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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

And Then There Was One

The Movement to Free Albert Woodfox



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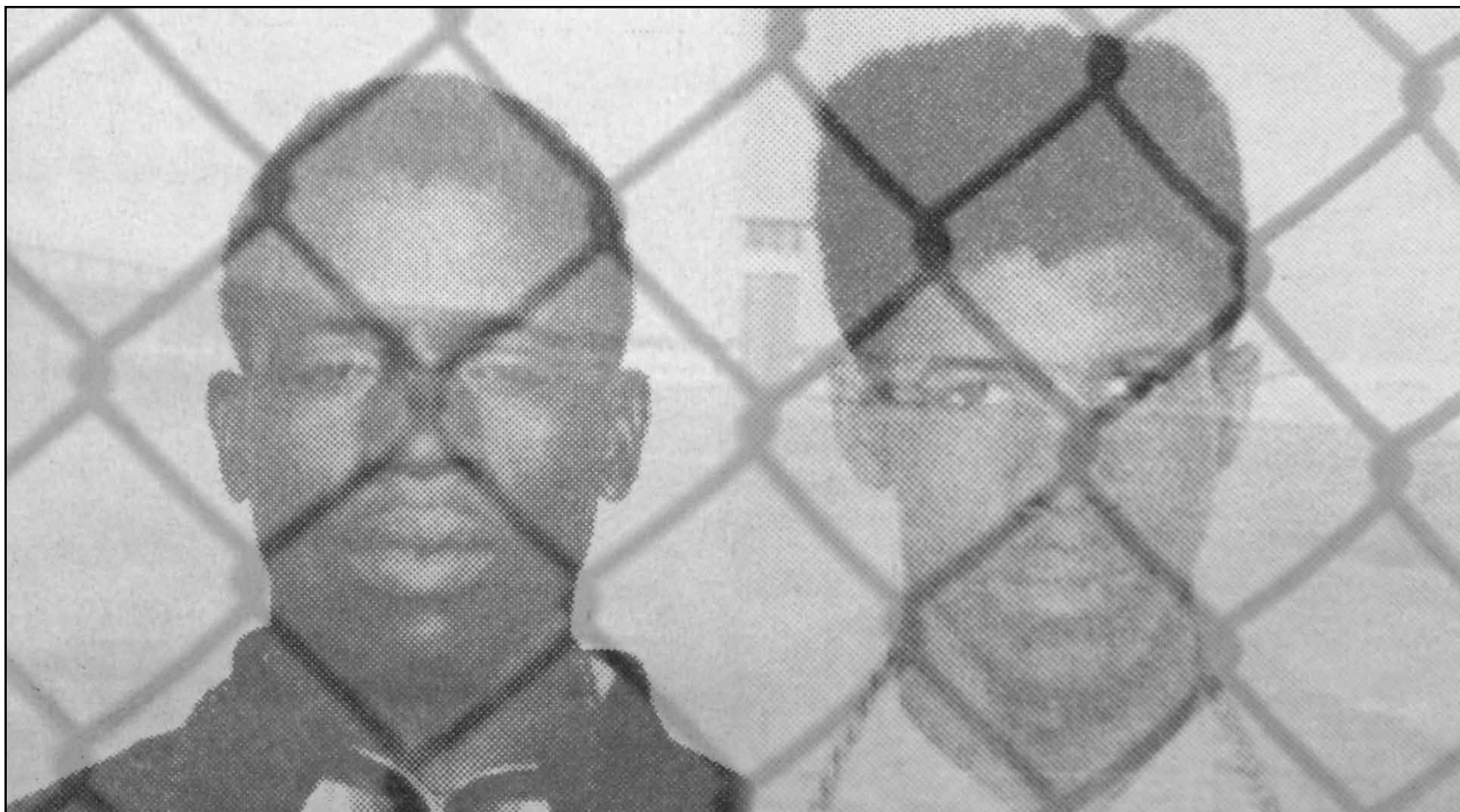
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And Then There Was One



The late Herman Wallace & Albert Woodfox image taken in the 1970's

By Parnell Herbert

Albert Woodfox; the remaining incarcerated member of the Angola 3 has spent the past forty-two and one-half years in a 6'x 9' cell twenty-three hours per day/seven days per week. Solitary Confinement.

Congressional hearings have been held, scientific studies have been conducted and law suits have been filed; all have confirmed; long-term solitary confinement is immoral, harmful, illegal and cruel and unusual punishment.

Louisiana has some of the harshest sentences in the United States. Convicted of a 1970 robbery, Albert was sentenced to 35 years. State judges tend to sentence defendants to terms double the time they actually want them to serve. The strategy is; one day off for each

day of good conduct. A prisoner can literally cut his sentence in half with good behavior.

In effect Albert should have been released in 1985 but that was not meant to be; you see... Albert Woodfox was a member of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. He and Angola 3 member Herman Wallace joined with others to form one of the first Black Panther branches in any U.S. penal institutions to fight against the violence and sexual slavery pervasive in what was then known as the bloodiest prison in the nation.

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.

Prison authorities sanctioned prisoner rape, and according to former Prison Warden Murray Henderson, "The prison guards actually helped facilitate a brutal system of sexual slavery where the younger and physically weaker prisoners were bought and sold into submission." The notorious Inmate trusty guard system was allegedly responsible for killing 40 prisoners and seriously maiming 350 between 1972-75, some prisoners were given state-issued weapons and ordered to enforce this sexual slavery, as well as the prison's many other injustices. Life at Angola was living hell — a 20th Century slave plantation.

