

# The Greatest Story Never Told

Stories from the Black experience to help you live your best life.



Hello Beloved,

Because we live in a predominantly white society, it's only natural that many of us strive to be recognized and accepted by the dominant culture.

It's the path to success... at least as Americans define it.



But is it really?

You gain acceptance and material comfort... but what does that cost you... if anything?

In other words, **do you pay a price** for not being your true self?

Perhaps.

Perhaps not.

It's definitely something to ponder and reflect upon.

Today's story **explores** this crucial question.

It's about a youngster who worked for the **accolades** and **affection** of white America with everything he had.

And it's about the lessons he learned in the process.

Perhaps you can learn a few things from him too.

**His name?**



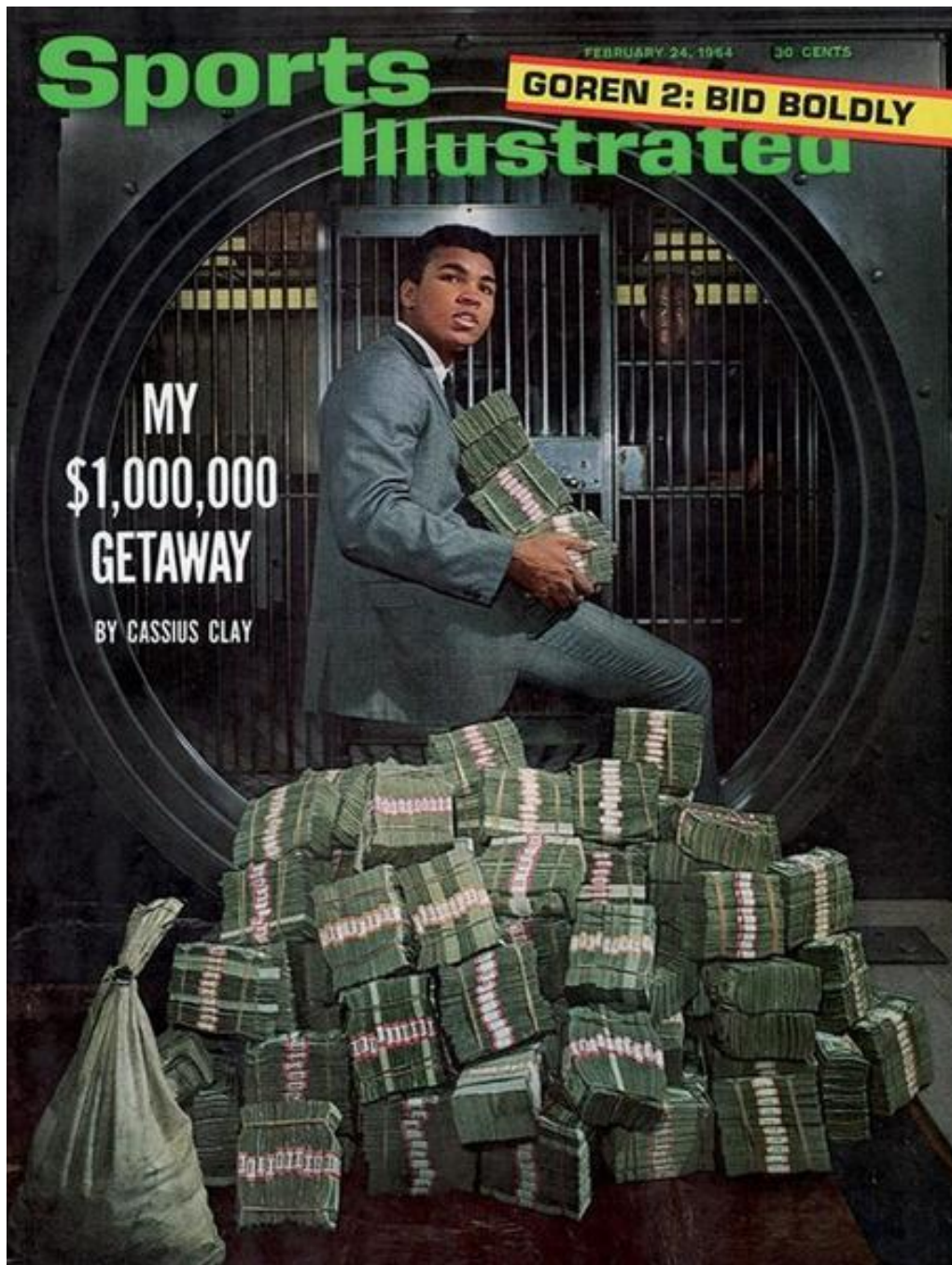
## Cassius Clay.

