
The Birth of a Nation: Black Women and Sexual Violence

OLIVIA MONTGOMERY (SHE/HER/HERS)
OHIO ALLIANCE TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE

How We Got Here



10 MOMENTS THAT SHAPED SEXIST AND RACIST CULTURE AGAINST BLACK
PEOPLE

LEWIS AUSTIN
12.30.1883

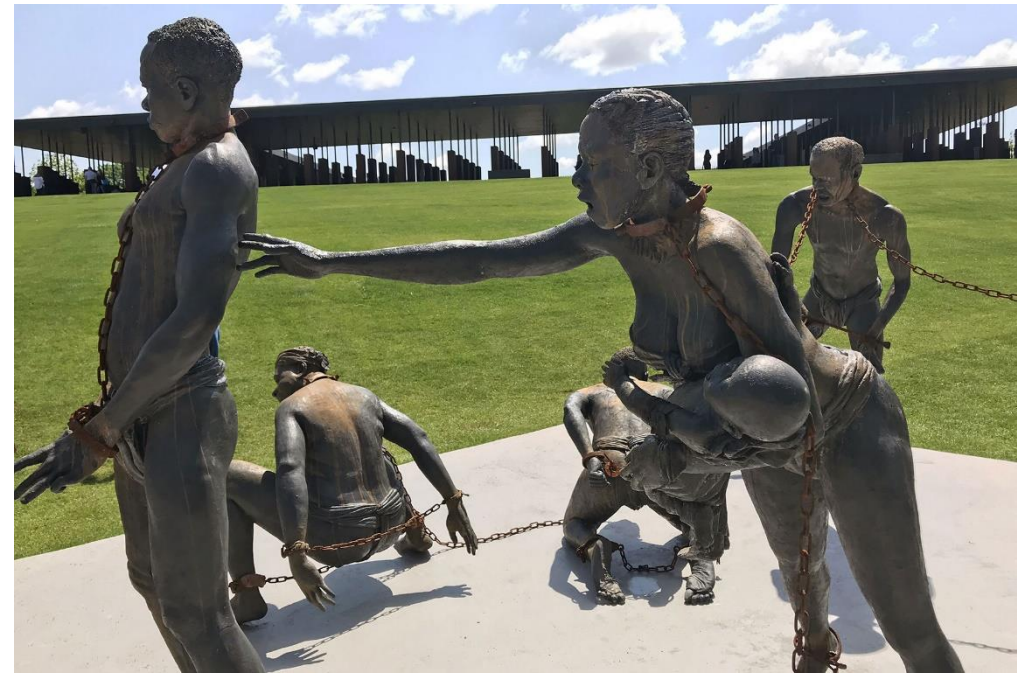
JEFF THOMAS
05.29.1891

UNKNOWN
07.04.1892

ED AVERY
08.20.1904

No. 1: The Birth of a Nation

- Social, Legal and Racial structures
- Black women constituted a permanent labor force through their womb.
- Partus sequitur ventrem (Latin for ‘that which is brought forth follows the womb’)
- Legislation, 1661
 - Children will be bond or free according to the perceived humanity of their mother
 - Children born to a Black woman, no matter the father would inherit *her* status
 - Slave holders could save the cost of buying new people by impregnating their own enslaved people



No. 2: The Separation of Black Children

**Harriet Jacobs on Rape and Slavery,
1860**

Southern women often marry a man knowing that he is the father of many little slaves. They do not trouble themselves about it. They regard such children as property, as marketable as the pigs on the plantation; and it is seldom that they do not make them aware of this by passing them into the slave-trader's hands as soon as possible, and thus getting them out of their sight.



<https://theappeal.org/black-families-matter-how-the-child-welfare-system-punishes-poor-families-of-color-33ad20e2882e/>;
<http://harrietjacobs.org/>

No. 3: The Complacency of White Women

- Open Secrets: the *knowledge* of bad actors being met with a *lack of acknowledgement* from society
- *The Thing We Cannot Name*: “Every lady tells you who the father of all the Mulatto children in everybody’s household, but those in her own, she seems to think drop from the clouds or pretends to think so”

-white Southerner Mary Chesnut, 1861



No. 3: The Complacency of White Women, cont.

