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EJI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.



Equal Justice Initiative
Annual Report
2015

In the last year, the Equal Justice Initiative has won the release of innocent people wrongly convicted and condemned to death by execution or sent to prison for life. We have won new trials for people illegally convicted and relief for those unfairly sentenced. We have documented and challenged abusive conditions of confinement in state jails and prisons. And we have continued to fight against the prosecution of children in adult court and to obtain new sentences for children who have been condemned to die in prison, some as young as 13.

EJI has launched an ambitious national effort to confront the legacy of racial inequality and injustice in the United States. Our February 2015 report, *Lynching in America*, our short film, *From Slavery to Mass Incarceration*, our *History of Racial Injustice* calendar, and our other public education activities have now reached millions of people. We are determined to deepen the national discourse about the legacy of slavery, racial terror, and segregation.

The success of Bryan Stevenson's bestselling book, *Just Mercy*, has brought global attention to the work of EJI. We are committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. As a private, nonprofit human rights organization, we greatly appreciate your support, which makes our work possible.



On April 3, 2015, EJI won the release of Anthony Ray Hinton, who spent nearly 30 years on death row for a crime he did not commit. Mr. Hinton endured solitary confinement in a 5 x 7-foot cell for nearly three decades, during which 54 people were executed just a few feet away. Evidence that proved his innocence was presented by EJI attorneys to state prosecutors and judges 16 years ago, but courts refused to grant relief and state prosecutors would not re-examine their evidence to confirm Mr. Hinton's innocence. In 2014, EJI won a ruling from the United States Supreme Court that ultimately led to Mr. Hinton's release this year. Pictured, Mr. Hinton (left) moments after his release with lifelong friend Lester Bailey (center) and EJI Director Bryan Stevenson.



EJI fights against the unfair and unjust administration of capital punishment. Anthony Ray Hinton was the 152nd person in the United States exonerated and released from prison after being sentenced to death. Since his release there have been four more exonerations. A shocking rate of error has emerged: for every nine people executed in the United States, one condemned person has been proven innocent and released. EJI challenges the death penalty and excessive punishment. We currently provide legal assistance to more than 100 condemned prisoners on death row. We believe that capital punishment is defined by unreliability, bias, and arbitrariness, and should be abolished.



On October 1, EJI won the release of Beniah Alton Dandridge, who spent 20 years in prison for a murder he did not commit. In 1995, Mr. Dandridge was charged with killing Riley Manning. Another man admitted to committing the crime alone, but because a bloody palm print found near the body was wrongly matched to Mr. Dandridge, he was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. EJI attorneys challenged his conviction and, using out-of-state forensic experts, proved that the print belonged to the victim's son, who had discovered the body. The State acknowledged Mr. Dandridge's innocence and a judge ordered his immediate release. Pictured, Mr. Dandridge's sister Katherine greets him as he walks out of Kilby Prison.



EJI won Ronald Elston's release, and he was reunited with his mother after 33 years in prison.
Jessica Earnshaw



EJI attorneys Katy Miller and Charlotte Morrison celebrate the release of Chrystal Chapman (middle) with her family.



Staff attorney Carla Crowder with Beniah Dandridge after he is freed from Kilby Prison.
Bernard Troncale

Each year, EJI provides legal assistance to hundreds of people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced, or abused in state jails and prisons. In the last three years, we have obtained relief, reduced sentences, or release for dozens of people. EJI also provides re-entry assistance to formerly incarcerated people and provides housing, employment, training, and support to people returning home from prison. EJI's Post-Release Education and Preparation program has been cited by several state officials as a model program that has facilitated release and successful transition from prison for dozens of formerly incarcerated people.



Robert Saltzman (right) was released from Angola Prison after being sentenced as a young teen to die in prison in Louisiana.



In the last year, EJI has investigated hundreds of complaints about abusive prison conditions and inhumane treatment of incarcerated people. EJI has documented corruption, widespread sexual abuse of inmates by correctional staff, and mistreatment of the mentally ill and people coping with serious medical issues in more than a dozen facilities. The United States Department of Justice has intervened in response to complaints by EJI about Tutwiler women's prison and EJI has filed a major lawsuit to address extreme violence and abuse at St. Clair Correctional Facility in Alabama, which has one of the highest rates of murder, serious assault, and violence in the nation.

