

CLSC BOOK REVIEW
DEVIL IN THE GROVE BY GILBERT KING

REPORTED BY MICHAEL J. GELFAND
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How could this happen in America? It could not happen again, thank God?

Two years ago, those were initial reactions to Gilbert King's Pulitzer Prize winning history entitled Devil in the Grove.

Why? Gilbert King writes of crimes in Groveland, Florida. These are in large part capital crimes. Accusations of rape that led to the death penalty.

I could rhetorically state: what's new?

Before I proceed, please allow me a diversion, to shout: **IT IS GREAT TO BE BACK AT CHAUTAUQUA!**

I have spoken from podiums, pulpits, bimas, risers, sidewalks and couches. The bucolic venues at Chautauqua are the most magnificent. The CLSC tradition on the Alumni Hall porch and lawn is splendid. Your consistent attention is amazing and appreciated, giving up your lunch hour on this busy day, between other lecturers who are truly outstanding.

Thus, it is a special honor to return to this porch of literary and scientific renown yet another time, for which I extend my gratitude and appreciation to Jeff Miller. Jeff should be congratulated not just for his choice of speakers, but also for every year painstakingly dedication to the core principles of the CLSC, ensuring that our summers will challenge our minds and souls.

The CLSC teaches us to undertake critical analysis of the world around us and our communal and individual roles which are core Chautauquan values. As a side note, if literary criticism is an interest, then I urge you to seek out Mark Altshuler, and participate in his 16 year running Saturday Morning Short Story Discussion Course, a gem because it provides an intellectual tool, and charge to examine our roles, forcing us to forsake the witticisms of cable television's talking heads, and to utilize the well tested tool of textual analysis, on Shabbat morning a secular type of Torah study. After you buy this book, Devil in the Grove, if you have not bought it first, then sign up for Mark's course.

The selection of Devil in the Grove provides a provocative juxtaposition to the week's lecture theme, "Boys will be Boys, Then Men", and to our lives in America today. The book addresses what happened to three men, Samuel Shephard, Walter Irvin and Charles Greenlee, young men who were boys just a few years before, and how being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and being black, changed their lives.

Though ostensibly about Thurgood Marshall, the book reports a legal lynching.

The initial subject is Norma Lee Padget, seventeen and married to Willie Padget. Padget is all of twenty-three. Actually, they were married the year before, and were separated. During the separation Norma was not exactly living the life of a Miss America contestant. She was known as “not good”, “a bad egg.”

Simply they are seen as the epitome of poor white trash. The socio-economic tag and forces are important, to be discussed latter.

To put this in time perspective, it is July 15, 1949, the day Truman announced that the Reds had stolen the secrets of the atomic bomb, and would have an a-bomb of their own. The nation did not care much for what was going on in small towns, and anyway, divisive voices were swiftly attributed to communist sympathizers.

To put this in a geographic perspective, where is the Grove, short for Groveland? It is in Florida. In case you have not been there, it is just east of Mascotte and Mabel, west of Minneola, south of Okahumka now the site of a Florida Turnpike rest stop, and north of Pretty Lake. It is in the middle of nowhere, but importantly in the middle of orange grove county. Today, it is just 25 miles northwest of Disney World.

So far, I have not mentioned Thurgood Marshall, the great civil rights lawyer, eventual United States Supreme Court Justice, who name on the book’s cover initially attracted me to this history.

But what kept me glued was Gilbert King’s success at transmitting the visceral emotions. King has a rare talent. He captured the fear of the each of the participants. It is the fear that keeps you reading.

The Pulitzer Committee awarded King the documented history Prize in 2014. In time, this book may be placed among others of its genre. The genre of war, the fear of war and the heroics in the face of fear. The genre started with Erich Maria’s All Quiet on the Western Front. In World War II we moved from the fiction to help ensure that the Great War was, to quote Wilson’s ironic phrase, the war to end all wars. Think now how fear forced you to read on in:

Mailer’s The Living and the Dead
Heller’s Catch 22
Vonnegut’s Slaughterhouse Five

to today’s Hillenbrand’s Unbroken. What made these novels and histories great? As I read the authors’ names and the titles of their masterpieces, each one you recall the participants’ fear that leaps from the pages. As you turned each page the horror increased, whether the author was reporting literal fact or fiction.

