

# **Laundering Black Rage**

The Washing of Black Death,  
People, Property, and Profits

**Too Black and Rasul A. Mowatt**

First published 2024

ISBN: 978-1-032-59282-4 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-57377-9 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-45398-7 (ebk)

**6**

## **Laundering a Massacre**

From Black Wall Street to  
Black Capitalism

*Too Black and Rasul A. Mowatt*

CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0

DOI: 10.1201/9781003453987-9

The Open Access version of Chapter 6 was funded by North Carolina State University.

## 6 Laundering a Massacre

### From Black Wall Street to Black Capitalism

*Too Black and Rasul A. Mowatt*

As word of what some would later call the ‘Negro uprising’ began to spread across the White community, groups of armed Whites began to gather at hastily-arranged meeting places, to discuss what to do next.<sup>1</sup>

– *Tulsa Race Riot: A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*

The popularized algorithm elevates passive Black suffering over Black militancy and resistance and thus has stymied the development of an algorithm of community-defense from violence of civilians or police.<sup>2</sup>

– Dr. Joy James, *In Pursuit of Revolutionary Love: Precarity, Power, Communities*

Black capitalism is still capitalism.<sup>3</sup>

– Terrell, *Black Myths Podcast*

Over 100 years ago on May 31, 1921, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, an angry White citizenry accused a Black 19-year-old shoeshiner, Dick Rowland of raping a 17-year-old White girl named Sarah Page after she was allegedly heard screaming on an elevator they both occupied. Of course, in historical context and fashion, a growing

1 The Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, *A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*, 2001, is the work of historian and other scholars, survivors, descendants of survivors, and community organizers that studied census data, newspaper accounts, and other material in situating the context of the Tulsa Massacre. This work began in 1997 was officially sanctioned by the state legislature of Oklahoma and presented several recommendations from its study of the massacre and its resulting effects.

2 Joy James, *In Pursuit of Revolutionary Love: Precarity, Power, Communities* (Brussels, BE: Divided Publishing, 2022).

3 Too Black, Terrell Alexander, Kam Lyons, and Ryan Mills [Hosts]. Myth: Black Wall Street Was Self-Sustaining, *The Black Myths Podcast*, May 27, 2021. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/myth-black-wall-street-was-self-sustaining-the-black/id1504205689?i=1000523152767>

White citizenry's initial impulse was to lynch the young Rowland or as the *Tulsa Tribune* put it at the time, "Nab Negro for Attacking Girl in Elevator".<sup>4</sup> But after a small group of Black men, many of which were World War I veterans, sped downtown to the courthouse "armed with rifles and shotguns" to defend Rowland's life, one lone lynching could no longer quench the cravings of the bloodthirsty White mob. Instead, these Black men's audacity to defend their own would serve as mouth-watering fodder for the White citizenry to feast on the entire neighborhood district of Greenwood—the largest Black section of Tulsa. Soon, rumors of a "Negro Uprising" spread rapidly across the city.<sup>5</sup> Now, some White citizens located at the courthouse where Rowland was being held anxiously ran to their homes—grabbing a mixture of guns and liquor to gear up for the counter-offensive. Black community defense had become even more intolerable than a fabricated rape. These Black men had to be reminded of their place.

When roughly 75 Black men arrived downtown a second time to confront the organized White citizens, shots rang out and all the hell that had already broken loose began to inflame farther out. Next, White volunteers were being sworn in by Tulsa police as "special deputies" with orders to "get a gun, and get a nigger".<sup>6</sup> Outnumbered 20–1, the Black men retreated back to segregated Greenwood as the organized group of White citizens was frantically chasing behind them. Despite the oncoming onslaught, the Black citizens of Greenwood were able to fight off some of the murderous Whites, but the organized White group of vigilantes and deputized citizens returned by the next morning growing even more frightening in numbers. They surrounded the neighborhood from nearly every entry point. Then, upon the signal of a whistle, the collective White group violently charged into Greenwood to put a final end to the "Negro Uprising". Homes and businesses were looted, families were torn apart, residents were thrown in concentration camps, elders were executed—life as it was known was demolished. Once the ashes cleared, 1,256 homes and nearly 191 Black businesses were destroyed, and roughly 300 people (likely more) were dead<sup>7</sup> (see Figures 6.1–6.3).

One hundred plus years since these 18 hours of State-sanctioned White barbarism occurred, agents of the State have steadily worked to delete this massacre from scribing its crimson pages into the books of American history. Journalists were suppressed from publishing it, teachers were discouraged from teaching it, and government workers were blocked from acknowledging it. Still, as history shows, bloodstains prove difficult to remove. Through the hard work of those same journalists, survivors, historians, lawyers, etc. the stains of the massacre were never completely scrubbed clean. Instead, the stains were refurbished to clean the crimes of the State. What has materialized from the embers is a flatlined narrative that emphasizes what was destroyed over who was destroyed.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

# TULSA'S TERRIBLE TALE IS TOLD

SCENES OF DEVASTATED TULSA, AND BLACK CROSS NURSES WHO VOLUNTEERED AID



Photographs of ruined homes in the wake of the Tulsa race riot. Eye-witness declare that in the city of Tulsa there has not been left standing a building saved by members of our Race. Center photograph is a Chicago group of Marine Gunnery's Black Cross Nurses who immediately volunteered to minister to the riot victims.

### RIISING FROM RUINS, TULSA TO REMOVE MAYOR

Say Possible Destruction of Life and Property, Way To Go, Nihilism.

TULSA, Okla., June 11.—Following a night of riotous destruction and the death of several lives, Tulsa is now a scene of utter desolation. The city is a mass of ruins, and the people are in a state of panic. The city is a mass of ruins, and the people are in a state of panic. The city is a mass of ruins, and the people are in a state of panic.

### Chicago Men's Father Held

Among them held in connection with the Chicago race riot.

### Noted Doctor Killed

Dr. A. J. Johnson, one of the most noted physicians of the country, was killed in the Tulsa race riot.

### EMPTY STOMACH, HURRY, BROCK, PORK CROPS, BULLETS

Black farmers, with an empty stomach, and of the very best quality, are being killed in the Tulsa race riot.

### Many Women Wounded

Many women were wounded in the Tulsa race riot.

### CLAIM 'BIB MISTAKE' STARTED TULSA RIOT

Tulsa, Okla., June 11.—A claim that a 'bib mistake' started the Tulsa race riot is being made by some of the rioters.

### 2nd Ward Clings To Thompson's Sinking Ship

The 2nd ward of Tulsa is clinging to the sinking ship of the city.

### Y. M. C. A. CAMP SCENE OF NEAR RACE RIOT

A scene of a near race riot was witnessed at the Y. M. C. A. camp in Tulsa.