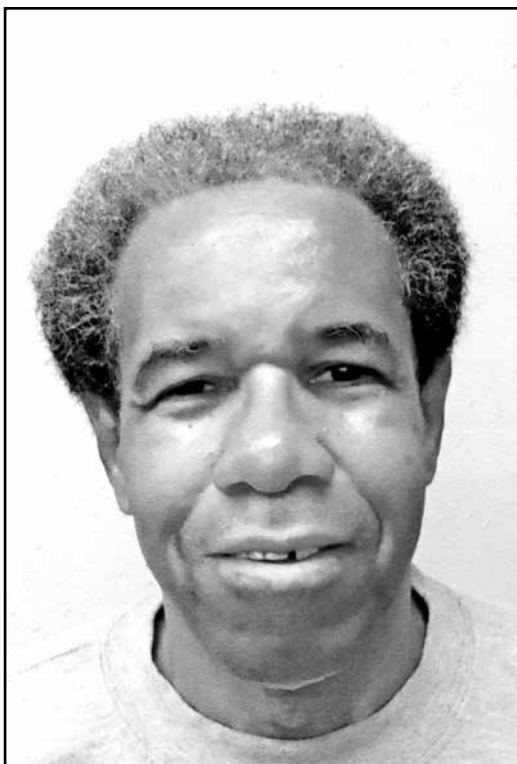
National Public Radio (NPR) series on the case reported directly from Angola, Reporter Laura Sullivan observed, "A hundred Black men are in the field, bent over picking tomatoes. A single White officer on a horse sits above them, a shotgun in his lap ... It's the same as it looked 40 years ago, and 100 years ago." Commenting that many at Angola today "seem to want to bury this case in a place no one will find it,"

As NPR documented, there is no physical evidence linking Woodfox or Wallace to the murder. A bloody fingerprint was found at the scene but it matches neither prisoner's prints. Prison officials have always refused to test that fingerprint against their own inmate fingerprint database. Caldwell vows to continue this policy, telling NPR: "A fingerprint can come from anywhere ... We're not going to be fooled by that."

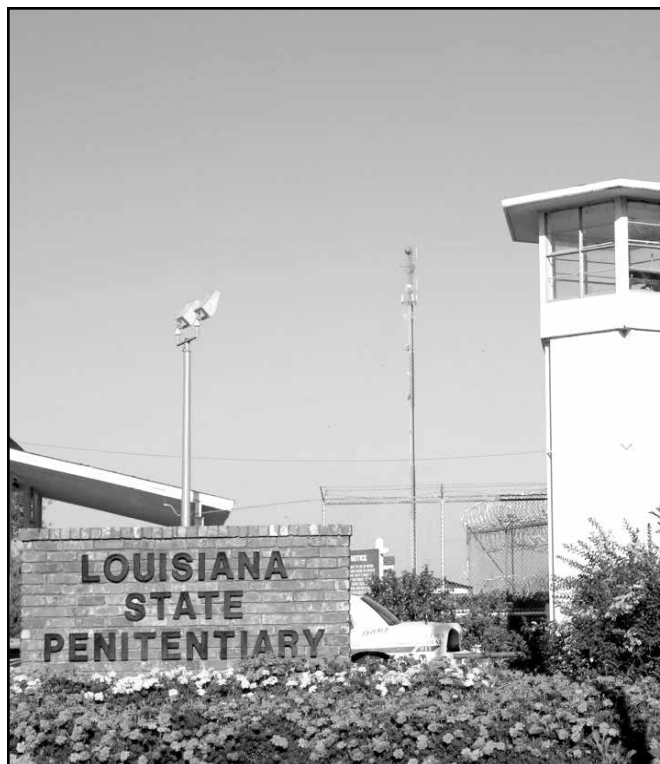
J Edgar Hoover; first Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Architect the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) declared "The Black Panther Party, without question, represents the greatest threat to internal security of the country." The greatest threat...? What about the Soviet Union Mr. Hoover? Or hadn't he noticed there was a cold war going on? What about the missiles Russia had stationed in Cuba, just 90 miles away from the Florida border pointed at every major U.S. sea port?

On June 15, 1969 Hoover vowed that 1969 would be the last year of the Panthers' existence. Neutralize, infiltrate, incarcerate, isolate, assassinate... destroy the Black Panthers' movement by any means available. Those were the marching orders delivered by Hoover; arguably the most powerful man in the world.

April 1972 Woodfox and Wallace were framed, charged, tried and convicted of the stabbing death of



Albert Woodfox is the last of the Angola 3 to remain imprisoned.



Louisiana State Penitentiary "Angola" today where Woodfox is incarcerated.

a young prison guard named Brent Miller. Because of a moratorium on the death penalty in the U.S. Albert and Herman were sentenced to life in prison. Otherwise they would have certainly been sentenced to die in the electric chair. Louisiana's Prison Industrial Corporation could not execute these men so they did the next best thing. They were banished to the isolation of solitary confinement to live out the rest of their lives; with an unofficial sentence of "Incremental death." Upon Robert King's arrival at Angola several weeks after the murder occurred... because of his Black Panther Party affiliation, he was placed in solitary confinement under investigation for Miller's murder and became the third Angola 3 member. While in solitary King was charged with a different murder; the murder of another prisoner who was also in solitary. On April 8, 2001 King was exonerated and released after serving 29 years in that same horrid condition of isolation.

Caldwell also told NPR that he firmly believes the testimony of the prosecution's key eyewitness, Hezekiah Brown, a serial rapist who had been sentenced to life without parole. Brown first told prison officials that he didn't know anything, but he later testified to seeing Miller stabbed to death by four inmates: Woodfox and Wallace, and two others who are now deceased: Chester Jackson (who testified for the state and pled guilty to a lesser charge) and Gilbert Montegut (who was acquitted after an officer provided an alibi).

Pardoned in 1986, and now deceased, Brown always denied re-

ceiving special favors from prison authorities in exchange for his testimony. However, prison documents reveal special treatment, including his own little house on prison grounds, a television set and a carton of cigarettes every week. Testifying at Woodfox's 1998 retrial, former Warden Murray Henderson admitted telling Brown that if he provided testimony helping to "crack the case," he would reward him by lobbying for his pardon. A few years later, Brown the serial rapist was pardoned and released.

In early 2008, a 25,000-signature petition initiated by ColorOfChange.org, calling for an investigation into Woodfox and Wallace's convictions and solitary confinement, was delivered to Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal by then head of the State Legislature's Judiciary Committee, Cedric Richmond and freed Angola 3 member Robert King. Jindal would not meet with the committee. To this day, Jindal remains silent on the case. Later in 2008, following a visit from Congressman John Conyers, Chairman of the US House Judiciary Committee; Innocence Project founder Barry Scheck; and Cedric Richmond, Wallace and Woodfox were transferred from solitary and housed together in a newly-built maximum security dormitory for twenty men. This temporary release from solitary lasted for eight months.

