How long can the Other be abused and silenced?

Emmett Till: The Ugly Face of Racism

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Disclaimer: This zine contains explicit images depicting the reality of African Americans during the 1950s in their fight against racism.
The KID:

Just 14 Years Old

In the summer of 1955, 14 year old Emmett Till left his home in Chicago to visit his Uncle (Moses Wright) and cousins down in Mississippi. Being a young African American from the North, he was youthfully ignorant of the racism that plagued the Southern states. He would go on to become a martyr in the African American struggle for equality.

Ripped from his Family

Stolen in the Middle of the Night

On the night of August 28th, Emmett Till was kidnapped from the home of his Uncle by two men. Both grown men were Caucasian and fearing any further repercussion for defending themselves, Emmett’s family was left helpless to protect him. He was abducted after he reportedly whistled at the white woman at the cashiers in the local store, an act not taken lightly in the South. The husband of the cashier, Roy Bryant, returned with his brother-in-law, J.W. Milam, to teach the young boy a lesson.
The Incident

Viciously tortured and heartlessly drowned, a childhood is stolen. After hours of torture and abuse, Emmett’s body was eventually drowned by a 70 pound cotton gin tied with barbed wire.

The "Trial"

The media representation of the killers was almost one of relief as white America had once again successfully “defeated” the Other, who found themselves defenseless. Pictured is the jury made up of entirely white southern men.
Fighting the Uphill Battle

Systemic Racism and the Ideologies Used to Cheat Justice

Trouble from the Start

They couldn’t possibly get away with it...could they?

Moses Wright testifies that Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam were indeed the two men guilty of abducting his nephew from his home.
A Failed System

After barely an hour of deliberation, the jury decided the two men were not guilty of the crime.

WARNING

The following pages contain graphic images that may be disturbing to some viewers. Viewer discretion is advised. Continue to page 12 if not comfortable viewing images.
In a phenomenal act of agency, Mamie allowed for her son to be placed in the public sphere in order to bring America face to face with its own horrific racism.

“I want everyone to see what they did to my son.”

-Mamie Till
The Efforts of Mamie

Mamie Till used her voice as a human being, and grieving mother to speak out to her fellow Americans in an effort to connect to the family values instilled within the communities across the nation.

"I cry everyday. But I cry as I move."
-Mamie Till

"When people saw what had happened to my son, men stood up who had never stood up before."
-Mamie Till
Respond

How can the framing of narratives regarding those with little or no agency, such as those about Emmett Till, contradict core American values such as family?

Emmett’s “New” Image

After viewing (or gaining a better understanding the incident), how does this image whitewash the murder of Emmett Till and in what way does this play into the white racial frame?