

**UCLA**

**UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations**

**Title**

Marie Hill and Her Intimate Terror: An Examination of Intimate Violence and the Disposal of Black Girls, Women, and their Insurgency in Carceral Spheres

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7bh4m8cf>

**Author**

Duncan, Erica Nichole

**Publication Date**

2017

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Marie Hill and Her Intimate Terror: An Examination of Intimate Violence and the Disposal of  
Black Girls, Women, and their Insurgency in Carceral Spheres

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts  
in African American Studies

by

Erica Nichole Duncan

2017

© Copyright by  
Erica Nichole Duncan  
2017

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Marie Hill and Her Intimate Terror: An Examination of Intimate Violence and the Disposal of  
Black Girls, Women, and their Insurgency in Carceral Spheres

by

Erica Nichole Duncan

Master of Arts in African American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Sarah Haley, Chair

This project aims to disrupt understandings of intimate violence as something that is secluded to the private or personal sphere, and instead, demonstrates that intimate violence and state violence cannot be disentangled. They are violences that are mutually constitutive. By using a black feminist framework and centering the complex life of a young black woman named Marie Hill during the 1960s and 1970s who was arrested and sentenced to death by the time she was 17-years old, Hill's life unveils that the intimate familial violence that she experienced prior to her incarceration continuously converged with carceral state violences. Hill's life represents a larger process where the convergence of these violences produced a system of intimate state terror. This terror immobilizes and alienates black girls and women from institutions of care and protection, and this alienation facilitates their disposability into carceral spheres.

This thesis of Erica Nichole Duncan is approved.

Aisha K. Finch

Robin D.G. Kelley

Sarah Haley, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Marie Hill and Her Intimate Terror: An Examination of Intimate Violence and the Disposal of  
Black Girls, Women, and their Insurgency in Carceral Spheres

Introduction: Disrupting the Distorted and Disfigured Histories of Black Girls and Women..... 1

Chapter 1: Intimate Carceral Brandings of Black Girlhood.....19

Chapter 2: The Trial: State Spectacle and Legitimizing of Deviant Intimacies.....46

Chapter 3: Prison: Imaginations of the Domestic and Intimate State Violence.....71

Conclusion: ‘Will there be even no words for Marie Hill?’ .....97

Bibliography.....102

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to begin these acknowledgements by thanking my committee. Sarah Haley, Aisha Finch, and Robin Kelley continue to inspire my work with their scholarship, words, kindness, and advice. After two years at UCLA, I believe I've become a stronger scholar because of them, and I have no doubt that I will continue to be inspired by them. They reflect the African American Studies faculty and staff at UCLA, and in some way or manner, the faculty and staff that I have had the pleasure to take a course with or simply had a brief conversation with, have influenced this project in some manner. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Graduate Opportunity Fellowship Program. Thank you!

I would also like to thank my undergraduate departments at UC Berkeley, the Department of African American Studies and the Department of Ethnic Studies. It was in these spaces of both scholarship and activism that I was inspired by the stories of black and radical women. I especially want to thank Professor Ula Taylor for always providing honest but kind advice over the years. Thank you!

I also need to thank three women who have continued to be spectacular and amazing friends, Ashley Shatola, Cydni Baker, and Kaya Vyas. I do not think you all understand how much our random texts, calls, and visits to each other in the past two years have helped me keep perspective on what's important. Thank you!

Finally, I cannot express enough gratitude and love for my mom, dad, and brother. Thank you for being a constant source of love, inspiration, support, and dealing with my quirks since birth. Thank you and love you!

## Introduction:

### **Disrupting the Distorted and Disfigured Histories of Black Girls and Women**

Dear Mr. Clerk,

I write you this letter on the [sic] behalf of my case. The reason I am writing to you is because you helped me before. I have wrote my lawyer Friday and told him I don't want him to appeal my case anymore. I want to go ahead and start serving on this life sentence now. I have been confined again. I am locked up like I have been the past two years and eleven months and I can't stand to be lock up like I was before [...] Thank you write soon.

– Marie Hill, September 9, 1972<sup>1</sup>

In 1972, the Supreme Court of the United States debated the constitutionality of capital punishment. Organizations like the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, and Julius Chambers and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's North Carolina chapter organized on behalf of incarcerated black and poor people to overturn death sentences and unjust trials. Among the defendants was a young black woman named Marie Hill from Rocky Mount, North Carolina. However, while these institutions and various organizations debated the life and death treatment of disenfranchised people, Marie Hill sat trapped behind bars. Caged in solitary confinement for two years and eleven months since 1969, Marie Hill addressed the letter quoted above to the clerk of North Carolina's Supreme Court in hopes that someone would deliver an update on her case. Although her legal defense team had been able to reduce her capital punishment sentence to a life sentence in 1971, this letter reveals how little she knew about the case that choreographed her life's movements. Life outside those prison walls continued to move while Marie Hill endured the inhumane conditions of solitary confinement. Her only human contact was with the prison guards who surveilled and monitored her every move.

---

<sup>1</sup> Marie Hill, Letter to the North Carolina Supreme Clerk, dated September 9, 1972 (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina)



The excerpt from the above letter reveals a young woman pleading with the state to end her torture and allow her to at least live out the rest of her life with some form of connection besides the guards. This letter captures Marie Hill's pleas for intimacy.<sup>2</sup> This glimpse into the desires of Marie Hill is brief yet significant because, in her letter to the clerk, we see a young woman who no longer wanted to appeal her case but had become resigned to a life behind bars as long as she was no longer subject to the torture of solitary confinement. However, Marie Hill's pleas for social interaction did not begin with the violent torture inflicted by North Carolina's prison system. Instead, her desires for freedom outside of this form of violent state alienation was built within a larger narrative of a life constructed from the mutually constitutive convergence of intimate and state violence. The culmination of this violent web would erupt in 1968.

On October 25, 1968, two police officers arrested Marie Hill for the murder and the robbery of a white storekeeper named W.E. Strum. Without legal representation and possibly intoxicated, Marie confessed to murdering Strum. Although Hill would eventually recant her confession and her public defender would question the validity of the confession as evidence during her first trial, Marie Hill's efforts to defend her life were not enough. On December 19, 1968, an all-male jury convicted Marie Hill of first-degree murder, and because the jury did not recommend an alternative sentence to capital punishment, the state of North Carolina condemned 17-year old Marie Hill to the gas chamber. Although public attention to Marie Hill's life and

---

<sup>2</sup> Marie Hill was sent a responding letter back from Julius Chambers and the Clerk informing her that she had begun serving her life sentence term May 26, 1972, four months prior to when she sent this initial correspondence. This correspondence indicates that even during Marie Hill's appeal when she had acquired better trained attorneys and more resources to support her legal defense, the state continuously kept Marie isolated from key information and the progress of her case and life decisions. Marie Hill's lack of choice and isolation during her first trial in 1968 and subsequent imprisonment in solitary confinement are explored more in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

case began at her trial, the violence and the infrastructures of state violence inflicted upon her began prior to her sitting in that courtroom and prison. In fact, the violence that culminated and eventually erupted into the state's persecution of Hill for the murder of the white storefront keeper, and her subsequent imprisonment, was a process facilitated by the intertwined webs of intimate and state violence that continuously alienated, immobilized, and isolated Marie Hill. It was a process that fostered the conditions of the carceral state inflicting what Ruth Wilson Gilmore calls "premature death"<sup>3</sup> via a gendered racialized state violence.

By centering the life of Marie Hill, this project intends to disrupt the notion that violence within the domestic or private sphere is isolated from the state and state violence. In fact, the containment and disposal of Marie Hill was an active and ongoing state project. Her life demonstrates that the intimate<sup>4</sup> violence she experienced prior to her formal incarceration was facilitated by the state in order to support its political and economic orders; the long and intimate carceral state terror that preceded Marie Hill's caging in North Carolina's Correctional Center for Women created the foundation for the state to inflict further state violence and captivity. In an historic moment of changing racialized and gendered ideologies, as well as the abandonment of state infrastructures, Marie Hill's life demonstrates how the state merged old and emerging ideologies about black girlhood, womanhood, and intimacy to justify her dispossession from

---

<sup>3</sup> Ruth Wilson Gilmore defines racism as, "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death." Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 28.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that when deploying the term intimacy, I am moving beyond the hegemonic liberal notion of intimacy, and expanding upon Beth Richie's black feminist framework of intimacy, which she outlines as, "(a) a historical or episodic feelings of intimacy, connectedness, or dependency, even if they are not current or reciprocal; (b) the social perception by outsiders that the individuals form some type of intimate unit, even if it is not a fully positive one; and (c) the routine access of the partners to each other's physical and, to some extent, emotional space." Beth E. Richie, *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation*. (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 137.

spheres of protection, care, and citizenship.<sup>5</sup> In return, this dispossession sustained the ongoing surveillance, exploitation, and disposability of black women and black girls into carceral spheres. Situated in a time when the state was intent on suppressing any form of black resistance, Marie Hill's life and the violence she experienced transformed her from a 17-year old black girl from a small southern community and into a political prisoner. The violences of black girlhood constituted carceral spheres, and in return these carceral spheres constituted an ongoing intimate violence that continued the state disposal of black girls and women. To demonstrate this, each subsequent chapter will center on the life of Marie Hill, her intimate relationships, and the other women who surrounded her to demonstrate this long carceral terror.

These chapters will use interviews in African American newspapers that continued to chronicle Marie Hill's life up until her death sentence was commuted to life. Although limited, these interviews allow a glimpse into Marie Hill's narrative of intimate state terror. In these interviews Hill bravely clues her audience in to the intimate state violence that shaped her adolescence. The trial testimony from Marie Hill's court trial in 1968 is another archival source that will be utilized to understand the violences that shaped Marie Hill's life. However, while the trial testimony and other state archives are useful sources to uncover these violences, the state's documentation of black women's and girl's bodies must be understood as also part of this political project. These state archives acted as a state technology that helped facilitate the violent

---

<sup>5</sup> The changing racial and gendered ideologies and state orders that I am identifying is the emergence of neoliberalism—a capital and state response to crisis that emerged post-World War II. Historically, the emergence of neoliberalism can be situated as a period when anti-imperialist, anti-racist, and other liberation movements emerged globally and challenged gendered and racialized hierarchies of exclusion, as well as, a shift from a welfare state supported through military Keynesianism to a global 'free market.' To manage and maintain gendered and racialized hierarchies and capital orders, neoliberalism produced new logics to support racialized and gendered logics that continued to support the marginalization, exploitation, and dispossession of certain communities when de jure discrimination was no longer socially acceptable.

process of isolating, alienating, and dispossessing black women and girls like Marie Hill. In order to more fully dissect and disrupt these archival violences, it is imperative to understand the ways in which archives can reaffirm and inflict state violence against black women.

In Marisa Fuentes' *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*, Fuentes' methodological approach studying the lives of enslaved Barbadian women becomes particularly useful. Fuentes found that in researching and narrating the social history of enslaved Caribbean women whose lives were often short-lived and literacy was denied, the British Caribbean archive only provided a fragmented body. The distortions and disfiguration of black women's bodies were inherent in the archive, and as a result Fuentes only found a fragmented history.<sup>6</sup> The violent technologies that they experienced in their everyday lives reduced them to documents of sale, purchase, criminality and death, and the archive facilitated the objectification and fragmentation of black women. This violent objectification avowed their disposal when their labor was no longer profitable, and in return the archive rendered these enslaved black women silent and invisible. However, in these fragmented histories, Fuentes suggests "reading along the bias grain to eke out extinguished and invisible but no less historically important lives."<sup>7</sup>

"Reading along the bias grain" requires identifying systems of patriarchal White supremacy that are intended to render black women into distorted and monstrous figures. It also requires disrupting those biases and fragmentations that reproduce violence against black women and girls. Thus, this project intends to read along the bias grain and to disrupt the archival violences that pushed Marie Hill into carceral spheres. These violences in the archive are most

---

<sup>6</sup> Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

notably located in the state archival sources, including Marie Hill's coerced confession and the trial testimony in her court trial. The confession and testimonies recorded by the state occurred in an environment intent on fragmenting Marie Hill's personhood into a criminalized figure. These state archives acted as an objectification tool that constructed Marie Hill into an illegible figure that could be alienated from spheres of protection, and as a result, this state documentation of Marie Hill's life continued the process of violating her body. Therefore, the testimony provided and coerced from state agents will be read against the grain. It will attempt to disrupt the historical fragmentation that attempted to break Marie Hill.

Finally, this project will use the literature produced by both the organizations that fought to save Marie Hill's life and the lives of other incarcerated women. Angela Davis and the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression continued to remember Marie Hill's name even several years after her sentence was reduced to a life sentence and she published literature on the broader structural and systematic forms of oppression that shaped North Carolina's state terror.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, while Marie Hill remained imprisoned, revolutions and rebellions were being led by black and other colonized peoples in the United States and global South, including behind the walls of the prison that Marie Hill was being caged. In 1974, when the women at North Carolina Correctional Center for Women led a rebellion against the torturous prison conditions, a few of these imprisoned women produced a book titled, *Break de Chains of Legalized U.S. Slavery*. Despite there being no indication that Marie Hill knew these women, their experiences are intertwined because they all experienced the violence of the carceral state. While this project can never claim to know every detail of Marie Hill's life, it will

---

<sup>8</sup> National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, *North Carolina: Laboratory for Racism and Repression* (New York: National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, 1975).

attempt to fully imagine Marie Hill and black women in all of their complexities. Thus, utilizing black feminist theories and black feminist epistemologies, each chapter of this thesis will attempt to narrate the full complexities black girlhood, black womanhood, and the mutually constitutive relationship between the intimate and the state violence.

Chapter One focuses on the violent intricacies of Marie Hill's life prior to her incarceration. The first systems of violence that entangled and trapped Marie Hill were rooted in the violent hauntings of past carceral regimes that constructed the racial and gendered infrastructures of power in Rocky Mount. These state infrastructures would eventually mesh with the sexual violence that her foster father wreaked on her body. These violent hauntings and the intimate violence that Marie Hill experienced at home constructed a web of violence that produced an intimate carceral branding that would mark her body. This branding and web of violence was the violent markings and terrains that Marie Hill learned to navigate as a black girl attempting to survive these terrors.

Chapter Two begins at Marie Hill's trial for the murder of William E. Strum. Although she was placed on trial for the first-degree murder and robbery, the trial demonstrates that Marie Hill's intimate life was as significant to the state as other factors utilized to justify her conviction. From this trial court, both the violent relationships that dictated Marie Hill's movements and the caring relationships Hill developed for her survival were used by the carceral state to mark Marie Hill as the deviant figure of black girlhood and further alienate her from spheres of protection. The state legitimized the violent intimate brandings that marked her body as she navigated black girlhood.

Finally, Chapter Three circles back to where this introduction began—Marie Hill's imprisonment at North Carolina's Correctional Center for Women. Using Marie Hill's and other

incarcerated women's reflections on life in prison and in solitary confinement, this section aims to highlight that not only were the intimacies prior to Marie Hill's incarceration employed by the state to mark her as deviant to justify her death sentence, but the state, and more specifically the prison, modeled itself after domestic spaces to inflict its own form intimate state violence against the women incarcerated at North Carolina's Correctional Center for Women. This form of state-imposed intimate violence rendered these caged women invisible, and allowed the state to appear innocuous throughout their continued ongoing project of carceral terror.

Despite this state terror, Marie Hill and the women connected to her persistently resisted these brandings and webs of violence that sought to immobilize, alienate, isolate, objectify, and control them. They forged intimacies that defended each other against carceral terror. While these intimacies were also vulnerable to state terror, their connections provide alternative imaginations of what intimacies and community could look like. Thus, these moments of resistance located within Hill's narrative are indicative of what intimacies might be needed in order to more fully envision a future free of violence — especially the carceral terror that shadows and captures black women and girls. Therefore, the lives of black girls and women like Marie Hill not only need to be told in order to more fully understand the carceral state but their refusals and insurgent intimacies provide lessons needed to envision alternative futures.

\*\*\*\*\*

Several bodies of literature help to make the connections between Hill and broader regimes of intimate state violence. Black feminist scholarship and queer of color critique guide this work, but in particular the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia Hill Collins, Hortense Spillers, Dorothy Roberts, Beth Richie, and Darlene Clark Hines provide useful theoretical frameworks that elaborate on the gendered racial ideologies that construct the violences that

constrained Hill's life. In addition, the emerging literature on black girlhood studies from LaKisha Simmons and Aimee Cox expand upon black feminist theories and contribute to the theorizations of black girlhood or black girl adolescence as a social and politically constructed identity that further informs understandings of black womanhood and patriarchal White supremacy. The scholarship from these fields intersects with the carceral state histories that inform the connections between Hill's life and intimate state violence. Sarah Haley, Emily Thuma, Victoria Law, and Dan Berger provide critical interventions on carceral histories that furnish the needed foundation to further comprehend the carceral state's gendered and racialized logics and technologies. Finally, throughout this exploration of Marie Hill's life, Angela Davis' theories on black womanhood, violence, carcerality, slavery, and freedom guide my attempts to disrupt the archives historical fragmentation of Hill's life and move the lives and epistemologies of incarcerated black women and girls from the periphery to the center as key sites and producers of anti-carceral knowledge.

### *Black Feminist Theory*

Kimberlé Crenshaw's "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," as well as, Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought*, provides the overarching framework for understanding violence against black women, including rape and other forms of sexual violence. Race, gender, class, sexuality and other intersecting identities are key to understanding and framing violence, especially the sexualized violence against black women, as a tool to reinforce control over their bodies to fit specific state and ideological needs.<sup>9</sup> These intersectional identities as sites of knowledge reveal systems of power (i.e. White Supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism) that can neither be separated from nor

---

<sup>9</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identify Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1245.



reduced to liberal notions of identities that have been temporarily excluded. These intersections produce power relations, including the many controlling images that attempt to define black womanhood.<sup>10</sup> Thus, this black feminist framework and theory guides the analysis and use of other primary and secondary sources.

Hortense Spiller's influential essay, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book" extends this theoretical framework on how black women are racialized and gendered. Spillers asserts that in captivity, enslaved black women were transformed from body and into a piece of "flesh."<sup>11</sup> As flesh in captivity, specifically within captivity of the domestic, black women become the malleable property where American grammars or racialized, gendered, and economic classifications can be written on their bodies to support state and social ideologies.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, black women become this ungendered figure of ambiguity where ideologies of sexuality, motherhood, reproduction, pleasure, and desire can be scripted onto their bodies and used for public or state benefit. This project expands from Spiller's theoretical framework set during slavery, and situates Spiller's theorization of black womanhood, captivity, and the domestic as an ongoing project that continues in other articulations or imaginations of the domestic.

Scholars including Dorothy Roberts and Beth Richie provides more explicit, albeit fluid, theorizations of state and male violence that can be used to expand upon the various technologies that reduce black women to ambiguous flesh to be marked for state use. Roberts exposes the role of the state in marking black motherhood as a deviant figure in her text, *Killing the Black Body:*

---

<sup>10</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 76.

<sup>11</sup> Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Dialectics/Culture and Countermemory: The "American" Connection* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 67.

<sup>12</sup> Spillers, 68.

*Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. Roberts asserts, “Black mothers have been thought to pass down to their offspring the traits that marked them as inferior to any white person [...] it is believed that Black mothers transfer a deviant lifestyle to their children that doomed each succeeding generation to a life of poverty, delinquency, and despair,”<sup>13</sup> and in return, the state can justify its control over black womanhood, her reproduction, and her children. Roberts’ insights become particularly useful as they show that this control can be articulated through social policies that invade domestic spaces often thought of as private and secluded from state surveillance, including black women’s intimate relationships. Furthermore, although Marie Hill was not a mother, the ideology that deviance or pathologies can be transferred onto black children is the gendered and racialized logics that continued to follow Hill throughout her life. With that said, this project will move beyond traditional imaginations of the domestic and use surveillance scholar Simone Browne’s *Dark Matters*<sup>14</sup> to provide additional theoretical insight on how state surveillance as a technology produces domestic imaginations that continue to racialize and gender black women into ambiguous figures of flesh for state exploitation.

Beth Richie furthers links the close relationship between the state and black women’s intimate lives in *Arrested Justice Black Women, Violence, and America’s Prison Nation*. Particularly relevant are Richie’s articulations on law and order policies and ideologies that invade black women’s intimate lives. Richie centers several cases of male violence against black women and exposes how the state or the prison nation uses these cases as sites to justify the imprisonment of black women because of their gendered racialization as illegible bodies

---

<sup>13</sup> Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: First Vintage Book Edition, 1999): 8.