### PEACEMAKER GETS WORST OF FIGHT

A peacemaker who tried to stop the Tulsa race riot got the worst of the fight.

### LAWMAKER SLAYS URBANED MAN 'TO RESCUE FIVE'

A lawmaker who slayed an urbaned man to rescue five people is being investigated.

### SHIRKING DUTY

Some men are shirking their duty in the Tulsa race riot.

### ONLY 2 MORE WEEKS OF WHIP AUTO RACE

Only two more weeks of the Tulsa auto race are left.

### Campaign Spending Up On House Struggle—Last Chance June 18

A campaign is being spent up on the House struggle, with a last chance on June 18.

### RALPH TYLER, FAMOUS SCRIBE IS DEAD

Ralph Tyler, a famous scribe, is dead.

### CON MEN WORK IN SHADOW OF POLICE STATION

Con men are working in the shadow of the police station.

### ARRIVES Monday, Commits Murder Tuesday, Flees

A man arrives Monday, commits murder Tuesday, and flees.

### SOLVE YOUR OWN PROBLEM—HARDING

Solve your own problem, Harding.

### KILLSMAN WHO THREATENS TO MURDER HER

A killsman who threatens to murder her is being investigated.

### THO DYING, STICKS TO DISCREDITED TALE OF ATTACK

Though dying, a man sticks to his discredited tale of attack.

### SCORES DEAD, MILLIONS LOST IN PUEBLO FLOOD

Scores dead, millions lost in the Pueblo flood.

### BARDING, HARBORING TULSA HOMELESS, PLEADS FOR PUEBLO DUTIES

Barding, harboring Tulsa homeless, pleads for Pueblo duties.

### 14-Yr-Old Son's Testimony Dramatic Incident

A 14-year-old son's testimony is a dramatic incident.

### Counties Legislature Wile

The counties legislature is wile.

### SHIRKING DUTY

Some men are shirking their duty.

### SCORES DEAD, MILLIONS LOST IN PUEBLO FLOOD

Scores dead, millions lost in the Pueblo flood.

### BARDING, HARBORING TULSA HOMELESS, PLEADS FOR PUEBLO DUTIES

Barding, harboring Tulsa homeless, pleads for Pueblo duties.

### WASHINGTON, June 11.—

Washington, June 11.—

### 14-Yr-Old Son's Testimony Dramatic Incident

A 14-year-old son's testimony is a dramatic incident.

### Counties Legislature Wile

The counties legislature is wile.

### SHIRKING DUTY

Some men are shirking their duty.

### SCORES DEAD, MILLIONS LOST IN PUEBLO FLOOD

Scores dead, millions lost in the Pueblo flood.

### BARDING, HARBORING TULSA HOMELESS, PLEADS FOR PUEBLO DUTIES

Barding, harboring Tulsa homeless, pleads for Pueblo duties.

### WASHINGTON, June 11.—

Washington, June 11.—

### 14-Yr-Old Son's Testimony Dramatic Incident

A 14-year-old son's testimony is a dramatic incident.

### Counties Legislature Wile

The counties legislature is wile.

### SHIRKING DUTY

Some men are shirking their duty.

### SCORES DEAD, MILLIONS LOST IN PUEBLO FLOOD

Scores dead, millions lost in the Pueblo flood.

### BARDING, HARBORING TULSA HOMELESS, PLEADS FOR PUEBLO DUTIES

Barding, harboring Tulsa homeless, pleads for Pueblo duties.

### WASHINGTON, June 11.—

Washington, June 11.—

Figure 6.1 The front page of The Chicago Whip, noting the national breadth of the coverage and aid work by members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association's Black Cross Nurses, June 11, 1921 (The Library of Congress).



*Figure 6.2* Entrance to “refugee camp” on the State Fair Grounds in Tulsa, Oklahoma, after the riot of White violence, June 1, 1921 (Library of Congress).



*Figure 6.3* The photograph depicts an armed Caucasian man in overall looking at the camera. Three other individuals pillage through a trunk and other personal belongings. One boy has a book and other items in his hand. The back of the photograph contains a handwritten notation stating, “Proud of his pilfering. Race pride far astray”, 1921 (Courtesy of Tulsa Historical Society & Museum).

## The Search for Black Wealth

Following the economic crash of 2008 in which Black household wealth dropped by 53 percent as a consequence, there was an increasing focus on the plight of Black wealth in America.<sup>8</sup> Scholars such as Edward E. Baptist in *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014),<sup>9</sup> Richard Rothstein in *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (2017), and Mehrsa Baradaran in *The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap* (2017) historically documented how from slavery to banking to housing,<sup>10</sup> Black people in the United States had been used as capital and thereafter locked out of the process of accumulating it as a collective.<sup>11</sup> modeling off the aforementioned works, beginning in 2019 the *New York Times Magazine* published *The 1619 project*, a curated collection of various authors and scholars chronicling the 400-year impact of slavery, Jim Crow, and the unjust policies of racial apartheid.<sup>12</sup> Prior to this, in 2014, author Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote the important essay “The Case for Reparations”,<sup>13</sup> that resuscitated the longstanding arguments and work on reparations by pioneers like Queen Mother Moore, the Republic of New Afrika, and N’COBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America) as well as unrelatedly inspired screenwriter Damon Lindelof’s 2019 HBO show, *The Watchmen*, an official sequel of the graphic novel 1986 *The Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave

8 Christopher Famighetti and Darrick Hamilton, “The Great Recession, Education, Race, and Homeownership”, *Economic Policy Institute*, May 15, 2019. <https://www.epi.org/blog/the-great-recession-education-race-and-homeownership/>.

9 Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014) comprehensively places slavery as vital to the development of capitalism in the United States (slaves as producers of capital and collateral for financing). While the study of this history is an ambitious undertaking, there are questions about the methods in the research and the oversight in understanding capitalism as an international system, even pre-20th century.

10 Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright, 2017), has reinvigorated public awareness of segregated housing beyond Jim Crow. Criticisms of this work have identified that far too much blame is levied on the federal government and policies, and not the involvement of every people in their capacities as bankers, real estate developers, land speculators, and property owners that aided or benefited from undervalued, subsistence housing.

11 Mehrsa Baradaran, *The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2017) charts the long history of the “racial wealth gap” that begins instantly during the era of Reconstruction and the role that Black banks of that era aided in this devaluing of homes, saved earnings, and questionable investments. As Baradaran noted, one can separate people but never their money since such currency works within an economic system.

