

THE LAST BLOOD SACRIFICE

BY ANDRÉ DE SHIELDS

JULY 13, 2020

I am a man. I am a Black man. I am a free Black man. Nonetheless, during my 74 years of existence on the Earth Plane, I have experienced a systemic, sometimes suffocating, yet ultimately symbiotic constriction that is almost inexpressible. It's called righteous rage. I live in the United Plantations of America, where Black Lives Matter, but Black life does not. The pathology of racism detrimentally affects one's emotional, physical, and psychological health. This chronic condition was recently made

even more acute by the video capture of the death of George Floyd, whose body had been defiled on the streets of Minneapolis by the action of four police officers, the most egregious of whom was Derek Chauvin. There are those who caution me to not watch the video because of its horrific content. I choose to do the opposite for the very reason that by watching the video, I serve as witness to the horror of the terror tactics used to deny George Floyd his life. Viewed in the context of the concurrent plague of police killings of Black citizens—both male and female—the dispatching of George Floyd was deemed third degree murder. The officers were relieved of their duty. An

autopsy followed, which—when highlighted by the eight minutes and forty-six seconds of deadly pressure applied by Officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck—raised the level of the alleged murder to second degree. This treacherous event occurred on Monday, May 25, Memorial Day, a day set aside for observance in memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in war.

At its least harmful, the murder of George Floyd was a heinous crime, and at its worst it was a matter of violating, with inveterate malice, his Constitutional rights. What Derek Chauvin accomplished was the segregation of George Floyd from the inalienable rights



André De Shields (Director + Choreographer) rehearses *Ain't Misbehavin'* at Crossroads Theatre Company, 2011
PHOTO Lia Chang



André De Shields in his theatrical concert *Old Dawg, New Tricks* PHOTO Lia Chang

endowed him by his Creator. And among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I believe the perpetration of that act was deliberate and premeditated. Which, from the perspective of righteous rage, elevates Chauvin's commission of murder to the first degree. Chauvin intended his deed for evil, but in the end it evoked good. Ironically, the repellent action of Derek Chauvin was catalytic in fomenting the war against racial hierarchy that presently consumes the very soul of the American body politic.

AMERICA, WE ARE AT A HISTORIC CROSSROADS, THE INTERSECTION OF HUMAN EVOLUTION AND MORAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

I choose to watch the video because of the unmistakable patina of impunity on the face of Derek Chauvin, obvious in his imperious white gaze that is impervious with disdain, not only for the Black dog under his knee, but also for the hapless spectators, who are helpless to alter the terror unfolding before their eyes. Moreover, when one of his colleagues in uniform inquires as to whether Floyd should be turned on his side to ease his breathing, Chauvin responds, "No," inferring, "watch closely, I'm going to show you how to kill a nigger." At that point Floyd had pleaded 20 times, "Please, let me stand. I can't breathe." The final three words

of George Floyd's plea have morphed into an international lament, as people the world over became woke to the pernicious disease known as White Supremacy. These are the agencies of brutal entertainment that qualify George Floyd's murder as a public lynching.

I choose to watch the video because it lays bare for anyone who has the slightest knowledge about the politics of taboo just how viciously aberrant is the pleasure that Chauvin derives from depriving Floyd's brain of the oxygen-rich blood necessary for sustaining life. This is a blatant display of sexual assault via erotic asphyxiation, pornographic, depraved, and reminiscent of the 1997 episode in which Abner Louima, a Black Haitian American, became the blood sacrifice of a group of vicious officers from the New York City Police Department. Arrested on fallacious charges outside a Brooklyn nightclub, Louima was assaulted, brutalized, and sexually abused. The responsible officers attempted initially to cover up the attack; however, Louima's injuries were so severe as to require three major surgeries. In the face of such incontrovertible evidence, the offending officers were charged and convicted in federal court, and one, Justin Volpe, is still in federal prison serving a 30-year sentence.

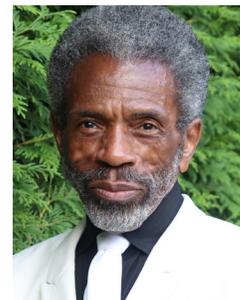
I choose to watch the video in order to make note of White Christian America's hypocrisy. The ancient Hebrew tradition for communion with G_d involved the sacrifice of unblemished animals. The Hebrew name Yehoshua (Joshua, the deliverer, 1 Chronicles 7:27, KJV)—later transformed through Greek and Latin to become the English Jesus—easily resembles both Joshua delivering the Jews into the Promised Land and Jesus becoming

the Christian Savior. By the time the name has completed its metamorphosis, it is associated with the revolutionary ethos that animal sacrifice was no longer necessary, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16, KJV). And the proof of that were the events on Golgotha, the Aramaic name for the location outside of Old Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified and was intended to be the last blood sacrifice. It was this promise in the scriptures of the King James Version of the Bible that was used to indoctrinate the enslaved peoples kidnapped from Africa into believing that their bondage was the will of God, and they would be rewarded in heaven after dying. And lo, here we are, the African American people... obedient, beaten, and teetering on the verge of a meager existence. George Floyd was crucified on a cross of cement in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His *cri de coeur* was "Mama, I'm dying." The cry of the heart from Jesus as he hung from his cross of wood was, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46, KJV).

America, we are at a historic crossroads, the intersection of human evolution and moral accountability. And if we are as great a nation as we claim to be—leader of the free world, which is the entire planet, because if one of us is chained, then none of us is free—we must own the responsibility of setting the example that there is only one use for violence, and that is in the extinguishing of guilt, shame, hate, and blame. Humanity united. At this juncture—the crossroads of our potential coexistence—we have an opportunity to embrace this miracle moment and declare, "Never again!"

Perhaps on Memorial Day 2021, Americans will have sufficiently healed so that we might include the memory of George Floyd in the tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice...in Peace.

And if for some reason we don't emerge from the fire unscathed, we shall say—as faithful, Black Christian Americans who believe in a God that saves the innocent and punishes the guilty—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34, KJV). **SDC**



André De Shields is a performing activist and proud Member of SDC.