<sup>14</sup> Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2015).

according to hegemonic conceptions of who is a victim.<sup>15</sup> In this text, Richie expands from a black feminist framework and presents a violence matrix,<sup>16</sup> in which Richie argues that to understand male violence against black women one must comprehend the interconnected relations of community, institutional, and the social contexts of male violence. This matrix becomes particularly useful as it defines the spatial politics of male violence employed against black women, and the various contexts that dictate black women's movements and choices for survival. Finally, when placed in conversation with Grace Hong's *Death Beyond Disavowal*,<sup>17</sup> Richie's articulations of male violence, especially intimate violence, becomes key to understanding how black women as illegible victims are rendered invisible by the state.

Historian Darlene Clark Hine most notably argues that entangled in the history of African American women migrating to the North and to the Midwest during the early twentieth century was their motivation to escape the sexual and domestic violence that terrorized their daily lives. Hines asserts that while black women often allude to the sexual and domestic violence in their narrations since slavery, there remains a hidden history. Hines identifies this hidden history as the "culture of dissemblance," which she defines as black women's decision to employ a certain type of self-presentation or self-image to not only combat hypersexualized stereotypes of black womanhood but to also protect their private or interior selves.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Beth E. Richie, *Arrested Justice: Black Women Violence, and America's Prison Nation*. (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 80-81.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 132-133.

<sup>17</sup> Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

<sup>18</sup> Darlene Clark Hines, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance" in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall. (New York: The New Press, 1995), 384.

LaKisha Simmons expands upon this theory to help unveil the sexual violence that shaped black girls lives and conceptions of black girlhood in New Orleans, Louisiana. In *Crescent City Girls: The Lives of Young Black Women in Segregated New Orleans* Simmons' provides an early twentieth century historical account of the often-silenced racialized sexual violence against young black women living in New Orleans. Simmons' historical analysis of these young women reveal the relationship between black girlhood and sexual violence as a site where ideologies of Jim Crow segregation were reinforced and produced. Simmons' articulates that while the lynching of black men became the public symbol to reinforce racial orders, the silenced and more private racialized and gendered violence against black girls informed its citizens of Jim Crow logics as well.<sup>19</sup> However, because this violence was often silenced, akin to Hines' "culture of dissemblance," Simmons relies upon a "disciplined imagination,"<sup>20</sup> to inform her project. This "disciplined imagination" is particularly important to understand the intimate violence and intimacies explored in this project when the culture of dissemblance has been employed by black women or when these violences has been disavowed by the state. However, my research departs from the culture of dissemblance or the respectability politics that veiled black girl's sexual politics in New Orleans by identifying young black women who explicitly presented a narrative where sexual violence is not hidden. This choice to unveil sexual violence could be written as a different historical articulation of black women attempting to express a type of sexual politics that could not be easily co-opted and concealed by the state, as well as, a possible pathway to practice new articulations of self-autonomy, care, and bonding over mutual experience with other abused women.

---

<sup>19</sup> LaKisha Simmons, *Crescent City Girls: The Lives of Young Black Women in Segregated New Orleans* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 4-5.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

In a more contemporary articulation of black girlhood scholarship, Aimee Cox's *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship*, Cox provides an ethnographic study of black girlhood adolescence at a homeless shelter in Detroit, Michigan. Detroit—a city that has been abandoned and further disenfranchised by liberal and neoliberal policies—is the site in which Cox not only chronicles neoliberal policies and their effects, but demonstrates that black girlhood and black girl citizenship as a multi-textured construction of the gendered and racialized violence of neoliberalism.<sup>21</sup> Overall, *Crescent City Girls and Shapeshifters* are two examples of recent scholarship that inform this project conceptualization of black girlhood as both as socially constructed site that reflects state and capital anxieties and crisis, and the exploitation of their bodies is a state project to reinforce state control. Simmons historical analysis articulates black girlhood as a negotiated site of the Jim Crow south, while Cox's ethnography articulates black girlhood from an urban neoliberal state in crisis. This project situates itself temporally between these two works, demonstrating the merging of old and new regimes of control and violence on black girlhood. While Jim Crow segregation and its ideologies still violently permeated and shaped the social, political and economic terrain of North Carolina, a new southern strategy was also emerging at that time and had to adapt to the rise of neoliberal law and order policies. The life of Marie Hill reflects this merging.

Finally, Cox analyzes black girlhood and adolescence as a contested space where black girls continuously negotiate their citizenship, not necessarily for inclusion within liberal and neoliberal definitions of citizenships, but rather as alternate ways of imagining citizenship.<sup>22</sup> The insights of Cox's ethnography are expanded upon in this project, especially when concerning the

---

<sup>21</sup> Aimee Meredith Cox, *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 13-14.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

question of how black women and girls use their own bodies to contest the social and political immobilization that intimate state violence enforces. Furthermore, Cox's insights provide a helpful guide for how the movements or the choreography of the body unearths aspects of black women's and black girls' interior lives, including imaginations and desires for new intimacies that defy their abuse.

### *Carceral State Histories*

Sarah Haley's *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*, exposes the horrors of the gendered racial terror that African American women were subjected to in Georgia's penal system during the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Specifically, through the violent exploitation of black women's labor and bodies in the state's convict leasing, chain gang, and probation economies, Haley demonstrates that their gendered racialized terror produced what Haley identifies as "Jim Crow modernity"—a system that materially produced and maintained state and private infrastructures that represented modernity, like roads and domestic spheres. In return, this terror also produced and maintained racialized gendered ideologies that reinforced "white patriarchal control over economic, political, and social relations."<sup>23</sup> For this project in particular, Jim Crow modernity becomes especially fruitful to understand the logics that shaped the social, political, and economic terrain of North Carolina, which provides the context for intimate and state violence that Marie Hill was forced to endure. Furthermore, Haley's examination of Georgia's domestic probation program of incarcerated black women into white homes, reveals that the carceral state has consistently relied upon the surveilling and inflicting violence in domestic carceral spheres to manufacture ideologies on

---

<sup>23</sup> Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 12.

black womanhood, white womanhood, and to maintain the needs of gendered racialized capital relations.

Scholar Emily Thuma demonstrates the ways in which the carceral state expanded in the 1970s by exploiting anti-violence movements to build carceral infrastructures. In Thuma's article, "Lessons in Self-Defense: Gender Violence, Racial Criminalization and Anticarceral Feminism," and her dissertation, "Not Wedge, But a Bridge": Prisons, Feminist Activism, and the Politics of Gendered Violence, 1968-1987," Thuma investigates radical anti-violence feminist organizations that were faced with the predicament of negotiating the political terrain of law and order, while also trying to advocate for abused women.<sup>24</sup> Thuma argues that for radical anti-violence feminists who also advocated for economic justice, prisoners' rights and sexual autonomy, the state's and private industries co-optation of strands of the anti-violence movements created a more complicated and contested political and social terrain. In fact, these anti-violence and anti-racist feminists recognized the dangers of a law and order state that used their anti-violence strategies and rhetoric as pathways to expand law and order tenets, while disavowing women of color as victims.

However, anti-violence feminists provided alternative anti-carceral political and social agendas that advocated for women, especially impoverished women of color, without reifying the carceral state. While this project does not focus on the broader anti-violence political organizations, Thuma's analysis provides the historical foundation for how violence against black women became hidden behind hegemonic notions of who is a victim and what was the state approved pathways of escape and survival. Understanding this social and political context

---

<sup>24</sup> Emily Thuma, "Lessons in Self-Defense: Gender Violence, Racial Criminalization and Anticarceral Feminism," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 3&4 (Fall/Winter 2015), 52-71; Emily L. Thuma, "Not a Wedge, but a Bridge": Prisons, Feminist Activism, and the Politics of Gendered Violence, 1968-1987." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2011.

better situates how this project interprets how impoverished black women and girls navigated a political terrain where they were illegible as victims and could not access state resources.

Dan Berger's *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era* moves the jail and prison cell from the periphery, and instead centers the prison as key site to understand the relationship between blackness and confinement. By centering the experiences of black political prisoners such as Angela Davis, George Jackson, Ruchell Magee, and Diane Nash during the late 1960s to the 1970s, Berger demonstrates that the jail and prison cell were spaces in which these political prisoners from their position of unfreedom were able to use the prison as a political site to theorize and perform alternative imaginations of freedom outside the liberal definitions that relies upon the confinement of blackness.<sup>25</sup>

Victoria Law's *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women* documents the daily experiences and the collective organizing of incarcerated women in both the contemporary period and during the 1974 uprisings. By exploring stories largely wiped out of the scholarship on prison rebellions and resistance, Law expands the notion of collective resistance in women's prisons to reveal that incarcerated women's resistance is often more subversive compared to the more physically performative uprisings associated with men's prisons. Acts like group education, talking and bonding, lawsuits, and filing written complaints become the daily and collective acts of resistance that undermine the prison's forms of control, including isolation, individualization, immobilization, and more broadly capitalism.<sup>26</sup> Thus, this project expands upon the relationship between confinement and blackness by centering the narrative of young black women who are trapped in positions of unfreedom due to a racialized

---

<sup>25</sup> Dan Berger, *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era (Justice, Power, and Politics)* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 23. (Kindle Edition)

<sup>26</sup> Victoria Law, *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggle of Incarcerated Women* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012).



and gendered violence. Their positions of unfreedom reveal both the dialectics of freedom and the ways in which their gendered resistance and confinement must be understood through multiple intersections.

*Angela Davis*

Finally, Angela Davis' powerful insights on the carceral state are extremely valuable to this project. Particularly, Davis' theories on prisons, particularly on racialized gendered power dynamics, move beyond simply understanding prisons to abolishing prisons and replacing them with institutions of care. Furthermore, as Dan Berger advanced in *Captive Nation*, specifically in his analysis of Davis' "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," her insights into the position of unfreedom allowed Davis and other black political prisoners to conceptualize the problematics of black freedom that moved beyond liberal male centered ideologies.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the fact that Davis gains a better understanding of enslaved black women's lives during her incarceration reveals that the sediments of slavery and the logics of gendered racialized capitalism continue to linger in the present. The lessons of the enslaved become lessons for the present. Therefore, Davis' "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," continues a key goal of this project, which is to present the often-missing and disavowed voices and histories of captured and imprisoned black women as a crucial narrative needed in order to fully understand and dismantle the carceral state and its technologies.

---

<sup>27</sup> Berger, 209-210.

## Chapter 1:

### **The Intimate Carceral Brandings of Black Girlhood**

*The personal history of Marie Hill is interesting in this respect. She epitomizes the development that many prisoners have undergone in the last few years. She was picked up on the streets about six years ago when she was 15 and charged with murdering a white man in a little town in North Carolina [...] When we study the lives and political careers of George Jackson, Ruchell Magee, the San Quentin Six, and others, we see essentially the same dynamic at work.<sup>28</sup> – Angela Davis*

The excerpt above is taken from a 1975 Angela Davis interview after she brilliantly won her historic case with the support of the U.S. Communist Party and its international affiliates, and as a result, this historic win would position Davis as one of the more well-known political prisoners in the United States who achieved a rare win against the United States legal system. In the interview, Davis places Marie Hill, a young African American girl imprisoned in North Carolina for allegedly murdering a white storekeeper, in conversation with other black political leaders who have been imprisoned by the United States and remained as key figures in the long black freedom struggle. While George Jackson, Ruchell Magee, and Angela Davis are more widely perceived as political activists of their time (and Angela Davis still), the case of Marie Hill barely registers in the history of activists who were legally persecuted for challenging the United States' criminal justice system. After all, prior to Marie Hill being imprisoned, she was seen as a little black girl from a small North Carolina town; nor did she identify herself as a political activist or with an activist movement. If this is the case, why did Angela Davis in her 1975 interview mention Marie Hill during her conversations on political prisoners?

Marie Hill was born in 1951 in Edgecombe County, North Carolina, specifically in the small town of Rocky Mount. In 1968, she was charged by local police along with three other

---

<sup>28</sup> Mike Hannigan and Platt, Tony, "Interview with Angela Davis," *Crime and Social Justice* 3 (Summer 1975): 5.

young black women for the robbery and murder of a local white storekeeper named W.E. Strum. The other three young women's charges were dropped, but Marie Hill was not afforded the same fate. Despite the scant evidence, the trial jury of eight white men and four black men convicted her based on a coerced confession that she made while she was possibly intoxicated, without legal representation. She would later recant her confession during the trial. The state condemned Marie Hill to the gas chamber, making her the youngest person in North Carolina to be sentenced to death row.<sup>29</sup> Thus, despite Marie Hill's lack of public visibility and symbolic political activism, the state's persecution of Marie Hill was a political project—a political project that pushed Marie Hill outside the logics and protections of citizenship, girlhood, womanhood and ultimately life. It was a political project that even the North Carolina Supreme Court described as “tragic”<sup>30</sup> during their first refusal to overturn her conviction and capital punishment sentence. In fact, Marie Hill's dispossession from these spheres of protection began long before she was forced into a cage and wait for her physical death. It began at her birth.

By examining the life of Marie Hill prior to her incarceration by the state, this chapter will demonstrate that the state's persecution of black women and black girls, like Marie Hill, does not begin with a lone incident nor is it isolated in the public sphere; rather, it is a buildup of violent technologies found between the mutually constitutive spaces of the domestic and public, creating a landscape that terrorizes the black body and reproduces the logics of the state rule under capitalism, and thus creating a slow carceral terror. More specifically, by demonstrating how the state employs her intimate relationships prior to her incarceration, I argue that the formation of carceral spaces does not start within the cages of prisons, rather the states violent

---

<sup>29</sup> “Group Acts to Save Life of Girl, 17” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), April 26, 1969.

<sup>30</sup> *State of North Carolina v. Marie Hill*. Supreme Court of North Carolina. 10 Dec. 1969.

surveillance, invasion, and overall terror of black women's lives begins with a violent branding of black girl's intimate lives as disposable, a necessary step in building a carceral regime. Using Angela Davis' historical analysis on enslaved women, this process can be framed as an intimate carceral branding that was informed by the afterlives of slavery,<sup>31</sup> and in return, this violent branding performs as a state pedagogy intended to teach and regulates where black girls can and cannot move. With that said, the state's branding of black girls as disposable is a constantly contested space. Black girls and women like Marie Hill destabilized their disposability by refusing to accept their objectification as expendable material and in so doing produced new imaginings of value and intimacies that defied the state's political project.

The violent technologies employed to brand and cage Marie Hill and other black women and girls constantly adjusts to fit their environment, but in the case of Marie Hill, the state's intimate carceral branding can be tracked in several ways. Specifically, this chapter will map how the branding and regulation of Marie Hill's life began with the carceral infrastructures that haunted her hometown. Next, it will trace how domestic spheres coded her body as naturally ungendered and unlawful, which resulted in the state exploiting these vulnerabilities that these classifications carry with them. Finally, when Marie thinks she can escape the violent intimate branding that continued to classify her body outside of spheres of protection, she found that her escape only left her more vulnerable when spaces outside the domestic that evade state surveillance and control proved to be fleeting. Eventually, these markings and the ever-present state catches up with Marie, where physical escape and intimacies of care became even more

---

<sup>31</sup> Saidiya Hartman conceptualizes the afterlives of slavery as the persistence of slavery in the political life of black America where, "black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery—skewed life chances, limited access to health to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment." Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 6.

difficult to grasp. Carceral regimes built their walls while Marie matured from childhood to adolescents, and eventually these walls attempted to close in on her at North Carolina Women's Prison.

*The Hauntings of Carceral Landscapes:*

Marie Hill was born in a small town located miles outside of the capital city of North Carolina in Rocky Mount.<sup>32</sup> It was a city not known for its large population nor its wealth, and while Rocky Mount produced a few famous residents, including legendary and internationally known jazz musician Thelonious Monk,<sup>33</sup> it was a town that was slowly crumbling into a landscape that mars North Carolina's natural beauty. The town in which Marie Hill experienced her childhood was described as a city segregated by railroad tracks. Specifically, Rocky Mount was depicted as, "A town of about 35,000 people [...] The town is different now than its heyday when Rocky Mount was one of the main stops on the southern rout of the long passenger trains from the North. All that is left now are the tracks down the middle of town."<sup>34</sup> The abandoned roads and tracks that were once laid down for an industry that represented movement and mobility across space was now only the skeletons of an industry that once promised its residence economic and social possibilities.

The significance of the roads and train tracks not only represents the hauntings of economic possibilities, but it also signifies a past built upon the carceral state's violent exploitation of African American bodies and labor in order to maintain old and establish new

---

<sup>32</sup> Jordan Milton, "Marie Hill knows of life from wrong side of the tracks," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 10, 1975.

<sup>33</sup> Robin Kelley, *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009), 1.

<sup>34</sup> Jordan Milton, "Marie Hill Knows of Life From Wrong Side of the Tracks," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 10, 1975.

social, political, and economic orders. The merging of these orders would be a gendered racialized carceral regime that relied upon both the public and the domestic sphere. This merging included marking black bodies as disposable labor, which in turn would continue to shape the changing landscapes that Marie Hill's most intimate relationships would eventually be constructed under.

The train tracks that ran through Rocky Mount were built in 1893 by Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, a company established during the antebellum era and who were a part of a cohort of North Carolina railroad and transportation companies that exploited slave labor while the Confederacy quickly lost its white wage laborers during the Civil War.<sup>35</sup> Eventually, in the early 1900s, the Rocky Mount station would be bought and rebuilt by the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, a southern company who would endorse the use of racialized punishment and violence to support the infrastructural development of the South post-Reconstruction.<sup>36-37</sup> By tapping into the penal system, as seen in states like Georgia<sup>38</sup> and Mississippi,<sup>39</sup> local and state governments exploited the labor of both black men and black women to construct South's

---

<sup>35</sup> Charles L. Price, "North Carolina Railroads during the Civil War," *Civil War History* 7, no. 3 (September 1961), 298-309.

<sup>36</sup> William S. Powell. *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*. Raleigh: The University of North Carolina, 415-416.

<sup>37</sup> Historian Alexander Lichtenstein's identifies this southern Progressive movement as the "Good Roads Movement"—a movement that circulated throughout the South that advocated for the exploitation of convict labor to build public roads and state infrastructures to modernize the South, Alexander Lichtenstein, "Good Roads and Chain Gangs in the Progressive South: 'The Negro Convict is a Slave,'" *The Journal of Southern History* 59, no. 1 (February 1993): 87.

<sup>38</sup> Alex Lichtenstein, *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South* (New York: Verso, 1996); Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Talitha L. LeFlouria, *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South (Justice, Power, and Politics)* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

<sup>39</sup> David M. Oshinsky, *Worse than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1997).

infrastructure, both the public and the domestic spheres. This project was positioned in a larger gendered racial terror that Sarah Haley identifies as Jim Crow modernity, a system which was

produced through a nexus of the material and ideological, the appropriation of bodies and the consolidation of gendered and racially specific notion of the human. Modernity, a structure of power ‘shaping material and epistemological conditions of life and thought’ into which black people were conscripted, ‘coercively obliged to render themselves its objects and its agents,’ had to be perpetually reasserted and reinforced precisely because of imprisoned women’s contestation of their conscription.”<sup>40</sup>

For patriarchal White supremacy, Jim Crow modernity was the needed system to maintain the exploitation of black bodies and the gendered racial hierarchies that combatted African American resistance, especially from African American women. Although North Carolina post-Reconstruction was subject to gendered racial violence, according to Glenda Gilmore, North Carolina for many African American women was a place of possibility.<sup>41</sup> Unlike the Deep South where blacks were plagued by debt peonage, disenfranchisement and segregation, for a brief period in the 1890s a niche of African American North Carolinians were able to pursue education and political enfranchisement. However, as White populism rose and campaigned to disenfranchise black men, black women were able to form political networks outside of civic engagement that provided black social welfare services. The ongoing challenge against patriarchal white supremacy required that Jim Crow modernity constantly be enforced.

Hence, following in the footsteps of its southern neighbors like Georgia, Rocky Mount passed its own laws to fit the terrain of Jim Crow modernity. By 1929, Rocky Mount city officials passed “Section 28,” a law intended to remove “beggars” from the streets. Supported by previous vagrancy laws, Rocky Mount policed the downtown commercial communities, and

---

<sup>40</sup> Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 11-12.