12 The 1619 project is the title given to an ongoing effort by the New York Times through the curatorial leadership of Nikole Hannah Jones. A collection of essays, poetry, and podcast episodes represented the initial work that begins in 2019. Much of that collection was then published as a collected work entitled, *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* (London: One World/Random House, 2021).

13 Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations”, *The Atlantic*, 2014, as some consider a magnum opus in journalism and Coates’ writing due to its exceptional charting of 250 years of housing discrimination. It is also noted with inserting into the public consciousness what decades of Black thinkers and organizers had been studying and advocating for reparations.



*Figure 6.4* A shot from an episode of CBS’ *The Equalizer* in which Legacy McCall joins forces with Jessie Cook (Jada Pinkett Smith), a brilliant and unpredictable master thief, to recover a valuable painting stolen from a Black family during the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. The episode shows the widening use of the Tulsa Massacre in all forms of media (JoJo Whilden/CBS via Getty Images).

Gibbons.<sup>14</sup> Lindelof’s *The Watchmen*, based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was an alternative universe where the descendants of the Tulsa Massacre received reparations for the property damage of Greenwood and its acclaimed business district “Black Wall Street”. Although “Black Wall Street” had been known prior in Black communities through its own folklore, it was here that the story of its destruction was thrust into public awareness and popular imagination (see Figure 6.4).

National newspapers such as the *New York Times* and *The Washington Post* ran feature pieces covering the centrality of the “Black Wall Street” to the plot line,<sup>15</sup> and the viewers’ reaction to the first episode in which the massacre was depicted.<sup>16</sup> *The Atlantic* magazine published an online comic paid for by the HBO show illustrating the massacre proclaiming “Fifteen years of Black wealth and

14 Tonja Renée Stidhum, “How ‘The Case for Reparations’ by Ta-Nehisi Coates Inspired Damon Lindelof”, *The Root*, December 16, 2019. <https://www.theroot.com/how-the-case-for-reparations-by-ta-nehisi-coates-insp-1840457863>.

15 Jeremy Egner, “Who Will Watch ‘Watchmen’?”, *The New York Times*, October 16, 2019. <https://nyti.ms/2MiuMU2>.

16 DeNeen L. Brown, “HBO’s ‘Watchmen’ Depicts a Deadly Tulsa Race Massacre that was All Too Real”, *The Washington Post*, October 21, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/10/21/hbos-watchmen-depicts-tulsa-race-massacre-that-was-all-too-real-hundreds-died/>.

self-sufficiency were razed in one night”.<sup>17</sup> Prior to *The Watchmen*, much of White and non-Black citizens of the United States had not known about the massacre and/or were able to conveniently forget about it. Now, 98 years after the massacre, “Black Wall Street” was being promoted by a multinational network as a universal symbol of Black wealth that had been tragically destroyed by American racism.

While these broader developments were occurring, several Black-led efforts had been emerging with the proclamation of building Black wealth to combat police brutality. In 2015, the Nation of Islam launched the “Justice or Else” campaign to boycott Christmas shopping starting with Black Friday as a means to “Stop Feeding the Beast that has demonstrated a disregard for the lives of Black people”.<sup>18</sup> The belief was that a boycott would serve as an “economic sanction” for police killings. In 2017, Black Lives Matter Global Network partnered with the Black-owned bank, OneUnited, to support the #BankBlackChallenge by issuing a debit card for Black people to bank Black.<sup>19</sup> According to its adherents, banking Black is the idea of Black people depositing their money into Black-owned banks to generate Black economic power and investment in Black communities. In conjunction with the #BankBlackChallenge hashtag was #BackingBlackBusiness or #BuyBlack. Supposedly, to #BuyBlack is to support Black businesses with the same goal of building Black economic power and wealth as Black banking.<sup>20</sup> The proponents of these hashtags often use the celebrated memory of Black Wall Street as an inspired marketing ploy. For instance, OneUnited Bank refers to its checking accounts as “Black Wall Street Checking”.<sup>21</sup> They also encourage prospective clients to sign up for their debit card with the welcoming invite: “By spending more dollars with Black owned businesses, who are more likely to hire and locate in Black communities, we can build the new #BlackWallStreet”.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, in 2018, a group of Black entrepreneurs founded the “Tulsa Real Estate Fund” which is “an economic vehicle named in honor of Black Wall Street.”<sup>23, 24</sup>

For both the hashtag activists, Black financial evangelicals, and broader America, “Black Wall Street” has become a model of self-sustaining Black wealth, a Black American dream. It exemplifies the what if of Black people being

17 Natalie Chang, “The Massacre of Black Wall Street”, *The Atlantic*, 2019. Also includes the illustration work of Clayton Henry and colorists, Marcelo Maiolo, and was paid for by Watchmen on HBO. <https://www.theatlantic.com/sponsored/hbo-2019/the-massacre-of-black-wall-street/3217/>.

18 n.a., “Boycott Christmas”, *The Crusader Newspaper Group*, December 28, 2015. <https://chicagocrusader.com/boycott-christmas/>.

19 Breanna Edwards, “OneUnited Bank, Black Lives Matter Team Up to Organizer Black America’s Spending Power”, *The Root*, February 8, 2017. <https://www.theroot.com/oneunited-bank-black-lives-matter-team-up-to-organize-1792104750>.

20 Kelley D. Evans, “Buy Black Movement Gains International Attention”, *Andscape*, October 16, 2016. <https://andscape.com/features/buy-black-movement-gains-international-attention/>.

21 “Introducing the NEW Black Wall Street. Join Today”. OneUnited Bank. <https://www.oneunited.com/the-black-wall-street/>.

22 Ibid.

23 “About,” Tulsa Real Estate Fund, accessed December 21, 2023. <https://www.tulsarealestatefund.com/about-us/>.

24 Chenjerai Kumanyika, “Misremembering Black Wall Street and the Promotional Rhetoric of Capitalist Racial Repair,” essay, in *The Routledge Companion to Advertising and Promotional Culture*, 160–75, edited by Emily West and Matthew P. McAllister, New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2023.



*Figure 6.5* Tulsa race massacre survivors Lessie Benningfield Randle, left, Viola Fletcher, center, and Hughes Van Ellis Sr., right, receive checks for \$100,000 from the Justice for Greenwood organization, Saturday, May 29, 2021, in Tulsa, Oklahoma (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki).

historically given a fair chance to participate in capitalism. It is used as an inspiration for housing policy, Black economic independence, closing the titular racial wealth gap and even reparations (see Figure 6.5). But a closer examination of “Black Wall Street” questions whether it or the zombie Black capitalism it is used to promote is a model to be reproduced at all<sup>25</sup> (see Figure 6.6).

