANSITION

I have these quick anecdotes before we close.

After his speech, Dr. King and other leaders of the March on Washington meet with President John F. Kennedy and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, at the White House. Kennedy supports civil rights. He submitted legislation to Congress. But, unfortunately, he does not see the outcome.

President Kennedy was assassinated, November 22, 1963, just three months after Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law in 1964. The Voting Rights Act became law in 1965.

MUSIC: TRANSITION

CODA: MLK'S LAST SPEECH

On April 3, 1968, Dr. King is in Memphis, Tennessee, to support the strike by city Sanitation Workers. He speaks for nearly an hour at Mason Church, to a packed congregation. Concluding his "I See the Promised Land" speech, Dr. King acknowledges there is still work to be done, but the end, the prize, is in sight.

SFX: MLK#12 "I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW."

"WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW. WE'VE GOT SOME DIFFICULT DAYS AHEAD, BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER WITH ME NOW. BECAUSE I'VE BEEN TO THE MOUNTAINTOP, AND I DON'T MIND. LIKE ANYBODY, I WOULD LIKE TO LIVE A LONG LIFE. LONGEVITY HAS ITS PLACE, BUT I'M NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THAT NOW. I JUST WANT TO DO GOD'S WILL. AND HE'S ALLOWED ME TO GO UP TO THE MOUNTAIN. AND I'VE LOOKED OVER. AND I'VE SEEN THE PROMISED LAND. I MAY NOT GET THERE WITH YOU. BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW TONIGHT, THAT WE, AS A PEOPLE, WILL GET TO THE PROMISED LAND. SO I'M HAPPY TONIGHT. I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT ANYTHING. I'M NOT FEARING ANY MAN. MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE GLORY OF THE COMING OF THE LORD."

CODA: RFK ANNOUNCES MLK'S DEATH

HOST

Dr. King is eerily prescient. Twenty-four hours later, the evening of April 4, 1968, he is assassinated at the Lorraine Motel, in Memphis, Tennessee.

Later that evening, in Indianapolis, Indiana, Robert Kennedy, brother of the late President John F. Kennedy, is campaigning for his own run at the presidency. Learning of Dr. King's murder, Kennedy makes this announcement to a group of demonstrators.

SFX: RFK ANNOUNCES MLK'S ASSASSINATION.

"I HAVE SOME VERY SAD NEWS FOR ALL OF YOU, AND THAT IS THAT MARTIN LUTHER KING WAS SHOT AND WAS KILLED TONIGHT IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE.

"MARTIN LUTHER KING DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO LOVE AND TO JUSTICE BETWEEN FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS. HE DIED IN THE CAUSE OF THAT EFFORT.

"IN THIS DIFFICULT DAY, IN THIS DIFFICULT TIME FOR THE UNITED STATES, IT IS PERHAPS WELL TO ASK "WHAT KIND OF A NATION WE ARE AND WHAT DIRECTION WE WANT TO MOVE IN. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE BLACK-- CONSIDERING THE EVIDENCE EVIDENTLY IS THAT THERE WERE WHITE PEOPLE WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE--YOU CAN BE FILLED WITH BITTERNESS, WITH HATRED, AND A DESIRE FOR REVENGE. WE CAN MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION AS A COUNTRY, IN GREAT POLARIZATION--BLACK PEOPLE AMONGST BLACK, WHITE PEOPLE AMONGST WHITE, FILLED WITH HATRED TOWARD ONE ANOTHER.

"OR WE CAN MAKE AN EFFORT, AS MARTIN LUTHER KING DID, TO UNDERSTAND AND TO COMPREHEND, AND TO REPLACE THAT VIOLENCE, THAT STAIN OF BLOODSHED THAT HAS SPREAD ACROSS OUR LAND, WITH AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND COMPASSION AND LOVE.

"FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE BLACK AND ARE TEMPTED TO BE FILLED WITH HATRED AND DISTRUST AT THE INJUSTICE OF SUCH AN ACT, AGAINST

ALL WHITE PEOPLE, I CAN ONLY SAY THAT I CAN ALSO FEEL IN MY OWN HEART THE SAME KIND OF FEELING. I HAD A MEMBER OF MY FAMILY KILLED, BUT HE WAS KILLED BY A WHITE MAN. BUT WE HAVE TO MAKE AN EFFORT IN THE UNITED STATES, WE HAVE TO MAKE AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND, TO GET BEYOND OR GO BEYOND THESE RATHER DIFFICULT TIMES.