<sup>41</sup> Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 27.

arrested those who were labeled as beggars, vagrants, and train hoppers on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad that traveled through the city. Seeking to remove impoverished black people from the streets but also desiring their labor, the punishment for breaking this city ordinance was to either pay the city fine or forced labor on a public roads project.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the town that Marie Hill spent her childhood and adolescences in was a town built upon the violent exploitation of black and poor people targeted by the penal system. The chain gang economy that supported Jim Crow modernity was a system so violent that the conditions sometimes rivaled the previous racialized capitalist system of slavery. Under these brutal conditions, work was described as “done under the gun from sunup to sundown, shoveling dirt at fourteen shovelfuls a minute. Food was bug infested, rotten, and unvarying.”<sup>43</sup> Public officials had little regard for preserving black life, confident that Jim Crow laws would allow the city a continuous supply of black life to be consumed. The brutal conditions on the roads made a spectacle of blackness to produce and naturalize gendered and racialized hierarchies, but behind the closed walls of white homes, the paroling of black women in the chain gang economy continued to reproduce the gendered and racialized material and logics for Jim Crow modernity.

Sarah Haley’s historical analysis on parole and the chain gang economy reveals that, “By forcing imprisoned black women to work as servants in private white homes, domestic service parole and chain gang punishment isolated them from their communities and left them vulnerable to moral and physical control by prison authorities and white masters and

---

<sup>42</sup> Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, *Negotiating Poverty: Economic Insecurity and the Politics of Working-Class Life in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, 1929 - 1969* (PhD Dissertation: Duke University, 2003), 139.

<sup>43</sup> Alexander Lichtenstein, “Good Roads and Chain Gangs in the Progressive South: ‘The Negro Convict is a Slave,’” *The Journal of Southern History* 59, no. 1 (February 1993): 93.



mistresses.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, while the state of North Carolina latched onto to the convict labor systems that painted the façade of modernity through landscape, it maintained the marginality of African American women through a violent racialized and gendered labor system. This system was not simply about the exploitation of black labor, but it physically and ideologically needed blackness present to re-enforce liberalism and its goal of “progress.” Blackness became the building block in which whiteness and womanhood in the South maintained its power and definitions of citizenship, as well as, imprisoned black people became necessary to build modernity’s physical and ideological infrastructure through roads and train tracks. However, while whiteness and white bodies were granted mobility, African American laborers and communities in towns like Rocky Mount, North Carolina were left immobilized and under the containment of Jim Crow.

In return, the modern economic possibilities promised to white southerners via these train tracks became a mocking symbol for black residents for what they could not possess despite their ancestor’s labors and sacrifices. While Marie Hill may or may not have known the violent details of African American’s forced labor that constructed the train tracks that reaffirmed their marginalization in society, what she did understand was expressed in an interview when she stated, “I used to wonder [...] how downtown could be so far away when it was just across the tracks.”<sup>45</sup> In her brief reflections on her small southern community, she sensed a community that had been pushed to the periphery of state imaginations of what communities were deemed worthy of investment and care. To be haunted according to Avery Gordon is “to be tied to the historical and social effects,”<sup>46</sup> or in Marxist terms, hauntings are the unseen forces that produce

---

<sup>44</sup> Haley, 160.

<sup>45</sup> Jordan Milton, “Marie Hill Knows of Life From Wrong Side of the Tracks,” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 10, 1975.

<sup>46</sup> Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Hauntings and the Sociological Imaginations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 190.

“phantasmatic effects: objects that come alive only when you can’t see the labor that made them; markets that are ruled by invisible hands; value that is surplus of what has been appropriated from you; groups of people, classes, that are bound to each other in wrenching forces.”<sup>47</sup> These hauntings are the structures that not only shaped the landscapes of Marie Hill’s life but the ongoing ideologies that helped shape what marks would be branded on Marie Hill’s body. Furthermore, despite being unseen these violent hauntings are sensed and these feelings provided the violent carceral epistemologies that informed Marie Hill’s movement. In return, the hauntings of the past, including the carceral landscapes and carceral logics would continue to establish the physical and ideological borders in her small southern town that would capture and code her outside of the normative definitions that the state valued as worthy of protection and autonomy.

The brutalization enforced in Jim Crow modernity including, the inhumane living conditions and the casual everyday torture in the domestic by white masters and mistresses, becomes the naturalized rationale within the larger landscapes of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. The caging of black bodies as a mode of enforcing the state’s vision of justice, modernity, and racialized and gendered control become the modes that would continue to be practiced within North Carolina. These cages in the public and possibly the domestic are no longer memories of a past forgotten during the middle passage or the slave quarters on plantations. Instead, these reimagined cages via the carceral state become the justified and allegedly humane logics for a new generation of Southerners and persisted even as the railroad tracks no longer met modernity’s visions of the future. The once needed inhumane spectacle of black labor being tortured and mobilized eventually becomes obsolete and transformed into one of stillness and

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 196.

divestment, where 7.4 percent of black residents in Rocky Mount, North Carolina lived in homes with no indoor plumbing by the 1970s,<sup>48</sup> but the skeletons of the past remained. By the time Marie Hill was born in 1951, Jim Crow modernity had transformed, leaving a town that was abandoned and once again outside of notions of progress, and it was these conditions, both the old and the emerging, that helped shape Marie Hill's life, even the intimate spaces where the state is often viewed as non-existent.

*Marie Hill's Illegitimate Birth and the Coding of Black Girlhood in the Domestic:*

According to one newspaper account by the *Baltimore Afro-American*, it details that Marie Hill was, “an illegitimate child raised in a slum house next to railroad tracks.”<sup>49</sup> This statement might seem insignificant or simply an indicator of the times, but when scrutinized more closely, the descriptors chosen to portray Hill's life not only described the abandoned landscapes that Marie was born into as detailed earlier, but her portrayal reveals how both the media chose to depict her childhood and begins to hint at how the state classified her body within a larger system of state logics. Understanding these classifications is imperative to grasping how carceral regimes would not only haunt the surrounding geographies of her childhood via the abandoned and dispossessed infrastructure but also how the state's dispossession of the town would interact with the most intimate relationships during her childhood.

As stated, in the description provided by the *Baltimore Afro-American*, Marie was made known to the public through the idiom of the “illegitimate child.” This descriptor of illegitimacy was not simply a journalistic choice. It was also a reinforcement of how Marie was classified

---

<sup>48</sup> Claudia Harper, “Angela Davis,” *The Sun Reporter* (San Francisco, California), March 9, 1974.

<sup>49</sup> Nancy Benson, “N. Carolina Teenager Spends Second Christmas in Prison,” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), January 3, 1970.

since birth in Edgecombe County. Scribbled on North Carolina's long list of births for the year 1951, one can find the name "Marie Hill" listed in North Carolina's *Birth Indexes*. While this may seem insignificant or simply a confirmation of her birth date, what is significant is the parent name listed to the right of her name, Ora McKnight, Marie Hill's birth father.<sup>50</sup> Unlike the names listed above or below, is the fact that Marie Hill did not take the last name of her biological father. Instead she followed her matrilineal lineage of her mother, Mary L. Hill,<sup>51</sup> but her mother's name is nowhere to be found on this official record, rendering her mother invisible but present. While the complete reasons as to why Marie took on her mother's last name are unknown, the stigma and the historical impact of past social orders continued to haunt and mark Marie Hill's body outside modes of protection.

Marie Hill fell out of the standard of the normalized or the acceptable modes of childhood per definitions of Western heteronormative philosophies on family and kinships. Her unidentified mother on the birth indexes birthed a daughter who was automatically born into both old and new ideologies and systems on African American families that merged together to form a new coding of Marie's birth as pathological. This is a signifier of a state that was continuing the legacy of classifying black kinship networks, black homes, and black motherhood, and especially black children outside the territory of the citizen, human, and modernity. Old logics of black children following their mother's lineage, rather than the state norms of their father, finds its roots within the enslavement of black people, and while the original purpose of this practice ceased to exist, the impacts of it continued to paint black motherhood outside of conceptions of womanhood and their children as naturally deviant.

---

<sup>50</sup> *North Carolina, Birth Indexes* (ancestry.com); "N.C.'s Marie Hill hopes Death Row days are gone," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 3, 1975

<sup>51</sup> Milton Jordan, "N.C.'s Marie Hill hopes Death Row days are gone," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 3, 1975.

Hortense Spillers theorizes the lasting historical impact of this practice in her article, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” in which Spillers articulates that, “The destructive loss of the natural mother, whose biological/genetic relationship to the child remains unique and unambiguous, opens the enslaved young to social ambiguity and chaos: the ambiguity of his/her fatherhood and to a structure of other relational elements, now threatened [...].”<sup>52</sup> Spiller’s statement refers to the institution of slavery and the legal practice of enslaved African American children inheriting the status of their mothers rather than their fathers. This system ensured a system where white men and owners could sexually terrorize and rape black women regularly and would not be held legally or socially responsible for any child born by an enslaved African American woman; and black children would instead inherit enslaved black women’s status as slave. Thus, the “ambiguity of his/her fatherhood” left the enslaved child in a place of vulnerability to be dictated and defined by systems of white supremacy and capitalist needs, and during slavery, a central need was to produce as many black bodies as possible for labor and profit. Although Marie Hill’s biological father is known because of these birth indexes, Marie Hill still carried the last name of her mother. “Hill” acted as a marker of “ambiguity” of her paternity and thus opened her up for state definitions to fit its needs starting from her birth through her childhood, and as a result, became more susceptible to state manipulation especially when state and capital structures would drastically change during periods of crisis in the 1960s. These state definitions began with a coding and valuing who she was conceived from, which was a deviant black flesh.

Mary L. Hill, fulfilled the often-intertwined controlling images of the matriarch and the single black mother. The matriarch has been identified as the emasculating black woman/mother

---

<sup>52</sup> Hortense Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” *Diacritics/ Culture and Countermemory: The “American” Connection* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 76.

figure in black kinship networks who holds the power over the black family, especially black men. It is a figure that Angela Davis also identified as a figure rooted within false narratives of slavery and misconceptions about the power that black women possessed,<sup>53</sup> but the significance of the matriarch would continue to haunt the logics and environments that Marie Hill would be born into and would shape the perceptions of who she was and her worth. This controlling image of the matriarch would intertwine with the “single black mother” and would later be deemed as the central figure responsible for perpetuating the cultural pathologies located within the black family by sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan in 1965 because of their alleged emasculation of black men,<sup>54</sup> and Marie would be viewed as a potential carrier of these pathologies. When placed in conversation with Spiller’s observation, this emphasizes that black womanhood, particularly black motherhood, continues to be defined by state logics of illegitimacy, immorality, and unlawfulness, and as a result the children of black mothers are always left vulnerable because they too inherit this pathology through their pathological upbringing.

Although being labeled a poor single black mother as Mary L. Hill had been and the illegitimacy that labeled Marie Hill were not illegal by state laws, they did carry with them a stigma that pushed Marie and her mother outside the bounds of respectability. When black girls and black motherhood fall outside of these shifting boundaries of respectability, womanhood, and girlhood, the state becomes justified in excluding them from protection or pushing them under state control as an alleged corrective form. No longer simply based within a pseudo-biological racialized exclusion inherited from one parent, the stigmatized label of illegitimacy

---

<sup>53</sup> Angela Davis. “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves.” *The Massachusetts Review* 13, no. 1/2 (Winter-Spring, 1972): 82-84.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Patrick Moynihan. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. (United States: Office of Policy Planning and Research United States Department of Labor, 1965).

was a branding passed down through an individualized behavior in which it was the responsibility of the deviant mother and her illegitimate child to escape their pathologies and assimilate into respectability. Thus, from birth, Marie Hill's home and her intimate familial ties with her mother were places of illegitimacy that were reduced to a place of "social vulnerability and chaos" where the state becomes justified in both intervening and abandoning. The protection of familial relationships was not scripted on Marie's body nor in the domestic spaces where black kinship networks resided. It is doubtful that Mary L. Hill did not sense at least some of the stigma and the unjust baggage associated with being a poor unwed African American mother in a town that had been bordered off from downtown North Carolina's industry.

For these reasons, it is possible that Mary L. Hill felt that the better option was to leave Marie with her neighbor Mrs. Maggie Joyner, whose daughter and son-in-law Arilla and John Lesegne would eventually become Marie's foster parents<sup>55</sup>—a family who Mary L. Hill may have viewed as an extended kinship network who could be trusted to protect her daughter. The actions of Mary L. Hill could easily be construed by the state as black motherhood being neglectful, uncaring, and naturally unable to fulfil the role of motherhood. However, as legal scholar Dorothy Roberts asserts, for black networks and mothers, "Child neglect is often the result of parents' financial inability to provide for their children. Parents may be guilty of neglect because they are unable to afford adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care for their children."<sup>56</sup> Considering the divestment from the town of Rocky Mount, the disappearance of Marie Hill's mother fits into the long history where the state's actions, including their neglect and dispossession, stole away multiple reproductive choices as to whether or not Mary L. Hill

---

<sup>55</sup> Nancy Bentson, "A Girl's Tragic Story-On Death Row at Age 18," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD) February 8, 1969.

<sup>56</sup> Dorothy Roberts, *Shattering Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare*. (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2002), 33.

wanted to become a mother, what type of mother that she desired to be, and if she could fulfill these desires without interference from a violent state.

*Sexual Terror and State Control:*

Although the exact circumstances that led Mary L. Hill to leave Marie in the care of Mrs. Maggie Joyner and eventually her foster family of Arilla and John Lesegne are unclear, what does become clear is that her foster home was another space intimately tied to the hauntings of violent domestic logics. During an interview while she was imprisoned in 1975 and reflecting on her journey to North Carolina's Women's Prison, Marie revealed, "Things started going bad at home when I was about 13 [...] My foster father decided he wanted to go to bed with me [...] and everything then was a matter of me staying away from him. I couldn't be caught at home alone."<sup>57</sup> The sexual violence experienced at Marie's foster home was at the hands of Marie Hill's foster father who continued the domestic logics of the past that held black women and girls captive and rendered them into a piece of flesh.

Angela Davis describes rape as a counterinsurgency technology used against enslaved black women held captive within both plantation and domestic economies. Forced into this intimate but abusive power relation inside the slave master's home, Davis argues that rape "contrived a ransom system of sorts, forcing her to pay with her body for food, diminished severity in treatment, the safety of her children, etc."<sup>58</sup> This ransom system forced black women and girls to negotiate basic survival or to be subject to sexual terror, although neither of these are mutually exclusive. Marie Hill's foster father continued these domestic logics that Spiller's also

---

<sup>57</sup> Jordan Milton, "Marie Hill Knows of Life from Wrong Side of The Tracks," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 10, 1975.

<sup>58</sup> Angela Davis. "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves." *The Massachusetts Review* 13, no. 1/2 (Winter-Spring, 1972): 96.



identifies as the “interiorized violation of body and mind,”<sup>59</sup> that reduces the black female body to flesh. Thus, Marie Hill’s foster father became an arm of the state by continuing the domestic logics of dispossessing Marie Hill from herself, holding her body at ransom for basic survival, and ultimately further reducing Marie Hill’s body into a piece of flesh primed for public spaces of social control. Her foster home was transformed into a place of abuse and a manufacturer of the continued markings of chaos and crisis on the body of black girlhood, and in a sense, it took over where the markings of illegitimacy left off. These new markings that Hill’s foster father inscribed on her body translated into ideologies that her body was assailable, vulnerable, and something to be conquered.

For a young black girl, these were the violent intimate brandings that taught her what black girlhood and womanhood would come to mean across geographies shaped by patriarchal White supremacy. Marie Hill would learn that this violence defined her body as vulnerable for state control. The afterlives of slavery continued to persist, but rather than a white slave owner enforcing this violence, these anti-black gendered violences would be enacted by a black man. The patriarchal White supremacist violence that would brand Marie Hill as disposable would move beyond white/black dichotomies, and instead her life emphasizes that this intimate carceral branding of black girlhood sometimes recruits and implicates black men as a tool to shape carceral spheres. Her foster father may not have worn a uniform or held a high rank in the state schema of power, but the sexual violence inflicted became the needed state technology to render Marie Hill vulnerable to state-sanctioned control. However, the borders separating Marie Hill’s foster home from the surveillance of the state were more blurred than distinct.

---

<sup>59</sup> Spillers, 68.

First, as a state approved father figure via foster care, he acted as the state appointed corrector of illegitimacy or the correctors of the morally unlawful status that was scripted on Marie Hill since birth. Within her foster family's home, the image of a two-parent household and two wage earning parents were the images of legitimacy that fit within normative definitions of the nuclear family and more broadly respectability. Arilla Lesagne, Marie Hill's foster mother, was employed as a sweeper during tobacco harvest, while John Lesagne was employed as truck driver. Despite their assumed low wages, her foster father announced that, "The family never has received welfare payments."<sup>60</sup> Her foster father's revelation contributed to the logic of individualized deviance which law and order logics would come to rely upon. It was a logic that implied Marie Hill's subsequent interaction with the carceral state was a matter of immorality rather than structural violence. He and his family unit did not take the demonized public assistance that was and is viewed as a contributing factor to black deviance and criminality. Instead, despite their class standing, they practiced a politics that fit within law and orders tenets that black criminality was birthed from black cultural pathology, specifically a black cultural pathology produced from those who took welfare, like the infamous "welfare queen."

However, what was hidden beneath this respectable and corrective image of a black foster family, was the physical and sexual violence inflicted by her foster father. In many ways, the sexual violence inflicted becomes naturalized into the landscapes because it fits a long history on how black women and girls were terrorized in order to enforce state control. Furthermore, according to Dorothy Roberts, while black families have historically relied on extended kin care networks to support their families, in order to receive state recognition and resources, these black kin care networks are required to relinquish the custody of their children to

---

<sup>60</sup> Nancy Bentson, "A Girl's Tragic Story-On Death Row at Age 18," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD) February 8, 1969.

foster care regulation.<sup>61</sup> However, because these black kinship foster systems are illegible to the state, welfare agencies and social workers often devalued and ignored black foster kinship.<sup>62</sup> Hence, for Marie Hill who was left with her neighbors, her foster home existed in an in between place—a “private” place under state regulation and a “private” place of state disavowal, and as result, Marie’s sexual abuse in her domestic space existed under the purview of the state who negated her abuse but used this violence to control her movements.

Furthermore, as a tool of the state, sexual violence has continuously been employed, and Angela Davis recalls this history to discuss the rape of another more famous North Carolina imprisoned woman, Joanne Little. In Davis’ article “Joanne Little: The Dialectics of Rape,” Davis asserts,

The social incentive given to rape is woven into the logic of the institutions of this society. It is an extremely efficient means of keeping women in a state of fear of rape or of the possibility of it. It is, as Susan Griffin wrote, ‘a form of mass terrorism.’ This, in turn buttresses the general sense of powerlessness and passivity socially inflicted upon women, thus rendering them more easily exploitable.<sup>63</sup>

The power behind rape and sexual violence has without fail been employed to enforce the logics of the state, and as the carceral state began to take formation, sexual violence and rape was woven into the fabrics of an emerging and rapidly growing state capacity. When rape as a tool of terror is woven into carceral spheres, including outside of the prison walls, it becomes a tool that moves across geographies. Whether they are within prison cages or outside these cages in their homes, black women and girls’ bodies are marked and spatialized as something that needs to be corrected and invaded by carceral state’s actors, like correction officers, parole officers, law enforcement, and in the case of Marie Hill, her foster father. Even when black women and

---

<sup>61</sup> Dorothy Roberts, *Shattering Bonds*, 259.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 261-262.

<sup>63</sup> Angela Davis, “Joan Little: The Dialectics of Rape (1975),” *Ms. Magazine*, 1975.

girls do not have direct contact with these state representatives, terror and fear invades black women's and girls' bodies through the threat of sexual violence. Rape and sexual violence are tools employed to enforce its power and social control over bodies. However, as Marie Hill's history in her foster home emphasizes, it is not always a known fear of the carceral state. Marie could not have predicted that she would end up in prison, but the threat of sexual violence becomes the pedagogy in which she encounters the traumatic effects of sexual violence and the violent nature of the state, as well as the consequences of being classified as the "other," who sits on the margins of humanity.

In fact, Marie Hill's testimony about the sexual violence that she experienced at age 13 to black print media was a form resistance that further emphasized the close relationship between the state and the intimate violence that she experienced within the domestic. Her decision to reveal the sexual violence inflicted upon her body was both a step away from what historian Darlene Clark Hine's terms the culture of dissemblance<sup>64</sup> and instead follows a pathway of resistance that tells her audience that the intimate sexual violence that homes and communities only whisper about or keep hidden, is a form of violence that demands the same attention that the black press, like the *Chicago Defender*, gave when they boldly declared another black man was lynched today. Marie Hill understood that for her and many other black girls that this racialized sexual terror pushed them outside of a space that promised protection and familial care, leaving her and other black girls vulnerable to more state inflicted violence. Her testimony breaks away from a respectability politics that once attempted to protect black women and girls from a racialized and sexual violence via a practiced performance womanhood and silence, and instead

---

<sup>64</sup> Darlene Clark Hines, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance" in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall. (New York: The New Press, 1995), 384.