### A Utopia That Never Was

Allegedly coined “Negro Wall Street” by Booker T. Washington, what we now call “Black Wall Street” was the historic Black business area of the larger Greenwood district (but Washington’s coining is apocryphal). Posited within three to four

<sup>25</sup> Zombie capitalism is a term applied to the ways that the capitalist system has evolved to the point that governments have pumped enormous amounts of currency into society, thereby cheapening the value of that currency, while banks have loaned more money at lower interest rates than they will ever expect to get back, debtors that are business owners are forced to take out loans to pay off other existing loans, and investors are primarily investing in that debt; meanwhile, wages continue to be cut to offset a slide in profits and produce a mass of debtors to pump more money and assets into those dying banks. This crisis would normally bring an end to an economic system, but instead, there is still life and activity (due to government bailouts that pump more cash in, but not enough to end-erase debt obligations). In Chris Harman’s, *Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx* (Chicago, IL: Bookmarks, 2009).



*Figure 6.6* Map of Black Wall Street from the Encyclopædia Britannica that in many respects misleads a reader to think of it as a separate city or larger than what it was (Encyclopedia Britannica).

blocks of the 35-block Greenwood neighborhood, this business district, disparagingly referred to by Tulsa Whites as “Little Africa”,<sup>26</sup> was the home to a number of Black-owned enterprises including a 54-room hotel, a public library, two newspapers, a 750-seat theater, multiple cleaners, and two dozen grocery stores among more. Through these efforts, “Black Wall Street” produced a prosperous Black business class fancying “some of the city’s more elegant homes” and successful Black businesses in the country.<sup>27</sup>

Faced with only these cherry-picked facts alone, it’s entirely understandable why one would view and be enamored with “Black Wall Street” as a wealthy “self-sustaining” and growing Black utopia whose growth was violently interrupted by a jealous White vigilante “mob” as it’s popularly remembered today.<sup>28</sup> Although “Black Wall Street” certainly brought pride to the Black residents of Greenwood, that pride failed to translate to a prosperous economic status for most of the Black residents of Greenwood. A report by the American Association of Social Workers on the living conditions of Black folks in Tulsa at the time stated, “95% of the Negro residents in the Black belt lived in poorly constructed frame houses, without conveniences, and on streets which were unpaved and on which

26 The Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, *A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*, 2001.

27 Ibid.

28 Myth: Black Wall Street Was Self-Sustaining. *The Black Myths Podcast*. May 27, 2021.

the drainage was all surface”.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, most Greenwood residents were not only living in substandard housing but were employed outside of the Black-owned district of “Black Wall Street” according to the Oklahoma Commission study on the Tulsa Race Riot, “Despite the growing fame of its commercial district, the vast majority of Greenwood’s adults were neither business men nor business women, but *worked long hours, under trying conditions, for White employers* [emphasis added]”.<sup>30</sup>

This explains why on the day leading up to the massacre, Rowland was shoe-shining for a White employer that served White customers many blocks away. On that day, Rowland needed to use the bathroom but he was not allowed to relieve himself inside the building in which he worked because all the bathrooms were registered as “White only”.<sup>31</sup> Instead, he was forced to go to a nearby location (Drexel building) arranged by his White boss where “colored people” were permitted to use the bathroom. It was inside the Drexel building on the elevator heading up to the “colored bathroom” in which Rowland encountered Sara Paige—the 17-year-old white girl whose scream invited the formation of an initial White mob. If “Black Wall Street” had been the mythical “Wakanda” it is now acclaimed to be, it is fair to assume Rowland would have had a comfortable job in his own Black neighborhood shielded safely from the possibilities of White violence. Rather, most Black people such as Rowland were service workers in proxy to the far greater Tulsa oil industry controlled by White capital:

Largely barred from employment in both the oil industry and from most of Tulsa’s manufacturing facilities, these men and women toiled at difficult, often dirty, and generally menial jobs — the kinds that most Whites consider beneath them—as janitors and ditch-diggers, dish washers and maids, porters and day laborers, domestics and service workers. Unsung and largely forgotten, it was, nevertheless, their paychecks that built Greenwood, and their hard work that helped to build Tulsa.<sup>32</sup>

As the report makes distinctly clear, Tulsa and the Black freedom colony of Greenwood that is now coined as “Black Wall Street” were both consequences of de jure segregation. Segregation operated as a public policy purposely made to suppress Black wages for the benefit of White capital while simultaneously limiting where those suppressed wages could be spent—inadvertently creating a monopoly for the Black elite. Put differently, it was the super-exploitation of poor Black labor that facilitated both the function of the “Black Wall Street” District and Tulsa as a whole. Neither could have existed without the presence of poor and working-class Black

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.



Figure 6.7 The Black Dispatch Front Page, June 10, 1921 (Greenwood Cultural Center/Getty Images).

people. Yet, as historian Robin D.G. Kelley notes,<sup>33</sup> when the massacre was over, “it was the Black working class, the Black poor, who suffered the most. They didn’t have insurance and very, very few had the means to file suit or make claims” (see Figure 6.7). Kelley also discusses how “some of the wealthier Black folks owned between 10 and 20 houses each” including the above-mentioned homes that lacked functional plumbing and amenities.<sup>34</sup> This is far from the utopian legend that we have been led to believe. Greenwood suffered greatly from hyper-class stratification as did many segregated communities under capitalism. The city creates the divisions of labor that allow for White capital to get the biggest bang for its buck. Thus, Greenwood, the largest of several Black neighborhoods in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was effectively a domestic Black “colony” inside the city. It housed the largest Black labor force who left Greenwood every day to work the low-level service jobs that cooked and cleaned so White capital could continue extracting oil from the stolen ground. A Black business class who provided the basic essentials and leisure for

33 George Yancy, “Robin D. G. Kelley: The Tulsa Race Massacre Went Way Beyond ‘Black Wall Street’”, *Truthout*, June 1, 2021. <https://truthout.org/articles/robin-kelley-business-interests-fomented-tulsa-massacre-as-pretext-to-take-land/>.

34 Ibid.





*Figure 6.9* Members of a new Black Panther Party and other armed demonstrators rally in the Greenwood district during commemorations of the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre on May 29, 2021, in Tulsa, Oklahoma (Getty Images).

such a fantasy, it allows the State to redirect our Rage away from the conquerors who deny us the very independence and prosperity we claim to seek. Thus, myths such as “Black Wall Street” are necessary to build consensus among the conquered (see Figure 6.9).