Thus, we have King’s Devil in Grove. The Grove is the scene of a battle in a continuing war. The Grove is not a battleground like Gettysburg, there is no huge body count. Worse, Groveland cannot be celebrated as a turnaround in the war.

The Grove is the site of one isolated battle in a continuing war of terror, that, at least in this speaker's experience, continues to this day. Thus, it is important for you to read this book, not just for the history lesson, but to cause you to consider what is going on today, literally.

The book begins in an usual method for text. It begins with a photo of 69 Fifth Avenue, the heart of New York City. A flag is set outside the headquarters of the NAACP. Page 1. You know the author is not going to pull punches.

So, back to our protagonists, Norma Lee and Willie. Just as parents today think of returning children, author King thinks Norma's dad was tired of her living at his house, and Norma's dad was increasingly concerned about her declining reputation. So on Friday night, and with Norma's dad's begrudging approval, Willie took Norma, his estranged wife, out for a date.

As Willie and Norma were driving back, Willie's car stalled in the middle of nowhere. At the same time Samuel Shepherd and Walter Irvin were driving by. Shepherd and Irvin were US Army veterans, serving in the same regiment. They were both black, Negroes, and in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Shepherd and Irvin did the right thing. They stopped to help. They even tried to push start the car, not an easy prospect as the car was off the road. Their efforts did not succeed, though that did not prevent Willie from getting upset with Shephard and Irvin as you will remember were volunteers

Norma sought to diffuse the tension created by the failed effort to start the car by offering a swig from Willie's whiskey bottle to Shephard. Willie said he would not drink from a bottle used by Negroes, and Shepard promptly floored him with a couple of swings.

Shepherd and Irvin experienced fear, that of a black men hitting a white man in the South. They left, quickly. Gilbert King's history begins.

By the next morning somehow Norma was walking along the country road, Willie was not to be found, and the story was concocted that four Negroes raped Norma, and bludgeoned Willie. In spite of the fact that there was not any physical evidence, not that a medical examination did not support the accusation, not that Norma's and Willie's stories were inconsistent, but immediately up went the hue and cry for action to protect the honor of white women. There was another type of fear, Willie's for not protecting Norma and having to concoct a lie, and Norma's fear for her reputation walking the street at night.

The Sheriff arrested Shephard and Irvin on Willie's accusations. In jail, they were beaten severely. Shephard and Irvin were joined in jail that evening by Charles Greenlee. Greenlee's crime was that he was at the train station. Oh yes, he was black. Greenlee observed the other two were beaten bad, one seemed to be missing part of his head.

Greenlee had no connection to anyone involved in the alleged rape, but he was black man with a gun in the South. That made him an accomplice because Willie claimed that one of the

attackers had a gun. After all, how could Negroes overpower the white man. But Willie confirmed that Greenlee was not one of the attackers.

Recall again this was 1949, post-World War II, not the seventeenth century, if time should make a difference. In the meanwhile, 250 white men had surrounded the jail before the Sheriff was able to persuade them to disburse. Some of the crowd headed to the black area of town and shot out the windows of a juke joint.

In the face of Greenlee's refusal to confess, the beatings, by the Sheriff, Willis McCall, escalated.

Page 75. Fear consumed Greenlee, and Greenlee confessed, for he was nearly at death.

Eventually, Sheriff McCall's efforts, you judge the difference between interrogation and torture resulted in confessions from Shephard and Irvin, in addition to Greenlee. The newspaper proclaimed the confessions of the three Negroes who raped a white girl.

The fear shifts from those in jail to those outside the jail, the Negroes in the black area of town. Vigilantes set up road blocks around the black area of town, and then started shooting up and torching houses.

This was revenge for a rape. Consider the status of Shepard's father Henry
Pages 95-96. You can see the economic issues rising.

You would validly inquire, what about the law. If there is a riot, where is the National Guard? Well the Guard was there, 200 plus strong but without help from law enforcement its hands were tied.