Marie Hill showed the limits of these politics. As much as respectability politics practiced by African American club women and working class black women protected and provided a performance that shielded their interior lives from further exploitation and state control, it was also a politics that occasionally hid the brutal truths of many black women and young girls.<sup>65</sup> Her foster family attempted to hide behind an image of respectability, and in their attempts to hide behind these images of respectability they only reinforced law and order's pathologizing and criminalization of blackness, while also naturalizing the sexual terror that Marie experienced in her intimate familial relationships that eventually fed her into additional carceral spheres.

*Pushed Outside of the Domestic:*

Because of the violent state pedagogy that taught Marie Hill that both the public and the private spheres occupied by black women were never fully safe, she was forced to learn new survival techniques, techniques that would hopefully relieve her from an aspect of the daily terror that attempted to immobilize her. She became intent on staying away from her abusive foster father, and this meant that she had to find other pathways to survive in a community where the social services that were supposed to aid and protect her only opened a new Pandora's box of violence and terror. In response to state failures, Marie recounts, "When I started hanging out in those splo house and staying out sometimes all night [...] I got up with three other girls who taught me how to shoplift and forge checks."<sup>66</sup> She does not reveal much about the other three

---

<sup>65</sup> The politics of respectability has been richly discussed by historian Evelyn Higginbotham's *Righteous Discontent* (Harvard University Press, 1993) and her discussion of black church women political influence; as well as, historian Stephanie Shaw's *What a Woman ought To Be and To Do: Black Professional Women Workers during the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

<sup>66</sup> Jordan Milton, "Marie Hill knows of life from wrong side of the tracks," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 10, 1975.

young women who taught her new economic survival techniques in the splo house.<sup>67</sup> This group likely included Carolyn Fox, Mamie K. Higgs, and Bessie Dorthea Wilkins,<sup>68</sup> the women that were originally charged with Marie Hill for the murder of W.E. Strum; it may have also included Virginia Stanton, the woman who attempted to provide Marie an alibi during both the investigation and the trial.<sup>69</sup> It is in underground spaces of intimacy with black girls that Marie chose new kinships, relationships, and practiced a body politic that could be rooted in the possibility of mutual protection, love, and care, as well as, the practice of a gendered performance that undermined the state's controlling definitions of girlhood and womanhood.

Prior to Marie Hill's death sentence, former public school teachers described her demeanor and reputation as, "cold and brutal."<sup>70</sup> Another teacher would report that "She wasn't very smart and she wasn't very pretty [...] she liked to wear men's shirts and neckties."<sup>71</sup> Considering that Marie Hill only attained a formal education until she was about thirteen years old, the statement from these teachers reveal how public school officials perceived black girlhood. The characterization of Marie Hill with controlling images, such as Sapphire, or the depiction of black girl's bodies as aesthetically outside the boundaries of beauty, fits into the long legacy of images being utilized against black women to brand and ultimately control their movements.<sup>72</sup> However, these images that marked Marie Hill's body prior to when one could reasonably argue that she entered adulthood, and instead occurs during her adolescence. Marie

---

<sup>67</sup> A "splo house" was the slang or colloquial term for a house known for selling illegal whiskey.

<sup>68</sup> Bessie Dorthea Wilkins was the full name of her friend who was also known as Susie Wilkins. For the remainder of this project, Wilkins will be referred to by her nickname, Susie Wilkins.

<sup>69</sup> *State of North Carolina v. Marie Hill*. Supreme Court of North Carolina. 10 Dec. 1969.

<sup>70</sup> "Marie Hill Grows Up Prison's Death Row," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), December 30, 1972.

<sup>71</sup> Nancy Bentson, "A Girl's Tragic Story-On Death Row at Age 18," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD) February 8, 1969.

<sup>72</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (New York: Routledge Press, 2000), 76.

Hill's coding could be described as the construction of black girl adolescence that "increasingly represent middle-class anxieties [and] racialized fears and the concern with enforcing class- and gender-based boundaries."<sup>73</sup> Rather than images of playfulness and innocence, these depictions of being 'cold and brutal' push Marie outside the perceptions of childhood and into a sphere of adulthood that does not allow care and empathy or justifies a lack of care and empathy for a girl who was already experiencing sexual terror within her household. This push outside of childhood, specifically girlhood, was akin to the process that Angela Davis coins as the "annulment from womanhood,"<sup>74</sup> that black women experience when a combination of controlling images and violence terrorizes and brands their body, yet for Marie Hill it is annulment from girlhood, which involves the ungendering and movement outside a specific temporality that is viewed as space and period typically protected first within the home and by other adults. Marie Hill's public-school teachers coded her with controlling images that lacked respectability and again pushed her into a branding of criminality that marked her as unworthy aesthetically. Rather than recognizing signs of possible sexual abuse, her public-school teachers aided in furnishing the intimate state violence that occurred within Marie Hill's foster home.

Hortense Spillers suggests, "that 'gendering' takes place within the confines of the domestic, an essential metaphor that then spreads as tentacles for male and female subject over a wider ground of human and social purposes,"<sup>75</sup> and for the black enslaved female it is in fact an "ungendering" process as they are always the illegible being needed to construct womanhood. Thus, the domestic spaces inhabited specifically by blackness are read as ungendered spaces

---

<sup>73</sup> Aimee Meredith Cox, *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 12.

<sup>74</sup> Angela Davis. "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves." *The Massachusetts Review* 13, no. 1/2 (Winter-Spring, 1972): 87.

<sup>75</sup> Spillers, 72.

until the social orders, including the state, defines when and how to code them to fit state needs. When these spaces become ungendered by the state, the domestic spaces become void and read as geographies without sovereignty or self-determination, and thus, the state claims justification to invade and fill these alleged void geographies with its own rationale and infrastructure. Black bodies who inhabit them become a blank canvas for its definitions. Marie Hill, prior to being imprisoned, had to be coded as an ungendered flesh who could be exploited for state needs. The violent branding of illegitimacy and the sexual violence practiced against Marie Hill reduced Marie to a powerless being of black girlhood who needed correction and if this could not be “corrected” then she would become another example of which racialized and gendered bodies should be discarded. Her public-school teachers who coded reactions to sexual abuse within the domestic become an extension of this gendering process. In her foster home she becomes this illegible gendered being through sexual terror, and these teachers, representatives of the state, continue this racialized gendering that codes Marie Hill as ‘brutal and cold’ allowing the state to use this form of black girlhood to support its vision of who can be included as protected life and who can be excluded.

Thus, when Marie Hill chose to practice a masculinized gender performance, this could have been her attempt at locating a mode of being where she could find home, identities, and relationships where she would not be deemed as powerless, easily violated, and immobilized to violent geographies ranging from her hometown of Rocky Mount, North Carolina to her foster home. Pursuing entrepreneurship, despite its illegality, and dressing in the image of possibly a businessman by wearing “men’s shirts and neckties” was the aesthetic choreography of a girl seeking power and mobility in a town and home that attempted to trap her physically, economically, and ideologically on the periphery as an object that was easily disposable.



Nonetheless, her masculinized gendered performance also fueled the town and its state officials when they defined black girlhood as an illegible being. Marie Hill's resistance or search for new ways of being that would not render her powerless were also the practices that the state consumed when it saw ideologies on girlhood challenged and unstable.

At the age of 13-years old, Marie decided to enter an underground space with other women, specifically the underground economy of selling illegal liquor and forging checks. While this may have been a mode of escape from a domestic space that terrorized her, it was also a new house in which these women could have been practicing an economy that allowed both economic independence from the state, support, pleasure, and a micro-cooperative economy that ran outside her previous domestic logics. This escape not only provided Marie Hill access to the economic resources that she would need when she decided to escape the sexual terror at home, but in a sense, she also found new intimate spaces and relationships where she was able to form an identity that undermined the ways in which the state attempted to control and exploit black girlhood. Although she was later flagged by the courts for her deviant "homosexuality," it was also within these possible same gender loving relationships that she might have been able to practice a mutual form of love and care not practiced or seen within her own foster home. For this reason, underground spaces were imperative to Marie Hill.

These underground spaces were fugitive by nature and undermined the state and capital needs that annulled Marie Hill from girlhood. They were geographies that attempted to escape the violence of the state while also envisioning and practicing expressions of desires and wants. While these spaces are not always located in proximity to the underground economy, it is a space that is often tapped into when black girls are trying to escape. It is important not to overstate the freedom of these spaces because while they were attempts to escape violence and state

persecution, many black girls who fall outside the borders of the state and its ideologies, are still the most vulnerable to be attacked even within these fugitive spaces.

Other tools of oppression do permeate these fugitive spaces of the most marginalized. In fact, anti-violence activist and scholar Beth Richie points out the centrality of locating these fugitive spaces. While black girls, especially queer black girls look for these modes of survival, the state is also searching for them as well in order to feed more bodies into the carceral state. Richie emphasizes that for African American girls, “beyond individuals who are ‘queer’ to those who simply do not conform to traditional standards because of their appearance, their work, their family structure, or their behavior,”<sup>76</sup> black girls and women are always at risk of being used as the dialectical image of deviant womanhood. Thus, black girls, like Marie Hill, may be able to find places of escape that hold possibilities of survival and new imaginations of being but under the surveillance of the state, these moments and movements of escape were fleeting and nonpermanent. Furthermore, if their spaces and actions were coded as spaces and movements at the margin, then these acts were always read as criminal, which only feeds into the carceral logics of social and cultural pathology. Their modes of survival, their blackness, their queerness begin to add up against them. They are targets to be tracked and surveilled, and ultimately, this helps to push Marie Hill to be the main suspect for the murder of the white shopkeeper.

In 1968, with several arrests for petty crimes already trailing Marie Hill as she attempted to escape domination, she begun to gather marks that coded her as a threat who undermined state control, and when the robbery and murder of the white storefront owner gained the attention of the small North Carolina community, Marie Hill became suspect number one. Why? According to the Rocky Mount law enforcement, the evidence that linked Marie Hill to the violent scene

---

<sup>76</sup> Beth E. Richie, *Arrested Justice: Black Women Violence, and America's Prison Nation*. (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 116.

was Marie Hill's money habits. Officer Horace Winstead stated, "We found where she had been spending money freely. That's what called my attention to her."<sup>77</sup> In other words, it was not forensic evidence nor witnesses that identified her with the crime; instead, it was Marie Hill's ability to spend money. Marie Hill was coded as a criminal body because she could practice a certain amount of economic and social agency. She moved beyond a space of immobilization that her town of Rock Mount and her foster home attempted to enforce. Marie had access to spaces that a small town black girl should not have access to at the age of 17-years old.

These are the conditions into which Marie Hill was born. They consisted of the porous geographies of the private and the public spheres that began marking her body as disposable material not necessarily needed for its labor but instead objectified and made into a spectacle of a body to show which bodies are worthy of protection and which bodies would be abandoned. This process began when she was born into a city that was possibly built upon the violently exploited labor of enslaved and incarcerated African American labor who were used to build state infrastructures that were intended to represent modernity, progress, and economic possibilities in the Jim Crow South that reinforced racial and gendered hierarchies. However, as the state needs transformed, these carceral logics merged with new and emerging carceral logics where the state employed a racialized and gendered definitions of motherhood, girlhood, and family to decide who would be the most vulnerable to be expelled from spheres of protection. Marie Hill and her mother would be the black girls and black women expelled from these spheres of protection. Ultimately, these early conditions that Marie Hill lived through are not unique but emblematic of how the state utilizes even the most intimate spaces and relationships to further its vision, and in the year of 1968 when Marie Hill was officially incarcerated by the

---

<sup>77</sup> Jordan Milton, "Marie Hill knows of life from wrong side of the tracks," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 10, 1975.

state it was also known as year when mass transformation in capitalist and state structures were being revolutionized partly because of various anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movements led by third world liberation movements. The case of Marie Hill is a small sample but significant representation of the buildup that led to this key moment; and her imprisonment and conviction to the gas chamber reveal even more about the state and capital logics.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **The Trial: A State Spectacle and The Legitimizing of Deviant Intimacies**

After a week of seasonal labor at the local warehouse owned by the Independent Tobacco Factory in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, Marie Hill craved a break from the monotony of her week. When her foster father expressed that he no longer needed a train ticket that was scheduled to travel to South Carolina, Marie Hill jumped at the chance for a small adventure and the chance for a brief escape. With her friend Susie Wilkins by her side, they made their way out of their small and sometimes suffocating community for a weekend of fun in a new scenery. For Marie Hill, this trip was a chance to possibly reconnect with family who she was not able to see enough of. After all, her biological father, Ora McKnight, and her paternal grandfather resided in Kingstree, South Carolina. In the past when Ora McKnight was able to make his way up to Rocky Mount for the occasional visit, Hill expressed how she always loved the joy rides that they would take around town.<sup>78</sup> However, unlike her previous visits to South Carolina that eased her mind and body from the violence that haunted her in her foster home and local community, this visit to South Carolina did not gift her with the same relief that trips in the past brought her. On Friday, October 25, 1968, in Kingstree, South Carolina, Marie Hill and her friend Susie Wilkins were confronted with two men that Marie knew too well. Rocky Mount Officers Detective Horace Winstead and Detective Walter G. Mullen left their local jurisdiction to arrest Hill and Susie Wilkins. For Marie Hill, the State of North Carolina, Edgecombe County issued a

---

<sup>78</sup> Milton Jordan, "N.C.'s Marie Hill Hopes Death Row Days Are Gone," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 3, 1975.

warrant for her arrest on the charges that she “did kill and murder one W.E. Strum of Rocky Mount, N.C.,” signed by prosecuting attorney, W.O. Moore.<sup>79</sup>

Under the scrutiny of the state and with the warrant already written and read to her, Marie Hill described that she felt that her fate and any other pathways out of this state persecution was already decided, and in return, she confessed to a crime that she later said she did not do. When asked why by her state appointed attorney, H. Vinson Bridgers, during her trial, she responded,

Marie Hill: Because the warrant was already read out for me for murder and he asked me I might as well have told the truth about it, so I told him yes, I had killed Mr. Strum.

Bridgers: Why did you tell him that?

Marie Hill: Because the warrant was already made out for murder for me.

Bridgers: I understand that, but why did you tell him that you had done it and these other persons had been siding and abetting you in doing it if you did not do it?

Marie Hill: *I had no choice.*<sup>80</sup>

Since the state’s main evidence tying her to the murder of W.E. Strum was her confession (not fingerprints, forensic evidence or eyewitnesses that connected her to the scene) debates over choice, coercion and consent became the central questions surrounding Marie Hill’s confessions to a murder. She would later recant this confession and support her location through alibi’s that verified her whereabouts during the estimated time of the crime. This debate over choice and consent would continue to be the logic in which some advocates for Marie Hill would attempt to overturn her death sentence. Organizations like the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union submitted an Amicus Curiae brief in support of overturning Marie Hill’s death sentence by highlighting that the trial court proceeded with the confession “without making findings of fact

---

<sup>79</sup> State of North Carolina, “Warrant (before recorder),” (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969) 1-2.

<sup>80</sup> State of North Carolina, “Defendant’s Evidence: Marie Hill” (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), 64; emphasis added.

with regard to defendant's age, maturity, and mental condition."<sup>81</sup> However, what the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union overlooked was that the questions of choice, coercion, and consent could not simply be reduced to the lack of legal representation, age, or maturity. It was also the state's manipulation of her most intimate relationships, both caring and abusive, and for a young black woman, this manipulation allowed an accusation to translate into a conviction.

In this chapter, I argue that the state of North Carolina manipulated and controlled Marie Hill's most intimate relationships by severing her connections to both abusive and caring relationships in order to racialize and gender her into an illegible being who could never hold the status of innocence. Specifically, via the trial court, the testimony from state officials demonstrate the ways in which the state disavowed Marie Hill's experiences of violent familial abuse and manipulated her caring relationships. This control over her intimate relationships rendered Marie Hill as underserving which allowed the state to more easily disregard her age, maturity, and mental condition and ultimately sentence her to death. More broadly, the state's performance represents how the carceral state employs the intimate to construct the gendered and racialized criminal body into a malleable being who is ineligible for compassion and more easily manipulated for control.

#### *State Disavowal of Intimate Abuse:*

On December 17, 1968, the trial for Marie Hill began. On that day, the twelve jurors of eight white men and four black men began to listen and watch the state present its evidence against Marie Hill to convict her for the murder of a white storefront keeper, W.E. Strum. The central evidence that the state of North Carolina relied upon was the confession that officers

---

<sup>81</sup> North Carolina Civil Liberties Union, "Brief of Amicus Curiae" (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), 2.

Walter G. Mullen and Horace G. Winstead took from Hill in Kingstree, South Carolina. With the warrant read and Marie Hill feeling pressured and possibly intoxicated during her interrogation, she confessed without legal representation. She stated that she just wanted to tell the Officer Winstead the “truth.”<sup>82</sup>

Marie’s state appointed counsel, H. Vinson Bridgers, cited her lack of legal representation as an opportunity to debate the validity of her confession. With a central piece of state evidence under question, the trial judge Hon. George M. Fountain, dismissed the jury to verify the officer’s conduct and determine if Marie Hill’s confession was admissible evidence. Interrogated in the absence of the jury, the state prosecutor questioned Detective Horace Winstead, which was summarized by Judge George M. Fountain as,

That [Officer Winstead] told [Marie Hill] that he had talked with Susie and he knew some things and some thing he did not know. Whereupon, the defendant made certain statements to Officer Mullen and Officer Winstead. That Officer Winstead had given similar warnings of the defendant on another occasion about two years before, and had been acquainted with her and she with him for about five years [...] there was no threat of any kind made against the defendant, nor any promise of reward or hope of reward, or any inducement, or any suggestion of duress to persuade the defendant to make any statement whatever.<sup>83</sup>

Ultimately, Judge Fountain agreed with the state prosecution that Marie Hill was not threatened during her confession in Kingstree, South Carolina and that the “truth” that she told the police was not coerced and thus valid evidence. However, when the judge and ultimately the state decided what was deemed worthy as a valid “threat,” they rendered the past intimate violence that Marie Hill was subject to as separate and insignificant to what threatened and coerced Marie Hill during her moment of “truth” with Detective Horace Winstead. In fact, the judge’s

---

<sup>82</sup> State of North Carolina, “Voire dire – Horace Winstead” (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), 29.

<sup>83</sup> State of North Carolina, “Voire dire – Horace Winstead” (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), 35.



simplified summary negates that Detective Winstead acted as a menacing figure that stalked Marie Hill's every move since she was 13-years old, and by disavowing this stalking, the trial court further naturalized the practice of state's attempt at completely mastering black women and girl's bodies.

From his trial testimony, Detective Horace M. Winstead represented the ways in which the state disavows black women's intimate relationships to keep them under the surveillance and control of the carceral state. Specifically, Winstead admitted that he had known Marie Hill for "four or five years," and in fact, has known her well enough to make a judgement of her intelligence and background. In Detective Winstead's words, Marie Hill was someone who earned a "ninth-grade education and I would have to say that she has a fair ninth-grade education. She seems intelligent to me."<sup>84</sup> In a sense, Officer Winstead both watched Marie Hill mature through adolescence and began to build a profile of who and what Marie Hill was capable of according to state logics. Detective Horace Winstead had known Marie Hill since she was a 12 or 13-year old girl, and it is also around this time that Hill reported that she was being sexually abused by her foster father. Although it is unclear whether or not Marie admitted to Detective Winstead about the intimate violence that was being inflicted upon her, it is obvious that rather than the state reaching out and providing care for a 12 or 13-year old girl, they created their own narrative. The state did not question why a 13-year old girl no longer desired to stay at home and actively sought to find other places to rest. Instead, the state constructed its own narrative of who Marie Hill was and was not. In this process of constructing who she was, the Rocky Mount local police force began collecting the materials needed to more easily construct a 17-year old black girl as criminal, and the trial court solidified this criminalizing process.

---

<sup>84</sup> State of North Carolina, "Voire dire – Horace Winstead" (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), 35.