### **Laundering Blackness**

As we discussed in Chapter 2, the State, as both the hegemonic “educator” and the collective “organizer”, normalizes the interests of White capital to appear as universal to all of our own interests. Unfettered wealth accumulation, no matter its destructive outcome, is presented as a positive as long as it appears that everyone has the freedom to participate. A similar process occurs intra-racially as efforts that primarily allow the Black elite to accumulate wealth are universalized as panaceas to the totality of Black life. Universalizing Blackness layers diverging Black interests together as if they are all the same. It allows Amazon to proclaim #BlackLivesMatter,<sup>35</sup> boost Black-owned businesses on its website, but crushes

35 Kari Paul, “Amazon Says, ‘Black Lives Matter’. But the Company Has Deep Ties to Policing”, *The Guardian*, June 9, 2020. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/technology/2020/jun/09/amazon-black-lives-matter-police-ring-jeff-bezos>.

the unions organized heavily by its Black workers without much criticism.<sup>36,37</sup> It allows the NBA to paint BLM on its hardwoods, highlight Black businesses during the NBA finals but pay dirt low wages to its predominantly Black temp workers who work the games as security, ushers, ticker takers, custodians, and concession workers, while maintaining all the fanfare of a socially just sports league.<sup>38,39</sup> Universalizing Blackness layers the narcissistic Rage with the militant Rage by laundering the desires of masses to uplift the interests and ambitions of a few. Yet, it is largely the propaganda of a universal Blackness that convinces the masses to pour their Rage into efforts that exploit it.

In the summer of 2020 following the police murder of George Floyd, while police precincts became bonfires, people were searching for solutions to their Rage. According to Google Trends, the search item “Black Wall Street”<sup>40</sup> received more Google searches than ever before. The same is true for the cousin search items of “Black business”<sup>41</sup> and “We buy Black”.<sup>42</sup> These terms received the highest hits in predominantly Black metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, GA, and Washington, DC.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile on Yelp, the crowdsource business review application “searches for Black-owned businesses were up 2,400% in 2020, compared to 2019, and review mentions were up 232% for the same time period”.<sup>44</sup> The rapid uptick in searches corresponded to a 2021 Pew study revealing that roughly six in ten Black people in America found “Supporting Black businesses (“buying Black”)” as an “Extremely/Very effective” solution “for helping Black people move toward equality in the U.S.”<sup>45</sup> According to the study, buying Black ranked above “volunteering” and “protesting” only trailing voting as the most “extremely/very effective” solution.<sup>46</sup> This boost in Black business interests can also be attributed to White

36 “Support Black Entrepreneurs on Amazon”, *Amazon*. <https://www.amazon.com/b?ie=UTF8&node=21382093011>.

37 Dave Jamieson, “How Amazon Crushed the Union Effort in Alabama”, *HuffPost*, April 13, 2021. [https://www.google.com/amp/s/m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us\\_60746e5ce4b01e304234929d/amp](https://www.google.com/amp/s/m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_60746e5ce4b01e304234929d/amp).

38 Terry Shropshire, NBA and ESPN to Highlight Black-Owned Businesses During NBA Finals, *Rollingout*, October 5, 2020. <https://rollingout.com/2020/10/05/nba-and-espn-to-highlight-black-owned-businesses-during-nba-finals/>.

39 John Barr, “Thousands of Stadium Workers Not Covered by Pledges of Financial Support From Athletes, Teams”, *ESPN*, April 20, 2020. [www.espn.com/espn/story/\\_/id/29073065/thousands-stadium-workers-sidelined-coronavirus-pandemic%3fplatform=amp](http://www.espn.com/espn/story/_/id/29073065/thousands-stadium-workers-sidelined-coronavirus-pandemic%3fplatform=amp).

40 <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=US&q=Black%20Wall%20Street>.

41 <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=US&q=Black%20Business>.

42 <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=US&q=We%20buy%20Black&hl=en>.

43 *Ibid*.

44 Brenae Leary, “Yelp Names Black-Owned Businesses to Watch in 2021”, *Yelp*, January 28, 2021. <https://blog.yelp.com/news/yelp-names-black-owned-businesses-to-watch-in-2021/>.

45 Rebecca Leppert, “A Look at Black-Owned Business in the U.S.”, *Pew Research Center*, February 21, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/02/21/a-look-at-black-owned-businesses-in-the-u-s/>.

46 Jens Manuel Krogstad and Kiana Cox, “For Black History Month, A Look at What Black Americans Say is Needed to Overcome Racial Inequality”, *Pew Research Institute*, January 20, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/01/20/for-black-history-month-a-look-at-what-black-americans-say-is-needed-to-overcome-racial-inequality/>.

liberals who, in their minds, viewed supporting Black businesses as a form of “allyship”, racial justice or a means to cop out of both. As a result, wealth generation becomes the solution for the lethality of the State.

Of the \$50 billion promised for “racial justice” by the top 50 corporations we discussed in Chapter 1, \$47 billion was earmarked toward economic means. The Biden White House announced plans to “Build Black Wealth and Narrow the Racial Wealth Gap” naming Black Wall Street as its primary example of what Black wealth could have become.<sup>47</sup> Following the trend, Atlanta-based hip-hop MC Killer Mike and *Grey’s Anatomy* actor Jesse Williams, raising 40 million dollars from predatory banking institutions including JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, and Truist,<sup>48</sup> founded the Greenwood Banking app, “inspired by the early 1900’s Greenwood District, where recirculation of Black wealth occurred all day, every day, and where Black businesses thrived”.<sup>49</sup> Despite the constant usage of the coined term “Black Wall Street”, each sector conveniently fails to discuss the flagrant Black poverty in the “1900’s Greenwood District” that actually existed to make that wealth a reality and thus would be what they claim to want to recreate (intentionally or not). To highlight such a contradiction would collapse their entire business model and disrupt the laundering process.

The solutions collected from the trash heap following George Floyd’s murder mirror the myth of “Black Wall Street”. They proclaim to represent the entire Black population but primarily serve the Black elite and the State that bribes them. They are successful for similar reasons that capitalism is successful because they offer the hope of a better life to the masses. Whether this better life is achieved is irrelevant; what matters is the possibility, and the Black elite serve as role models for the possibility. “Black Wall Street” is their city on the hill—representing all the false hopes of their class. With this false hope as a commodity, what the Black elite help produce is what Frantz Fanon called a “class of affranchised slaves, or slaves who are individually free”.<sup>50</sup> The strategy is to liberate individual Blacks from the worst trappings of racism—police murders, stop and frisk, incarceration, poverty, homelessness, etc.—through wealth building efforts that catapult a chosen few into the their shared class status. In short, their goal is to buy the next George Floyd out of a chokehold. The approach is analogous to teaching a slave how to buy their freedom from their master while never abolishing slavery as an institution. These efforts to produce more affranchised slaves whether it be through Black business,

47 “Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Action to Build Black Wealth and Narrow the Racial Wealth Gap”, June 1, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/01/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-new-actions-to-build-black-wealth-and-narrow-the-racial-wealth-gap/>.