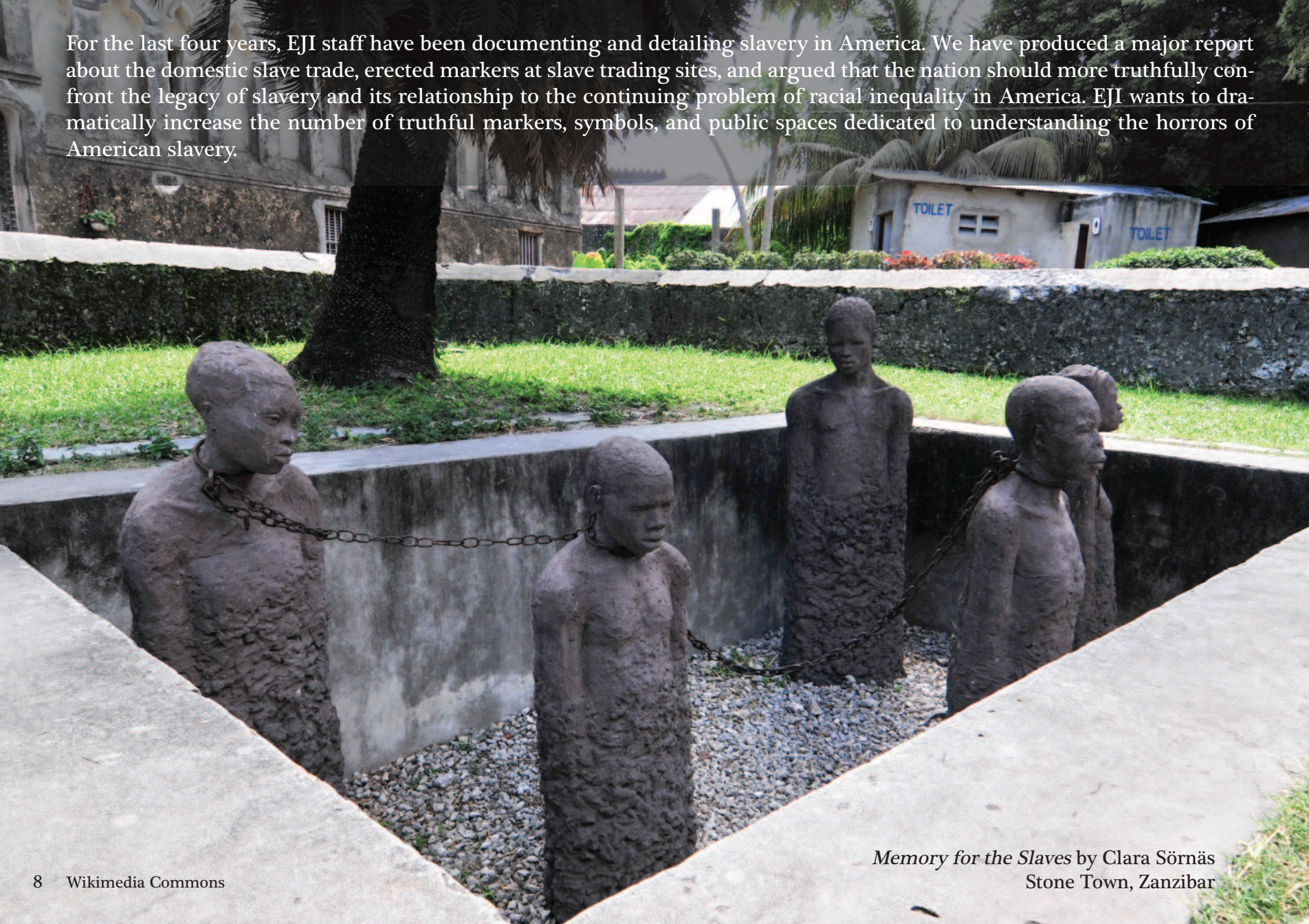


EJI is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States. We combine litigation with reform advocacy, research, reports, public education, a dynamic website, and community outreach to end America's status as the world's most punitive nation, with the highest rate of incarceration on the planet. EJI believes that America's prison population can be reduced by 50 percent in the next eight years without threatening public safety.