While Marie Hill attempted to present herself as “just a 17-year old girl”<sup>85</sup> to the jury, the state prosecutor forced Hill to present a different picture of herself. During her own cross-examination at the trial, the state-prosecutor again asked Marie Hill to introduce herself, and in this state forced presentation, she was required to reveal in her own words,

In my 17 years I have been convicted of forgery, larceny, and for not going to school. I have been convicted five times for stealing. I have been convicted three times for forgery. I was convicted in January of 1967 for cutting two boys in South Rocky Mount. I have known Mr. Winstead for three or four years. He talked to me about some of these cases I was convicted of before. I have always told him the truth about it.<sup>86</sup>

At this moment, Marie Hill was forced to list and quantify her life, and in return, the state reduced the complexities of her life into a numerical list of infractions against the state and its emerging ideologies of law and order. Three convictions of forgery, five convictions of stealing, and two incidents of violence against two other boys were employed by the state as the quantifiable and objective material to code Marie Hill’s life. It was a process in which Katherine McKittrick might situate as the historic and ongoing state project where “blackness comes from: the list, the breathless numbers, the absolutely economic, the mathematics of the unliving.”<sup>87</sup> These were the numbers that could be easily added up to code and produce criminal black girlhood while also killing the complexities of blackness, and more specifically killing Marie Hill. In this forced quantified reduction and fragmentation of her life into objectified lists and the neutrality of numbers, the state of North Carolina deemed insignificant key aspects that shaped her truths. Simultaneously, the carceral regime needed Marie Hill as the dialectical figure to define who could and could not be a victim entitled to protections.

---

<sup>85</sup> State of North Carolina, “Defendant’s Evidence: Marie Hill” (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969) 64.

<sup>86</sup> State of North Carolina, “Defendant’s Evidence: Marie Hill” (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969) 64.

<sup>87</sup> Katherine McKittrick, “Mathematics of Black Life,” *The Black Scholar* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 17.

Year after year for the past four to five years, Detective Winstead and North Carolina's penal system taught Marie Hill what the state would consider as objective and valued truths. Marie Hill's truth as a victim of rape and familial sexual abuse were not written within the numerical coding of her 12 or 13-year old body when they first encountered her, but other state truths were being written. Her coding produced the figure of criminalized black girlhood and womanhood. On that trial stand, Marie Hill represented the state's construction of a body that was the perpetuator of and responsible for the violence that haunted Rocky Mount rather than violent state technologies. She was representative of a deviant blackness that required a constant monitoring to protect private property and persons from her criminality and violence. Yet, the overtones of explicit gendered anti-blackness were hidden behind the state's choice to include four African American men to be her peers who judged and sentenced her to death. The four African American men selected for her trial was the partial departure from the explicit exclusion of African Americans from citizenship in a post 1964 Civil Rights Act and post 1965 Voting Rights Act. This inclusion of a select few black bodies within the state project through civic citizenship veiled Marie Hill's criminalization as an individualized and pathological behaviors. According to transforming state logics, Marie could have been a future juror, yet her record and lists of juvenile acts against the state supported her current criminalization. The re-enforcement of universal meanings of respectable citizenship and entitlements discounted the racialized and gendered violence that informed Marie Hill's actions throughout Rocky Mount.

Those meaning and truths that privileged whiteness as citizenship were not written in the list of infractions. In fact, cloaked under these numerical lists of infractions was a different narrative. This was a narrative that the state both rendered invisible and capitalized on. It was a list that Marie Hill was all too aware of. After all, she was the only one forced to recite it during

her trial, and because of this, it is possible that Marie Hill already knew how Detective Horace Winstead and Detective Walter G. Mullen would code her in that unfamiliar interrogation room in Kingstree, South Carolina. Perhaps the warrant that was read to Marie Hill was proof that the documentation or paper trail had already begun to accumulate and would discount all her other truths. Her juvenile record acted as the objective state truths that would disfigure Marie Hill as a murderer and veiled the violences that informed her choreography in Rocky Mount.

Perhaps cloaked behind the breathless list of Marie Hill's five convictions for stealing and three convictions for forgery was a black girl attempting to find the economic means of survival in a town that was already dispossessed by the violent industrialization and abandonment of local economies that previously forced her biological mother Mary L. Hill to leave Marie Hill with her foster parents as a young child. Perhaps cloaked behind this breathless list was a girl attempting to find the capital for her foster mother Arielle Lesegne, a local sweeper at the tobacco harvest, who was being harassed by City Inspectors to fix and bring their roof up to city standards a few months prior to the murder of W.E. Strum.<sup>88</sup> Hidden behind Marie Hill's tallies of school absences that undoubtedly affected her pursuit of an education beyond the ninth grade was not simply a delinquent or "slow girl" as teachers once categorized her, but of a girl who could not awake in time for the first school bell after a number of sleepless nights either wondering if her foster father would enter her bedroom. Possibly, her inability to sleep peacefully was due to the often loud and active local "slo house"<sup>89</sup> where she was occasionally able to escape to but also was not an environment meant for a 13-year old girl pursuing an education.

---

<sup>88</sup> *State of North Carolina v. Marie Hill*. Supreme Court of North Carolina. 10 Dec. 1969.

<sup>89</sup> "Slo house" is slang or a colloquial term for a house known to sell illegal whiskey.

When Marie Hill could attend school functions like the school dance where she allegedly assaulted two other boys, what was cloaked under this code of violent and deviant black girlhood? Was it possibly a girl attempting to act in self-defense? After all, Marie Hill was a girl who defied the racialized and gendered politics of femininity by choosing to openly express her gendered performance through a masculine fashion aesthetic. She unapologetically wore neckties and masculine clothing. In addition, rumors that Marie Hill was queer circulated throughout town, especially after she was arrested for the murder of W.E. Strum.<sup>90</sup> Did the boys on that fateful night attempt to target, harass and torment a queer black girl during an event that was intended to be a night of joy and pleasure with her closest girlfriends, and Marie refused to be another victim? These are just a few possible complexities that Officer Horace Winstead and the North Carolina penal system hid when they forced Marie to reduce her life to a set of numbers and lists of crimes.

It is unknown whether or not Marie Hill explicitly revealed the sexual abuse being inflicted upon her by her foster father to Officer Winstead on the multiple occasions that that they encountered each other over the years. It is possible that like black women and girls before her, Marie Hill practiced her own form of dissemblance. She might have hid the sexual abuse that was occurring in her home in order to present an image of respectability in her working-class home. Maybe this practice of dissemblance was not employed to protect herself, but rather for her foster mother and grandmother who felt the need to portray respectable images. Their performance of respectability defied overly sexualized images of black womanhood, especially among poor black women. It also provided a veil to hide the abuse that may have further

---

<sup>90</sup> Ike Ridley, "Case Of N.C. Girl On Death Row Sparked National Reaction," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 17, 1969.

marginalized and ostracized their home in their small community where state officials were already seeking to evict them. Yet, this dissemblance occurred at the expense of Marie and possibly her foster mother's and grandmother's safety from intimate violence.

However, it is possible that Officer Horace Winstead was explicitly aware of the violence that was being inflicted on Marie Hill for the past four to five years. Considering that during both her trial and during her initial interrogation at Kingtree, South Carolina, Marie Hill told Detective Mullen and Detective Winstead that “two weeks prior to this thing happening [the murder of W.E. Strum], that she and her father had a fight and he pulled a gun on her.”<sup>91</sup> Yet, this information provided by Hill during the interrogation and trial was dwindled down and summarized to one word by the courts, “tragic,”<sup>92</sup> rather than a coercive factor that dictated how Marie Hill would choose to move through these carceral spaces. With a history of intimate familial violence in the small town of Rocky Mount, the multiple encounters that Marie Hill and Detective Horace Winstead exchanged over the years, it is possible that she was already aware of how the state had and would continue to disavow the full complexities of her life. In the years that she had encountered the police and as she compiled her juvenile record, the state had alienated her from possible spheres of protections, like her age, maturity levels, traumas effecting her mental state, and her lack of resources or access to state protection from violence. They utilized her violent eviction from these spheres of protection to amass the numbers and lists needed in order to categorize and code her as both criminal and disposable. The state's disavowal of the intimate violence might have been the central factor or threat that informed Marie Hill of what her options were. After years of her traumas being rendered both invisible

---

<sup>91</sup> State of North Carolina, “Voire dire – Horace Winstead” (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), 48.

<sup>92</sup> *State of North Carolina v. Marie Hill*. Supreme Court of North Carolina. 10 Dec. 1969.

and capitalized upon, options to protect her life were already scarce. Thus, when Marie Hill declared, “*I had no choice*,” on the trial stand, one must question if and when Marie ever truly had a choice that could guarantee her protection when she was interacting with state power? Her lack of choice in both her intimate relationships and under state control would continue to work in tandem to deny Marie Hill access to both choice and entitlements of care. The crossroads between the intimate and state control was emblematic of a larger debate that would develop more fully during the mid to late 1970s.

Debates over what protections battered and abused women and children were entitled to would filter through various social and political circles across the United States. This most notably occurred during the mid to late 1970s when cases like Joan Little, Dessie Woods, Yvonne Wanrow, and Inez García would gain national attention.<sup>93</sup> Nationwide support would coalesce for these four women of color who were all placed on trial for murder during acts of self-defense against sexual violence. For radical feminists of color and antiracist white feminists the question of what role the state should play in protecting battered and abused women became central. Over the years, they observed that “‘the rape issue was being co-opted’ by government funders and law-and-order politics, as well as ‘non-feminist’ professionals.”<sup>94</sup> In other words, the government and private businesses took over spaces established by radical feminists to protect battered women and children, and instead utilized these radical spaces as justifications to expand carceral regimes along with other law and order policies, like the emerging War on Drugs. These early anti-carceral feminists recognized that this co-optation would further embed

---

<sup>93</sup> Emily Thuma, “Lessons in Self-Defense: Gender Violence, Racial Criminalization and Anticarceral Feminism,” *WSQ: Women’s Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 3&4 (Fall/Winter 2015), 52-71; Emily Thuma, “Against the ‘Prison/Psychiatric State’: Anti-violence Feminisms and the Politics of Confinement and Law,” *Feminist Formations* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2014), 26-51.

<sup>94</sup> Thuma, “Lessons in Self-Defense: Gender Violence, Racial Criminalization and Anticarceral Feminism,” 60.

law and order ideologies in the United States which would further disenfranchise poor people and communities of color, and with a few exceptions, women of color would largely be alienated out the sphere of women who were deemed worthy of protection in law and order's tough on crime practices against sexual assailants.

Marie Hill was emblematic of this alienation from state protection under law and order tenets. She in fact demonstrates the ways in which black girls and women like her would be criminalized through the intimate sphere. This state negation was not the only method where the state employed the intimate to further produce a criminal body through gendered and racialized ideologies. As much as the state needed to sever Marie Hill from the possibilities of being a victim of intimate violence, the state of North Carolina also needed to present a spectacle of deviant and non-normative intimacies that did not need to be respected by the jurors and ultimately the state.

*The State Spectacles of Non-Normative Intimacies:*

Immobilization, alienation, and isolation became the logics of intimate and state violence that haunted Marie Hill through her childhood and adolescence, and because of this, she consistently fought to establish and re-establish intimacies and kinships that countered these technologies. Whether it was with other women who adopted her within their network at the local slo house or with other women who resided in Rocky Mount, these intimacies become Marie Hill's insurgency against the entangled web of state and intimate violence that constantly threatened her. Yet, because these insurgent intimacies threatened both intimate and state violence, the state had to practice a counterinsurgency. This counterinsurgency took form as devaluing the intimacies that fell outside the definitions of normativity, and the state practiced



this devaluing by delegitimizing the network of black women that Marie Hill surrounded herself with.

After Marie Hill's first confession in Kingstree, South Carolina, she had been extradited back to North Carolina. Returned to hometown, she once again saw another familiar face, Virginia Stanton. Virginia Stanton and her home was one of the places that Marie Hill escaped to and established new intimacies. When Virginia Stanton arrived at the Rocky Mount police station and she saw her friend, she called out, "Marie, you couldn't have done it because you were with me that day."<sup>95</sup> With this familiar face, defense, and confirmation that Marie Hill was not alone and isolated as she was in Kingstree, South Carolina, it was from this point that Hill began to tell a different truth. The defense of Marie Hill's whereabouts was not only confirmed by Virginia Stanton but also Virginia Stanton's half-brother, Johnny "Pumpkin" Hines, and Virginia Stanton's mother, Lollie Peoples. However, their network of defense for Marie Hill became the terrain in which the state would not only challenge the legitimacy of her alibi, but it also became the terrain in which the state would undermine the non-normative familial intimacies that Marie Hill and Virginia Stanton established. Amid this process, the state legitimized ideologies on valued and devalued family structures.

During Virginia Stanton's trial testimony, Marie Hill's attorney asked Virginia to verify where Marie was during that night and morning of the murder and why she was staying with her family. For Virginia, the presence of Marie in her home was not an unusual occurrence in the two to three years that Virginia had resided in Rocky Mount, but for this specific night before the murder of W.E. Strum, Virginia replied that,

---

<sup>95</sup> State of North Carolina, "Voire dire – Horace Winstead" (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), 40.

On Sunday, October 6, Marie Hill and I went to a prison camp somewhere up beyond Durham to see a friend of mine. When we got back from the that trip, I went on the other side of Leggett to my mother's house to pick up my children. Marie and I and the children came back to my house. Marie spent that night with me. [...] Marie, my brother Johnny Hines and I left my house about 20 or 25 minutes to nine o'clock that Monday morning.<sup>96</sup>

Additionally, before they left that morning Virginia relayed that she was awake at around 6:30am dressing her children for their school day. The morning that the white storefront keeper was killed, was an innocuous scene of a mother preparing her children for school and her younger friend Marie Hill slept in the next room. However, in response to this quotidian scene, the state prosecutor required that Virginia elaborate on whom she went to see with Marie at the prison camp. Virginia elaborated, "I went to the prison camp to see Herman Dickens. He is not my husband. Nobody lives with me except my children."<sup>97</sup> Upon further interrogation from the state prosecutor, Herman Dickens was implied to be her boyfriend while her husband lived in New York. One of the errands that she and Marie Hill left for later that day was to pick up money from the Western Union wired to her by Virginia's husband.

The two testimonies provided by Virginia Stanton reveal a process of delegitimizing non-normative intimacies or intimacies that cannot be categorized within valued ideologies of the nuclear family. During Virginia's first testimony, she chose to only describe Herman Dickens as a friend. The platonic label chosen by Stanton was an act of self-presentation where her value and associations could not be based upon her romantic partners or the structures of her home. Virginia Stanton chose who and how to define her relationships, and as she physically sat on display in that courtroom, she attempted during these initial testimonies to protect her interior

---

<sup>96</sup> State of North Carolina, "Defendant's Evidence – Virginia Stanton" (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), 69.

<sup>97</sup> State of North Carolina, "Defendant's Evidence – Virginia Stanton" (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), **69**.

life from being made into a spectacle as well. Virginia Stanton's self-presentation could not easily fit within the simple categorizations of femininity and nuclear family.

The upholding of the nuclear family, motherhood, and femininity is not simply based upon outdated ideologies, but rather a contested sphere of ideologies that produce systems of gendered racial capitalism. In particular, ideologies of family have historically and contemporary been the spheres controlled by the state, and as Angela Davis argues, historically the state and capitalism have “manipulate[d] family-based emotions into an unmediated fusion with extreme national and racial chauvinism,” in order to maintain social and capital relations.<sup>98</sup> For white womanhood and white motherhood, these figures have been employed as the ideological model that reinforced the image of the universal domestic space, specifically the nuclear family. In these domestic spaces capitalist ideologies and other tools of oppression (i.e. White Supremacy) could be taught and practiced, and this is where white women found their power in a family ideology that also disempowered.

In contrast, Virginia Stanton's two testimonies uncover how black women, motherhood, and their homes have been employed by the state to demonstrate who is not valued and who is pathological. The state built its definitions on what was ideologically and materially denied to black womanhood, Nevertheless, black women's refusal to completely collude to these confining and immobilizing notions of family also challenged state and capital orders. Thus, Virginia Stanton's positioning was not only because black womanhood and motherhood have been systematically denied to these universal conceptions, but it was also her refusal to completely accept these orders, which placed these ideologies in crisis. This crisis required a

---

<sup>98</sup> Angela Y. Davis, “Women and Capitalism: Dialectics of Oppression and Liberation,” in *The Black Feminist Reader*, ed. Joy James and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting (Blackwell Publishers: 2000), 165.

constant monitoring and manipulation to define what were valued intimacies versus pathological. Therefore, the state's imposed label of what type of intimacies connected Virginia Stanton and Herman Dickens not only attempted to crack open and divulge the intimate details of Virginia's relationships and interior life, this state imposed relationship with Herman Dickens was the state's efforts to categorize and file her body into one of the many controlling images that dictated African American women's movements. Simultaneously, it was an attempt to push her outside gendered and racialized conceptions of state valued intimate spheres.

Perhaps Virginia Stanton and Herman Dickens were friends who were romantically linked, but the state's emphasis on Virginia's possible romantic relationship uncover a different state agenda. The state tied Stanton with a man who was incarcerated at a prison camp, and for the state prosecutor this forced link was more than simply retracing Virginia Stanton's and Marie Hill's steps the day prior. The state prosecutor attempted to infer that Virginia Stanton was a woman already intimately and romantically associated with criminality. Furthermore, the clarification that her friend Herman Dickens was not her husband and her husband was living in New York, pushed forward the controlling images of hypersexualized black womanhood and irresponsible black motherhood. In this moment, Virginia Stanton was erased from the image of a loving mother who kissed her children goodbye for the morning or a caring friend and mentor who opened her home for Marie Hill, and instead, transformed her into a deviant figure of hypersexualized single black motherhood who relied upon an absentee father to financially support her. Virginia Stanton was a woman romantically linked with criminality and who could not control her household. On that court room stand, Virginia Stanton and her intimate connections were aberrations from the normative and valued intimacies of a nuclear family, and while these intimacies became a spectacle for the state to dissect and place on trial as well,

Virginia Stanton's defense of Marie Hill became delegitimized. The right to protect and defend both oneself and others was a privilege that the state only granted to those bodies and intimacies that fell within normative definitions of womanhood and family.

These insurgent intimacies that Marie Hill formed to disrupt the violence of isolation, alienation, and immobilization, while always vulnerable, became even more so as the state further dissected these non-normative intimacies. Through these non-normative intimacies that Marie Hill formed with friends like Virginia Stanton, all of their relationships became further at risk to the threat of state violence as well. Although Virginia Stanton, like Marie Hill, was always at risk to these webs of violence, especially as a black woman who lived in a non-nuclear home, Virginia Stanton was reminded by the state of these risks if she continued to maintain a relationship with Marie Hill. As the state dissected and displayed Virginia's alleged intimate partner relationships, the state also asserted its control over Virginia Stanton's familial relationships. From Virginia's testimony while she was being interrogated by the state prosecutor, Virginia revealed that when detectives Mullen and Winstead first took Virginia in to question her about Marie's whereabouts, Virginia made sure to state, "[Officer Mullen and Officer Winstead] came to my house that Saturday about two o'clock in the daytime and came back that Saturday night at 9 o'clock and took me away from the children and took me to Police Headquarters and kept me up there until eleven o'clock that night."<sup>99</sup> Virginia's description of her interaction with the police, reveal a woman who was frustrated with the constant state surveillance of her home. The Rocky Mount police invaded and interrupted her home and her children's routine, and despite being only a few hours out of the day that Virginia Stanton was stolen away from her children, this constant presence of state surveillance in her household and

---

<sup>99</sup> State of North Carolina, "Defendant' Evidence – Virginia Stanton" (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), 71.

the disruption of her role as a mother acted as a threatening reminder of the destruction that the police could inflict upon Virginia Stanton, her children, and extended kin-networks. Virginia Stanton knew that Marie Hill was a foster child dispossessed from potential loving relationships. Could Virginia take the chance of having the state violently separate her from her children like Marie Hill was separated from her mother? The state's presence in her home was a strong enough threat for Virginia Stanton to question her relationship with Marie Hill.

This is the predicament of black motherhood within carceral regimes. Virginia Stanton's dilemma represented a larger narrative of black womanhood and black motherhood walking the tight rope between maintaining the intimacies that not only fostered modes of survival but occasionally allowed one to live beyond just survival and find joy and love within friendships, extended kinships and/or romantic partners. However, because these intimacies fell outside the boundaries of the legible and often inaccessible constructions of the nuclear family, these kinships were placed on display as threats to discourage further intimacies that undermined state and capital structures of control. Black motherhood within the carceral regime faced the perpetual negotiation on how to remain unseen from the state to avoid further violent technologies that dispossessed black children and kinship networks, while also knowing that these intimacies were needed for their day-to-day survival.