In April, following his visit, Conyers wrote a letter to the FBI requesting their documents relating to the case, stating: "I am deeply troubled by what evidence suggests was a tragic miscarriage of justice

with regard to these men. There is significant evidence that suggests not only their innocence, but also troubling misconduct by prison officials." The FBI responded by claiming that they had no files on the case, because, they had supposedly been destroyed.

On October 2, 2013, seventy-one year old Herman Wallace was exonerated and released after serving 41 years in solitary. October 4th; three days after his release; he died of advanced staged liver cancer.

Albert's 42 plus years in solitary is second only to California's, San Quentin State Penitentiary's, Hugo Pinell who has served the past 43 years isolated in solitary confinement. He was accused of participating in an attempted escape which left six people dead, including Black Panther leader, George Jackson, founder of the Black Guerrilla Family prison gang.

Louisiana's Attorney General, James Caldwell appears to have waged a personal vendetta. He adamantly opposes Albert's release, "With every fiber of my being." He denies that they have never been held in solitary confinement but are instead being held in "Protective cell units known as CCR (Closed Cell Restriction)." He further stated he will appeal Woodfox's case all the way to the US Supreme Court. "This is a very dangerous person; he is the most dangerous person on the planet."

In a 2008 deposition, attorneys for Woodfox asked Angola's Warden Burl Cain, "Let's just for the sake of argument assume, if you can, that he is not guilty of the murder of Brent Miller." Cain re-

sponded, "Okay, I would still keep him in CCR... I still know that he is still trying to practice Black Pantherism, and I still would not want him walking around my prison because he would organize the young new inmates. I would have me all kind of problems; more than I could stand, and I would have the Blacks chasing after them." Cain went on to say "He wants to demonstrate. He wants to organize. He wants to be defiant ... A hunger strike is really, really bad, because you could see he admitted that he was organizing a peaceful demonstration. There is no such thing as a peaceful demonstration in prison."

Conversely; Leontine Verrett (Miller's widow) now questions their guilt. She has called for a new investigation into the case: "What I want is justice. If these two men did not do this, and I believe they did not; they need to be out."

Angola has been described as "An 18,000-acre former slave plantation in rural Louisiana, it is the largest prison in the U.S. today, with African-Americans composing over 70% of Angola's 5,108 prisoners. Prison guards known as "Free men," a forced 40-hour workweek, and four to fifteen cents an hour wages, the resemblance to antebellum U.S. slavery is striking."

In the early 1970's, prior to the organizing work of the Angola Black Panther branch, it was even worse. Prisoners were forced to work 96-hour weeks (16 hours a day/six days a week) for two cents an hour as minimum wage.

The Angola Panthers saw life at Angola as modern-day slavery and fought back with non-violent hunger strikes and work stoppages. Prison authorities were outraged by the organizing of the Black Panther's. Overwhelming evidence has since emerged that authorities retaliated by framing these men for murders that they did not commit. Albert Woodfox is the last of the Angola 3 remaining in solitary confinement.

In 2013 A federal judge overturned Albert's guilty verdict. As expected Caldwell appealed that decision. January 2014 the case went to the 5th Circuit Court of appeals. Now all eyes are focused on that court. Albert's supporters are cautiously optimistic; "We feel this is the one." Another said "The third time is the charm. Albert's coming home."

We hope that the 5th Circuit Judges will hand down a ruling favorable to Albert Woodfox and end this forty-two year nightmare. FREE Albert Woodfox!!

Civil Rights Groups Expand Discrimination Complaint Against Bank of America

Civil Rights Organizations Add Cleveland, Kansas City, New Orleans, and Vallejo to

Federal Complaint over Neglected Foreclosures

This week, the National Fair Housing Alliance and three of its member organizations announced new evidence of housing discrimination by Bank of America. The civil rights groups allege that Bank of America continues to maintain and market bank-owned foreclosures (also known as real estate owned or REO properties) in white neighborhoods better than in African-American and Latino neighborhoods, a practice that violates the federal Fair Housing Act.

This announcement marks the



second anniversary of the initial filing of a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in September

2012. Evidence gathered from 2011 through September 29, 2014, documents an ongoing pattern and practice of discrimination. NFHA and its partners continue to amend the complaint as new evidence of discrimination comes to light. Currently, NFHA and its partners have investigated 868 REOs in 41 cities across the United States.

"It's shocking to see Bank of America continue to engage in this type of illegal discrimination on such a large scale," said Shanna L. Smith, President and CEO of the National Fair Housing Alliance. "NFHA alerted Bank of America about these problems in June 2009. We met several times with bank representatives and shared information about these problems. Instead of implementing quality control measures to address these problems, Bank of America continues to neglect basic maintenance tasks in communities of color, such as mowing grass, securing doors and windows, cleaning gutters, and removing debris. Such neglect damages neighborhood property values, drains local tax revenues and creates health and safety risks for the community."

This fifth amended complaint adds data from investigations in Cleveland, Ohio, Kansas City, Kan. / Mo., New Orleans, La., and Vallejo, Calif. The overall complaint encompasses neighborhoods in 41 cities comprising 24 metro regions. The three member organizations joining NFHA in submitting new evidence of discrimination are Housing Resource & Advocacy Center

(Cleveland), Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (New Orleans), and Fair Housing of Marin (Vallejo).

The organizations investigated the maintenance and marketing of bank-owned foreclosed homes for 39 different types of deficiencies, including broken windows and doors, broken and obstructed gutters and downspouts, accumulated trash, overgrown lawns and shrubs, no "for sale" signs, and other issues that affect curb appeal, the security of the home, and the value of the property.

Bank of America properties in communities of color had excessive trash, unsecured locks and windows, overflowing mail, and overgrown lawns, but most Bank of America properties in predominantly white communities did not. These problems are simple to fix and are the responsibility of the bank and its contractors.

"Bank of America should take meaningful steps toward fixing this problem," said James Perry, Executive Director of the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center. "Communities in New Orleans were hit hard by hurricane Katrina and are now suffering because of Bank of America. Their property values have taken a nose dive because of Bank of America's discriminatory neglect."