The picture above is of Cassius at the **age of 12**.

When he was just getting started in boxing, one of his trainers said...

Young blood, an Olympic Gold Medal is **where it's at**.

It's worth a **million dollars** to a fighter.





When you win a gold medal... you're a **national hero**.

You'll be celebrated like **Charles Lindbergh** when he crossed the Atlantic in a plane.



You'll be celebrated by the governor... the mayor... the police... even **the president** will honor you.



It's something you'll remember for the rest of your life.

So, at the **age of 12**, winning Olympic Gold is what young Cassius set out to do.

The work he put into it is **mind boggling**.

Each day he rose at **5:00 AM** to do his **roadwork**.

Then he went to **school**.

After school, he worked a job for **The Catholic Sisters** from **4:00 to 6:00**.

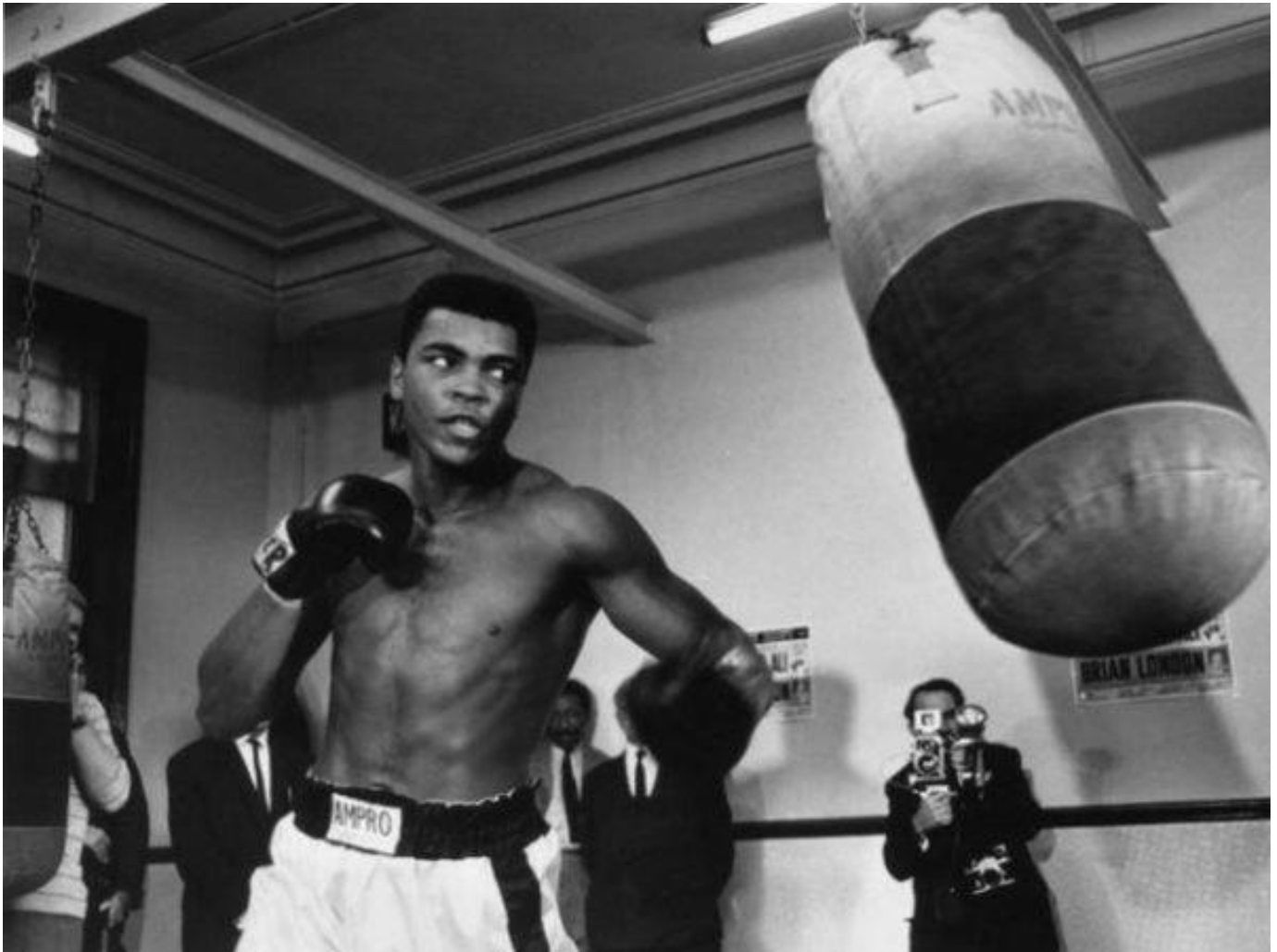
From **6:00 to 8:00**, he trained at **Martin's gym**... a white gym.