In the end, not one person was indicted or was arrested for the crimes of whites terrorizing and burning black homes. Ending the violence was not the law of statutes and the courts, but the fact that the owners of the groves needed black labor, and if the blacks refused to return because they feared their lives, then the groves would go bankrupt. That is what brought peace to the Grove.

So King swiftly move forward to the trial. It was a show trial, a Kangaroo court. The Judge meet privately with the Sheriff and the prosecutor. Was there doubt of the guilty verdicts and the death penalties for Shephard and Irvin. Greenlee accepted a life sentence for his confession.

The fast paced recitation of horrors and fears then, if possible, became even more interesting. How? The introduction of Thurgood Marshall. Marshall has been held up as a saint. But, as we know, after centuries saints appear unblemished, but up close, contemporaneously, saints have their blemishes, and Marshall was no exception.

Whether the long out of town trials provided justification, or if it was just Marshall's personality, King does not judge Marshall's extra marital affairs.

What King does bring to life is that Marshall traveling across the country, a black lawyer, frequently the only black lawyer ever seen by whites, and many blacks, was a threat to the *status quo*. For that white racists fought back, hard. Marshall was the point man in the infantry against racism, and just like point men in the army, Marshall's life was constantly threatened. But unlike soldiers, Marshall never mustered out, his lifetime was constantly leaving the safety of his Harlem home, and traveling into enemy territory, and invariably and ironically, in segregated railroad cars.

There have been other great biographies of Marshall. Juan Williams, a Chautauqua speaker has a well-respected biography of Williams. Yet, Gilbert King had access to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund papers. As a result, King provides a unique vantage point to report Thurgood Marshall's strategy. Marshall had limited resources, especially money, and recognized that every battle could not be fought. Thus, a convict's plea of innocence, even if seemingly true was not a determinant. Marshall took cases that he would form the basis for making good new law, and cases that would provide good press, and make for good fund raising headlines.

Thus, Marshall brought the case to the US Supreme Court. Marshall won hands down. A unanimous decision in the nearly unheard of time of thirty days. The court found that the convictions "do not meet any civilized conception of due process of law." "The case presents one of the best examples of the worst menaces to American Justice." In short, the segregated jury pool, was cause for reversal.

Reversal does not mean freedom. It meant a new trial. If the facts to now are not harrowing, they get worse. Summarizing, let us just say that the town did not want to be told what to do. You have no idea of the lengths to which Sheriff McCall and the citizens of Groveland would take to impose the death penalty on the accused.

Sheriff McCall drove up to the State Prison to bring the Shephard and Irwin back from death row to trial. As the Sheriff drove the two back, he lost sight of the deputy's car driving ahead. He claimed that also felt the steering pull, that there was mechanical problem with the car. Sheriff McCall claimed that as he stopped to check his tire he allowed Shephard out to relieve himself, and that is when Shephard, according to McCall, hit McCall with a flashlight and McCall starting shooting.

In the end Shephard and Irwin lay by the side of the road. Hearing the shooting on the radio, in addition to a service station attendant, a local mayor, council members, reporter, Kiwanis members, and the State Attorney arrived. Only when the Sheriff moved close to the two for a photograph was one observed to be moving.

One of them was alive! Did you call an ambulance? Of course not, for in the Jim Crow south an ambulance could not transport a black. A "black car" had to be sent from a funeral home further than the hospital. While they were waiting, Judge Hall put together a Coroner's Jury of admittedly six friends of the Sheriff, including a reporter that was printing inflammatory stories.

In the hospital, the attorneys could not see Irwin who survived. The Sheriff's deputy refused them access, despite the attorney's right to visit his client. Somehow Irwin survived, to give the story of how the Sheriff roused the prisoners from his car, and shot them in cold blood on the side of the road. Quite a different story than the Sheriff's story, but Irwin's made sense.

As Judge Hall, the coroner was speaking to the press at the hospital on behalf of the Sheriff, no arrest was made in the murder of Shephard or the attempted murder of Irwin. Noone was indicted. There was no justice. In essence, Sheriff McCall carried out the death penalty against Shepard that the US Supreme Court reversed.