"Bank of America boarded windows in communities of color rather than installing clear boarding or fixing the windows. Boarded windows carry a stigma and imply the neighborhood is not safe or desirable," said Caroline Peattie, Executive Director of Fair Housing of Marin. "Bank of America must be held accountable for failing to maintain its foreclosure inventory. In California, Bank of America has played a major part in changing single family owner-occupied neighborhoods into rental communities, as large investors buy REO homes in quantity and drag property values down in the process."

The Fair Housing Act makes it illegal to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status, as well as the race or national origin of residents of a neighborhood. This law applies to housing and housing-related activities, which include the maintenance, appraisal, listing, marketing, and selling of homes.

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NFHA
National Fair Housing Alliance

National Fair Housing Alliance
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www.nationalfairhousing.org

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GE Foundation Announces Grant Supporting NOLA Delgado Training Program

On Wednesday, October 1, 2014, the GE Foundation announced a multi-year grant to support the development of advanced manufacturing and water management skills in New Orleans. The program will support Delgado Community College's ongoing efforts to train certified water infrastructure personnel, helping to fill critical infrastructure



jobs by connecting job seekers to opportunities at the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans.

This program is an extension of a century's old commitment to the City of New Orleans by GE and the GE Foundation, and their ongoing work to support skill building and advanced manufacturing efforts around the globe.

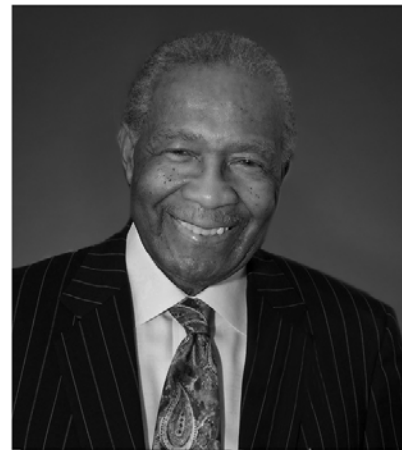
The announcement was made during the 87th Annual Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference (WEFT-EC), the world's largest annual water quality conference and exhibition, hosted in New Orleans from September 27 through October 1, 2014 at the The New Orleans Morial Convention Center.



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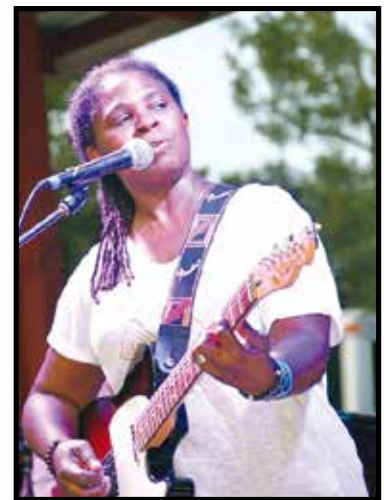
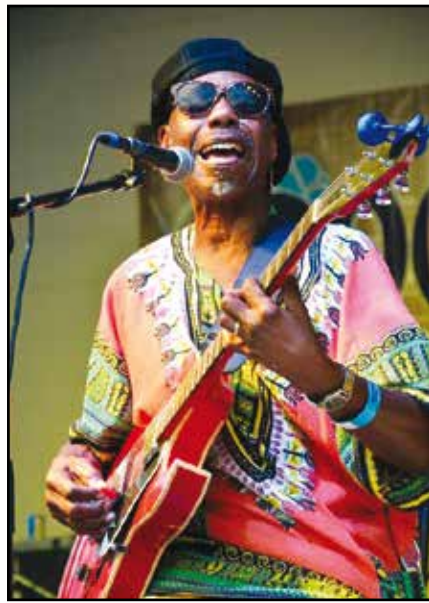
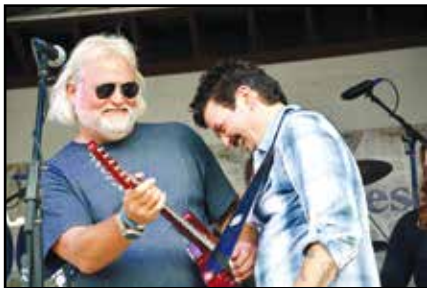
The Bogalusa Blues and Heritage Festival

Photos by Kichea S. Burt

The Bogalusa Blues and Heritage Festival 2014 featured a lineup on the Main Stage in beautiful Cassidy Park all day Saturday, Sept. 27, but also had audiences howling at the moon and dancing under the stars on Friday night. In

its third year, BBHF assembled a slate of splendid soulful performers that gave voice to a wide, and deep, range of blues styles who ranged from noted grand masters to youthful musicians with Blues in their blood.

Noted performers included: Big George Brock, Walter "Wolfman" Washington, Ruthie Foster, Johnny Sansone, Devon Allman, Dwayne Doopsie and Mike Zito.



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

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Eric Holder Stood Tall for Justice



Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
NNPA Columnist

Black American leadership too often is taken for granted. Attorney General Eric Holder announced his resignation from office not because of malfeasance or wrong doing, but because of his resolve to leave office after serving six years, the third-longest tenure in history. Being the nation's top law enforce-

ment officer was not an easy job, yet he stood tall for the principles of equal justice and fairness.

I have personally known and witnessed the evolution of Eric Holder's outstanding career over the past 30 years. The justice and judicial system interests of the United States of America were served well by his contributions and leadership.

President Barack Obama explained, "I chose him to serve as attorney general because he believes as I do that justice is not just an abstract theory. It's a living and breathing principle ... That's why I made him America's lawyer, the people's lawyer."

Even after some raised objections to Holder being confirmed by the U.S. Senate to become Ameri-

ca's first Black American attorney general, Holder was confirmed and since has been a strong advocate for freedom, justice and equality.

In a special ceremony inside the White House, Holder stated, "I have loved the Department of Justice ever since as a young boy I watched Robert Kennedy prove during the Civil Rights Movement how the department can – and must – always be a force for that which is right."

