

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF AUDIO FILES FOR ATIM GEORGE DISSERTATION

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A. George Y'All Pray

I do not have her metrics. I cannot tell you when she was born. I do not know if she ever 'married' or could read and write. I do not even know where she was born, how many children she had or how long she lived. But I do know that the blood that flows through my veins contains the genetic material of the courageous wise woman whose name I may never know. She was my great-great-paternal grandmother. She was a woman held in bondage under the heinous system of chattel slavery. A system that refused to acknowledge her humanity, respect her human dignity or protect her basic human rights. This woman's bravery and foresight inspire me today. Let me tell you her story.

In my mind's eye, I envision a beautiful young woman in her mid-twenties sheltering her two young sons close to her body. She had just weaned her baby; he was barely two years old. Indeed, she used all the ingenuity and yes cunning at her disposal to prolong breastfeeding in the hope that she could protect him from the brutality that awaited him. His older brother, my great-grandfather, was only four years old yet he sensed his mother's apprehension. She seemed to carry the weight of world on her shoulders. Nevertheless, she embraced them in her warm and loving arms and for that instant - all was well. The sense of contentment and security faded swiftly as a coldhearted outsider, clothed in the comfort of ignorance, arrogance and avarice, approached the trio. Before he wrenched the two little ones from her loving embrace, my great-great-grandmother summoned the strength to utter two words of instruction to them 'ya'll pray'.

Ya'll pray. That, in my view, is a simple yet profound illustration of genius. Crafting a message of wisdom and love, of action and reflection, she commended her sons to the Divine. Short, sweet and efficacious 'ya'll pray' was easy enough for her little

ones to remember traumatized though they were by the ordeal of being sold on an auction block in Richmond, Virginia – they were sacrificed on the altar of bigotry and greed. My great-grandfather and his brother committed these words to memory and planted them, like precious seeds, deep within the fertile soil of their hearts. These two words bequeathed to my family a legacy of faith and action that would sustain us through the adversity of bondage, sharecropping, poverty, Jim Crow, and unprovoked racial animosity. Prayer invokes the Divine and implies that she who appropriates its power can affect change. As the great-great granddaughter of this remarkable woman, I have always known that faith is an indispensable, renewable resource at my disposal. The most compelling definition of faith I know is found in the book of Hebrews (11:1), “now faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.”

No wonder my great-great-grandmother equipped her sons with this mystical resource that would engage both their hearts and minds. They would need faith in full measure in their quest to contend with the forces of domination and exploitation that engulfed them. The forces of greed and bigotry that ripped our family apart also rigidly proscribed my ancestors' ability to exercise their fundamental human right to self-determination. These forces limited their access to quality education, health care, housing and the fruits of their labor. But the dislocation I describe here involved more than just my family. Millions of Africans were subjected to the dehumanizing degradation of chattel slavery in antebellum America for hundreds of years. This is, in part, what makes the African American struggle to reclaim our human rights such a remarkable quest.

My great-great-grandmother inhabits my heart and mind to this day because she transcended her socially ascribed status as victim to become an actor, able to affect change, however small or incremental. Indeed, I see her as a master teacher who acted within the confines of her limited sphere of influence to bestow upon her children and the succeeding generations this potent instrument to meet life's challenges. She uttered these words to my great-grandfather in the 19th century. My beloved paternal grandmother Lessie shared this instruction with me in the 20th century and I have been assigned the sacred duty of carrying this message into the 21st century.

As I grapple with the distortions and disruptions caused by chattel slavery, Jim Crow segregation, poverty and the climate crisis, I am making a conscious decision to begin with the guidance of my great-great-grandmother. Y'all Pray. Her compelling story is the foundation of my leadership philosophy and practice. Indeed, my beloved great-great-grandmother is an example of courage and creativity in the face of overwhelming odds and I am proud to embrace her legacy – Ya'll Pray – as my own. (6:35)

A. Brazeal, Interview 1

Atim George (AG): Good afternoon. My name is Atim George. I'm a doctoral student at the Antioch University Graduate School of Leadership and Change, and today – Tuesday, September 18, 2018 – I'm in the home of Ambassador Aurelia Brazeal to begin

the study of her life, her leadership philosophy and practice. Ambassador Brazeal would you say a few words as we begin this interview?

Aurelia Brazeal(AB): Well, happy to participate in your dissertation and so we'll see where we go from here. I'm interested in the questions you have to ask.

AG: Thank you so much. Actually I'm very curious about your family of origin and your early beginnings and I'm hoping that, today, we could explore that, talk about your parents, your sister, your early life and I basically want to listen. You have the floor madam.