Eventually, Irwin went to trial a second time. To cure the Supreme Court's segregated jury issue, there were seven blacks in the jury poll. Four were dropped because of their objection to the death penalty. Of the remaining three, the prosecutor challenged three. Irwin would be tried by an all-white jury, was convicted again despite an appalling lack of evidence, and again issued a death sentence.

Marshall appealed the case to the Florida and the US Supreme Court, and surprisingly lost.

King interjects an interesting story, a white lady named **, who arrives in town looking to buy a home, claiming she is a Baptist, and thus is welcomed. It appears that she was an investigator for Marshall. She uncovers many conflicting facts that further undermine any belief that the prosecution was correct. She presented a petition challenging the death penalty which is signed by many town persons, including Norma Lee!

King presents other interesting and heroic stories. You cannot forget, you must remember, Harry Tyson Moore was the chair of the of the State NAACP and dedicated his life to fight racism and to fight for dignity. In the midst of this his home was bombed. It happened on Christmas Day, of all days. He died. His wife was of course with him. She died a few weeks later. Page 279. Investigator Elliot was a Mason, flashing the secret Mason distress signal to other Masons such as Sheriff McCall. Of course, there was no indictments, no arrests.

King raises tangentially the issue of redemption. After the Sheriff shot Irwin, executing Shephard, there seemed to be a change. Perhaps that cold blooded execution by the side of the road for which the Sheriff's explanation was lame at best, finally forced a few of Groveland's citizens to reconsider what they were participating in.

Consider Mabel Norris Reese. She wrote for and published the *Mount Dora Topic*. She could not stand McCall anymore after the execution of Shephard.

Consider Jessie Hunter, the State Attorney who vigorously obtained convictions after the two trials. He wrote the Governor in support of Irwin's clemency petition.

There was political change in the wind in Florida. New Governor Collins granted clemency to Irwin. Pages 358-359.

Today, literally today, July 7, 2015, the issues raised by Gilbert King from July, 1949, are especially compelling, especially to each of us. Maybe I am naive, but I did not expect to read about this happening in Florida, especially so recently. In the forty's., fifties and sixties, communities stood by with those in power, subjugating on the basis of race, and breaking faith with the Lord. Ironically everyone up in Lake County was saying like a mantra that they were acting in the Lord's name.

So what does this history lesson have to do with today? Especially as we look back and see what happened in Groveland continued beyond the sixties and continues today, usually not as frank and in your face, but it is still there.

Well, you may have forgotten about societal racism, because it is off the front page, or you may have thought the issue is gone. But it is back, especially in the shocking number of people that have been shot dead by police in the last year.

As we have celebrated independence, consider the latest American tour sites. Start in New York, Cleveland, Chicago, Ferguson Mo, Tulsa Ok, to L.A. In each, and others law enforcement, representatives of government shot and killed black men.

Do not forget Florida. Have you seen the video of the man on a bicycle in Palm Beach County? He dismounts and walking away he was shot. He had a cellphone in his hand, but was unarmed. By the way, what was he doing that got him shot? He was riding his bicycle in a neighborhood that the sheriff thought he should not be in, did not look familiar.

So what has changed in last 65 years? One good sign is that we do not have vigilante lynching. But I am bemused by folks wondering if there is an upsurge in police on black shootings. The irony is that there is no upsurge. There is just a new way of documenting what occurs. The ubiquitous cellphone or dashboard video camera.

So what is our role in all of this? First, do you think that there is a problem? Think about it. The videos that we see are just those that are recorded by happenstance, for each there was someone, a witness, who had the peace of mind and agility to video, or the police had an automatic camera.

What about those shootings that are not on video tape, they are not talked about. That is where there is a problem. The grossly disproportionate number of law enforcement shootings of black unarmed men is a problem our nation must face.

So I ask again, what is our role in all of this. Can you stop it? I do not have any dream that any one of us, individually or even collectively can stop it, alone.

So I ask again, what is our role in all of this. Let us start to tear down the mental barrier, our own abstract Berlin Wall, the barrier to how society thinks about race. Since we are mostly all white in this sanctuary, what is it that White America thinks and fears about Black America?

There has been a lot of focus on what occurs in the heat of a police chase. There is the proliferation of guns which raises an entirely different issue, albeit important issue. But it is beyond debate that it is dangerous on many police beats. Each of us has friends in law enforcement and we hear the situations from those we trust.