Holder opposed suppression moves across the nation that have attempted to gut the Voting Rights Act. He also launched and directed the official Justice Department investigation about the killing of Trayvon Martin. Holder traveled to Ferguson, Mo. to amplify the demand for justice in the wake of

the murder of young unarmed Michael Brown and held meeting with the parents of Brown. Holder has shown courageous leadership.

Expressing appreciation to President Obama, Holder stated, "I hope that I have done honor to the faith you placed in me, Mr. President, and to the legacy of all those that served before me."

We believe that Eric Holder kept that faith and exemplified the best example of law enforcement national administration.

As we rapidly approach the November national elections, it will be important that the U.S. Department of Justice remains committed to protecting the voting rights of all Americans, and in particular Black American voting rights. We hope

that President Obama will nominate another freedom fighter for equal justice to replace Holder.

In the meantime, we all should pause to say thank you to Attorney General Eric Holder. One of the best ways to express our gratitude to Holder is to make sure we have the largest Black American voter turnout in American history this November. That would be a great and lasting tribute Brother Holder.

Benjamin F. Chavis, is the President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and can be reached for national advertisement sales and partnership proposals at: dr.bchavis@nnpa.org; and for lectures and other professional consultations at: <http://drbenjaminfchavisjr.wix.com/drbcf>

To Be Equal

Violence Against Women and Children is Wrong



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

"I also understand after meeting with a psychologist that there are other alternative ways of disciplining a child that may be more appropriate." — Adrian Peterson

The NFL may have inadvertently done us all a favor by shedding light on a problem that is too often ignored or swept under the rug. Recent incidents of abuse of his then fiancée/now wife by former Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice and alleged child abuse by Minnesota Vikings running back

Adrian Peterson are stark reminders that domestic violence against anyone has no place in any relationship, even when it is not captured on camera or doesn't become a national news story.

As the president of a civil rights organization that is steeped in a tradition of peaceful change, and as a husband and father of two daughters, I have consistently spoken out against the lack of value placed on the lives of Black males, including Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis, Eric Garner, Michael Brown and too many more across the nation.

Today, I want to send a similar message about the value we place on the women and children who live in our homes. Non-violence has always been the cornerstone of what Dr. King and John Lewis have called "The Beloved Community" – and non-violence begins in the home.

While a wide range of disciplin-

ary choices are available to parents, we must ask ourselves if the way we were raised is the same way we want to raise our children. What lessons are we teaching children when disputes between fathers and mothers are more likely settled with physical confrontations instead of reasoned conversations?

While spanking – sometimes with belts and switches – might have been a part of many of our childhoods, what are we saying to our children when we whip them until their butts are black and blue? Charles Barkley was a formidable basketball player and is an entertaining sports commentator, but Chuck got it wrong when he recently downplayed Adrian Peterson's use of a switch which caused lacerations and bruises on his 4-year-old son. Barkley responded by saying, "I'm from the South. Whipping — we do that all the time. Every Black parent in the South is going to be

in jail under those circumstances."

Responding to the fumbling response of the NFL in the wake of recent incidents and allegations of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse involving professional football players, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell admitted, "I got it wrong and I am sorry." Saying that "Domestic abuse and sexual assault have no place in the NFL," he also pledged to re-examine and change NFL policies to prevent future incidents and toughen sanctions for players who break the rules.

But this is a problem that affects all of us. Domestic violence occurs among all races and in all communities. Parenting is not easy, and none of us are perfect; but when loving discipline crosses the line into angry and hurtful punishment, it is time to take a step back and seek healthier ways to teach our children right from wrong. Many urban families facing the twin stresses of

poverty and single parenthood may need special help. That is why many Urban League affiliates across the country offer parenting counseling as part of their services to the community, and it is why the National Urban League has been such a strong supporter of Early Childhood Education and programs such as Head Start, which include parenting classes.

This issue is about more than Ray Rice, Adrian Peterson and the NFL. It is about who we are as a nation. It's time for all of us to take a stand and make it clear – domestic violence is wrong – no tolerance, no excuses. Our mothers, daughters, wives, sisters and friends are counting on us.

Marc H. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, is president and CEO of the National Urban League.

Voting

The Shaping and Making of History is in Our Hands



By Edwin Buggage
Editor, Data News Weekly

On November 4th registered voters in New Orleans will go to the polls to vote. In this election cycle we must ask ourselves what is it that is at stake? The things that are on the ballot from our U.S. Senate race, the U.S. House of Representative seat in addition to several local judge races, a contest for State Representative, constitutional amendments and several City propositions to name a few. All of these are important items on the ballot

that will continue to reshape the future of New Orleans.

In this time we must ask ourselves how we will in the African-American community fair into the power equation. As we at Data News Weekly always remind our readers during every election cycle, this is not the time for us to go to sleep at the wheel and not vote. We cannot continue to vote in low numbers and expect the tides of change and all that comes with it to blow our way. It is time for us as a community to realize that our fortunes will change only if we are more engaged. And as many things in life is unequal but inside that voting booth is where the playing field is level and it is one person, one vote regardless of your station in life. If we are to use our power at the polls effectively we can begin putting elected officials in place and voting on initiatives that speak to our concerns and needs of our community.

When you think about the power equation and voting we can look no further than recently as chaos broke out in Ferguson, Missouri after Officer Darren Wilson shot and killed an unarmed African-American teen named Michael Brown. While there were weeks of protests that may have bought some of the questions of police misconduct and the treatment of African-American males and men of color by law enforcement to the forefront once again. There was something that came up that was equally as important going on in the background that was not discussed as much. This is the 800 pound elephant in the room that never gets talked about; the relationship between organized and proactive civic engagement and mobilizing short-term around an issue without a long-term strategy and expects change. When you look at Ferguson we see that voter participation among African-Americans is

in the single digits. Ferguson while obviously is a smaller community, but like New Orleans it has a majority African-American population but experiences low voter turnout. This is detrimental to their community as is ours as many voices are muted, not being heard as we are not on the radar screen when decisions regarding the priorities of public policy when they are being made.