EJI continues to challenge the prosecution of children as adults and seeks to eliminate excessive punishment of kids in the adult criminal justice system. Several states have resisted full implementation of *Miller v. Alabama*, an EJI case in which the Supreme Court ruled it is unconstitutional to automatically sentence children to die in prison. EJI currently represents over 100 people condemned to die in prison for crimes committed when they were children. EJI is working to end the practice of housing children in adult jails and prisons. It is estimated that there are nearly 10,000 children in the United States currently in custody with adults where they are at much greater risk of sexual assault and abuse.

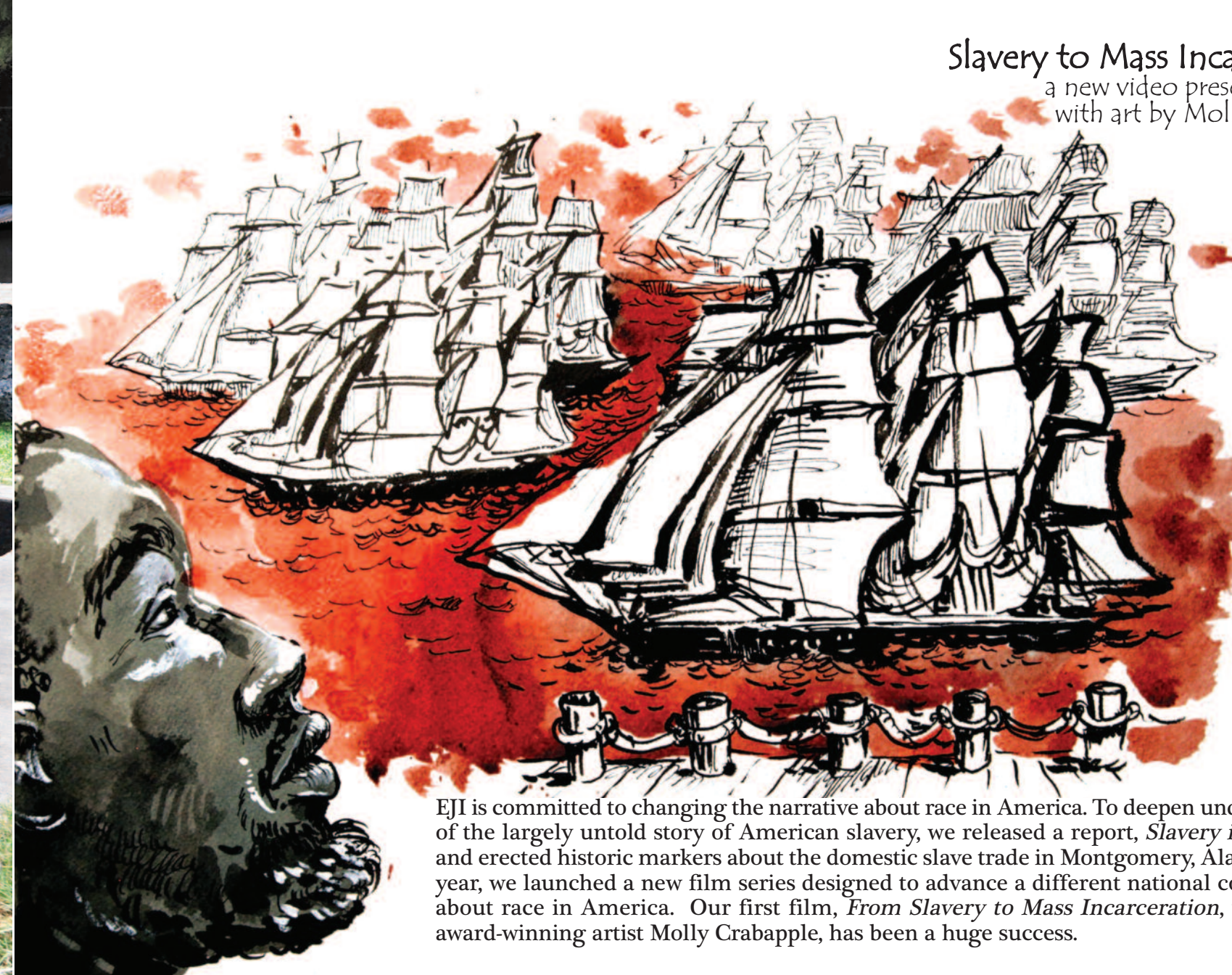
For the last four years, EJI staff have been documenting and detailing slavery in America. We have produced a major report about the domestic slave trade, erected markers at slave trading sites, and argued that the nation should more truthfully confront the legacy of slavery and its relationship to the continuing problem of racial inequality in America. EJI wants to dramatically increase the number of truthful markers, symbols, and public spaces dedicated to understanding the horrors of American slavery.