AB: Oh. Okay, well, my mother was Ernestine Vivien Erskine Brazeal. My father Brailsford Reese Brazeal from Dublin Georgia. My sister is Ernestine Walton Brazeal and I am Aurelia Brazeal . . . (pause due to external noise) . . . Okay, my mother was from Jackson, Mississippi. My father was from Dublin, Georgia. They met in college. We don't know . . . They never shared with my sister and myself very much about our family history. Black people didn't talk about a lot of things, which is unfortunate, in hindsight. So, I'm not sure. We don't have . . . I haven't done a family chart because it's difficult to find information, in part.

I know my father's father was minister. My mother's father was a stonemason and, I think, an American Indian, but I'm not sure what . . . we've heard everything from Creek to Cherokee to Blackfoot. So it's hard to know what he was, except, he was a supposedly, a full-blooded American Indian. So that sort of takes care of what I know about my ancestors. I never met my mother's father. He had died before I was born. I met my grandmother on my mother's side. And I never met my father's parents because they both had passed as well by the time I was born.

The names I mentioned were important. My sister's name, Ernestine Walton Brazeal, is . . . she's named after my mother. Her middle name, Walton, was the first name of my father's mother. And then, of course, Brazeal. I'm Aurelia Erskine. And so, Aurelia was my grandmother's name on my mother's side, and Erskine was her married name, or my mother's maiden name. So, in a sense, the names were given to keep in the family. (3:30)

A. Brazeal, Interview 2

AG: Good morning, Ambassador Brazeal.

AB: Good morning, Atim, and congratulations on finishing your dissertation.

AG: Thank you.

AB: I'm honored that I was the subject for it. So thank you very much. I just wanted to say, as an addendum to what we've done, that we live in a world that's divided now and knowing that there are divisions, we have to recognize that there are also bridges. Diplomats are the people who are designed to build those bridges, find those bridges, cultivate the people who will keep those bridges together so that people can come together. I wanted to make a pitch in a way for young people to consider becoming a diplomat for their country.

For me, it was the highest honor I could think of and I enjoyed myself in doing that work for 40 years. I think it brought a degree of self-awareness to me and I encourage other people to work on that, building that self-awareness so that you know how you can build those bridges to other people.

Everyone blooms at a different time. I think people should be as gentle with themselves as they possibly can be, but find something they like to do. If you enjoy what you're doing, it's really a reward in itself. You're not there for the greed or for the money or for the accolades, but you're there because you know you're doing important work. I think that's what I hope people can find in themselves to build those bridges that we're going to need as a country going forward from 2019.

AG: Rea, thank you so much. I appreciate your wisdom and your insight.

AB: Thank you. (2:24)

A. Fernandes Interview

My first encounter with her was when I was an entry level officer, a junior officer, in the Foreign Service. And this was, I think, about two years into my career, I was looking for people to talk to who had more experience, obviously, in the Foreign Service about assignments and promotions and just how to be a good Foreign Service Officer. And so I had joined the Thursday Luncheon Group and she was an active participant in the TLG.

And so that's, I think, part of how I got to know her a little bit versus I knew of her, because she was considered a very senior person in the early 2000s and went on to obviously great things. But I . . . that was the first time I had a chance to talk with her and then set up, I think, a coffee or a chance to just talk with her about her career and tell her a little bit about my interests, my goals in the Foreign Service, and just kind of learn from her about what she thinks are some of the keys to success in the Foreign Service.

And since that time—I think, about 2002—we just kept in touch. At different times in my career when I was looking at assignments, where I needed help with my evaluation, employee evaluation or I was facing a struggle with a supervisor or trying to better understand, you know, what next things I needed to do career wise to make myself look promotable, I would reach out to her and ask, “what do you think about this assignment?”

Now, early on, my first assignment was in China. And so, she had been somewhat of a EAP, or East Asia Pacific person. She's also an economic officer. In the Foreign Service, there are very few African American Economic Officers and so she was one of very few group of folks. And then, particularly, interested in Asia. I think she had been the Economic (Minister) Counselor in Tokyo during her career. And so, that was another area that I was always asking her about, is how to be a better Economic Officer and some of the career paths that economic officers or assignments that economic officers take to best prepare them for more senior leadership. (2:12)

B. Goldbeck Interview

I'm a retired I worked for Ambassador Brazeal in Addis Ababa from 2003 to 2005. And, so, My first year there, from roughly August of 2003 to about October of 2005, I was the Econ Political Section Chief. And then my second year, there she pulled me upstairs—the EP section was in the basement—to serve as her acting DCM for the duration of the period that her former DCM vacated. Basically . . . I did kind of two

different jobs over two different years, but it gave me, in a sense, some different angles of perspective with respect to Ambassador Brazeal.