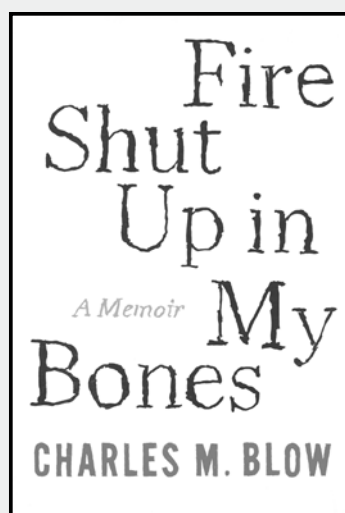
Today it is incumbent upon us to get serious about the business of voting as around the country groups like ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) and others are working to suppress voter turnout among minorities. And when it was publicized and in the courts during the 2008 Presidential Election we responded to these challenges by getting fired up and getting to the polls. And as a historical first as a percentage of registered voters African-Americans voted in

greater numbers than Whites. But as we celebrated the re-election of the nation's first African-American President Barack Obama; closer to home we went back to the same old thing; participating in low numbers and not being civically engaged.

Our City is at a crossroads and its direction in terms of the steering of resources it is important that the voices of the most vulnerable citizens are heard and given priority. It is only in this way that we can rebuild our City in an effective and efficient way, and that is from the bottom up. This is the only way this City will reach its full potential. We can if it were a priority move ourselves from of a Third World Economy and political system that has the few of the "have plenty's" and a whole lot of the "don't have any's." In this election cycle this is something that has to be addressed

Buggage, Continued
on page 11.

Fire Shut Up in My Bones



"Fire Shut Up in My Bones"
by Charles M. Blow
c.2014, Houghton
Mifflin Harcourt
\$27.00 / \$35.00 Canada
240 pages

By The Bookworm Sez

Take a deep breath.

Sometimes, nothing is sweeter: a newborn's first lungful of air. The headiness of roses, new-mown grass, or familiar perfume. A gasp at the surface of water. The sigh that accompanies a good hug.

Sometimes, you need that deep breath, especially when you realize you've been waiting too long for it. Or, as in the new memoir "Fire Shut Up in My Bones" by Charles M. Blow, when the air's been knocked out of you.

Despite growing up poor in rural Louisiana, Charles Blow had a good early childhood. Nearly everyone in the small town of Gibsland, it seems, was related to nearly everyone else, so there was always an aunt, uncle, or cousin nearby to dispense candy or to play with. Blow also reveled in the presence of his gentle step-grandfather, and neighbors who coddled him.

Yes, those early years were good, but not without trouble. When Blow was just five years old, his mother, who worked hard to raise her

five sons, kicked his father out of the house for womanizing. With a month left on the rent-to-own, she then moved what remained of her family to live with Blow's great-grandfather.

The new home was a short distance away from Blow's old neighborhood, but it might as well have been miles. With his brothers at school and his mother at work, he had little choice but to spend his days with his mentally-disabled Uncle Paul, Paul's strange and eccentric friends, and the occasional relative who came to visit awhile.

One of those relatives was Blow's cousin, Chester, who manipulated then-six-year-old Blow, making him steal candy. But "shame of stealing candy would pale in comparison" to what happened not long afterward, when Blow's cousin molested him, then bullied and taunted him for months for being a "punk."

Believing that nobody could – or would – do anything about it, Blow kept quiet for years about what happened, about the haunted part of him that sometimes surfaced,

and about the cruelty and anger that dwelled inside him. He kept quiet until the night 16 years later, when Chester was on the other end of the phone...

Strictly speaking, as memoirs go, "Fire Shut Up in My Bones" isn't much different from other stories like it. Indeed, if you look, you'll find plenty of them.

What sets this book apart from the others, however, is the way in which Charles M. Blow tells his tale. In addition to being an author, Blow is also a journalist, which shows in the beauty of his writing and the gentle images he creates, even in passages of brutality and the ultimate confusion about his sexuality that the abuse awakened. Gorgeous words like that make this book akin to being wrapped in rich cashmere that softens a hit with a sledge hammer now and then.

Look for this book – not so much for the story (which is still really good) but for the lushness of its words. Then be prepared: "Fire Shut Up in My Bones" will leave you breathless.

The Botany of War

By LMG Calla Victoria

Recently I attended one of the Lagniappe Lecture series at the National World War II Museum in the U. S. Freedom Pavilion: Boeing Center. The speaker was world plant explorer, shaman apprentice, ethnobotanist, Time magazine's "Hero of the Planet," and expert on rainforest ecosystems, Dr. Mark Plotkin. The lecture was entitled "Quinine, Rubber, Sherman Tanks, and Japanese Submarines: How Rainforest Plants Served as Key Strategic Materials in World War II." Of course I was intrigued by the title as one does not generally think of vegetation when the discussion of war is on the table.

Dr. Plotkin explained that plant material is an integral part of every war. When battleships were built they wanted the largest trees for the mast of the ships because the tallest masts would accommodate more sales thus allowing them to move faster. White pine *Pinus strobus* which grows 300 feet high was very much in demand. The Higgins boat, which was a landing craft used extensively in amphibious landings in World War II, was designed by Andrew Higgins and made of ma-

hogany wood. More than 20,000 were built, by Higgins Industries and licensees.

The Sherman tank, officially M4 General Sherman, the main battle tank designed and built by the United States for the conduct of World War II contained ½ ton of rubber which came from the rubber tree *Ficus elastica*. Rubber too was in demand for gas masks which contain 1.11 pounds of rubber, tires for all military vehicles, and rafts that were made of 100 pounds of rubber.

Dr. Plotkin went on to explain that the army that could get its soldiers healed and back on the battlefield the quickest usually won the war. Therefore medicinal plants were the winners of many battles. The cotton plant which belongs to the genus *Gossypium malvaceae* is one such plant. The root of some cotton species was used in fever, and seeds are used in treating gonorrhea, gleet, chronic cystitis, catarrh and dysentery. The seed oil is used to clear freckles and spots from the skin. The juice of the leaves of cotton is used against scorpion sting and snakebite while the gauze made from cotton binds wounds. Quinine *Cinchona succirubra* has



Pictured is Dr. Mark Plotkin, world plant explorer, shaman apprentice, ethnobotanist, Time magazine's "Hero of the Planet," and expert on rainforest ecosystems.

been used for the treatment of malaria and associated febrile states, leg cramps caused by vascular spasm, internal hemorrhoids, varicose veins, and pleural cavities after thoracoplasty. Myrrh *Commiphora myrrha* kills staph infections, while frankincense *Boswellia serrata* has been used for hundreds of years for

treating arthritis, healing wounds, strengthening the female hormone system and purifying the air. Opium poppy *Cinchona succirubra* is used for pain and is the source of many narcotics, including morphine (and its derivative heroin), codeine, papaverine, and noscapine. Dr. Plotkin's lecture certainly looks at war

from a botanical perspective and his final words at the close of the lecture were, "Mother Nature is the world's best chemist."

