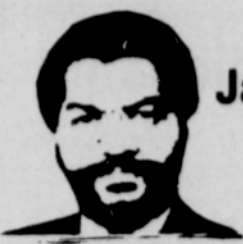


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"The Eyes and Ears of the Community"

April 6, 1988

April Death

by Nyewusi Askari

Applause, and there stood — tall, proud — the Black Prince of Peace. His eyes: the lightning's flash. His voice: the thunder's roll. Looking out at members of the congregation who had come to hear him speak, he flashed a knowing smile, a vision smile, a dream smile, a smile that set the stage for the penetrating, shocking words that followed.

"... I don't know what will happen now. We have got difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me because I've been to the mountain top. Like anyone else, I would like to live a long time. But I'm not concerned with that. I just want to do God's will, and he has allowed me to go up the mountain ..."

A deep chill went through the congregation. They had not heard him talk like this before. There was something strangely different about the way he moved in front of the podium; something chilling about the way he chose his words, and something revealing about the way he stared into the faces of his followers. An old Black woman sitting in the back of the room said it reminded her of Jesus and his Disciples at the Last Supper.

The Black Prince of Peace cleared his throat. The light in the room revealed tears in his eyes, but no tear did he shed. Instead, he smiled and said, "I see the promise land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promise land. I am happy tonight that I am not worried about anything. I am not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord ..."

Members of the congregation were stunned. They couldn't believe they had just heard Martin predict his own death. And Martin, he just stood there — tall, proud — a Black Prince of Peace. His eyes: the lightning's flash. His voice: the thunder's roll. His smile fading slowspeed.

"... Our world is as a neighborhood. We must all learn to live together as brothers, or we will all perish as fools. There are two challenges to America. The challenges are racism and poverty. In a few weeks a few of us are coming to Washington to see if the will to meet those challenges still lives among us. We're not coming to engage in any historic action. We are not coming to tear up Washington. We are coming to engage in dramatic non-violent action. We are coming, and we will stay as long as we have to. We will suffer and die if we have to. For I submit, nothing will be done until people put their bodies and soul into this ..."

The old Black woman sitting at the back of the room wiped tears from her eyes and with shaking hands she wrote the following note to herself: "The Prince of Peace will never die." April 3, 1968, Memphis, Tennessee.

On April 4, 1968, it was Springtime throughout the South. Winetime. Springtime. Seed planting time. Family time. School time. Nice like sugar and spice wrapped around thoughts of fun and sun and rhythmic



January 15, 1929 — April 4, 1968



chants of precious things.

"I love you in the summer. I love you in the fall. I love you, love you, knock knees and all."

But on this day in Memphis, Tennessee love had taken a holiday and was replaced by the sounds of BOOM! BOOM! the tragic sounds of a southern afternoon. Gray skies. Black smoke and screams of "Oh, God, No! Somebody done shot Dr. Martin Luther King dead. Done shot the brother in the head! It happened so quick — like the lightning's flash.

... In a little white church sitting on a Louisiana hillside a Black preacher bowed his head to sing and pray. He had just heard the news and couldn't stop his body from shaking like a storm blown tree. He had intended his prayer to say, "God forgive them for they know not what they just did," but other words poured from his mouth.

"They crucified our King and he never said a mumblin word. They nailed him to the tree and he never said a mumblin word. Not a word. Not a word. They pierced him in the side and he never said a mumblin word. The blood came twinklin down and he never said a mumblin word ..."

In another part of the south, a loud chant could be heard. "Free at last, free at last, we thank God he's free at last. On this day bright and fair, Martin gon meet

our Jesus way up in the middle of the air. We thank God he's free at last ..."

The skies over America turned black. Sounds turned silent, except for willows that weeped and fish that swam upstream, confused about why the rivers were starting to boil. A Black mother, on her way to a grocery store in Franklinton, Louisiana, stopped in the middle of the street and began to scream at the pavement.

"Right now, I vision God standing on the heights of heaven, throwing the killer of our King like a burning torch over the gulf into the valleys of hell. I vision God wringing a storm from the heavens; rocking the killer's soul like an earthquake, blazing his eyes with a trail of fire! I vision God snatching the killer's heart out of its socket ..."

... Snap, crackle and pop went the buildings as they buckled from the heat of the fire that raged across America on this day. And riding ontop of the fires was the voice of Martin — speaking loud and clear.

