

Till's Last Christmas, 1954 -- <http://web.missouri.edu/~hudsonweemsc/>

On August 28, 1955, 14-year-old **Emmett Louis “Bobo” Till**, a household name, was savagely murdered for naively whistling at 21-year-old Carolyn Bryant of Money, Mississippi. A Chicago icon, Emmett is directly linked to his home-place and moreover, to the modern Civil Rights Movement, as he became its catalyst, rather than an embarrassment, having occurred three months and three days prior to the refusal of Rosa Parks to relinquish her bus seat to a white man on December 1, 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama. Although the history of Emmett’s brutal lynching cannot be altered, there are “strides toward true freedom” that can be gleaned from this incident.

Realizing at last that Emmett Till was the true catalyst of the Civil Rights Movement of the 50s and the 60s truly makes for a clearer picture of where we were during that time in history and of the realization that the ultimate powerlessness of Blacks, to the point of not being able to protect their children, compelled them to vow at last “No More,” thereby taking a stand to change racist laws in America for human justice.

The response to racial dominance on the part of the perpetrator could very well offer a possible solution to the long-standing race divide. There are four basic steps in properly addressing this problem--Remorse, a sense of moral revulsion for one’s racist act; Atonement, accountability for the wrong doings and the victimization of the oppressed; Redemption, which is God’s Grace, achievable via positive acts representing good deeds; Forgiveness, the final step in closing the racial gap that separates diverse humankind.

Within the last few years alone, many hate crimes have occurred, representing an Emmett Till Continuum, including the following top headline stories of only 3 such U.S. victims: **Travon Martin**--17-year-old high school teen, shot to death on February 26, 2012 by a police officer in Florida, who was acquitted. **Michael Brown**--18-year-old Black teenager of Ferguson, MO, shot to death on August 9, 2014 by a white policeman, later freed of criminal charges. **Sandra Bland**—28-year-old Black Chicago woman, who “allegedly” committed suicide in her cell the day after her arrest for a minor traffic violation in Dallas, Texas, July 18, 2015.

Everyone is affected, either physically or emotionally, by racial dominance and racist atrocities. While Blacks, for the most part, are the primary victims, whites, too, could ultimately suffer, for no one is truly safe and secure until all are fairly and justly treated. In short, the empowered can and do oftentimes become the victim of others’ helplessness and hopelessness. Thus, in offering a possible solution to the race problems haunting our restless society today, we have the lessons of the Emmett Till story to combat senseless on-going Emmett Till continuums coming full circle!