Memory for the Slaves by Clara Sörnäs
Stone Town, Zanzibar

Slavery to Mass Incarceration

a new video presented by EJI
with art by Molly Crabapple



EJI is committed to changing the narrative about race in America. To deepen understanding of the largely untold story of American slavery, we released a report, *Slavery in America*, and erected historic markers about the domestic slave trade in Montgomery, Alabama. This year, we launched a new film series designed to advance a different national conversation about race in America. Our first film, *From Slavery to Mass Incarceration*, with art by award-winning artist Molly Crabapple, has been a huge success.

In February, EJI released a comprehensive report on racial terror lynchings. The result of five years of investigative work, *Lynching in America* documents nearly 800 more lynchings than had been identified previously and provides data about the distribution and location of more than 4000 lynchings in twelve Southern states. The report generated national and international headlines as well as thousands of inquiries about America's era of racial terrorism, when between Reconstruction and World War II, millions of African Americans were traumatized. EJI will soon release additional reports about lynching and is now working on a national memorial site to address the legacy of racial inequality and lynching in America.



African American Lynching Victims by State, 1877-1950

Alabama	363
Arkansas	491
Florida	307
Georgia	595
Kentucky	170
Louisiana	559
Mississippi	614
North Carolina	122
South Carolina	184
Tennessee	238
Texas	344
Virginia	88
Total	4075



LYNCHING IN AMERICA

Thousands of black people were the victims of lynching and racial violence in the United States between 1877 and 1950. The lynching of African Americans during this era was a form of racial terrorism intended to intimidate black people and enforce racial hierarchy and segregation. Lynching was most prevalent in the South. After the Civil War, there was violent resistance to equal rights for African Americans and an ideology of white supremacy led to violent abuse of racial minorities and decades of political, social, and economic exploitation. Lynching became the most public and notorious form of terror and subordination. White mobs were usually permitted to engage in racial terror and brutal violence with impunity. Many black people were pulled out of jails or given over to mobs by law enforcement officials who were legally required to protect them. Terror lynchings often included burning and mutilation, sometimes in front of crowds numbering in the thousands. Many of the names of lynching victims were not recorded and will never be known, but over 300 documented lynchings took place in Alabama alone. Jefferson County had the highest number in Alabama (29) and the ninth highest total lynchings in the nation during the era of terror lynching.

EJI hopes to mark hundreds of lynching sites across the United States in coming years. The first marker recently went up in Brighton, Alabama, to document the lynching of William Miller in 1908. Mr. Miller was a black coal miner who was seeking better wages for black workers and was murdered by a white mob. EJI is coordinating a national site where information about lynching will be maintained. We are collecting soil from every lynching site in the country as part of an exhibit and effort to document the legacy of racial terror and lynching in America.