"Every now and then I guess we all think realistically about the day when we will be victimized with what is life's final common denominator — that something we call death.

"If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don't want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell him not to talk too long ... I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others. I want you to say that I tried to be right on the war question. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. I want you to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked. I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. And I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity ..."

On that day, April 4, 1968, I felt rage. I felt hatred. My insides were

Lenora Fulani, Ph.D.: Presidential Candidate

Lenora Fulani, Ph.D., is an independent candidate for President in the 1988 general election. She is an Executive Board member and the national spokesperson of the New Alliance Party — the only nationwide progressive electoral party. She is seeking the nomination of the party, which is committed to running an independent Black Presidential candidate in all 50 states and the District of Columbia in the general election of 1988.

The only Black woman to ever run for Governor of New York State, her 1986 independent gubernatorial run made front-page headlines when she refused to repudiate Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan. She garnered 25,000 votes, more than any independent progressive for that office in over 30 years.

Fulani is known as the "Independent Mayor of Harlem" in recognition of her 1985 independent Mayoral campaign in New York City.

A developmental psychologist who practices in Harlem, she is the Director of the Community Clinic of the Institute for Social Therapy and Research, an independent community-based medical and mental health network.

An activist in the Baptist Church during her youth in Chester, Pennsylvania, Fulani, now 38, graduated from Hofstra University. Receiving her M.A. in Education Psychology from Columbia University Teacher's College,



LENORA FULANI, Ph.D.

1988 Independent Presidential Candidate

she went on to get her Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the City University of New York in 1984, with a focus on theories of cognitive development in children.

Fulani has taught at numerous colleges in the New York City

metropolitan area and was a guest investigator at Rockefeller University. In 1983, she founded the Jackson/Luxemborg School at the Institute for Social Therapy and Research.

She currently lives in Manhattan with her two children.

burning from the presence of anger and frustration. I no longer felt the need to care, to be loving, to be kind, to be understanding and as I stood on a Louisiana street corner holding a book of strike-anywhere matches in my hand, an elderly Black woman put her arm around my shoulders and whispered gently, "I know you loved Dr. King. We all did. We're all hurting. And, we all would like to show our anger in a violent way, but do you remember what the good King said? He said one day we've got to sit down at the table of brotherhood, and when we truly believe in the sacredness of the human personality, we won't exploit people, we won't trample over people with the iron fist of oppression, we won't kill anybody. If you strike that match and set fire to anything, you may kill somebody. If you do strike that match, you just might be setting fire to Dr. King's dream."

This story took place 20 years ago, but I remember it as if it happened yesterday. I was a young man approaching age 23. Now at almost 43 years of age and with two beautiful sons of my own, "I believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies; education and culture for their minds; and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits."

I owe much of my strength, courage, and dreams to Dr. King and I shall always honor, remember and be appreciative of him — A Black Prince of Peace. His eyes: the lightning's flash. His voice: the thunder's roll.

Julius Evans Named DBE/EEO Officer for Tri-Met

Tri-Met has named Julius Evans its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/Equal Employment Opportunity (DBE/EEO) Officer. Evans, who began work with Tri-Met on March 21st, is charged with setting DBE/EEO goals and ensuring Tri-Met's compliance with federal DBE and EEO requirements.

Prior to hiring Evans, Tri-Met consolidated two agency functions — assisting and certifying minority- and women-owned businesses and guaranteeing non-discrimination in hiring and promotion policies — into a single job description as part of administrative streamlining.

"Tri-Met is fortunate to acquire Evans with his decade of experience at high levels of federal and state government to help us continue the agency's outstanding record of contracting with disadvantaged businesses and promoting equal employment opportunities," said Executive Director of Public Services Doug Capps.

Evans came to Tri-Met from the Civil Rights Division of the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries in Portland where he was a senior civil rights field representative. He worked in the Bureau after serving as a staff assistant in the Governor's Affirmative Action Office.

Before that, he managed the technical and administrative aspects of employment discrimina-



tion investigations for Nero and Associates of Portland in the firm's contract with the federal Department of Agriculture.

Evans also probed employment discrimination complaints in the Washington, D.C. area for the federal General Services Administration and for the Omega Group, Inc. which handled EEO complaints for federal agencies.

Evans, a Washington, D.C. native, resides in S.W. Portland and holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Clark College in Atlanta. He attended North Carolina Central University School of Law.