- Enslaved people equaled freedom for white women
- Breastfeeding, Wet Nurses and White Women
 - Violently extracting resources
 - Neglecting Black babies
- Modern health outcomes persist in 2020
 - Maternal mortality rates are 4x higher for Black mamas
 - Infant mortality 2x the rate for Black babies versus white babies



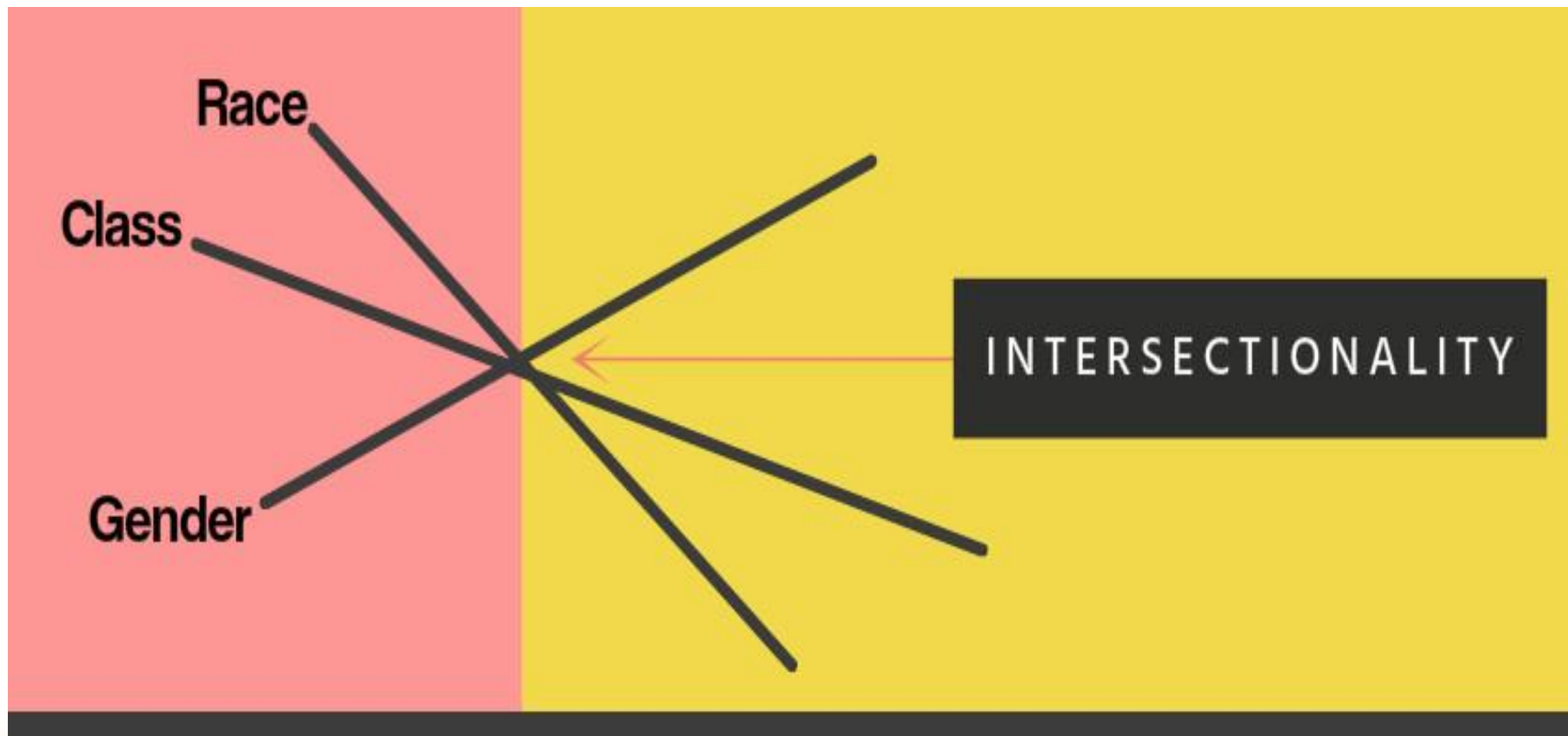
No. 4: The Medical Trauma and Abuse

- Child birthing experiences of Black women
- Violence based on the stereotype that Black women are stronger
- 1845, Lucy, Anarcha Westcott and many more
- Outcomes in 2020:
 - Racism in health care is putting Black women's lives at risk
 - Allostatic Loads: the outcome of chronic exposure to stress