And I guess I would just say from the start that I see kind of four major achievements that I attribute to her success, her hard work. The first one was the prevention of a second war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The one that happened before cost about 200,000 lives between the two sides of mostly 14- to 18-year-old boys. Preventing that war was really quite an achievement. I think she had a very instrumental role in that function.

The second one was the tamping down of ethnic cleansing in the southwest region adjacent to Darfur. That also, I think, was a major achievement. In a sense, I think, she really helped formulate a way to help the parties come out of that problem.

A third one relates to the election violence following the May 2005 elections in which both parties claimed a majority. There were a couple of hundred deaths and several hundred woundings and several thousand people were moved away from the capital for rural incarceration or re-education, as the saying goes.

The fourth one is kind of an unusual one because in her capacity as ambassador in Addis Ababa, she is also wearing ambassadorial hats for two other organizations that are co-located there—the African Union and also the United Nation’s Economic Commission for Africa, ECA. So, she was triple-hatted, in a sense, although those two functions really took up not very much time, at least initially in my time there. (2:17)

T. Hull Interview

I had an excellent time with Ambassador Brazeal and I learned a lot from her because of her extensive experience. She had served twice before as an ambassador. She had held all sorts of important positions related to leadership training in the State Department. So I learned quite a bit from her. And I was always impressed by her great intellect. It was a pleasure to work with her. She was consistently a strategic thinker and that was always her mantra; think strategically.

I served the function for her of taking on some of the managerial aspects of the embassy so she could concentrate on the political and the economic side. And I was also the interface with the rest of the embassy for her and spent a lot of time—because there was, frankly, some people in the embassy who did not grasp what she was about. So I’d spend a lot of time simply explaining what the ambassador wanted to people, which I found a bit bizarre because what she said was always very clear to me. That being the case, she was always thinking. She always took responsibility, which was very important and I appreciated it as deputy chief of mission. Because she recognized her responsibilities as chief of mission.

And we had some really difficult issues that we had to deal with at that time. We were trying to get the Ethiopians to implement the peace treaty they had signed with Eritrea, which they had deep second thoughts about. We had the civil war going on in Sudan and we had lots of refugees come over the border, both from Sudan and from Somalia, which was another neighbor in turmoil in the region. So, Ethiopia was very much a center of stability in a difficult area in the horn of Africa. (2:28)

J. Ingati Interview

J Ingati (JI): When I came here, I was still young. And . . . During the time I came here, it's like when we came here, she never looked at me as staff. She looked at me as [00:05:00] a family member. So In all the days, it was like . . . we worked as a team. And after her mom died – who's my grandmother and I cherish her a lot to this day – she told, she told me after that going back -- I had a feeling of her as my mother. Because the way she conducted herself, the way she took care of me, when I'm sick, she's always seeking to see how she can . . . she took me to the doctors, anything I wanted. And that's how my feeling was she was not like a boss. Because even from the beginning, she never treated me like a servant or anything. She just treated me as part of the family. And that's how it developed to when her mom died.

AG: What year was that?

Jl: It was . . .My grandmother died in 2002. It was August 4th. I remember I was lost. I felt lost at that time. I remember we were driving, because we had gone to stay in an apartment around Watergate because we were starting to . . .we were going to Ethiopia for our next post, and I was crying a lot. Back then, I didn't know why I was crying. And she just looked at me and she asked, "Are you depressed or what's going on?" I just told her: I don't know. Because I didn't know. I was just lost and crying a lot because I had lost someone, my best friend, my companion. (2:34)

L. Palmer Interview

You could not have picked, as far as I'm concerned, a better exemplar than Ambassador Brazeal. And ... First of all, I feel honored and privileged that you've asked me to do this because I spent nine months almost daily with Ambassador Brazeal. I was a member of the 41st Senior Seminar of which she was the dean. And, the fact that she was chosen dean is a tribute to her because the Senior Seminar is the U.S. government highest program of leadership and management training.

We had 15 Foreign Service Officers who were senior Foreign Service Officers. Those persons who were predicted to hold roles of leadership, to be ambassadors, principal officers around the world. Not only that, they had 15 Foreign Service Officers and 15 Senior Executive Service Officers from the other agencies in Washington. We had senior members of the FBI. We had an Army colonel, a Navy captain, a Marine colonel and an Air Force colonel. We had senior representatives of our intelligence agencies. We had senior executives from Justice, from FBI, any number, from Agriculture.