"MY FAVORITE POET WAS AESCHYLUS. HE WROTE: "EVEN IN OUR SLEEP, PAIN WHICH CANNOT FORGET FALLS DROP BY DROP UPON THE HEART UNTIL, IN OUR OWN DESPAIR, AGAINST OUR WILL, COMES WISDOM THROUGH THE AWFUL GRACE OF GOD."

"WHAT WE NEED IN THE UNITED STATES IS NOT DIVISION; WHAT WE NEED IN THE UNITED STATES IS NOT HATRED; WHAT WE NEED IN THE UNITED STATES IS NOT VIOLENCE AND LAWLESSNESS; BUT LOVE AND WISDOM, AND COMPASSION TOWARD ONE ANOTHER, A FEELING OF JUSTICE TOWARD THOSE WHO STILL SUFFER WITHIN OUR COUNTRY, WHETHER THEY BE WHITE OR WHETHER THEY BE BLACK.

"WE CAN DO WELL IN THIS COUNTRY. WE WILL HAVE DIFFICULT TIMES; WE'VE HAD DIFFICULT TIMES IN THE PAST; WE WILL HAVE DIFFICULT TIMES IN THE FUTURE. IT IS NOT THE END OF VIOLENCE; IT IS NOT THE END OF

LAWLESSNESS; IT IS NOT THE END OF
DISORDER.

"BUT THE VAST MAJORITY OF WHITE
PEOPLE AND THE VAST MAJORITY OF
BLACK PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY WANT
TO LIVE TOGETHER, WANT TO IMPROVE
THE QUALITY OF OUR LIFE, AND WANT
JUSTICE FOR ALL HUMAN BEINGS WHO
ABIDE IN OUR LAND.

"LET US DEDICATE OURSELVES TO WHAT
THE GREEKS WROTE SO MANY YEARS AGO:
TO TAME THE SAVAGENESS OF MAN AND
MAKE GENTLE THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD.

"LET US DEDICATE OURSELVES TO THAT,
AND SAY A PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY
AND FOR OUR PEOPLE. THANK YOU VERY
MUCH."

CODA: MLK'S DREAM UNREALIZED

HOST

Two months later, in June 1968, Robert Kennedy is assassinated, at The Ambassador Hotel, in Los Angeles, California.

Fifty seven years later, the murder of George Floyd by members of the Minneapolis Police Department, May 25, 2020, ignited international protests and demonstrations against the continuing denial of freedom and safety to Black Americans and other peoples of color.

Today, sixty years after he delivered his now famous speech, Dr. King's dream

is not fully realized. Despite being legally eliminated, both segregation and discrimination continue, a soul-destroying fungus, infecting housing and residential opportunities, education, voting rights, jobs, and wages.

Indeed, Dr. King's dream is under threat from those advocating autocracy and white nationalism.

What can be done? Dr. King provides an answer. On April 18, 1959, in Washington, DC, speaking to 26,000 Black high school and college students demonstrating support for the 1954 Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision against racial segregation in America's public schools, Dr. King tells the students . . .

Quote, "Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in," unquote (King, "Address to Youth March").

Many thought Dr. King's dream would die with him. That the man, and his dream, would be silenced. But, the legacy of both continue to speak truth to power, and continue to inspire.

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom is one of the most significant protests in American history. Dr. King's

"I Have a Dream" speech is one of the most powerful in American history.

It's a prominent historical event, a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement. But, as Joseph W. Wenzel reminds us, quote, "we should endeavor to understand and evaluate it on its own terms as a real response to a particular situation," unquote (Wenzel 179).

As a response, Dr. King's vision of equality, civil and economic rights for all people, and an end to racism, still resonates as a national vision. HIS dream remains OUR hope.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, ESTABLISH, THEN
DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING**

KXRW SHOUT OUT

HOST

Re-Imagined Radio is produced with support from KXRW-FM. Vancouver, Washington's community radio station. We appreciate their support. Whatever you can do to help them will be much appreciated. All donations are tax deductible.

HOST CREDITS AND CLOSE

HOST

All episodes are archived at our website, reimagedradio DOT net. Podcasts are available at the major platforms, or our website.

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Our announcer is Jack Armstrong.

This is John Barber, producer and host.
Thank you for listening.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, THEN DUCK
UNDER THE FOLLOWING

THEME AND ANNOUNCER CLOSE

SFX: RECORDED ANNOUNCER CLOSE

ANNOUNCER

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(that's all one word, no punctuation)
DOT net.

Thank you so much for listening, and
please join us again for another episode
of Re-Imagined Radio where we'll we
continue our exploration of radio
storytelling.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, AND TO END

Sources

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