[https://www.history.com/news/the-father-of-modern-gynecology-performed-shocking-experiments-on-slaves;](https://www.history.com/news/the-father-of-modern-gynecology-performed-shocking-experiments-on-slaves)
<https://www.change.org/p/alabama-state-house-remove-james-marion-sims-statue-from-alabama-state-capital-grounds>

Intersectionality Matters



No. 5: The Lynching of Black Men

- The most common reason for public lynching was the perception that white women needed to be protected from Black people.
- Black men and boys were (are) hypersexualized
- *No longer the property of a few white men, Black women [and girls] became sexually abused by all white men.*

-Patricia Hill Collins



No. 6: The Legalizing of Lynching

- America legalized lynching through the creation of **capital punishment**
- The jury was entitled to draw the inference *based on race alone*, that a perpetrator intended to rape someone
- Between 1930 and 1972, 455 people were executed for rape, and 405 of those people were African American



How this movement continues to be harmful in 2020



No. 7: The Miseducation of this Movement



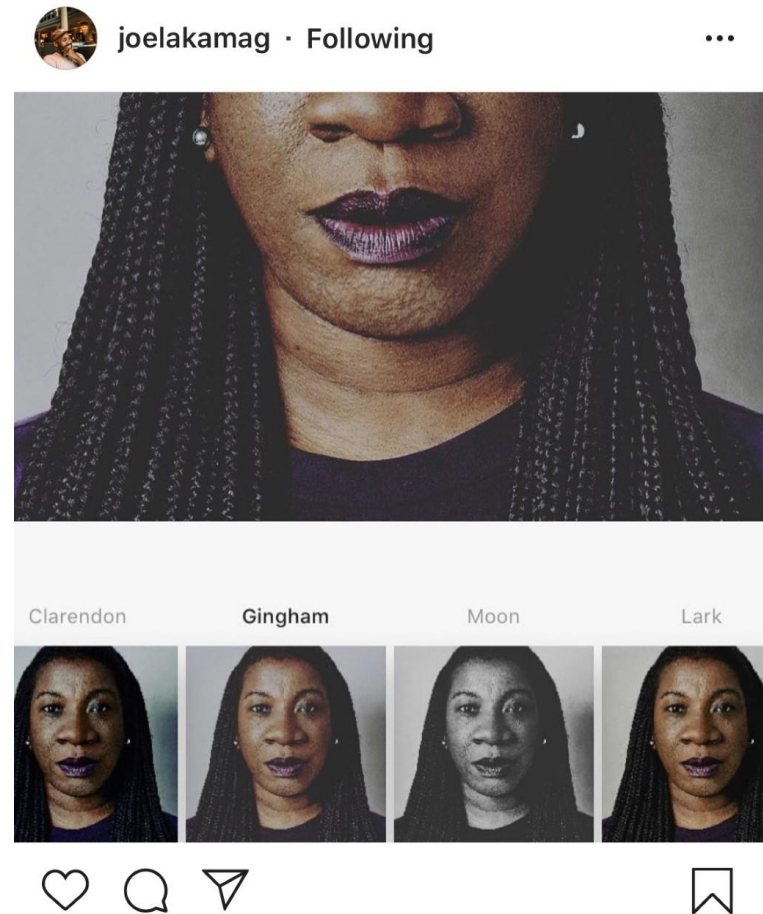
[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/diversity-inclusion/articles/2019/summer2019-intersection-of-race-and-rape/;](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/diversity-inclusion/articles/2019/summer2019-intersection-of-race-and-rape/)

https://americanstudies.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Keyword%20Coalition_Readings.pdf