At the same time what is our role is to start to change the discussion. Instead of focusing on the heat of the police chase, perhaps the focus should be earlier. For example, why is a black man whose hands are in view, automatically suspect, leading a policeman to draw a gun, and then to shoot.

How is it a community which has debated the death penalty and is so protective of targets of the judicial death penalty, allowing appeal after appeal, allows the death penalty to be imposed in the literally a blink of an eye with no appeal whatsoever, when the imposed on the street against a black man? What is it about the mindset of our society that allows this dichotomy between protesting judicially imposed death and the law enforcement imposed death against blacks?

Our role is also not to forget our outrage when we read what happened 65 years ago here, and what we see in movie theaters when we watch Selma. Yes, today is not Selma, and yes, it is the 21st Century, but there is a shooting epidemic continuing in our society.

Let start simple. Talk at your tables, educate your friends and lead your children and grandchildren by example. Start the discussion so that the voices become louder and louder so that we can take on the imposition of the death penalty on our streets without warning. As we do this perhaps we can change the way that we perceive our fellow man so that we not only live in peace, but also how we respect each other.

What makes Devil in the Grove such a compelling read? It is not that the book is another voyeuristic tract about the law. Personally, I annoyed about slick rich lawyer stories that deliberately blur the truth and gloss over my chosen, embraced professions heavy lifting. It is that King captures the abuses of power, and real fear in men's lives.

My daughter would call me an old timer. My literary hero is Atticus Finch in "To Kill a Mockingbird." Why Atticus, as Gilbert King reminds us, real people are not ideals, supermen, gods, they have real flaws. But they rise to the time, taking a stand when it is costly, challenging their role in their society. Perhaps we learn from the Atticus Finches and Thurgood Marshalls that if our society is wrong, we have a duty to stand up and be counted!

Let me leave you with an additional thought. Another King, Martin Luther King, lead an army of thousands to millions to obtain political change in pulpits and the streets.

Thurgood Marshall led an army of a half a dozen, they were lawyers. Marshall obtained a truly great revolution without firing a shot, perhaps the most remarkable revolution in history.

Long before marches and rallies, Author King writes that Marshall was winning cases. His was an incremental campaign. It started small, he fought for and won black access to law

schools, then to colleges, then in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the primary schools. These are the things that have brought about great changes. These are Marshall's great legacy.

You have a chance to make this part of your legacy, use your bully pulpit to bring change.

In the interim, buy the book, read the book, take action. See you Thursday afternoon at the author's presentation at 3:30 in the Hall of Philosophy.

Not For Publication

PROLOGUE



Flag outside the NAACP offices at 69 Fifth Avenue, New York City. (*Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Visual Materials from the NAACP Records*)

ALL HIS LIFE, it seemed, he'd been staring out the windows of trains rumbling toward the unknown. Again, he was seated in the Jim Crow coach, hitched directly behind the engines, where the heavy heat bore the smell of diesel. Still, the lawyer sat proud in his smart double-breasted suit, a freshly pressed handkerchief dancing out of his pocket, as the haunting Southern landscape of cypress swamps, cotton fields, and whitewashed, tin-roofed shanties flickered by. Traveling alone, he hunched his six-foot, two-

... Charles noticed; he seemed to be "directing the traffic."

The interrogation of Charles Greenlee continued for about forty-five minutes, with the teen slipping in and out of consciousness. Campbell, his voice rising as the force of his blows increased, was unrelenting. "Did you rape that woman?" he snapped at the beaten boy yet again.

There was only one way to stop it: "Yeah," Charles answered.

The men behind him stirred and mumbled. Deputy Campbell let his arms drop slowly to his sides. Without blows, he asked a few more questions: Was he with those other boys? Did they rob that man? Did they pull a gun on the girl?

"Yes," Charles said. To all of it.

Campbell let the hose fall to the floor. He stared a long minute at the boy, then pulled the gun from his holster and pointed it at Charles's belly. "Better start saying your prayers," he advised.

The jailer, Reuben Hatcher, wanted Campbell to show some mercy. "Shoot him in the stomach and he will die quickly," he said.