Tethered to her children, perhaps this was the reason why Virginia Stanton went from enthusiastically defending Marie Hill starting from the time she first opened her home to Marie Hill and into a more tepid defense of, "I have known Marie Hill ever since I have been Rocky Mount, about two or three years. *She is not a good friend of mind.* She likes to come around and

play with my children.”<sup>100</sup> Despite Virginia Stanton knowing Marie Hill well enough to let Marie play and watch over for her children, sleep at her home, be a travel companion for a trip to a South Carolina prison camp, Marie was no longer a good friend by the end of her testimony. The diminishing of their friendship may have been Virginia’s self-defense from a state that had just attempted to investigate and place her relationships and the most intimate details of her life on trial, while also publically shaming her character, her role as a mother, friend, and spouse. This state shaming acted as its own violence that severed Virginia Stanton outside of the spheres of womanhood and motherhood, which further endangered her children. With the violent shaming and the possible threat of future state violence, Virginia Stanton was coerced to make a choice. It was a choice that consisted of choosing between shielding her children or maintaining a relationship that in many ways provided the needed resources that were also denied to her, like childcare for a single mother and the emotional support for a friend visiting a loved one at violent prison camps. Virginia Stanton may have temporarily shielded herself and parts of her intimate life from more invasive forms of state violence by distancing herself from Marie Hill, but for Marie, the state continued to succeed in its project of further alienating and isolating Marie Hill. Yet, Marie Hill refused to accept this violence passively.

*Reimagining Intimacies and Dreams of Possibilities:*

This alienation away from these insurgent intimacies that protected Marie Hill from the webs of state and intimate violence was an ongoing project that was inflicted in multiple ways, but as the state continued to manipulate these black women’s intimacies and inflict their own state violence, Marie Hill throughout this state terror continued to imagine new possibilities. As

---

<sup>100</sup> State of North Carolina, “Defendant’ Evidence – Virginia Stanton” (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969), 72; emphasis added.

the state collected its numbers, lists, and data to justify a state murder, Marie Hill also imagined her own list. Marie wrote her own lists and numbers that defied the codes that attempted to trap her within carceral regimes.

On that handwritten confession collected in Kingstree, South Carolina that would ultimately anchor the state's case against her during the trial, Marie Hill may have written her desires and imaginings of how caring intimacies might look. One thousand dollars were missing after the murder of W.E. Strum, and the police needed to account for it. When they asked Marie Hill to divulge where the money was and spent since they only found \$3 on her the night she was arrested. Pressured to account for the stolen \$1000, Marie compiled a list: \$30 worth of liquor for her and her friends; \$50 to pay for her friend Susie Wilkin's rent and some more money to buy clothes for Susie; .75 cents for Carolyn; \$35 to cover Mammie Higg's rent and an additional \$1.50; \$7 to lend Susie Wilkins money for food but Susie gave her back \$2.43; \$60 was given to Virginia Stanton; \$35 for an anonymous friend; possibly some money to help her foster mother repair their home roof that City Inspectors were harassing her about; and finally, Marie lent a few people some gas money. Obviously, this list does not add up to the \$1000 and the police could not verify that Marie spent this amount of money. Furthermore, when Marie recanted her confession, she disclosed that the only money that she possessed prior to the robbery and did spend was on liquor, gas money, and clothing for herself, and this money originated from her \$18 paycheck from her factory job and some money that she had taken from a South Carolina ABC store that she admits to robbing.<sup>101</sup> Nonetheless, the details of what and where the money

---

<sup>101</sup> Marie Hill, "Handwritten Confession by Marie Hill" (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969); State of North Carolina, "State's Evidence – Walter G. Mullen" (North Carolina State Archives – Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1969).



had actually been circulated reveals less about who killed W.E. Strum and more about Marie Hill and her dreams of possibility.

In this list, Marie Hill provided a glimpse into the desires and imaginations of a 17-year old black girl reaffirming her relationships and showing state deficiencies, despite the state's vigorous efforts to alienate and isolate her. For Marie, if she did have \$1000, the money was not only spent on herself for the entitlements or access to self-care that were denied to her, but also reaffirmed the intimacies that she built through extended kinships. In this state archive Marie wrote her desires to be cared for, as well as to protect the network of black women closest to her. In her dreams of possibility Marie reciprocated to the women who opened their doors for her by paying the rent that landlords most likely harassed them for. As the seasons transitioned into the colder winter months, she desired to provide her friends and herself warmer clothes that followed the latest fashions. For Marie Hill and her friends felt the brutal effects of a system where employed North Carolina workers earned the lowest weekly earnings in the country at \$97.17, and it was doubtful that she and her friends earned enough money at the local textile and tobacco factories or in their sporadic underground economies to support their daily needs.<sup>102</sup>

Additionally, Marie Hill listed her desire to shield her foster mother and grandmother from the constant surveillance of the state to prevent the city from foreclosing their house and dispossessing her adopted mother and grandmother during the colder winter months. Especially in those winter months when they did not want to burden other residents who struggled to support themselves in the environment where 38 percent of black residents did not have indoor

---

<sup>102</sup> National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, *North Carolina: Laboratory for Racism and Repression* (New York: National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, 1975), 22.

plumbing.<sup>103</sup> Plus, when North Carolina averaged only 3 hospital beds per 1,000 residents,<sup>104</sup> there was no guarantee that they would receive adequate healthcare if anything should happen.

It is possible that the 75 cents given to Carolyn Fox was a quick loan for a young mother who was trying to feed her new born baby, a vital task when “43 percent of North Carolina’s school-children have inadequate diets, the greatest deficiencies being in Vitamin A, iron, calcium and protein.”<sup>105</sup> The gas funds were imagined to allow her and her friends the occasional escape for adventures and possibilities outside of the town that attempted to cage them in. Marie Hill may have bought the liquor to share with her friends, or her purchase may have been a girl trying to self-medicate after years of the state disavowing her trauma and capitalizing on it to fit their needs of disposing of surplus black bodies. Like her juvenile record that coded her as the disposable criminal, Marie Hill provided her own list of possibilities and praxis on how communities could be protected, provided for, and more broadly what the state was and was not doing for her and the residents of Rocky Mount. These were the basic entitlements that Marie Hill imagined and desired while New York bankers like J.P. Stevens owned a monopoly of tobacco and textile industries in North Carolina<sup>106</sup> that afforded him a luxurious lifestyle but only earned Marie Hill an \$18 paycheck after several days of work.

This confession was Marie Hill’s list of demands and central to her demands was the affirmation of loving intimacies that extended beyond the state ideologies of family. For these loving intimacies that Marie Hill formed with women like Virginia Stanton prior to her arrest and that she continued to imagine even after her arrest, were the intimacies that questioned and challenged state control. After all, Angela Davis contends that, “Love alone is impotent, yet

---

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 20

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 21.

without it, no revolutionary process could ever be truly authentic,”<sup>107</sup> and more specifically, black extended rather than nuclear families, “points to the yearning for human solidarity in the midst of a situation where solidarity has almost become obsolete.”<sup>108</sup> Thus, Marie Hill’s continued insistence to affirm these intimacies that resisted against her alienation and isolation, was a girl who was not officially associated with any social movements but knew of the inherent importance of practicing a love and solidarity during her day-to-day interactions. Her intimacies may have been pathologized and criminalized, but they were intimacies that challenged and disrupted state and social orders during a moment when the state was actively suppressing black liberation movement’s direct action campaigns against an anti-black racism.

As Delio Vasquez points out, “poor people often cannot afford to waste their time engaging in symbolic forms of protest, and because they rarely expect to be heard by those in power anyway, they are much more likely to engage in practical, direct action than in symbolic political protests [...] Things like stealing food from work, not paying taxes, and calling in sick are [direct] actions that produce clear results.”<sup>109</sup> Marie Hill’s involvement in the underground economy prior to the murder of W.E. Strum was her direct action. It was her mode of survival, but her actions were also an implication against the systems of violence that facilitated gendered racial capitalism’s orders. She continued her form direct action through these insurgent intimacies that she refused to allow the carceral state completely disrupt during her coerced confession. Marie Hill’s insurgent intimacies challenged state and capital orders, but her direct

---

<sup>107</sup> Angela Y. Davis, “Women and Capitalism: Dialectics of Oppression and Liberation,” in *The Black Feminist Reader*, ed. Joy James and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting (Blackwell Publishers: 2000), 167.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>109</sup> Delio Vasquez, “The Poor Person’s Defense of Riots: Practical Looting, Rational Riots, and the Shortcomings of Black Liberalism,” in *Taking Sides: Revolutionary Solidarity and the Poverty of Liberalism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2015), 35.

action against the state was also the needed material for the state to compile a list of their objective truths that would justify her sentencing to death.

On Thursday, December 19, 1968, only one day after the trial commenced that Wednesday morning, the jurors and the state decided that they had enough lists, objective truths, and breathless numbers to justify the state murder of a 17-year old black girl. The compilation of this evidence did not start at trial but began long before W.E. Strum's murder. This documentation began with the state and capital abandonment of Rocky Mount, North Carolina where the haunting logics of carceral regimes forced Mary L. Hill to leave her young daughter, Marie Hill within a foster home. In these intertwined spaces of the carceral regime and the domestic, Marie Hill experienced a violence that violated and dictated her movements. This violence continued through her trial where the state employed the intimate, both the violent and the caring, as technologies to further alienate Marie Hill outside of spheres of protection and value. The state severed Marie Hill from the intimate violence that shaped her childhood and adolescence revealing the state's decision on which figures of girlhood and womanhood were entitled to compassion and protection as the battered women's movement began to emerge and take shape within radical feminist spheres, governmental programs, and private institutions. Despite radical black feminist groups and anti-racist white feminist groups who advocated for the protection of African American and other women of color without reifying carceral regimes, state and private institutions continued to push poor black girls and women out of spheres of protection and into carceral regimes. The state's violent treatment of Marie Hill via the disavowal of intimate violence and the violent spectacle of Virginia Stanton's non-normative intimacies, unveil a carceral logic where black womanhood and their intimacies are the raw material consumed by the carceral state in order to justify the control and disposal of black

bodies. This violent state control, including over Marie Hill's intimacies, would continue to be cultivated in North Carolina's Correctional Center for Women where Marie Hill would await her fate in solitary confinement, while nation-wide organizing outside the prison walls would fight for her life.

### **Chapter 3:**

#### **Imaginations of the Domestic and Intimate State Violence**

In late July 1978 during a White House press conference, President Jimmy Carter was asked whether he agreed or disagreed with Ambassador Andrew Young's assessment that there were currently political prisoners in the United States. President Carter disagreed.<sup>110</sup> While he acknowledged the criminalization of civil rights activists some "10 or 15 years" ago, according to him, this form of social control, "no longer happens." Situated within the Cold War, a period when the United States regularly framed the Soviet Union and the Global South as security threats and enemies of human rights and freedom, the statements by President Carter represented a nation who had forgiven itself and thought to have progressed beyond a violent racialized past when it regularly and openly inflicted violence against anti-racist, anti-imperial, and anti-capitalist organizations and nations. The US was now the self-proclaimed leader of global human rights, yet hidden under their acts of self-forgiveness, these statements signified a nation-state who was actively rendering black and other marginalized people who were currently caged in prisons as the silenced, invisible, and unwanted bodies needed to support the United States' merging and transforming state orders, especially the rise of law and order tenets.<sup>111</sup> In contrast, in 1977 the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression recognized the people who were made the invisible and unwanted in order to support this transforming state orders and regimes when they produced a list of political prisoners incarcerated by the United States, a list that may have prompted Ambassador Andrew Young to speak out. A name printed on that list

---

<sup>110</sup>Simon Anekwe, "U.S. Political prisoners listed," *New York Amsterdam News* (New York, NY), July 29, 1978.

<sup>111</sup>Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 13.

was a now 26-year-old Marie Hill, who had been imprisoned for all of her young adult life, 5 of those years on death row.<sup>112</sup>

The state's decision to persecute and convict Marie Hill without recommendation for life imprisonment or as the court termed it, "without mercy,"<sup>113</sup> follows both a pattern of racialized gendered violence, and like her life prior to her incarceration, it reveals emerging and continuing contours of state projects, as well as, the various tools the carceral state employed to naturalize its terrain. This chapter will argue that Marie Hill's incarceration and sentence to death via the gas chamber represented the state's ongoing project of disassociating itself from its own violence in a neoliberal carceral regime. Grace Hong defines "neoliberalism foremost as an epistemological structure of disavowal, a means of claiming that racial and gendered violences are things of the past. It does so by affirming certain modes of racialized and gendered, and sexualized life [...]"<sup>114</sup> Marie Hill's persecution is emblematic of the gendered racial logics of neoliberalism, and her repression and intimate carceral terror is a necessary technology to enforce this neoliberal's disavowal. Therefore, by centering Marie Hill's subsequent imprisonment, as well as the testimony of other women imprisoned at North Carolina's Correctional Center for Women, their experiences within North Carolina prison reveals a state that accomplished this veiled and slow state-sponsored disposal and murder via its own employment of intimate<sup>115</sup> violence, a violence that is traditionally seen as secluded to the

---

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> *State of North Carolina v. Marie Hill*. Supreme Court of North Carolina. 10 Dec. 1969.

<sup>114</sup> Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 7.

<sup>115</sup> It should be noted that I am expanding upon sociologist's Beth E. Richie's definition of the "intimate" and "intimate violence" in her work, *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation* (2012). Specifically, she defines the intimate which "reflects a Black Feminist orientation [and] is not solely based on hegemonic notion of intimacy in the

domestic and only enacted by private citizens. This long carceral terror contrasts the Rockefeller Drug laws that would be enforced 5 years after Marie's conviction, and instead the state was able to maintain the semblance of an institution that provided safety and protection from its most deviant figures. The ability to model and intersect carceral spaces with similar imaginaries of the domestic affirmed and established new logics of an intimate carceral branding that Marie Hill experienced growing up and allows for the state to continue to inflict a violence that has often been able to remain ignored and veiled through the guise of discipline, respectability, and isolation, while building up regimes of state terror. However, this intimate regime of terror was contested by Marie and other imprisoned women. Their refusal not only destabilized their branding but also provides a counter-epistemology against this carceral terror.

### *Building Domestic Spaces in Solitary Confinement*

By April 5, 1974 and 6 years after Marie Hill's conviction, according to the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression's overview of the racist, political, and economic oppression that reigned over African American and Indigenous peoples in North Carolina, they revealed that "Of the 81 persons still on death row through the United States, nearly 41 percent face death row in North Carolina. All but 10 of these 33 are Black, and one is Indian."<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, North Carolina's fast rate of executing black and Indigenous peoples was such a regular occurrence that in 1947, they gassed 5 men the same day, and by the 1960s, North Carolina decided that in order to keep up this pace of state violence, they needed at least two

---

relationship, but physical proximity, which emerges from everyday lived experiences of Black women (134)."

<sup>116</sup> National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, *North Carolina: Laboratory for Racism and Repression* (New York: National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, 1975), 16.



gassing chairs placed in North Carolina's Central Prison.<sup>117</sup> While the state execution of mostly African American men became a normalized ritual, the enforcement of capital punishment against African American women was numerically low. In fact, 1944 was the last year the state of North Carolina sentenced a woman to death. Her name was Bessie Mae Smith, a 19-year-old poor black girl who like Marie Hill was also accused of murdering a white man, specifically a taxi driver while out with friends.<sup>118</sup> Thus, with Smith condemned to the gas chamber, the question of where Marie Hill would spend her last days loomed. While the answer might seem obvious, the peculiarity of Marie Hill's punishment launched the state to question where does one cage a black girl awaiting her execution when these spaces were typically reserved for the caging and execution of men, especially African American men? In their quest to answer these uncharted questions, North Carolina's responding actions revealed emerging ideological landscapes on how black womanhood would be coded in public spaces in order to make them disposable. To facilitate this process, the state had to construct new landscapes that naturalized Marie Hill's death sentence. The surveillance technologies enforced by the prisons and the subsequent branding of black womanhood helped to facilitate this process by first creating its own imagined domestic spaces inside the walls of North Carolina Correctional Center for Women.

In 1968, when Marie Hill was convicted, "Death Row in North Carolina ha[d] always been at Central Prison in Raleigh across town from the Women's Prison,"<sup>119</sup> and according to

---

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 16

<sup>118</sup> STATE V. RALPH THOMPSON, CLEVE BRYANT JOHNSON, BESSIE MAE WILLIAMS, AND ANNIE MAE ALLISON; also see North Carolina's List of Executed Persons, <https://www.ncdps.gov/Adult-Corrections/Prisons/Death-Penalty/List-of-persons-executed/Executions-1941-1950>

<sup>119</sup> Jordan Milton, "N.C.'s Marie Hill hopes Death Row days are gone," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 3, 1975.

“K.B. Bailey, assistant correction’s commissioner, [North Carolina] decided Marie would not be kept on death row since only men had been kept there [...]”<sup>120</sup> Across town from North Carolina Women’s Prison sat Central Prison, a castle-like architecture that caged up to one thousand men, including some men who like Marie Hill were awaiting their fate on death row. Constructed for the mass surveillance of incarcerated bodies, like many other prisons across the United States, Central Prison could be envisioned as another surveillance system that enforced a process that has been argued to “objectify and transform individuals through architectural arrangements,”<sup>121</sup> and as surveillance scholar Simone Browne asserts, structures of surveillance are rooted within a “massifying” project intended for the purposes of both commodifying and selling blackness as legible objects during and after the enslavement of black people.

The theory that architectures, like prisons, are disciplinary and surveillance structures become more layered when put in conversation with its relationship to the surveillance of black bodies. According to Simone Browne, surveillance and the architectures of surveillance were not a corrective gaze but a branding gaze, and the logics of these surveilling structures continued to haunt prisons like Central Prison to fit the transforming state and more specifically carceral needs. Thus, in the case of Central Prison, the large castle-like structure was not simply a disciplining mechanism but a structure that continued a “massifying” project for the caged mostly black male bodies into bodies that were legible for North Carolina’s needs. In theory, it was a space where only a few eyes could surveil over the many, and in return these incarcerated men would be branded and objectified into legible commodities to fit the state’s needs. While this “massifying” project enacted to fit the state’s need for exploited labor, as signified by the

---

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2015), 41.

prison's establishment of a textile manufacturing sector within its walls, this massifying project during the second half of the twentieth century was also implemented as a technology that naturalized the confinement of surplus black and devalued labor no longer needed in communities, like Rocky Mount, that were slowly crumbling into an abandoned landscape as indicated by earlier chapters, and into a space that both supported the rising law and order tenets of branding blackness as criminal, while also facilitating the manufacturing of dispossessed surplus black bodies into a prison. However, unlike African American men, the justifications to funnel in black women depended on a different type of surveilling and massifying logic. How did Marie Hill and her fellow imprisoned women get surveilled and branded in order to justify their disposal? This coding starts with the construction or imagining of new spaces.

Marie Hill was not allowed within the walls of Central Prison. The structures that traditionally caged and coded men as criminal and death row inmates barred Marie Hill from physically being present within its quarters, and instead, "Marie was taken to Women's Prison and put in Cellblock-C, a solitary confinement unit usually reserved for incorrigible inmates."<sup>122</sup> The placement of Marie Hill was not simply North Carolina's logistical choice to honor binary codes of gender assignments, rather it was a continued process situated within the history of branding black women outside the gendered spaces of respectability that provide access to desirable status and protection. Marie Hill and other women locked inside Cellblock-C were placed within the secluded quarters of solitary confinement. Similar to other spaces of solitary confinement, the women coined this spaces as the "hole," but Cellblock-C was also known by

---

<sup>122</sup>Jordan Milton, "N.C.'s Marie Hill hopes Death Row days are gone," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 3, 1975.

another name. It was also called the “Punishment Cottage”<sup>123</sup> located up on the hill. The “security building” or the “cottage” was a small one-story building separated from the rest of North Carolina Women’s Prison population. Cellblock-C was a prison cage imagined as a domestic space to hold the most unrespectable women who were already labeled as deviant. It was the imagined domestic space not simply for its label as the “cottage” but also for following state ideologies that constructed domestic spaces. One of those being the use of respectability, a tool that was used against Marie Hill during her childhood, shaped which spaces could be invaded or abandoned, and continued to haunt her in solitary confinement.