I cannot end this article without commenting on The National World War II Museum. This world-class facility is simply amazing. The customer service there is superb, the complimentary spirits at the lecture was delectable, and the wait staff was first-class. WWII Museum was the perfect setting for the lecture as there was an actual Sherman tank literally about 3 feet from where I was sitting, while a b-52 bomber and other large combat planes hovered about 10 feet over my head. Prior to the lecture I had no interest in visiting the WWII Museum even though many of my sister Master Gardeners are caretakers of the Victory Garden there. I will definitely go back for a complete tour of this fascinating place. I did inquire if there was some sort of exhibit of the Tuskegee Airmen at the facility. I was told that there is an oral history and a temporary exhibit that was occasionally on display. It is my hope that the Tuskegee Airmen's exhibit will become a permanent fixture at the WWII Museum.

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Ebola Surfaces in the US

CDC Says Washing Hands Best Way to Protect Against Spread

By Ana Alamendria

A patient was diagnosed with Ebola in the United States for the first time, CNBC reported, citing the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

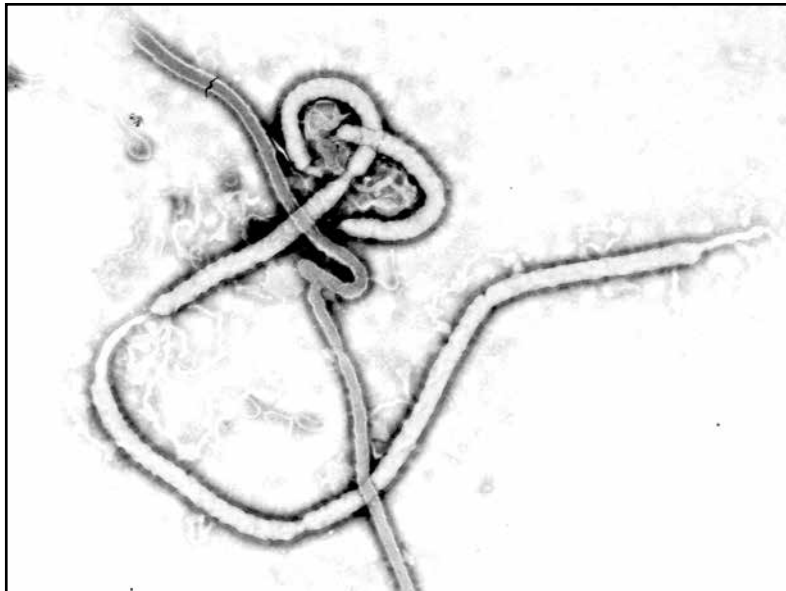
Until Tuesday, Ebola patients had only been treated in the U.S. after being diagnosed elsewhere.

Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas announced on Monday that one of its patients was being tested for Ebola. The patient was kept in isolation and CDC officials headed to Dallas to meet with doctors there.

Texas health officials told KDFW that the chances of an outbreak in the Dallas area are very low. On Tuesday, the CDC gave more details about the case in a press conference.

Dr. Thomas Frieden, Director of the CDC, reported that the infected patient was traveling from Liberia and left on September 19th, arrived in the U.S. on September 20th, but had no symptoms of the disease during that timeframe. On September 24th, the patient developed symptoms, and then sought care on September 26th. On September 28th, the patient was admitted to the hospital in Dallas.

When asked why the patient was sent home after his initial visit, Frieden explained that the beginnings of Ebola virus can very often appear similar to common illnesses, adding that his office has encouraged emergency department physicians to be particularly careful to take travel histories and conduct rapid testing on anything resembling the illness. Despite complications in care, he stated that he had



“no doubt that we’ll stop this in its tracks in the U.S.”

Friedan didn’t disclose much information about the patient beyond the fact that he is visiting family in the U.S. Doctors didn’t reveal his nationality – or whether he resides in the U.S. or is a tourist. Officials did confirm that he was critically ill and that the hospital was discussing experimental therapies with the patient’s family and drug providers.

Zachary Thompson, director of Dallas County Health And Human Services, is leading the public health effort to reach out and interview anyone the patient may have been in contact with in the time that he was showing symptoms, but had not yet been checked into the hospital. It’s estimated that only a “handful” of people – several family members, with whom he was staying, and one to three community members, had direct contact with him during that time, and they’ll all be assessed and monitored for 21

days to see if symptoms develop. If they do, their diagnosis triggers the same public health effort: identify everyone they’ve been in contact with since symptoms started, and monitor them.

“We think, again, it’s a small framework that we’re looking at in terms of the number of people, but once we get additional information, we’ll report out to the public,” said Thompson. The CDC also has a support team en route to Dallas to help state, local and hospital officials monitor those who had direct contact with the patient.

While public health officials are casting a wide net to err on the side of caution, Frieden re-emphasized that the Ebola virus was not a significant threat to the general U.S. population, and that any hospital with an isolation unit is equipped to isolate and care for someone who has been diagnosed with Ebola.

“It’s a virus that’s easy to kill by washing your hands, and easy to

stop by using gloves and barrier precautions,” said Frieden. For instance, he said, the U.S. has seen several patients with viral hemorrhagic fever in the past, and standard hygiene practices prevented its spread – even in the case of one patient with Marburg virus who was hospitalized and underwent surgery before being diagnosed.

Currently, the CDC has 130 staffers spread throughout West African countries to help support public health efforts to contain the virus. On the call, Frieden mentioned that the CDC was working with airlines to screen “100 percent” of passengers in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Lagos, Nigeria for fever before they get on the plane. Frieden emphasized means that no one exhibiting symptoms is allowed on planes.