Charles Greenlee—one eye puffed shut, blood pouring down his face, broken glass imbedded in his feet—finally broke. He began sobbing like his tortured mother, who all summer long suffered the unbearable pain of losing her two daughters on the railroad tracks. Quivering between gasps for air, he begged Campbell not to kill him.

Savoring the moment, the deputy took his time before he shoved the gun back into his holster. But Charles could not escape the menace in his gaze even as Hatcher uncuffed him from the pipe. His wrists burning and bloody, Charles was bending over to pull up his pants when a hard kick from behind knocked him to his knees. He fell forward and lay, a crumpled heap, in the dirt. That's when he recognized one of the men in the shadows staring down at him. It was the Big Hat Man, Sheriff Willis McCall.

Crowding around him now, the men led Charles to the elevator. McCall was all business. Like Samuel Shepherd and Walter Irvin, the young boy from Santa Fe had confessed to raping a white woman—and he'd catch up with Ernest Thomas yet. Just as the elevator was about to ascend, Charles was treated to a hard kick "in the privates"; he doubled up on the floor, unable to move or breathe. The elevator rose to the fourth floor. Campbell dragged the boy to a cell and locked the confessed rapist in.

WILLIS V. MCCALL was Lake County born and bred, and like Charles Greenlee, he knew the anguish families endured after the death of



THEY TELL ME my chickens and ducks are all gone," Henry Shepherd said.

The father of Samuel Shepherd had holed up with his family at a daughter's home in Orlando and was listening to the radio when he learned that his house had been burned to the ground during the violence in Groveland the night before.

Not long ago Shepherd had been a proud, successful farmer. He had raised a large family and dramatically improved its economic lot by rising from tenant farmer to landowner, but events over the last few years had left him broken and despondent: a "ravaged ghost" of a man, who was often heard to mumble that he wanted "no more trouble." Henry Shepherd was convinced that the previous night's terror in Groveland was more about him than about his son Samuel's alleged rape of Norma Padgett. His own neighbors, he later learned, were the very men who'd thrown lit kerosene-filled bottles through his windows.

To Henry Shepherd, a lifetime picking fruit in groves owned by wealthy whites in Groveland did not seem like much of a future. Though forced labor and peonage conditions continued in Lake County, there had also been a movement toward "Negro self-emancipation" over the last several years. Some blacks had purchased swampland around Bay Lake as cheaply as eight dollars an acre, and in their spare time drained the swamps and cleared the land to create sustaining farms. Once the land was drained, the surrounding acreage was automatically relieved of water, and white farmers bought up the adjacent land at bargain prices. The unintended consequence of the wasteland drainings was a breakdown in segregation in Bay Lake. As a result, Henry Shepherd's northernmost land bordered the Padgett farm. The two families were no strangers to each other.

Determined to escape the backbreaking work in the groves, Shepherd lived thriftily and augmented whatever meager savings he could muster from tenant farming with Samuel's army allotments. In 1943, for \$255, he purchased fifty-five acres of swampland in Bay Lake. Working tirelessly to drain the swamp, not to mention enduring countless snakebites on his legs, he was eventually able to cultivate rich Florida soil. Before long he had good crops, hundreds of chickens, and a few cows, while his wife, Charlie Mae, had "the best preserve cellar in the area." He also built a relatively modest six-room house on the property.

Not by intent, Shepherd also drew the resentment that festered among

the poor white farmers in Bay Lake. Neighbors tore down Shepherd's fences, thus allowing cows to graze on his farm—and to destroy his crops just before harvest. Shepherd confronted them, but to no avail, and when it happened again he called upon Sheriff McCall to help him with the dispute. McCall merely confirmed what Shepherd already knew: "No nigger has any right to file a claim against a white man."

For want of any legal recourse, Charlie Mae tried appealing to civility. She suggested to Oscar Johns, whose cows had again ravaged Shepherd's crop, that they might come to some sort of agreement regarding compensation for loss. Johns responded by cussing and threatening to kill her.

The harassment continued. Fences were torn down and rebuilt, crops replanted. And the Shepherds refused to leave Bay Lake.