Then, from **8:00 to 12:00**, he trained at **Stoner's gym**... a black gym.

The next day, he'd rise and do it **all over again**.

He did that for **six years!**

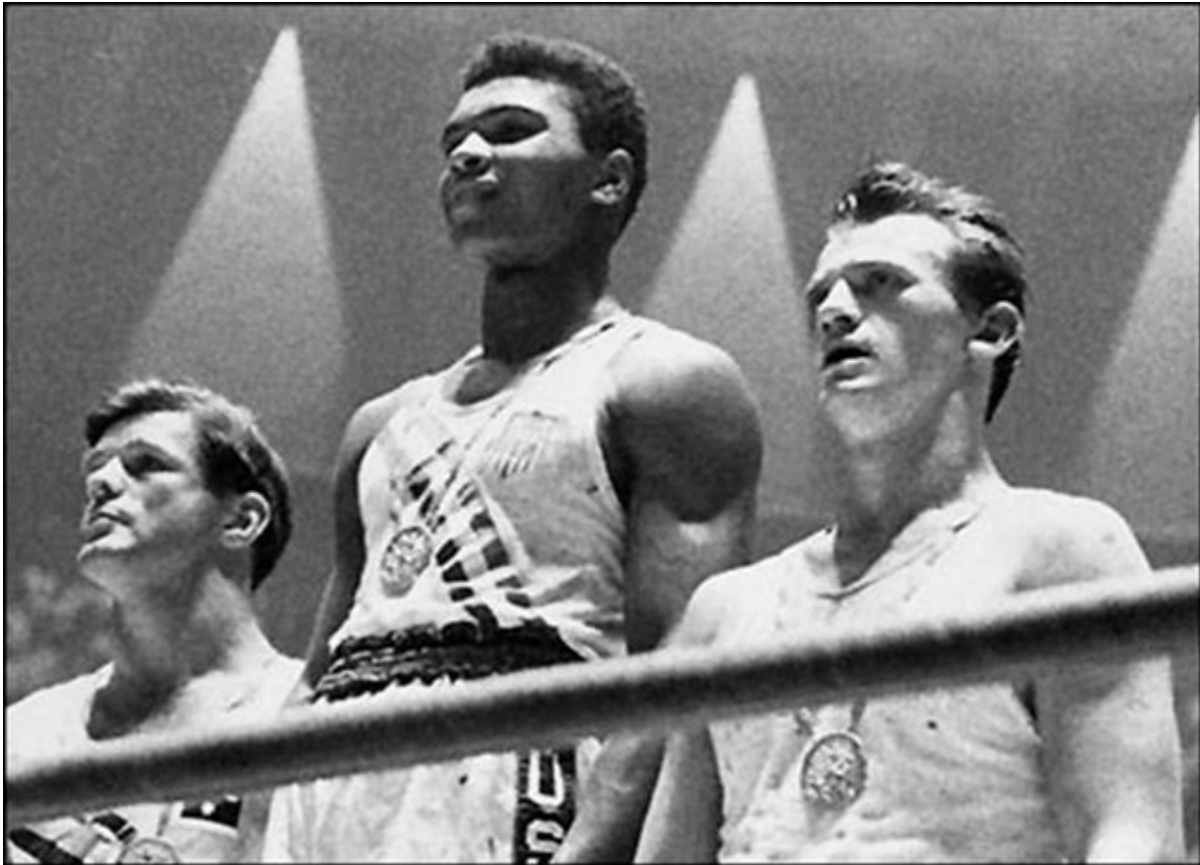


The results were undeniable.