“Remember: Ebola doesn’t spread before someone gets sick, and [the U.S. patient] didn’t get sick until four days after he got off the airplane,” said Frieden. “So we do not believe there is any risk to anyone who was on the flight at that time.”

Ebola virus is only spread via direct contact with the body fluids (including urine, saliva, feces, vomit, and blood) of a person who is exhibiting symptoms of the disease. It has a high case fatality rate; by last count, the current outbreak has infected more than 6,500 people and resulted in more than 3,000 deaths.

“I have no doubt that we’ll stop this in its tracks in the U.S.,” Frieden concluded. “But I also have no doubt that as long as the outbreak continues in Africa, we need to be on our guard.”

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Buggage, Continued from page 9.

and the people who need the most can use their voice to effect change through the vote.

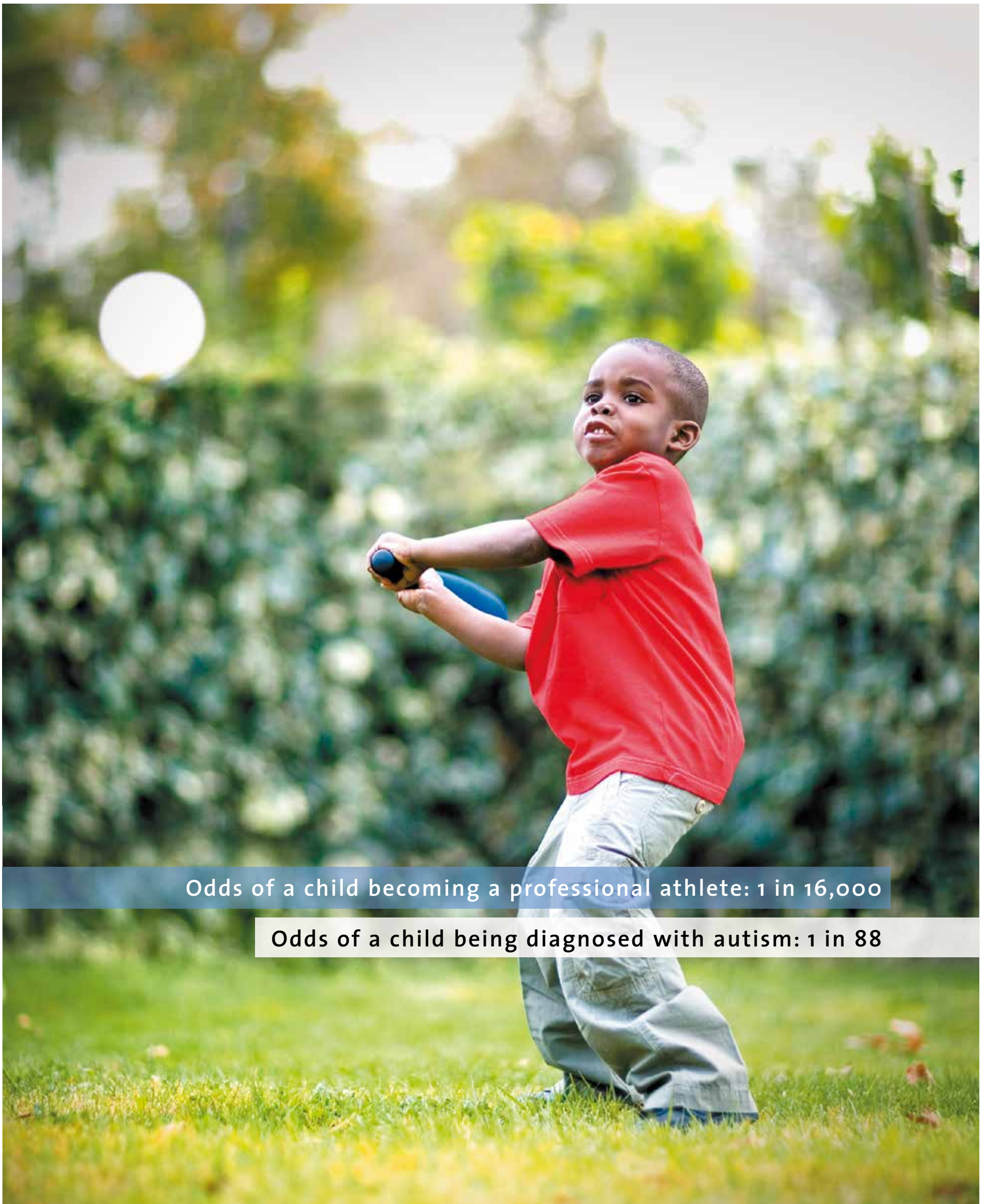
And while some may think that voting does not matter, it does. In our community especially given the sacrifices many have made for us. So many have fought and died struggling for us to have the right that is afforded all citizens. Today it is under attack and we cannot allow our non-participation to give reason to those who want to turn back the hands of time and thwart our prog-

ress by saying “they didn’t use it so they might as well lose it.”

We cannot get historical amnesia and forget that only fifty years ago we were involved in an historical struggle to change the course of our fate with the goal of being undeterred in pursuing the American Dream and reaching our full potential. To aspire to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and to live with dignity; we must understand that our struggle for progress, access and own-

ership continues. But admittedly, we have made great strides, today the ancestors of those who picked cotton and was considered 3/5ths a person by the founding fathers can now say their hands help elect Barack Obama, an African-American into the highest office in the land and leader of the free world. Something many thought would never happen, but in this we realize when we participate we can achieve extraordinary things. We can reshape history, so when

thinking about the upcoming election think about it as I am voting for those who historically could not. I am voting because our future depends on it, I am voting because it is my voice and it must be heard. And when we think of it that way we honor so many of those who have come before us who have dug this well of freedom from which we drink and they can look down from heaven and say that all their hard work and sacrifice mattered.



Odds of a child becoming a professional athlete: 1 in 16,000

Odds of a child being diagnosed with autism: 1 in 88

Some signs to look for:

No big smiles or other joyful expressions by 6 months.

No babbling by 12 months.

No words by 16 months.



To learn more of the signs of autism, visit autismspeaks.org



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