Despite the setbacks, Henry Shepherd continued to prosper, in part because the older of his six children worked on the family farm rather than in the citrus groves: another irritant to many whites. So was Shepherd's refusal to allow his teenage daughter, Henrietta, to do service in the home of a white neighbor who, Shepherd knew, had attempted to rape a prior teenage maid. When James Shepherd, the oldest son, found work as a mechanic and started driving a late-model Mercury around town, the Shepherds had become, in the eyes of local whites, "too damned independent": an "uppity nigger" family with two cars outside their house.

Envy of Shepherd's prosperity and growing bargaining power intensified when Samuel, home from the army in 1949, did not return to the citrus groves but worked with his father instead. The sight of that "smart nigger" Samuel, still in his military uniform, driving around town in his brother's Mercury, rankled whites. It was about time "that somebody put both Henry and Sammy in their places."

Terence McCarthy, a British economist and writer studying peonage in the South, arrived in Groveland in the aftermath of the rioting. On a tour of Stuckey Still and Bay Lake, his driver, a Klansman, pointed out the ashy remains of Henry Shepherd's home. McCarthy noted "three twisted bed frames warped by the fire's heat, a smashed camp cot, an upturned stove"; he could hardly believe anyone had ever lived there. Marauding neighbors had stolen Shepherd's chickens and Charlie Mae's preserves. When McCarthy asked why, his driver replied, "They should never let those niggers live here. We should keep 'em together where we can keep our eyes on 'em and not let 'em buy white man's land." McCarthy learned that whites in Groveland (who accounted for about 60 percent of the town's population of one thousand) were tolerant of blacks, as long as they contin-

Governor Warren was aggrieved by the press response to the Moore assassination. Editorials nationwide advertised "Terrorism in Florida," which led to organized efforts calling for boycotts of citrus and tourism. The op-ed page asked, "Notice Negro Blood on Your Grapefruit?" Another criticized the wife of New York's mayor Vincent Impellitteri for vacationing in Florida: "It's a pat on the back to the Klan murderers." And a heavily circulated Associated Press story with the headline "Terrorists Kill by Night; Shadow of Violence Drifts Across Sunny Vacationland" was exactly the kind of national publicity the state of Florida and Fuller Warren did not need.

Under the threat of drastic economic repercussions in Florida's tourist and citrus industries, Warren could not simply ignore the Moore affair—and thereby tacitly exempt the KKK, especially as the Klan was now perceived by the press and the public to be running unrestrained by any governance in the state. Warren thus offered a six-thousand-dollar reward for information leading to the "arrest and conviction of the dynamiters," and he promised a full investigation into Moore's murder, as "his assassins must be caught and punished." In addition, Warren announced, he was sending his special investigator, J. J. Elliott, to Mims.

Elliott, in his turn, declared that he would personally attend Moore's funeral service, where he would be "acting as a human shield to guarantee the church's safety." He indicated, too, that he would be willing to "ride with the family to see that nothing happens, if they want me to." The offer came with a boast: "I am the second best pistol shot in the state." Also, when Walter White announced that he was traveling to Florida "to see what can be done to stop the reign of terror," Elliott proffered his services as an armed personal escort.

As the day of Moore's funeral approached, the public outcry grew. So did the reaction to it, with black-owned homes and social clubs becoming targets for bombings throughout the South. Mostly, though, the nation's attention was fixed on Florida and the increasingly high-profile case of the civil rights leader who was slain in the twelfth of that state's bombings in 1951. The *New York Times* continued its daily coverage of news related to Moore's assassination. It reported, for instance, that Donald Harrington, a minister of the Community Church of New York in midtown Manhattan, had offered a prayer for Florida residents "in their moment of degradation and humiliation"—a moment that had shamed not only Florida but all of America in the estimation of foreign nations: "Our whole country stands weakened and discredited in the eyes of the world because of Florida's fail-

responsibilities; he enjoyed having more freedom. So much so that one day in 1957 he simply walked away from the work farm, and eighty miles to the north, in Fort Pierce, he found a job and in six weeks had settled into a "model life." That's when he was apprehended, and returned to Belle Glade. In July 1960 Greenlee was awarded parole. He married, raised a family, and built a successful heating and cooling maintenance business in Tennessee, where he lives today.