The criminalization of Marie Hill and her placement in solitary confinement alienated her outside the borders of a prescribed definition of respectability, a key characteristic of femininity and access to citizenship. The confining and intimate quarters of Cellblock-C were the imagined spaces of the “incorrigible” or in other words the unruly, the hopeless, or the uncorrectable. These women, especially black women, within these quarters were the marked bodies that needed to be constantly surveilled and controlled. While the branding of black women outside definitions of womanhood is a tradition rooted in slavery,<sup>124</sup> for Marie Hill in 1968 the process of branding her as an “incorrigible” can be situated within the contemporary articulations of respectability, specifically the rise of the Moynihan Report. As established during an earlier chapter on Marie Hill’s childhood and adolescence, the Moynihan Report was a government report that would outline who fell outside the borders of respectable citizenship, and would blame the figure of the deviant black woman as the cultural phenomena who fostered black cultural pathologies, such as African American criminality. In return, the state prescribed

---

<sup>123</sup> Triangle Area Lesbian Feminists Book Project, *Break de Chains of Legalized U.\$. Slavery* (North Carolina: North Carolina Women’s Prison Book Project, 1976), 24.

<sup>124</sup> Angela Davis. “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves.” *The Massachusetts Review* 13, no. 1/2 (Winter-Spring, 1972): 82-84.

pathways towards “fixing” these cultural pathologies for upward mobility. However, these alleged pathways towards upward mobility largely just helped the state dictate African American women’s movements and relationships.

Roderick Ferguson argues that the Moynihan Report justified the state as “the appropriate catalyst to masculine agency [...] and the need for black men to resume their role as patriarchs,”<sup>125</sup> and this masculine agency was best regained in state institutions like the military, and eventually this masculine agency could be enforced within the domestic spaces over black women. For the Moynihan Report, masculine agency was best learned from the state and more importantly an integral feature needed within the home and through patriarchal intimate relationships in order to correct the cultural pathologies bred by African American women and their dysfunctional children. Although the report situated this control within the domestic and between a male and female relationship, we can expand this observation by Ferguson about the Moynihan Report to other methods and institutions where the state embodied the figure of “masculine agency” to code, control the movements, and abandon the figure of “deviant” black womanhood or the “incorrigible” incarcerated women in Cellblock-C. In a sense, where black men failed to implement masculinity within the domestic sphere of black families, the state became authorized to take control and implement its own masculinity or patriarchal control over black women’s and her children to prevent the further spread of culture pathologies. As Dorothy Roberts has identified, “A persistent objective of American social policy has been to monitor and restrain this corrupting tendency of Black motherhood.”<sup>126</sup> Hence, if controlling black women’s reproductive agency through social policy was one technology of state masculine agency used to

---

<sup>125</sup> Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Toward A Queer Of Color Critique*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 123.

<sup>126</sup> Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: First Vintage Book Edition, 1999), 8.

protect society from black women's pathologies, then the disposal of black women into carceral spheres became another viable option for the state to execute white patriarchal control over black women's bodies.

For Marie Hill and the other women locked in solitary confinement, Cellblock-C was a space of intimate surveillance that extended beyond the walls of her foster home and into the new spaces of solitary confinement. Rather than her foster father who she shared intimate spaces and resources with and who acted as the 'male agency' who watched, controlled, and sexually exploited her body, it was now the prison guards in Cellblock-C. It is not far-fetched to assume that Marie Hill and the women imprisoned in Cellblock-C experienced a similar surveillance as other women caged in solitary confinement. Anti-carceral scholar, Victoria Law reports that, "Most female facilities have some form of the 'the hole.' [...] Even in their cells, the women have no privacy—toilets are in full view of the cell door windows, guards can look through those windows at any time and male guards often watch the women in the showers."<sup>127</sup> Thus, her body was secluded within a place imagined for those who were beyond the redemption from deviance, and it was this intimate gaze from the correction officers that watched over their most personal and intimate practices and inscribed their unsalvageable and thus disposable status as the "incorrigible."

Through these logics, not only was the state justified in invading and stripping her self-autonomy away, but it was justified to cage her within new spaces where masculine agency could monitor her movements when her previous domestic spaces and other masculine agents failed. However, it was this state branding that alienated her outside of saving or the ability to correct. Through this intrusive and intimate gaze, their unsalvageable branding as the

---

<sup>127</sup> Victoria Law, *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggle of Incarcerated Women* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012), 7.

incurable alienated her and the other women from protection and primed them for disposability. Furthermore, following definitions of domestic and liberal notions of intimacy, the physical seclusion and intimate gaze supported a disposal that was able to occur silently and without spectacle. Thus, it is not surprising that the women in the “cottages” or Cellblock-C, women reported conditions of abuse and abandonment from these prison guards. Marie Hill may have been sentenced to the gas chamber and marked as disposable through this sanction, but the abusive treatment of her and the other women isolated behind those bars reveals a treatment that fostered a slow death. In addition to establishing the imaginary of the “domestic” within solitary confinement to veil their disposal behind the myth of privacy, this abuse acted as a tool to not only control incarcerated women but reveals how the state continued to employ intimacy as a way towards premature death.

### *The Enforcement of Violent Intimate Technologies*

Forced into solitary confinement, Marie Hill and the other women locked in these cages were pushed into intimate, albeit exploitative, relationships with the prison guards at North Carolina’s Correctional Center for Women. The women in the “punishment cottage” or Cellblock-C relied upon the prison guards for basic resources of survival, while the prison guards, and more broadly the state, depended upon this exploitative and abusive relationship with these vulnerable women to reaffirm racialized and gendered ideologies that supported the state’s power and overall disposal of black women. In 1974 and while Marie Hill was still imprisoned, a group of incarcerated women rebelled against prison officials and called attention to the inhumane conditions at North Carolina Women’s Correction Center. In response to their rebellion, prison officials identified the leaders and participants and punished these rebellious

women by locking them in solitary confinement, the place of the “incorrigibles.” Using both the testimony of these rebellious women and Marie Hill, this section will examine the violent intimate technologies used as controlling tools against these women, as well as, the dialectic ideologies that the state gained to reaffirm its power.

### *Sexual Violence and the Promise of Reward for the State*

While Marie Hill never confirmed sexual abuse within the prison, the surveilling of black women’s bodies was haunted by violent histories of sexual terror or “monitoring” within the domestic as a way to enforce valued systems of racialized patriarchy and state control, and while the Moynihan Report does not explicitly endorse sexual violence as a way to enforce masculine agency, the logics of sexual violence as a technology to enforce and shape ideologies around black womanhood remain present. Thus, the anonymous redacted letter dated in 1975 to the Southern Poverty Law Center demonstrates that this violent and intimate technology continued to intersect into carceral spaces. In this letter from a local North Carolina jail, a woman recounted,

I had a conversation with a bondsman, [redacted], the time I was confined for a week. About the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> day, he asked if I was getting restless, wanted a man. He told me he was available. I joked this away with him. But I believe he was serious and would have pursued it if I had agreed [...] While I was confined, [redacted] told me that a girl was let out of jail early because she had sexual relations with some of the jailers or officials of the sheriff’s office.<sup>128</sup>

The sexual harassment that this anonymous woman reported, while not completely the same, does intersect with a “monitoring” that dictated Marie Hill’s movements when she was being

---

<sup>128</sup> Letter titled, “Statement of Formerly female inmate, North Carolina 7 March 75.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*.



sexually abused by her foster father 5 years prior to her conviction, and it was a monitoring that continued within formal carceral spaces.

The difference between her foster father and these bondsmen was that the bondsmen hid behind a state uniform. This pedagogy of sexual terror within the imaginaries of the domestic taught black women and imprisoned women what borders they could and could not cross. Using the auction block as a site to exemplify black women's geographies, Katherine McKittrick identifies that "The black females purchased on the auction block is rendered a public, rape-able, useable body-scale through which a distinct, or resistant, or human sense of place is obscured."<sup>129</sup> Black women's bodies are not simply flesh but their bodies and the violence inflicted upon them act as geographies that define space, including borders. Therefore, for the anonymous woman above and Marie Hill who were held captive within imaginaries of the domestic and state institutions, their bodies scaled which bodies are sovereign and which bodies can and cannot be conquered. The sexual violence threatened against black women reaffirms the state as a sovereign power that can invade the place of black women's bodies, while also making knowable that black women's and girl's bodies are open to the needs of a gendered racialized capitalist system, including the carceral state. For Marie Hill and the anonymous woman in jail, the carceral state used their bodies as a scale to reaffirm what blackness in captivity meant for a neoliberal state. Their bodies defined the borders of which bodies lived and which would be incapacitated, disposed of, and imagined on the peripheries.

This violence as geography dictated their choreography within these spaces and was employed as a twisted and mocking pathway towards "freedom" that never fully actualized into

---

<sup>129</sup> Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 81.

self-autonomy. In exchange for movement, the bondsman, their “keeper”<sup>130</sup> as some women termed, or simply the prison guards held the key to which spaces that they could or could not unlock. Confinement within spaces like Cellblock-C for Marie Hill and the anonymous woman within the jail cell represented state surveillance and a taunting of freedom that first reduced black women and girls to the sexual objects that could easily be moved into different spaces reserved for the free, the unfree, and the unsalvageable. Furthermore, written within this letter uncovers the way in which black womanhood was imagined during this interaction. Once again, the figure of a deviant woman was constructed, but more specifically the prison guard re-branded this anonymous woman as sexually deviant, or also known as the in the “Jezebel.” The figure of the Jezebel does not deserve protection, and if anything the prison guard was responsible for monitoring over a woman who was “restless” and might “want a man.” However, one must question what the prison guard and more broadly the state gained from this exchange?

The taunting tone between the vulnerable woman in the jail cell and the prison guard reveals a pornographic pleasure from the state officials that was derived from their own sexual terror over black incarcerated women. While sexual terror was the pedagogy that taught black women who controlled their movements and branded black women as deviant, this pornographic pleasure was the pedagogy that the state taught its enforcers or those who police these borders about the power they could derive through sexual terror. This racialized and sexualized power was the bondsmen’s reward in exchange for complying with state orders of branding and objectifying African American women as the disposable. It was this promise of power that helped veil the multiple institutions that were dispossessing black women into carceral spaces. Through this state sexual terror and the promise of pornographic pleasure, the disposal of

---

<sup>130</sup> *Break de Chains of Legalized U.S. Slavery*, 24.

incarcerated women was veiled behind the false-culprit of individualized choice that was constructed as the pathological cultures of sexual deviance and criminality, rather than a violent state project. For the bondsman that shadowed over her every movement in the jail cell, he more than anyone besides herself, knew of her isolation. This lack of physical and intimate contact within places and communities who could provide care became the leverage in which the state could gain or exploit its own resources, and it continued through keeping them isolated from accessing the resources needed for self-care.

### *Denial of Self-Care and Defining Entitlements*

From one of the many testimonies provided by the women who were locked in solitary confinement after their short but impactful prison rebellion at North Carolina Correctional Center for Women, leader Anne Wilmette wrote, “The steel-barred door of my brick cell casts a shadow over my entire body; it follows me; there is no escape.”<sup>131</sup> The shadow that Wilmette describes captures the ongoing presence of the prison guards, and more broadly the state. Their presence is not one that brings light or joy, but in the isolating quarters of the “punishment cottage,” the presence of the prison guards and administrators were often the only human contact accessible and one of the few sources that they were forced to rely upon in order to survive their day-to-day. Wilmette goes on to report: “Others have gone five days without a toothbrush/paste, wash cloth, and have water which is cold and murky. After five days I received these items, was permitted to shower and given a complete set of pajamas.”<sup>132</sup> Basic necessities needed for oral and bodily hygiene were denied to these women and up to the discretion of the guards. The slow aid or the outright refusal to provide them access to these simple items demonstrates the multiple

---

<sup>131</sup> *Breaking de Chains of Legalized U.\$.* Slavery, 24.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

ways that the state marked and segued these women as the population most vulnerable to a premature death if it was not a fate already decided via the gas chamber, like Marie Hill. Furthermore, it was through the denial of access to tools of care and the basic protection of life. More specifically, the practice of denying a toothbrush, toothpaste, and/or a washcloth was a state refusal to allow these women to practice a self-care and control over their basic self-autonomy. Thus, it is not surprising that the state's refusal to provide basic resources so that they could practice self-care often led to larger health related problems.

Marie Hill, like many of the other women who were forced to live through inhumane conditions and abusive relationships with their only form of human contact being the prison guards, often developed larger health-related issues. Health issues that the state ignored and when acknowledged, usually did not provide the adequate resources to help women address their issues according to imprisoned and protest leaders Marjorie Walsh and Anne Wilmette. Both Walsh and Wilmette outlined several failures of the prison medical department, in which they detailed, "A doctor is purported to be on call 24 hours a day. However, he is never called [...] a prisoner has to wait 2 or 3 days before seeing a doctor [...] A prisoner has to have a fever in order to be admitted to hospital [...] Prisoners should be able to see the psychiatrist alone if they so choose."<sup>133</sup> These were just a few examples of the abusive conditions that the women had to endure, and while the list might seem simple, they reveal the close relationship between women like Marie Hill and the prison guards that shadowed their every move.

The absence of the trained medical professionals, including mental health professionals, revealed that the untrained prison guards were often their first and sometimes only contact to proper medical attention for two to three days, and when we consider it took less than three days

---

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 37.

for women like Sandra Bland, Kindra Darnell Chapman, or Joyce Curnell to die (or be murdered via state negligence) within their prison and jail cells across the United States, this two to three day wait period for trained medical attention or sources of care, including mental health, reveals that through this isolation the preservation of life for women like Marie Hill was always within the hands of the prison guards and more broadly the state who were often their only material source that could provide them the basic necessities of life. The state's refusal to allow imprisoned women access to basic self-care was one of the many violent and intimate technologies that controlled women like Marie Hill's movement, yet for Marie Hill and the other women deemed unworthy of care, the state's withholding of medical attention to her and the other "incorrigibles" reveals ideological resources that the state gained.

#### Contamination & Public Loathing of Rebellious Women:

Unlike the massive prison structures found at Central Prison, the gaze that surveilled and branded Marie Hill's body occurred within the tight quarters of solitary confinement. The emotional effects and traumas experienced by this confinement were not lost on Marie Hill or the other women forced to live within the cages of the "punishment cottage." In fact, Marie described her experience as "It was awful [...] No one was allowed to talk with me but the prison officials. No one could come near my cell. If they were caught near me, they would be punished. I felt contaminated."<sup>134</sup> Marie's testimony reveal a young woman that was treated as a diseased or sick body. The feelings of contamination that Marie Hill testified to expressed an important deployment of affect that showcases how the state's valuing of certain bodies over the devalued manifests. The intimate carceral branding that marked her body from childhood and continued into solitary confinement figured Marie Hill as deviant, but now this deviance was supported

---

<sup>134</sup> Jordan Milton, "N.C.'s Marie Hill Hopes Death Row Days Are Gone," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 3, 1975.

through an ideology that her diseased body needed to be quarantined in solitary confinement in order to protect the public at large from further spreading her contagious pathologies. The state's violent isolation and disposal of her body became justified under the guise of a moral public health. Thus, her feelings of contamination and disease were not simply an individualized feeling, rather it was a state supporting the disposal of her body through ideologies on public health, but this disease was incurable. Furthermore, Marie Hill's feelings of contamination and loathing represented the ways that the state enforced a manipulative emotional violence that prevented possible bonds of intimacies between other women. The fear of being the contaminated or the diseased not only manifested itself within Marie Hill but it dictated the movements of other women around her to either stay away in fear of being infected by the "incurable."

As Grace Hong summarizes from Audre Lorde, fear and loathing, "are not individual nor free from coercion but rather legislated and enforced as a material structure through which the relational violence marked by 'difference' is hidden, and devaluation is legitimated."<sup>135</sup> In other words, the feelings of fear, loathing, and self-contamination that Marie Hill and the other women surrounding her felt were feelings developed from a culmination of systems, more specifically violent intimate technologies, built within the carceral sphere. This coercion was embodied through a branding of black womanhood, the sexual terror built within North Carolina's jails, the denial of care, and through this constant isolation that may have fractured intimacies built upon mutual care prior to their caging at the prison.

According to Tarishi Tamma Maisha (s/n Shirley J. Herlth), to be the contaminated or to be one of the 'incurables' was a reality where, "Physical barricades are built on behalf of their

---

<sup>135</sup> Grace Kyungwon Hong, *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 75.

racist Keepers to hinder the sistas from communicating with other sisters, other prisons, family, outside persons, etc...Mail has been delayed for 2 weeks at a time, never mailed, never received, destroyed, as some visits are denied.”<sup>136</sup> The forced isolation from communities, kin-networks, and relationships outside the prison walls contributed to not only breaking up intimate relationships that could have been based upon foundations of care and love, but it furthered the carceral state’s project of making these women into the deviant women that could be forgotten. If they were forced to break their only contact from their mothers, fathers, children, friends, lovers, then this forced break not only isolated women like Marie Hill but contributed to the feelings of resentment and loathing from the public.

However, this loathing and resentment began within their intimate relationships that they formed on the outside. Families, friends, and partners not aware of prison official’s actions of cutting off mail and other forms of communication were left to make assumptions on whether or not their loved ones behind bars returned their affection and to contemplate maybe these incarcerated women were truly the deviant women who were irresponsible towards their families and who only cared for themselves. North Carolina Correction Center for Women coerced a self-devaluation through feelings of contamination and continued to coerce a devaluation of these women through cutting off their most intimate bonds. Truly isolated and forced to rely upon a state that continued to abandon them from the necessities of care, it is not a surprise that this physical and emotional isolation contributed to the disavowal of these women in their homes and communities outside their prison walls.

From their positions as the non-respectable denied entitlements of care, Anne Wilmette understood this disavowal when she wrote, “In my cell I wept that evening, not only for me, but

---

<sup>136</sup> *Break de Chains of Legalized U.S. Slavery*, 53.

for all prisoners who are/ have experienced this cruel and barbaric treatment. Most importantly, I shed tears for the people who sit in their homes, who walk the streets and who sit down to a table filled with hot nourishing food; but who forget the oppressed people.”<sup>137</sup> The tears that Anne Wilmette sheds for outside the prison walls and into the homes of a traditionally imagined domestic space where families view their environments and kin-networks as safe, was disrupted by Anne Wilmette’s testimony. The illusion that the domestic and the intimate relationships existed in a vacuum of privacy and without state interference, was a reality that Anne Wilmette and especially Marie Hill knew first-hand that these realities were not set in stone.

Rather, the fluidity between the domestic, the intimate, and the state were the sites that pushed them into a penal system that advocated and facilitated their death. It was within their domestic and intimate relationships that the carceral state distorted them as the dialectical objects to construct the imaginaries of the domestic. They were the unrespectable, the contaminated, the non-desirable, and the homes in crisis that needed monitoring. These forgotten women made possible the mythic imaginaries for some to “sit down to a table filled with hot nourishing food.” The imaginations of tranquil domesticity was utilized as the dialectical space that would be promoted as the homes that needed protection from these “incorrigible” women, and the tranquil domestic spaces would be an agent of the state to support the loathing and disappearance of these “incorrigible” women behind bars. Anne Wilmette’s words were not pleading for access into these tranquil homes because as Angela Davis would argue “when equality is measured in terms of access to repressive institutions that remain unchanged or even previously barred, it seems to me that we need to insist on different criteria for democracy.”<sup>138</sup> Instead, Wilmette and the other

---

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Angela Davis, *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, and Torture* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005), 103.



rebellious women like Marie Hill would demand for, imagine, and articulate new institutions and ways of relating not based on violence.

*Resisting these State Intimate Violence and Imaginings of New Intimacies*

The enforcement of these various state-sponsored intimate violence against the women locked in the cages of North Carolina's prisons and jails was not constantly inflicted strictly for the pleasure of the state, rather these women continuously contested this violence with imaginings and practices of new intimacies to combat their dispossession and disposal. When Marie Hill's legal team secured the victory, albeit limited, of reducing her sentence from a capital punishment via the gas chamber to a life sentence, Marie Hill was transferred from being caged within the "punishment cottage" known as Cellblock-C to being caged in the general population with other women. While her sentence may have been reduced from a capital punishment to a life sentence, Marie Hill's actions demonstrate her need to preserve her life through establishing and imagining new intimacies. Imagining and practicing these new intimacies that aimed to defy state violence was a necessity in this new punishment and space that may not have sentenced her to an immediate death, but was still a space and punishment that would deny her entitlements of care and vulnerable to a premature death.

In 1972, now outside of solitary confinement after her new attorney Julius Chambers and the local NAACP Legal Defense Fund fought on her behalf to overturn her capital punishment sentence, Marie Hill was placed in a new environment where the possibilities of establishing new intimacies based on mutual care could be established. She took advantage of this when she hosted a party within her prison cell with three other women. The brief moments of joy and pleasure with her fellow imprisoned women ended with a prison guard breaking up the party and

Marie Hill punching said prison guard in response. This moment reveals four women not only trying to reconnect, but practicing an intimacy that threatened the violent control of the state. It was probably why Marie Hill expressed remorse for punching the guard but that was all she expressed remorse for.<sup>139</sup> In fact, her remorse may have simply been for physically harming the prison guard, but she could not apologize for protecting and defending her friends and herself from the psychological and emotional violence that the guards inflicted by disrupting their need for intimacy. The party that Marie Hill hosted was a site of joy and pleasure, and even though this may seem like an insignificant moment, for these women who had a past layered with multiple forms of physical, emotional, and psychological violence that threatened their life, it was an expression that was an attempt to assert their entitlements self-defense, care, and life.