EJI's Planned New Memorial for Racial Justice



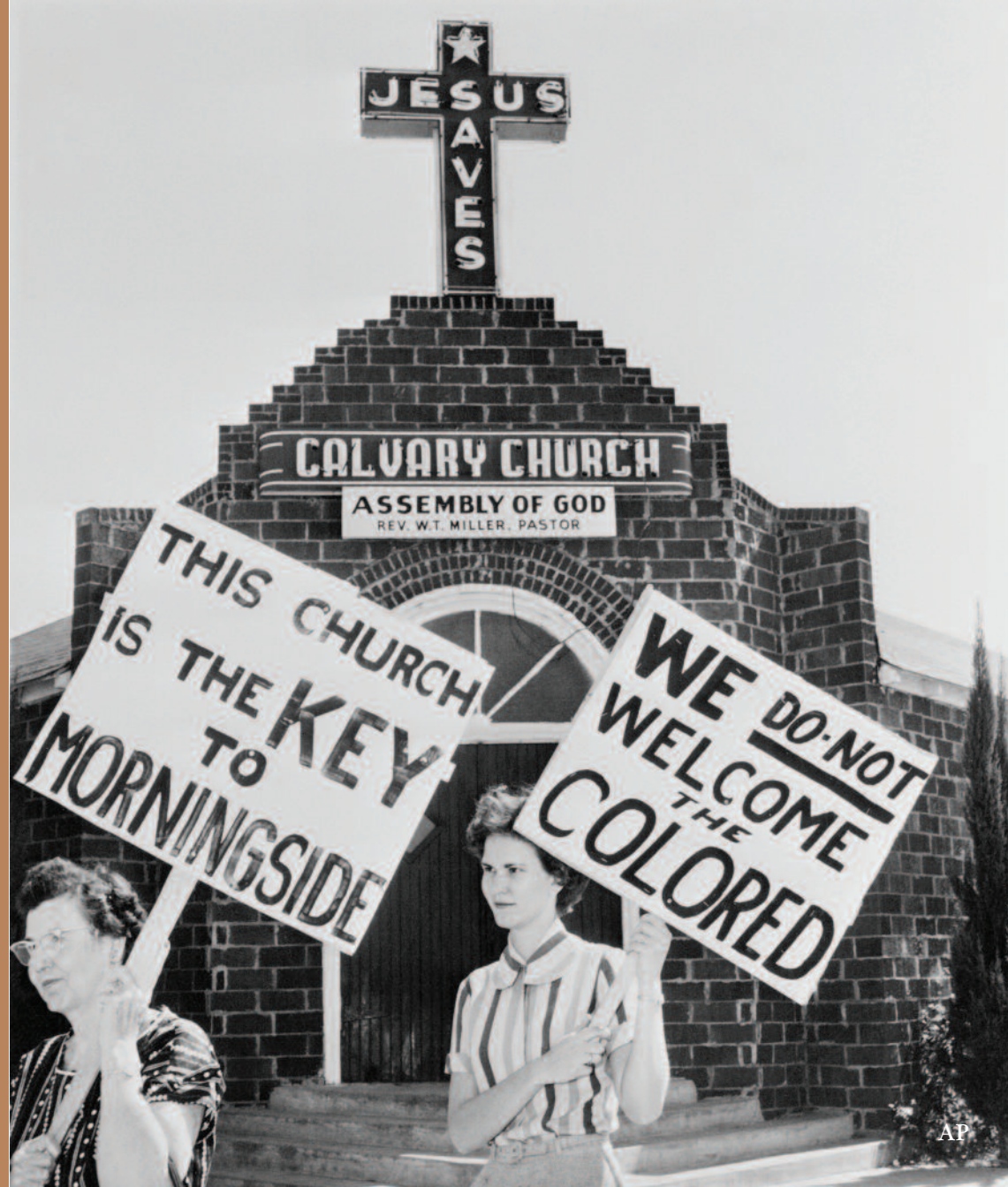
EJI has undertaken an ambitious project to create a national memorial to confront our nation's history of enslavement, racial terrorism, and legalized racial subordination. The site, which will open in Montgomery, Alabama, during the summer of 2016, will provide a much needed memorial designed to advance racial justice and recovery in a beautiful green space. EJI staff are organizing activities at lynching sites all across the United States to help advance work related to the memorial project. We are currently working with our exceptional design partner, MASS Design Group, on the development of the memorial.

Resistance to Civil Rights

As part of EJI's work to challenge this nation to deal with issues of race in a more informed manner, we have produced reports that detail the domestic slave trade, document racial terror lynchings, and explore the multiple ways in which race continues to shape the administration of criminal justice in America.