48 Chauncey Alcorn, “Killer Mike’s Greenwood Banking Platform Raises Nearly \$40 Million in Series A Funding”, *CNN*, March 25, 2021. <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/03/25/investing/killer-mike-greenwood-40-million/index.html>.

49 “How Dollars Circulate in Black Communities”, January 25, 2021, <https://bankgreenwood.com/how-dollars-circulate-in-black-communities/>.

50 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin, 1963), 60.

Black banking, or the overall framework of closing the titular racial wealth gap are at best movements to redistribute bribes more equitably. But they offer no serious challenge to the rule of White capital.

Consider Black business: according to US census data, there are 3.12 million Black-owned businesses in the United States, but only 4% have employees.<sup>51</sup> Of the over 3 million Black businesses, they generated \$206 billion in revenue in 2020.<sup>52</sup> That only accounts for 0.3% of all US business revenue (dropping from 1% decades prior).<sup>53</sup> As a comparison, according to Statista Walmart generated \$523.96 billion alone in revenue in 2020,<sup>54</sup> meaning Walmart generated more revenue as one single business than all 3 million plus Black businesses combined. Furthermore, most Black people are workers (or flat-out unemployed). We are not celebrities, influencers, nor business owners. Most are regular people trying to make ends meet, usually working for stingy employers who barely pay us enough to make those ends meet. This was true during the time of “Black Wall Street” and still rings true today. So why place so much emphasis on business when our power lies in our labor?

Consider banking: according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp (FDIC), as of 2020 there were 18 Black-owned banks.<sup>55</sup> They held combined assets totaling \$4.58 billion. That’s less than 0.03% of all American banking assets.<sup>56</sup> As a comparison, JP Morgan Chase has nearly 4 trillion in assets according to Macrotrends.<sup>57</sup> Bank of America is at 3 trillion in assets. Even with all 145 minority-owned banks taken together, they only have approximately \$329 billion in assets in total.<sup>58</sup> These gargantuan monopolies are not because a mythical Black dollar does not circulate or because so-called minorities fail to support each other. Monopolies are enabled by wealth accumulation, which is all a result of conquest—the original source of the capitalist State.

51 Adan Grundy and Lynda Lee, “Black History Month: Census Bureau Looks at Nation’s Black-Owned Business”, February 22, 2022. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2022/02/increase-in-number-of-united-states-black-owned-businesses-between-2017-and-2019.html>.

52 <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/annual-business-survey-characteristics.html>.

53 Dedrick Asante-Muhammad, Jared Ball, Jamie Buell and Joshua Devine, “Black Entrepreneurship’s Lethal Pre-Existing Condition: The Racial Wealth Divide During the COVID Crisis”, *National Community Reinvestment Coalition*, April 6, 2021. <https://ncrc.org/black-entrepreneurships-lethal-pre-existing-condition-the-racial-wealth-divide-during-the-covid-crisis/>.

54 “Revenue of Walmart Worldwide from Fiscal Year 2012 to 2023”, *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/555334/total-revenue-of-walmart-worldwide/>.

55 Jeffrey McKinney, “Looking Back at the History of America’s Black Banks, Even as They Strive for Vitality”, *Black Enterprise*, August 30, 2019. <https://www.blackenterprise.com/black-banks-struggle/>.

56 Dion Rabouin, “The Myth of Closing the Racial Wealth Gap through Black-Owned Banks”, *Axios*, July 1, 2020. <https://www.axios.com/2020/07/01/black-owned-banks-racial-wealth-gap>.

57 “JPMorgan Chase Market Cap 2010–2023”, *Macrotrends*. <https://www.macrotrends.net/stocks/charts/JPM/jpmorgan-chase/market-cap>.

58 “Minority Depository Institutions Program”, *FDIC*. <https://www.fdic.gov/regulations/resources/minority/mdi.html>.

Nebulous phrases like the “racial wealth gap” or “income inequality” fail to capture this phenomenon when gaps and inequality are built into the nature of capital; they are a fundamental part of capitalism. There is no equal distribution of conquests, and so there is no equal distribution of wealth (from that conquest). Conquest is not a gap, but it’s a top-down relationship—between the conqueror and the conquered, the slave and the master, the colonizer and colonized, the oppressor and the oppressed, the ruling class and the ruled, and the owner and the worker. The inequality of this relationship cannot be “narrowed” or “closed” when it is a part of the order of things and that order of things is grounded on the basis of domination.

When a people are conquered, the pain and suffering imposed by the conquest transmutes into raw materials that bleed from the soil of the stolen land. Hence, their Rage emerges as a resource to be refined by the State. Thus, the Black Rage embodied by the Black men who intervened to save Rowland from becoming hanging tree bark or the Black poor who subsidized “Black Wall Street” are now reduced to intellectual property, raw materials for the refinement of Black capitalism.

### **A Massacre without Capital**

The belief that private property is all liberating allows the Tulsa massacre to be cleaned for the ahistorical claims of today. In the first quarter of the 20th century, there were large scores of race riots and massacres in US cities in which many Black people fought and died. Yet not a single riot or massacre in recent memory has garnered more public attention and been appropriated for more laundering causes than the Tulsa Massacre. Unlike most incidents of White terror, the Tulsa Massacre is portrayed as having ingredients of both hope and despair. “Black Wall Street” was the hope of a wealthy Black community that could have been fulfilled, and the massacre was the despair that it defaulted. Other massacres of the time do not allow us to be swayed by the same delusion.

The Elaine Massacre, occurring two years prior during the bloody Red Summer of 1919, had similar ingredients to Tulsa such as the resultant death and injury of hundreds of Black people for defending each other (respectively, 300 potential deaths according to a commission report for Tulsa and 237 confirmed deaths in Elaine).<sup>59</sup> But the difference here is that this was a story of Black sharecroppers, not rich Black business owners, meeting peacefully as the Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America on the night of September 30, 1919, in Elaine, Arkansas, to discuss how they could recover better payments from the racist White landowners for the cotton they had picked for them.<sup>60</sup> This meeting, held inside a local church, was disrupted when three White men arrived and began harassing the Blackguards surrounding the building. Similar to Tulsa, an exchange broke out

59 Ida B. Wells-Barnett, “The Arkansas Race Riot”, at the North Illinois University Digital Library. <https://digital.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-gildedage%3A24320>.