There were 30 very senior employees who were all predicted to be future leaders of government and Ambassador Brazeal was the person chosen to (a), lead them and take us through nine months of almost daily interaction in the interest of bettering the United States government. She did a great job. (2:09)

R. Reis Interview

One of her strengths is working with other people and dealing easily with people that she had to deal with and that would have meant people in the Foreign Ministry, to a lesser extent, people in the Ministry of International Trade and Industry in Tokyo.

She dealt well with the US aviation industry with whom there were – long complicated story – but basically, there were ongoing . . . there was a constant effort by US Airlines to expand their service to Japan, which had been defined in an agreement from the 50s or 60s, I can't remember when, 50s, I think, and it had never been amended in any substantial way. So, the airlines were constantly trying to use that agreement, to use what was in the agreement, which was limiting, to try to expand their service. She had to know an awful lot about airlines and, I mean, their interests and what the agreement provided. And She had to deal with these people on a day-to-day basis because you had representatives in Tokyo . . . I mean at the time, there were only four US airlines that were permitted to serve Japan. One was Northwest, the other one was Pan American, the third was a cargo carrier, Flying Tigers, and the fourth was Continental Airlines, which had served not the continental United States, but ran flights from Tokyo to Saipan in Micronesia, which the US administered and also Guam, which was, is a US territory. They ran those things. She dealt with all of those people and periodically, there'd be delegations coming from the States. You know, she dealt with the local representatives.

The problem was we never until much, much, much later -- I'm trying to think when that was – oh, it wasn't that much later – I think it was . . . I think it was either '86 or '87. So, when I was on the Japan Desk, we were able to get an agreement with Japan that expanded service. But, I mean, for a period of 15 years or more, including, the period when Rea was in Tokyo to work on aviation, there were efforts, but no successful efforts to expand service between the United States and Japan on the airlines. Because the Japanese carriers didn't think they were competitive, and they didn't think that they would win out. (2:47)

L. Thomas-Greenfield Interview

When I came into the Foreign Service, Rea Brazeal was already in the Senior Foreign Service. So, given our hierarchical system, I saw her as this kind of person way up at the top who was unapproachable, or, at least, in my mind she was unapproachable. And I'd seen her in the hallways, but she was always approachable.

I finally went to Kenya in 1993 and she was the ambassador there. And I got to work with her up-close and personal. I got to know her as a person, know her as a leader, and eventually, know her as a friend, because that was the kind of personality that she had. She was very serious when it came to the functions of her office and the functions of her job, but she was also someone who knew that in order to get the best out of her people, she needed to engage with them. And so I got to, again, know her as a person and really appreciated learning from her and having her as a mentor at that stage in my career. (1:16)

H. Thompson Interview

But she explained economic work to me in such a way that it transformed how I viewed it. She said, "Well, kind of forget the charts and the figures and the quantitative and the qualitative. All of that is fine. It's part of it. But what we do at the Department really comes down to answering one question; who gets what and why? Who gets to be considered? Who gets to be thought about? Who gets to be assisted, and why? So if everybody at the table, when these decisions are being made, only cares about country X or country Y, and you're like, 'hey, what about country Z because they have stuff, too?' If there's no one there advocating for country Z, country Z is not even going to come up. It won't even be contemplated."

She said, "Everyone has issues that they care about. And of course, some of what we do is driven by what is necessary. If there is a war or a famine or an outbreak, we must - we're duty-bound to respond to that. But a lot of what we do doesn't come about because of some animating incident in the world. It comes about because people have shaped an agenda. And over years and time, they have formed coalitions to push forward issues. And then those issues are the ones that tend to rise to the top." And we see that all the time. Some countries get \$40 billion in aid. Some countries barely even get their name mentioned.

And, we all understand, as professionals in this business, that U.S. strategic concerns and considerations are paramount. Like for us, we represent the U.S. Government, so of course, we never want to do anything that's going to harm our country. And we want to do the most to help maximize opportunities and build relationships that are going to eventually benefit the country and the people in the country. But not all of what we do is driven by that. And she helped me understand that from day one.

So, when I went into meetings and I listened to the kinds of arguments that people make, and we have a lot of very persuasive, very smart people. So when they say things, when they make their assertions, it's done in such an eloquent and forceful way that you, the listener, who hadn't been Brazealized would be like, "Oh okay, I got it. That makes perfect sense. Let's just accept that and go with it." But I think she always felt empowered to offer a counter-narrative. And she was meticulous enough and smart enough to make sure that that argument was cogent and it answered the questions that were required. (2:53)