The full details of this party are not completely known, but they can be imagined. Marie Hill was the musician of the prison, and when a prison official gifted her a guitar and radio, she was known to learn by ear and play along the rock-n-roll jams that played through her radio,<sup>140</sup> so as host of the party, Marie Hill may have gifted her guests with the sounds of the latest musical hits or her own composition. They may have danced together allowing the rhythms and beats of Marie Hill's music to pulse through their bodies. Their dance was a reclamation of their bodies' movements—a new choreography that defied the violence that attempted to dominate them. Furthermore, despite her former public school teachers characterizing her as a “slow” and “cold and brutal,”<sup>141</sup> Marie gained the reputation as a “chatterbox,”<sup>142</sup> who “read an average of

---

<sup>139</sup>“Marie Hill grows up on prison's death row,” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), December 30, 1972.

<sup>140</sup> Nancy Benson, “N. Carolina teenage spends second Christmas in prison,” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), January 3, 1970.

<sup>141</sup> “Marie Hill grows up prison's death row,” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), December 30, 1972.

three and a half books a month, and wrote 187 pages of an autobiography, before she became bored and discarded it,<sup>143</sup> so it is possible that Marie Hill allowed her three other guests a glimpse into her imagination. From these acts, we see a young woman whose life was so complex and an imagination possibly too expansive that it could not even fit within the limits of 187 two-dimension pages. This is the young woman that her fellow prisoners most likely witnessed, saw, and connected with, and during that brief joyous party a mutual gaze, an intimacy, between four incarcerated women may have been shared. This gaze and joyous moment was a reconnection between women who were trying to affirm their humanity. It was a sharing of resources, specifically joy and pleasure, to wash away feelings of contamination.

However, it is also possible that while the prison officials only recognized a party, Marie Hill and her fellow imprisoned women were also using the party as a veil to hide additional modes of organizing against the prisons guard's surveillance and violence. Scholar Simone Browne identifies "dark sousveillance," as a mode or an imaginative place of possibilities in which surveilled black bodies employ strategies that counter the objectifying gaze of an anti-black state. Specifically, Browne describes it as, "tactics employed to render one's self out of sight, and strategies used in flight to freedom [...]."<sup>144</sup> Often the tactics employed are the co-optation of the technologies used to surveil, objectify, and commodify blackness. Thus, using dark sousveillance as an epistemology, what might Marie Hill's party with the other women might reveal or at least be imagined as?

---

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> "Marie Hill grows up on prison's death row," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), December 30, 1972.

<sup>144</sup> Browne, 21.

Marie Hill, like most of the women imprisoned today, experienced some form of domestic violence and/or sexual abuse prior to being incarcerated.<sup>145</sup> The effects of these traumas do not go away, and in fact, they could easily be reinforced through the constant violence inflicted by the carceral state as outlined throughout this chapter. Thus, what might this party been, besides a much-needed moment of community, that was out of sight from prison officials? In this moment one could imagine that this party could have also been a meeting of women who were providing their own group therapy without the constant shadowing of prison guards. It was a space in which they could vent and support each other about their own experiences with intimate familial and partner abuse. This party could have been a space in which the women confirmed the continued violence inflicted by prison guards that may have occurred out of sight from other women while they were locked in the cages of the “punishment cottage.” Under the guise of a party, this could have been when and where the first seeds of the prison rebellion were imagined and would come into fruition two years later.

After all, according to Angela Davis, she describes that “[Marie Hill] began to grasp something of the nature of racism. She began to have discussions with her sisters in prison and eventually became known as one of the leaders inside the walls of the Women’s Prison in North Carolina,”<sup>146</sup> but when prison guards saw the nature of these discussion, Marie Hill, like many other rebellious women against state control became the targets of intimidation and harassment. In fact, Hill and the other women imprisoned at North Carolina’s Correction Center for Women were already branded as deviant women who were irresponsible and out of control, so they

---

<sup>145</sup> Human Rights Watch, “All Too Familiar: Sexual Abuse of Women in U.S. State Prison” (Human Rights Watch, 1996); The exact statistics on the number of imprisoned women who have experienced some form of intimate violence prior to their incarceration range and are difficult to track.

<sup>146</sup>Mike Hannigan and Platt, Tony, “Interview with Angela Davis,” *Crime and Social Justice* 3 (Summer 1975): 5.

possibly employed this branding to their benefit. The authorities that had categorized them as slow and beyond respectability were unprepared to see them as leaders fully aware of the multiple violent systems working to dispose of them.

Thus, while the state attempted to code a woman to fit within the perfect image of deviance, Marie Hill may have been utilizing this coding to her benefit. It was a way to hide temporary moments or imaginations of escapes from violence. Even when one considers the 187 autobiography that Marie Hill wrote or the music that she composed, these acts of self-expression explicitly defied the state branding of her as slow, but they could have also been Marie Hill contemplating ways to implicate the state and call attention to their abuse. While the state may have immobilized Marie Hill and the other women behind bars, written words and songs when read or heard by communities outside the walls of prison like the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, Students for the Defense of the Rocky Mount Four at Shaw University,<sup>147</sup> the Black Panther Party,<sup>148</sup> North Carolina's United Church of Christ<sup>149</sup>, or the Khadijah Council,<sup>150</sup> these written words and songs possess the potential to bring together a diverse alliance united to care for and fight for the preservation of life for women who were being persecuted by the state. Marie Hill's autobiography and songs, which may have detailed the full complexities of both her joys and traumas, may have acted as a link in which a community defense for life could spread beyond the walls of the prisons and into the homes of people who may have not known her name if she had not decided to turn a defiant gaze back at

---

<sup>147</sup> Ike Ridley, "Case of N.C. Girl on Death Row Sparked National Reaction," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 17, 1969.

<sup>148</sup> "We Have Not Forgotten Marie Hill," *The Black Panther Intercommunal News Service* (San Francisco, CA), July 24, 1971.

<sup>149</sup> "Church drive to fight execution of girl, 17," *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), February 1, 1969.

<sup>150</sup> "Group acts to save life of girl, 17." *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), April 26, 1969.

the state and document all that she witnessed. Her possible insurgent words and songs were a danger to the state, and therefore, maybe Marie Hill was not so bored of her own words, but realized the dangers of keeping a paper trail in which the prison guards could use it against her to inflict others forms of torture in retaliation. After all, Marie like many of the other women incarcerated at North Carolina's Correctional Center for Women, intimately knew and understood the full capabilities of the state. The violent state pedagogies began at their birth.

This chapter began with the press conference of President Jimmy Carter who denied the existence of political prisoners in 1978. As stated, this denial reflected a government that was able to render marginalized and imprisoned bodies as invisible, and while organizations like National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression and Ambassador Andrew Young attempted to resurrect the forgotten and disposed of, they still remained hidden. They remained hidden due the various law and order tenets that incarcerated black and brown people. However, unlike the Rockefeller Drug laws enacted five years after Marie Hill's conviction, law and order capitalized on the violence that occurred within the domestic and the intimate, and the state was able to maintain this practice of slowly funneling in women when it modeled itself off the intimate violence rooted within histories of black women's role in the domestic. The state continued to inflict its own forms intimate violence. These imagined domestic spaces and forms of intimate violence branded black women outside the protected sphere of womanhood through a regime of sexual terror, a denial of care, and a fostering the public loathing. However, despite North Carolina's persistent infliction of abuse and terror, Marie Hill and the women who protested against North Carolina's inhumane treatment, they were able to imagine new spaces and relations of intimacies. These new imaginings nurtured an intimacy that moved beyond the prison walls to foster a community of care, rather than simply individual protection. It was an

imagining that destabilized the state and provided the cracks for local and national organizations to challenge law and order's intimate reign of terror over marginalized communities.

## Conclusion:

### **‘Will there be even no words for Marie Hill?’**

On July 24, 1971, the Black Panther Intercommunal News Service published their weekly newspaper. Printed on the front page over a silhouette of a young black woman with her head tilting down were the words, “We have not forgotten Marie Hill. Will there be even no words for Marie Hill, who at age 17 was sentenced by the state of North Carolina to die in the gas chambers?”<sup>151</sup> In other words, who will remember Marie Hill? Although this project can never fully claim to tell or comprehend all the complexities of Marie Hill’s life, a life that most likely cannot be fully told with words. “Marie Hill and Her Intimate Terror” is one step to not only remembering Marie Hill but also other black girls and women who have been terrorized and killed by the interlocked systems of intimate abuse and state violence. After all, there is more to tell of Marie Hill’s life. The fragmented histories stored in the state archive do not completely capture her life after her release from prison in the 1980s. What words and reflections does Marie Hill have left to say? What other complexities of black girlhood and black womanhood have been distorted and veiled because of this intimate carceral terror that has continued to reign over black women’s lives?

The violent racialized and gendered terror that plagues too many of the lives of black girls, black women, and black queer bodies has continuously been disavowed by communities and state institutions; this disavowal functions to allow further and more intense forms of state-imposed violence to be directed at victims and survivors of abuse. This was the political project that captured Marie Hill and disposed of her behind the prison walls of North Carolina in 1968,

---

<sup>151</sup> “We Have Not Forgotten Marie Hill,” *The Black Panther Intercommunal News Service* (San Francisco, CA), July 24, 1971.



but Marie's testimony reveals that this was an ongoing state project where her body and the women surrounding her would be violently inflicted by both physical and ideological marks. These would not only categorize her body as illegible for protection and care but choreographed her movements until one day, she would be pushed behind North Carolina's prison walls. It was a political project that demonstrates intimate and state violence cannot be disentangled as this web of violence produces a long a carceral terror that continues to alienate and dispose of black girls and women behind bars to be isolated and forgotten.

These ideological and physical marks that the state would use as their coding to justify her imprisonment began at Marie Hill's birth in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Rocky Mount was a town like many others across the nation where state infrastructures and private industries sat as mocking skeletons that were possibly built from the violent exploitation of black bodies. While the train tracks and roads of Rocky Mount were intended to represent movement and modernity, impoverished black people sat trapped by these infrastructures and symbols. It might have been these daily reminders, as well as, the controlling images of deviant black motherhood that motivated Marie's mother Mary L. Hill to leave her daughter within private foster care, but the actions of Mary L. Hill were emblematic of a larger phenomenon of black mothers and their children's intimate familial bonds constantly being left vulnerable to violence.

Black motherhood's coding as deviant and black children's inheritance of this coding would be the gendered racial ideologies and categorizations that would be passed down to Marie Hill as a black girl growing up in Rocky Mount. These inherited marks of deviance were the material that Rocky Mount police officers collected and consumed as they stalked Marie Hill throughout her childhood. What they saw, categorized, and listed into a flat list of categories and numbers was a black girl who chose a masculine fashion aesthetic and defied respectability,

tallied up school absences, and collected a paper trail on her juvenile record. This was the needed evidence to confirm black girlhood as deviant and pathological. It was the profile presented at her trial for the murder of William E. Strum, and the needed evidence to confirm a coerced confession from a 17-year old black girl and persuade an all-male jury to convict a 17-year old black girl to death. It was the material needed to stop her insurgent intimacies.

The state collected these numbers and lists to prove deviant black girlhood, but veiled behind this profile was the intimate abuse inflicted by her foster father. The state ignored the sexual abuse inflicted on a black girl by her foster father. The state disregarded that her foster father had at one time pointed a gun at her and threatened her life. Instead, the state framed Marie Hill's fight for survival against this torment as criminal—a criminal who could fit the profile of someone who did not deserve mercy from the state prosecution. Marie's illegible modes of survival were the terrain in which the state figured her as criminal. These modes of survival were framed as criminal not only because they were associated with black womanhood and girlhood, but because a key aspect of Marie Hill's survival involved shaping non-normative intimacies, these intimacies automatically challenged the state.

Black girls and women attempting to escape forms of intimate violence that alienates and isolates them are forced to navigate and negotiate alternative modes of survival when state approved resources and institutions are often the same institutions that marked them as deviant and pathological. This was the predicament that Marie Hill was faced with when she formed friendships and extended kinships with other women in her community. Together, they attempted to survive in an almost underground cooperative to provide the resources they needed to live, ranging from economic survival, childcare, and joy, yet these insurgent intimacies that provided the care that Marie Hill and other black women and girls sought were utilized as the

material needed to further code black womanhood and girlhood. The carceral state recognized the power of these intimacies in undermining their objectives of immobilizing and confining blackness.

However, even when Marie was arrested and caged behind the walls of North Carolina's Correctional Center for Women, the intimate sphere continued to be a technology and source of power for the state over black women and girls lives. The continued implementation of violence against incarcerated women by further isolating them from caring intimacies, reveals that this state technology moves beyond simply surveilling the intimate sphere within traditional domestic spaces seen as private, but continues within public spaces where the state continues the traumas of intimate violence found prior to their incarceration. This carceral logic is a testament that black women's and girl's bodies and their intimacies are rarely ever their own, and when they attempt to reclaim their bodies and intimacies, the state responds by figuring them as pathological and deviant. Their daily lives and bodies become a political project. However, despite the state figuring their bodies and intimacies as deviant, perhaps their alternative or insurgent intimacies provide the framework needed to imagine modes of being outside the liberal hegemonic definitions of protection and care that relies upon violence.

Black girls and women caught within this political project of carceral terror are not only political prisoners that need to be remembered, but their experiences, words, and imaginations are just as significant as the words of more well-known activists. As Dan Berger asserts, "Black activists, meanwhile, boldly endeavored to remake the prison into a site of liberation. The movement interrupted the most haunting power of imprisonment, the stigma of criminality, and instead made it synonymous with moral authority [...] Consequently, the best place to know

freedom was where it was most elusive.”<sup>152</sup> Therefore, perhaps the insurgent intimacies that Marie Hill imagined and practiced in her places of confinement and isolation are possible imaginations and pathways to new types of freedoms and intimacies based on black girl’s and women’s epistemologies of care, protection, community defense, and joy. For this reason, when women like Marie Hill and girls like Bresha Meadows—who continues to experience the torture of this intimate carceral terror— their stories need words to not only save their lives, but their lives and attempts to escape this gendered racial terror and unfreedom reveal possible alternative futures without prisons and other institutions of incapacitation. Instead, they unveil institutions the move beyond the goal of just surviving.

---

<sup>152</sup> Dan Berger, *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era (Justice, Power, and Politics)* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 23. (Kindle Edition).

## Bibliography

### *Periodicals*

“Church drive to fight execution of girl, 17.” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), February 1, 1969.

“Group acts to save life of girl, 17.” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), April 26, 1969.

“Marie Hill grows up prison’s death row.” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), December 30, 1972.

“We Have Not Forgotten Marie Hill.” *The Black Panther Intercommunal News Service* (San Francisco, CA), July 24, 1971.

Anekwe, Simon. “U.S. Political prisoners listed,” *New York Amsterdam News* (New York, NY), July 29, 1978.

Bentson, Nancy “N. Carolina Teenager Spends Second Christmas in Prison.” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), January 3, 1970.

Bentson, Nancy. “A Girl’s Tragic Story-On Death Row at Age 18.” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD) February 8, 1969.

Harper, Claudia. “Angela Davis.” *The Sun Reporter* (San Francisco, California), March 9, 1974.

Milton, Jordan. “Marie Hill Knows of Life From Wrong Side of the Tracks.” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 10, 1975.

Milton, Jordan. “N.C.’s Marie Hill Hopes Death Row Days Are Gone.” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 3, 1975.

Ridley, Ike. “Case Of N.C. Girl On Death Row Sparked National Reaction.” *The Baltimore Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), May 17, 1969.

*North Carolina State Archive*

North Carolina *Birth Indexes* (ancestry.com)

North Carolina Supreme Court, Original Case Files. 1969 F-2, *State v. Marie Hill* (Fall 1969)

*Secondary Sources:*

Berger, Dan. *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era (Justice, Power, and Politics)*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

Browne, Simone. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2015.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge Press, 2000.

Cox, Aimee Meredith. *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1299.

Davis, Angela. "Joan Little: The Dialectics of Rape (1975)," *Ms. Magazine*, 1975.

Davis, Angela Y. "Women and Capitalism: Dialectics of Oppression and Liberation." In *The Black Feminist Reader*, edited by Joy James and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, 146-182.

Malden Massachusetts, Blackwell Publishers: 2000.

Davis, Angela. "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves." *The Massachusetts Review* 13, no. 1/2 (Winter-Spring, 1972): 81-100.

Davis, Angela. *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, and Torture*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005.

- Davis, Angela. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003.
- Dudziak, Mary L. *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*.  
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Ferguson, Roderick A. *Aberrations in Black: Toward A Queer Of Color Critique*. University of  
Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Fuentes, Marisa. *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. Philadelphia:  
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.
- Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in  
North Carolina 1896-1920*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing  
California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Hauntings and the Sociological Imaginations*. Minneapolis:  
University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Haley, Sarah. *No Mercy Here: Gender Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*.  
Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016.
- Hannigan, Mike and Tony Platt. "Interview with Angela Davis." *Crime and Social Justice* 3  
(Summer 1975): 1-10.
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York:  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.
- Hazirjian, Lisa Gayle. *Negotiating Poverty: Economic Insecurity and the Politics of Working-  
Class Life in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, 1929*. ProQuest Dissertation: Duke  
University.

- Higginbotham, Evelyn. *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920*. Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Hines, Darlene Clark. "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance." In *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, edited Beverly Guy-Sheftall, 379-388. New York: The New Press, 1995.
- Hong, Grace Kyungwon. *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.
- Human Rights Watch. "All Too Familiar: Sexual Abuse of Women in U.S. State Prison." Human Rights Watch, 1996.
- Kelley, Robin D.G. *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009.
- Law, Victoria. *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggle of Incarcerated Women*. Oakland: PM Press, 2012.
- LeFlouria, Talitha L. *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South (Justice, Power, and Politics)*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016.
- Lichtenstein, Alex. *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South*. New York: Verso, 1996.
- Lichtenstein, Alexander. "Good Roads and Chain Gangs in the Progressive South: 'The Negro Convict is a Slave.'" *The Journal of Southern History* 59, no. 1 (February 1993): 85-110.
- McKittrick, Katherine. "Mathematics of Black Life." *The Black Scholar* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 16-28.



- McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. United States: Office of Policy Planning and Research United States Department of Labor, 1965.
- National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression. *North Carolina: Laboratory for Racism and Repression*. New York: National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, 1975.
- Oshinsky, David M. *Worse than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice*. New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1997..
- Powell, William. S. *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*. Raleigh: The University of North Carolina.
- Price, Charles L. "North Carolina Railroads during the Civil War." *Civil War History* 7, no. 3 (September 1961): 298-309.
- Richie, Beth E. *Arrested Justice: Black Women Violence, and America's Prison Nation*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.
- Roberts, Dorothy. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: First Vintage Book Edition, 1999.
- Roberts, Dorothy. *Shattering Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare*. New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2002.
- Shaw, Stephanie. *What a Woman Ought To Be and To Do: Black Professional Women Workers during the Jim Crow Era*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Simmons, LaKisha. *Crescent City Girls: The Lives of Young Black Women in Segregated New Orleans*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

- Spillers, Hortense. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics/Culture and Countermemory: The "American" Connection* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 64-81.
- State of North Carolina v. Marie Hill*. Supreme Court of North Carolina. 10 Dec. 1969.
- State v. Ralph Thompson, Cleve Bryant Johnson, Bessie Mae Williams, and Annie Mae Allison*. Supreme Court of North Carolina. May 1944.
- Thuma, Emily L. "'Not a Wedge, but a Bridge': Prisons, Feminist Activism, and the Politics of Gendered Violence, 1968-1987." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2011.
- Thuma, Emily. "Against the 'Prison/Psychiatric State': Anti-violence Feminisms and the Politics of Confinement and Law." *Feminist Formations* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 26-51.
- Thuma, Emily. "Lessons in Self-Defense: Gender Violence, Racial Criminalization and Anticarceral Feminism." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 3&4 (Fall/Winter 2015): 52-71.
- Triangle Area Lesbian Feminists Book Project, *Break de Chains of Legalized U.\$. Slavery*. North Carolina: North Carolina Women's Prison Book Project, 1976.