60 Ibid.

that led to the death of a White security officer and an injury to a deputy sheriff. In response, an organized group of 1,000 White men was assembled, newspapers including *The New York Times* spread false reports of a “Planned Massacre of Whites Today”,<sup>61</sup> and Black people were attacked and slaughtered in the 100s by the White mob on a crusade to put down the “uprising”. Once the governor called in federal troops, another 285 Black people were arrested and placed in stockades until their employers could identify them. Some were tortured. The next day, the *New York Times* claimed the “Trouble Traced to Socialist Agitators” implying the fabricated Black insurrection was because of the madness of communism and the White socialists made them do it.<sup>62</sup> This red-baiting disinformation was met to cover up the murder of at least 237 Black people during the massacre with some numbers as high as 856 killed.<sup>63</sup>

## Conclusion

Both Elaine and Tulsa were terrible tragedies that do not need to compete over which memory was the worst horror. Unfortunately, the class character of Black memory will rank their importance. How we remember and what we choose to emphasize from historical memory is *layered* with the interests of the Black elite (see Figures 6.10 and 6.11). Elaine does not represent the aspirations of living comfortably in American life, neither does it reflect the Black-owned utopia we yearn to occupy. However, to perform the same level of fixation on the Elaine massacre as is done with the myth of “Black Wall Street” would focus our efforts on organizing community self-defense along organizing the labor in which most of us are already engaged in daily vs. the Black businesses that barely employ any of us. It’s no accident why certain aspirations receive promotion while police step on our necks and employers garnish our wages. For the Black elite, to stand in true solidarity with the Black poor would be to starve the White hand of the cheap labor that feeds them both. As it follows, to fully embrace community defense is to not only starve the White hand but to bite it off.

Although deeply imperfect, Black unionization challenges White capital at levels Black entrepreneurship could never by the sheer numbers of Black workers. A historical accounting of most race riots and lynchings of Black people shows they were a means for White capital to control Black labor (seizure of property, instill fear of collective action, and acceptance of an existing inferior social order).

61 n.a., “Planned Massacre of Whites Today; Negroes Seized in Arkansas Riots Confess to Widespread Plot among Them Had Password For Rising and a ‘Paul Revere’ Courier System--School House an Ammunition Depot”, *The New York Times*, October 6, 1919. <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1919/10/06/118161202.html?pageNumber=1>.

62 n.a., “Six More Are Killed in Arkansas Riots; Governor Brough and Boston Chaplain Have Narrow Escapes from Bullets. 4 Negro Brothers Shot One Had Killed Alderman Guarding Them--Trouble Traced to Socialist Agitators”, *The New York Times*, October 3, 1919. <https://nyti.ms/1GUhpNV>.

63 Robert Whitaker, “On the Lap of Gods: The Red Summer of 1919 and the Struggle for Justice Hat Remade a Nation”, *Zinn Education Project*, 2009. <https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/on-the-laps-of-gods/>.



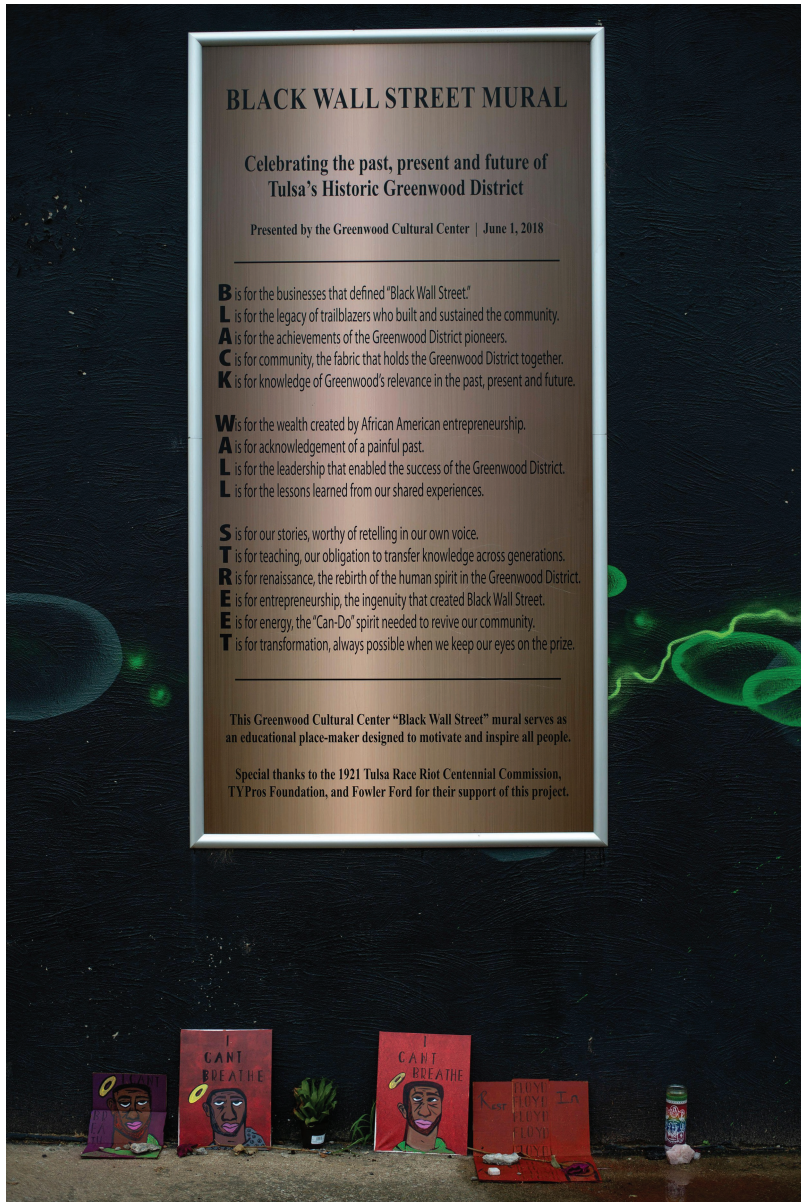
*Figure 6.10* In this Monday, June 15, 2020, file photo, a sign marks the intersection of Greenwood Avenue and Archer Street, the former home of Black Wall Street, in Tulsa, Okla. Black community leaders in Tulsa said they fear a large rally by the 45th President in the city this weekend could spark violence, and the State’s governor asked the President not to visit the site of a race massacre where up to 300 Black residents were killed by White mobs in 1921 (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki).

Here, the Rage of poor Whites was used to launder Black Rage into the grave in return for jobs from White capital. Black labor, when organized for class struggle, snatches the purse strings of White capital; Black capitalism fills the purse and returns it back unblemished. Capitalism needs our Black labor to be weak. Thus, poor disenfranchised Black people serve multiple functions: a disposable labor force for capital, a dead funding source for laundering Black Rage, and a reminder to the Black elite and their aspirants of what to not become or remain. Laundering would be unsuccessful without these functions.