Like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, he was transformed into a lean, mean, fighting machine.

During that time, he won **161 out of 167** amateur fights.

And, at **age 18**, he won a **gold medal** at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome.



This is his recollection of what it was like to win a gold medal.

“ What I remember most from my days as an amateur is the summer of 1960 when I came home from Rome to a **hero's welcome**.

I rode my new motorbike down to the mayor's office because he wanted to show my gold medal to some **visiting dignitaries**.

Along with me was **Ronald King**, a close friend and a good student. (One who I copied off when I was in class.)

The mayor introduced me to the visiting dignitaries.

Ladies and gentlemen... this is Cassius Clay!

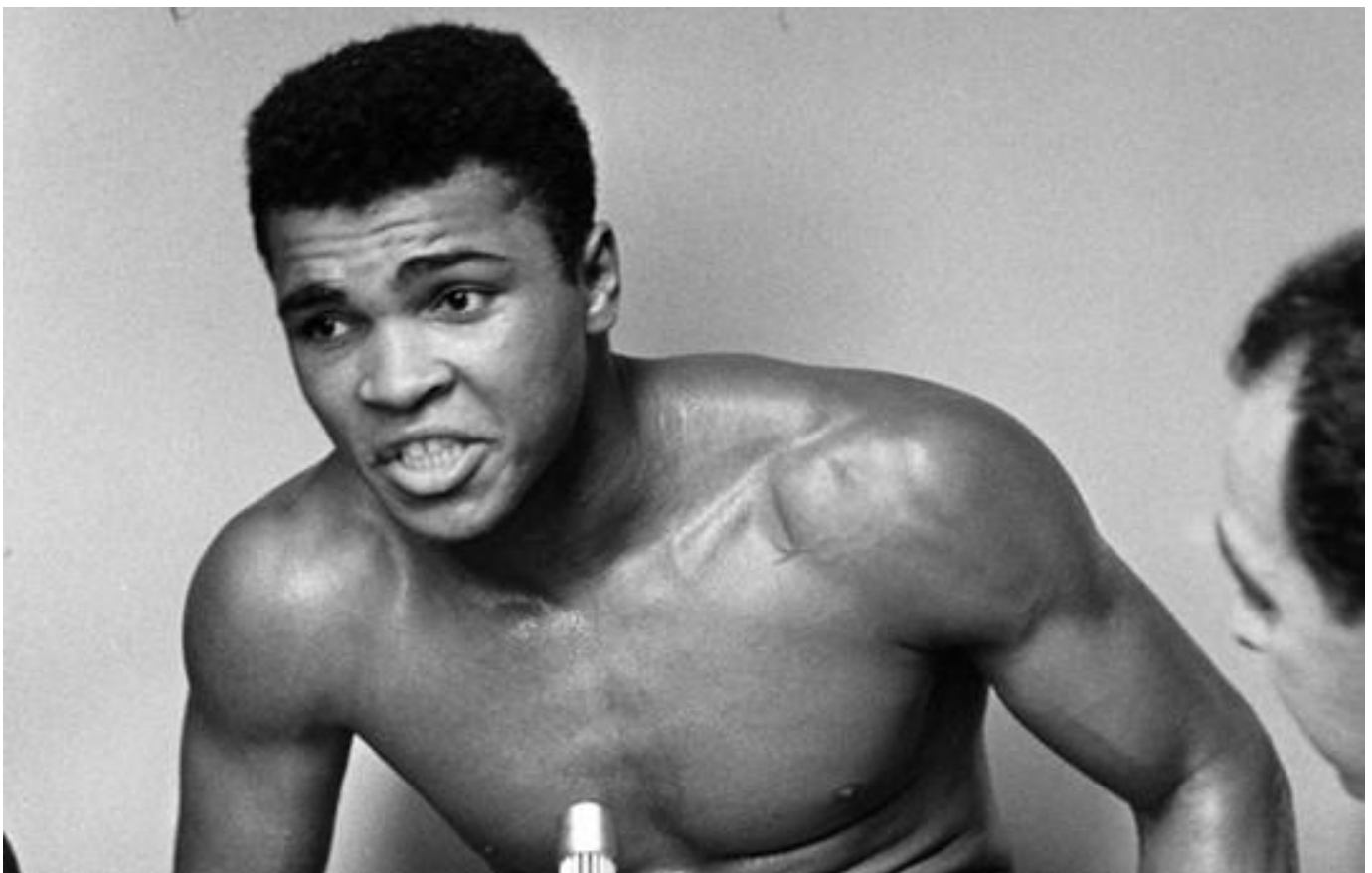


Cassius is a typical Louisville product. He's our next world champion!

The visitors applauded.

Did y'all hear what good ole Cassius told that **Russian reporter** in Rome?

This old Russian had the nerve to ask our boy **how things were for Negroes** in America.



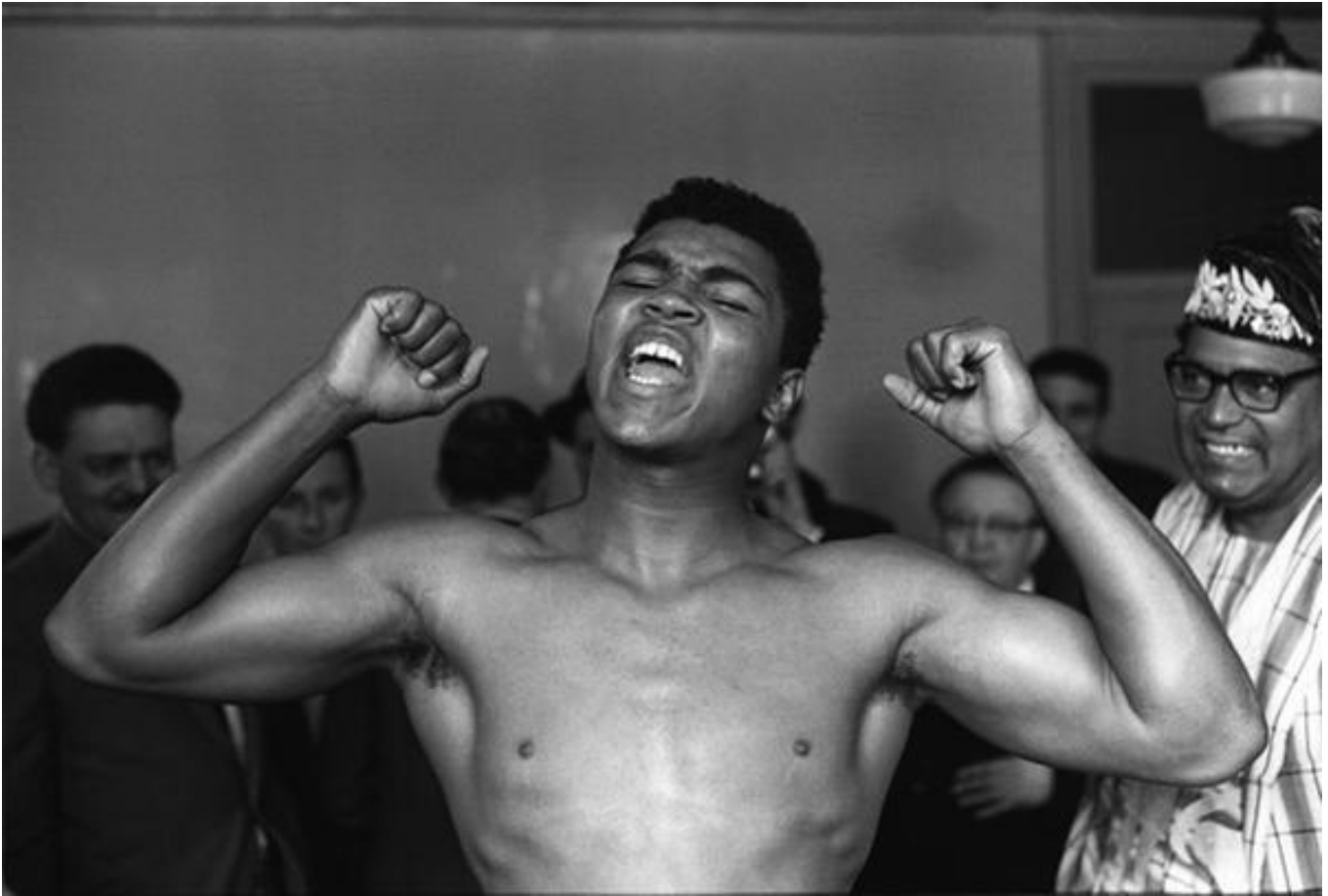
Why... Cassius brushed that Russian reporter off like dirt.