Our next major report will shed light on America's history of resistance to civil rights. Many white elected officials and policymakers ignored civil rights laws and continued to resist racial integration in the 1960s and beyond.

Learning about resistance to civil rights is critically important to understanding a range of contemporary issues that implicate the struggle for racial justice today. EJI's report will be released in early 2016.



EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

EJI's building in Montgomery, Alabama, is the site of a former slave prison where thousands of enslaved people were held before auction between 1850 and 1865. We are located less than 100 meters from Montgomery's slave market, which was the center of the city's commercial activity during the period when Alabama enslaved people. EJI is now using its building and location to educate and engage visitors with the history of racial injustice in America.

Next year, EJI hopes to complete a project that will convert 10,000 square feet of our building into an exciting new museum space dedicated to understanding the history of racial inequality in America and the connections between slavery and mass incarceration. We are working with the extraordinary design group, Local Projects, from New York and plan to open the museum in late 2016.



Staff attorney Ben Schaefer (left) discusses EJI's racial justice work with community member.



EJI attorneys Alicia D'Addario and John Dalton at the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals before oral argument in a death penalty case.

EJI's benefit honored formerly incarcerated people who use art to challenge conventional ideas about race, poverty, and our criminal justice system, including *Orange Is the New Black* author Piper Kerman and artist Winfred Rembert (center) with senior attorneys Cathleen Price (left) and Charlotte Morrison.



Senior attorney Jackie Jones-Peace introduces honorees at EJI's annual benefit.

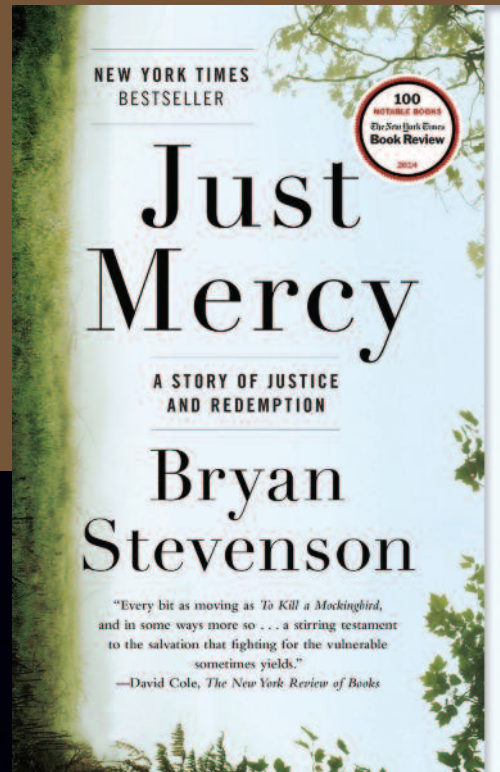


Senior attorney Sia Sanneh

Thousands of people have visited EJI in 2015 for programs and presentations about our work and the need for reform of the criminal justice system. Staff speak at colleges, universities, churches, community groups, high schools, and conferences on issues of criminal justice reform and racial inequality. In September, nearly 200 people gathered at EJI for an event featuring Dr. Bernard Lafayette (at right), who was recruited by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to serve as national coordinator of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign.



Bryan Stevenson's book, *Just Mercy*, became a New York Times Bestseller after its release last fall, and this year, the paperback release reached even more readers. Universities, churches, police departments, and entire communities collectively read and discussed *Just Mercy*, winner of the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence, an NAACP Image Award, and the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for nonfiction. The New York Times, TIME Magazine, Esquire, the Washington Post, the Boston Globe, and the Seattle Times joined the American Library Association in naming *Just Mercy* one of the best nonfiction books of the year, and in the year since its release, it has been a vehicle for sharing the work of EJI with a global audience. *Just Mercy* has opened the eyes and hearts of thought leaders from the Archbishop of Canterbury to Oprah Winfrey and is advancing a powerful conversation about our broken criminal justice system.



EJI staff Kiara Boone, Ivan Hugley, and Josh Cannon at our community event



EJI law fellows





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