No. 8: Tarana Burke and #MeToo

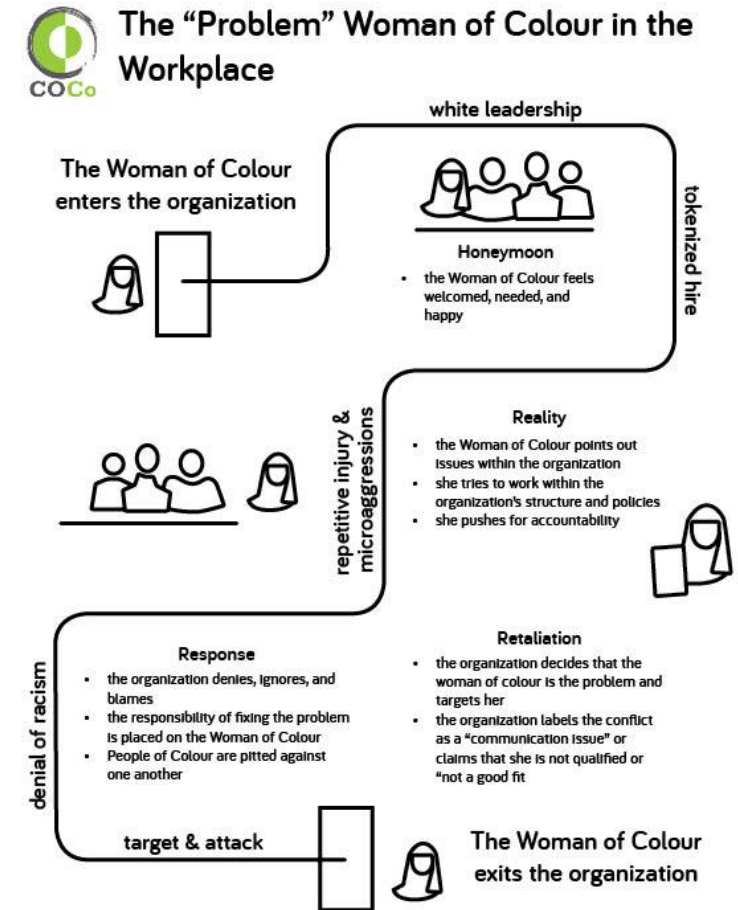
- Tarana Burke created the #MeToo hashtag in 2006 to focus energy towards the sexual violence against Black women, more specifically Black girls
- 60% of Black girls will be sexually assaulted before they turn 18
- Black girls and women are facing a public health crisis and being silenced by our own movement

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/oc71ee_0430993a393840f7af620d34b8e4624e.pdf;
<https://metoomvmt.org/>



No. 9: The Violence Against Black Women by the Nonprofit Industrial Complex

- Black women are being harmed, organizationally traumatized and pushed out of this movement
- Research such as *Race to Lead* highlights the exact problem and informed solutions