He stood up tall, and said, look here you commie...

**America is the best country in the world** including yours.



I'd rather live in Louisville **than in Africa** because at least I ain't got to fight no snakes and alligators and **live in a mud hut**.



Yes, sireee... he sure told em'! Didn't you Cash?

Then the mayor **put his arms around me** and said...

He's our very own boy. Our next world champion.

Anything you want in town is yours Cassius. You hear that? **Anything you want.**

I heard him alright. And I heard something else deep inside me that made me feel **ashamed**.

Of all the things I said in the Olympic village, the remark about Russia and Africa was the one that was **most quoted** in newspapers and magazines.

It was on TV and radio too... getting repeated **over and over**, month after month.

The instant I said it, I felt like I'd gotten caught up in some **big white net**.

I had given the answer the **white reporters** wanted to hear **a black athlete say**.



I knew nothing of Russia and very little of Africa, except what I'd seen in **Tarzan movies**.



Yet the effect of my answer had been brought home to me on my **first day back** in Louisville.

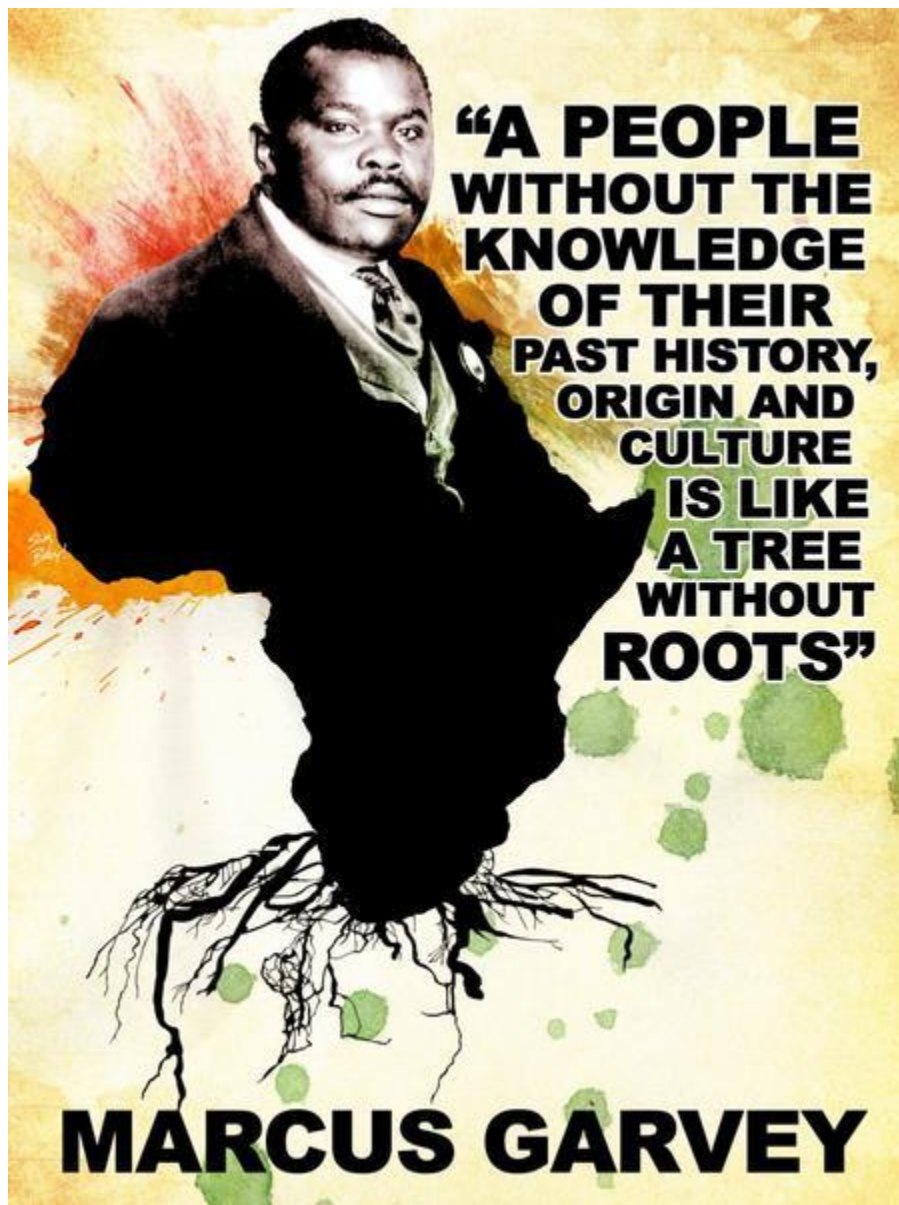
A **young Nigerian** approached me as I was talking to some friends and asked if I'd been **quoted correctly**.