Black capitalism redeems the State and all the crimes it was built to protect. It cleans our Rage while making us feel empowered. Today, building on a similar logic, Black Rage and suffering in America are promoted as a badge of honor—a “justice claim” made because “we built this country”. Black people are “the Soul of the Nation”<sup>64</sup> who “saved American democracy”.<sup>65</sup> The 46th President, in his speech for the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre, leveraged this foe Black

64 n.a., “ABC News’ 6-part ‘Soul of a Nation’ to Highlight Black Experience in America”, *ABC News 7*, march 2, 2021. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/abc7.com/amp/soul-of-a-nation-abc-newsmagazine-jemele-hill-marsai-martin/10330261/>.

65 Nikole Hannah-Jones, “Our Democracy’s Founding Ideals Were False When They Were Written. Black Americans Have Fought to Make Them True”, *The New York Times Magazine*, August 14, 2019. <https://nyti.ms/2OUT4ae>.



*Figure 6.11* June 19, 2020, Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA: a small memorial for George Floyd was set up below a placard at the Black Wall Street Mural in the Greenwood district during the annual Juneteenth celebration on Friday. The Juneteenth celebration in the historic Greenwood district of Tulsa, Oklahoma, home of America's Black Wall Street, marks 155 years since the Emancipation Proclamation reached Texas, freeing the last enslaved people in America more than two years after it was signed. The Tulsa race massacre occurred in the Greenwood district in 1921 and is called the single worst incident of racial violence (ZUMA Press/Alamy Photos).



Figure 6.12 US President Joe Biden silently prays during a moment of silence during commemorations of the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre on June 01, 2021, in Tulsa, Oklahoma (Brandon Bell/Getty Images).

patriotism to bolster the empire, “we should know the good, the bad, everything (see Figure 6.12). That is what great nations do. They come to terms. With their dark side. We are a great nation”.<sup>66</sup> Only in America can a nation be “great” for acknowledging a single massacre 100 years later with no reparations to show. The bloodshed of the past is cleaned to redeem the present.

Lastly, as co-founder of the Black Panther Party Dr. Huey Newton reminded us, Black capitalism “has come to mean to many people Black control of another one of the institutions in the community”.<sup>67</sup> Although Black capitalism is certainly not community control at all, we must recognize the positive and negative aspects of the things that capture Black Rage. For Black capitalists who use their surplus to fund projects that can help reverse-launder our dispossession, we welcome it. Still, the affranchised slaves ultimately have to burn down the plantation, not build wealth inside of it.

66 “President Biden Remarks on 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre”, *C-Span*, June 1, 2021. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?512210-1/president-biden-delivers-remarks-1921-tulsa-race-massacre#>.

67 “Black Capitalism Re-Analyzed I: June 5th, 1971” in *The Huey P. Newton Reader* ed. David Hilliard and Donald Weise pg 229 David Hilliard and Donald Weise (New York: Seven Stories Press First Edition, 2002), 229.

**Bibliography**

- Ball, Alverne. *Across the Tracks: Remembering Greenwood, Black Wall Street, and the Tulsa Race Massacre*. New York: Abrams ComicArts, 2021.
- Baptist, Edward E. *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 2014.
- Baradaran, Mehrsa. *The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2017.
- Bonaparte, Robert. *Black Wall Street Historic Picture Book and The Commission Report*. Seattle, WA: Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2019.
- Brophy, Alfred L. *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Charles Rivers Editors. *The Tulsa Massacre of 1921: The Controversial History and Legacy of America's Worst Race Riot*. Chicago, IL: Independent, 2020.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations". *The Atlantic*, 2014.
- Colbert, Brandy. *Black Birds in the Sky: The Story and Legacy of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre*. New York: Balzer, 2021.
- Davis, Kyle, Megan Swann and Benjamin Wheeler. *How to Build a New Black Wall Street*. South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.
- Ellsworth, Scott. *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.
- Ellsworth, Scott. *The Ground Breaking: The Tulsa Race Massacre and an American City's Search for Justice*. London: Icon Books, 2021.
- Gates, Eddie Faye. *Riot on Greenwood: The Total Destruction of Black Wall Street, 1921*. Fort Worth, TX: Sunbelt Eakin Press, 2003.
- Gerkin, Steve. *Hidden History of Tulsa*. Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014.
- Hannah-Jones, Nikole. *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*. London: One World/Random House, 2021.
- Harman, Chris. *Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx*. Chicago, IL: Bookmarks, 2009.
- Hill, Karlos K. *The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre: A Photographic History*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021.
- Hirsch, James S. *Riot and Remembrance: The Tulsa Race War and Its Legacy*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2002.
- James, Joy. *In Pursuit of Revolutionary Love: Precarity, Power, Communities*. Brussels, BE: Divided Publishing, 2022.
- Johnson, Hannibal B. *Black Wall Street: From Riot to Renaissance in Tulsa's Historic Greenwood District*. Fort Worth, TX: Eakin Press, 1998.
- Johnson, Hannibal B. *Tulsa's Historic Greenwood District*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014.
- Johnson, Hannibal B. *Black Wall Street 100: An American City Grapples with Its Historical Racial Trauma*. Fort Worth, TX: Eakin Press, 2020.
- Krehbiel, Randy. *Tulsa, 1921: Reporting a Massacre*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019.
- Laughlin, Kara L. *The Tulsa Race Massacre*. Parker, CO: Childs World, 2021.
- Luckerson, Victor. *Built from the Fire: The Epic Story of Tulsa's Greenwood District, America's Black Wall Street*. Manhattan, NY: Random House, 2023.
- Madigan, Tim. *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2003.

- Matthews, Kevin L. *From Burning to Blueprint: Rebuilding Black Wall Street After a Century of Silence*. Austin, TX: Building Bread, 2021.
- Messer, Chris M. *The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre: Crafting a Legacy*. Berlin, DE: Springer Nature, 2021.
- Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. *A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*. Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. 2001. <https://www.okhistory.org/research/forms/freport.pdf>
- River, Charles. *Black Wall Street and the Tulsa Race Massacre: The Creation and Destruction of America's Wealthiest African American Neighborhood*. Seattle, WA: Amazon Digital Services LLC, 2020.
- Rothstein, Richard. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. New York: Liveright, 2017.
- Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, 2021.
- Williams, Matthew. *The Tulsa Massacre of 1921: The Worst Race Riot in American History*. Chicago, IL: Independent, 2020.
- Young, R.J. *Requiem for the Massacre: A Black History on the Conflict, Hope, and Fallout of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2021.