Norma and Willie Padgett's marriage did not last; they finalized their divorce in July 1958. Norma remarried, but is now a widow living in Georgia.

Miss L. B. De Forest . . . vanished.

In 1961 Jack Greenberg succeeded his mentor as the LDF's director-counsel at the NAACP when President John F. Kennedy appointed Thurgood Marshall to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Greenberg is the former dean of Columbia College and is currently the Alphonse Fletcher Jr. Professor of Law at Columbia Law School in New York.

Franklin Williams was appointed by the Kennedy administration in 1961 to assist Sargent Shriver in organizing the Peace Corps. President Lyndon Johnson later appointed him ambassador to Ghana, but not before first consulting his friend Thurgood Marshall. "I would put Frank there without any hesitation," Marshall told the president. In 1985, Williams returned to Florida to give an interview on the Groveland Boys case for the University of Florida's Oral History Project. When the talk turned to Sheriff Willis McCall, Williams bristled. "This man is a, is a vicious killer," Williams stammered. "Is he still alive?" he asked, and was answered yes. "I would not doubt," Williams averred, "if he knew I were here today speaking. I would not doubt that he would come and try to kill me. I do not want to cross him." Franklin Williams died in New York in 1990.

Mabel Norris Reese shared Williams's opinions of Willis McCall. Her fears fueled by dead fish and hand grenades, she left Lake County shortly after Governor Collins commuted Walter Irvin's sentence. She divorced and remarried, and Mabel Norris Chesley, who counted Martin Luther King Jr. and other prominent black activists among her friends, committed herself as a reporter and columnist for the *Daytona Beach Morning Journal* to the advancement of the civil rights movement in Florida. She wrote regularly to Walter Irvin, and took occasion to visit him, throughout the years that he remained in prison at Raiford.

January 1968 brought Walter Irvin his parole, with the stipulation that he not return to Lake County. Now forty, he had spent nearly half his life

in prison. In Miami, where he lived with his sister Henrietta, he found work in construction, even with his impaired health, and tried to lead something like what people called a normal life. In February 1969, Irvin received permission from his parole officer to attend the funeral of an uncle in Lake County. He had been back in Willis McCall country for but a few hours when friends and relatives found him apparently sleeping in a car after the drive north; but he wasn't sleeping. Walter Irvin was dead.

Mabel Norris Chesley was suspicious. She did not doubt the depth of Willis McCall's resolve to visit his county justice upon the Groveland boy, especially as he had failed to do so on that dark country road eighteen years before. The Lake County Sheriff's Department report on Walter Irvin's death stated that the forty-one-year-old black male had died of natural causes. A *St. Petersburg Times* reporter told Mabel that he had tried to speak to the doctor who'd pronounced Irvin dead. The doctor had hung up on him.

ENCLOSED WITH THE letter to Justice Thurgood Marshall was the newspaper article by Mabel Norris Chesley on Walter Irvin's death in Groveland, reportedly of natural causes. Marshall had by then been a sitting associate justice on the U.S. Supreme Court for about a year and a half, and Walter Irvin had been free on parole four months less than that. For eighteen years Irvin had been imprisoned at Raiford, but Marshall had at least been able to keep his promise to Dellia Irvin—he'd kept her boy out of the electric chair.

The day before the letter arrived, Marshall had voted with his fellow justices at the Court to overturn a conviction of another sort, in *Brandenburg v. Ohio*. Ku Klux Klan leader Clarence Brandenburg's speech against "dirty niggers" and "Jews" at a Klan rally had been captured vividly on film, on which evidence he'd been charged with advocating violence, convicted in a state court, and sentenced to ten years in prison. In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court had ruled that on First Amendment grounds the government could not punish abstract inflammatory speech. The Constitution was the Constitution, and Justice Marshall did not struggle with his vote.

For a quarter century the younger Thurgood Marshall had fought in lower courts and argued in the highest one for constitutional rights, though not ever for white supremacists. At the NAACP the special counsel had championed politically disenfranchised and socially oppressed—and like Irvin, falsely accused—blacks in Oklahoma, Georgia, Alabama, Florida.