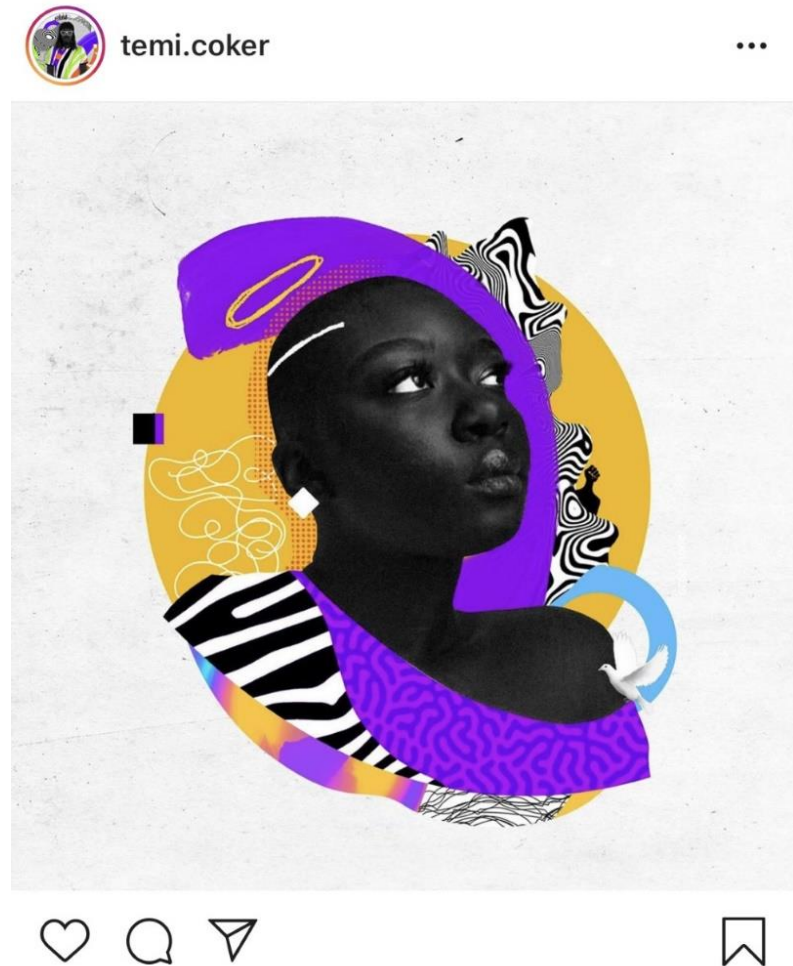


Adapted from "The Chronicle of the Problem Woman of Color in a Non-Profit" by the Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence
www.coco-net.org

No. 10: The Silence

Oluwatoyin “Toyin” Salau

- This movement doesn't show up for Black women
- Responses to white survivors versus our silence for Black (and Brown) survivors
- #SayHerName, African American Policy Forum, Kimberlé Crenshaw



Where Do We Go From Here



IMAGING RACE EQUITY WITHIN THIS MOVEMENT

Imagining Race Equity

- Leadership ranks hold a critical mass of people of color, whose perspectives are shifting how the organization fulfills its mission and reinforcing the organization's commitment to race equity.
- Internal change around race equity is embraced. Staff members are supported in managing and integrating the changes, and the organization demonstrates courage to advance external outcomes.
- Staff, stakeholders, and leaders are confident and skilled at talking about race and racism and its implications for the organization and for society.
- Cultural norms and practices exist that promote positive and culturally responsible interpersonal relationships among staff. Individuals are encouraged to share their perspectives and experiences.
- Programs are culturally responsive and explicit about race, racism, and race equity.
- External communications reflect the culture of the communities served.
- Communities are treated not merely as recipients of the organization's services, but rather as stakeholders, leaders, and assets to the work.
- Expenditures on services, vendors, and consultants reflect organizational values and a commitment to race equity.
- Continuous improvement in race equity work is prioritized by requesting feedback from staff and the community.
- Evaluation efforts incorporate the disaggregation of data in order to surface and understand how every program, service, or benefit impacts every beneficiary

How Can This Movement Show Up For Black Women

- Equity Strategy
 - Internal Review of Current Policy
 - Strategize around anti-racist policies to incorporate
 - Implement **innovative** equity practices that prioritize the health, sustainability, and leadership development of Black women
- Anti-Racist Education
 - Prioritize education and research around Black women, specifically
 - Pay Black women to educate your board, executive leadership, and staff
- Internal Advocacy
 - Build, organize and support spaces for Black women to meet and support each other
 - Use any feedback from this group for your roadmap in how your org moves forward

Spotlight on: Ohio

Accountability measures

- Women of Color Caucus
- Aspiring White Allies
- Anti-Oppression
Committee
- LGBTQI Task Force

Anti-Racist Practices

- Quarterly self-care days
- Separate check ins
- Equitable access to
mental health
practitioners
- Floating holidays

Anti-Racist Education

- Equitable Civic Engagement,
Kirwan Institute x tOSU
- Prioritizing a shift towards
Transformative Justice
practices
- Equity Coordinator

What you definitely should not do

**Burden your
staff of color to
develop or lead
anti-racist equity
practices for
your
organization**

**Tolerate anti-Black
aggression within
your agency or from
community partners**

**Implement
unsustainable
practices**

Additional Learnings: Orgs

- **Support and Help Fund Organizations That Focus on Black Women:**
 - SisterSong
 - Black Women's Blueprint
 - Black Women's Health Imperative
 - SisterLove, Inc.
 - INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence
 - A Long Walk Home
 - Marsha P Johnson Institute
 - National Black Women's Justice Institute



Additional Learnings: Books

- **Women, Race & Class** by Angela Davis
- **Feminist Theory: From Margins to Center** by bell hooks
- **When and Where I Enter** by Patricia Hill Collins
- **Sister Outsider** by Audre Lorde
- **Hood Feminism** by Mikki Kendall
- **We Should All Be Feminists** by bell hooks
- **Eloquent Rage** by Brittney Cooper
- **Anti Racist Resource List**, National Sexual Violence Resource Center



organicallyspicedmemes





victoriacreates



*we need to do better
for breonna for toyin
for all black women*



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