When I acknowledged that I had, he said sadly, **I thought we were brothers**.

I'd never met him before or since, but **his sadness shook me**.

I knew I'd been slanted in the **wrong direction**.

Later, when I did travel to Africa, I was even more ashamed that **I'd grown up so brainwashed** about the history and life of the people I'd descended from.



Most of the Africans I met and mingled with were **far better educated than me.**

Many spoke five and six languages... and they all **spoke English better than I did.**



I saw modern cities, met talented artistic people, and got to know something of the **culture** and **contributions** Africa had made in the ancient and modern worlds.



I learned how America and Europe had **robbed**, **raped**, and **enslaved** its' people for centuries.

And I learned they were **still plundering** and draining Africa's wealth.



That Nigerian's criticism made me **cautious** about not allowing myself to be groomed to become a **White Hope**.



And of course, I understood they'd prefer for the White Hope to **actually be white**.

But seeing how White Hopes had **fallen on hard times** in boxing, I could see why they'd settle for a black, White Hope.

As long as he believed what they believed, talked the way they talked, and hated the people they hated.

Or... until a white, White Hope came along.

It took me awhile to learn that while the slave masters cheer for slavery, they get a **freakish thrill** when they can **make a slave** cheer for slavery.

That's why I understood **what George Foreman did** at the 1968 Olympic Games.... parading around the ring **waving an American flag**.



He'd never waved a flag before, and he's **never waved one since**.

He'd been **put up to it** to offset Black athletes like John Carlos and Tommie Smith.

Before the whole world, they dramatized their objections to American injustice with their **Black Power salute** on the medal stand.



That afternoon, I left the mayor's office resolved that if I could not change my stupid remark before the public, I would **change it for myself.**

But little did I know... **the first act** in this correction would begin before I finished my bike ride back home.



Let's put a bookmark here dear reader... so you can get on with your day,

To find out what happened on the way home, join us next week for **Part 2 of The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ.**



# Are You a Sharer?

*It ain't no fun if the homies can't have none.  
~ Snoop Dog*

If you are and **would like to share** "The Poet, the Frog, and the People's Champ" **with a friend**, you can by copying and pasting the URL in the address bar and passing it on.

Once again, thank you for taking this journey with your fellow readers.

It's just one lesson from the greatest story never told.

If you have a story of your own that you'd like to share, send it to me at the email address below. I'd love to hear it.

Or, if you have comments, expressions, or feedback... feel free to hit me up at [b.johnson@ethnixonpressions.com](mailto:b.johnson@ethnixonpressions.com)

Until next time,

Brian

