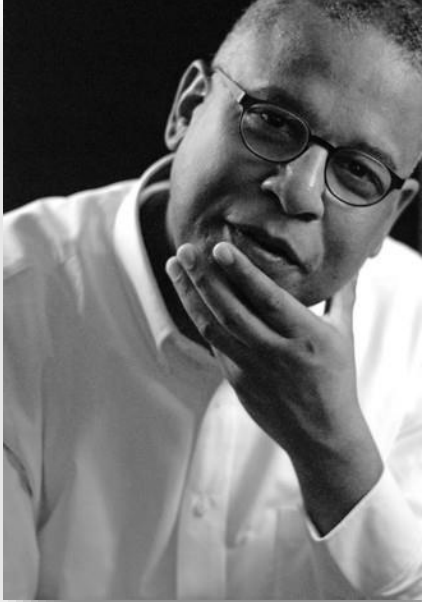


LYNCHING DOCUMENTARY LEAVES BIG QUESTION

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By DAVID KLEMENT



Who killed Yvonne Armelia Holmes? That was the question on the minds of many attendees at the screening of *Fair Game: A 1960 Georgia Lynching*, a documentary film presented by the Institute in March with partners Eckerd College, Legacy-56 Inc. and the SPC Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Yvonne was the 8-year-old victim of a brutal rape and murder in rural Blakely, Ga., in 1960. James Fair was the 24-year-old African American veteran who was falsely accused of the crime, tried without benefit of lawyer or jury, convicted and sentenced to the electric

chair, all in three days. His mother's two-year fight to free her son eventually resulted in his release.

That fight is the subject of the compelling documentary created by Clennon L. King, son of the lawyer who helped clear Fair. King's film is a shocking chronicle of the lynching culture that prevailed in much of the South in the 1930s to 60s, especially in Early County, Ga., where this crime took place. Twenty-four black men were lynched there from 1881 to 1941.

So, if Fair didn't kill the child, then who did? And why hasn't anyone tried to find the real killer during all these years? Those questions were asked by Fair's two sisters, Audrey Fair Porte and Diane Fair Odom, who joined King on stage for the post-screening conversation. They also talked about what the ordeal did to their brother, who had been honorably discharged from the Navy not long before he fell victim to Jim Crow justice on a road trip through the South. "He was never the same after that," Ms. Odom said, and her sister agreed. Both expressed anger at what happened to their family 59 years ago – anger that many in the audience reflected in the question-and-answer segment.

King himself commented on the anomaly that the unsolved crime represents, observing how most black mothers fight fiercely to defend their children if threatened – as did James Fair’s mother. But, he said, it appears no one fought for Yvonne after the near-lynching of an innocent man. Why?

King invited audience members to write letters to the Governor of Georgia urging him to reopen the case. This entry was posted in [Blog](#) and tagged [Criminal Justice](#), [Fair Game](#) on [May 7, 2019](#) by [Eric Gonzalez-Franco](#).

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