



Dramaturgy for Letters to Kamala

by Rachel Lynett

People, Places and Things to Note

Compiled by Sadie Lockhart and Kristin Clippard

Charlotta Bass

She was the first Black woman to run for vice president, in 1952. She was also a pioneering journalist. Her civil rights activism led her to address housing, work and voting rights as well as police harassment and brutality. She edited and published The California Eagle for 40 years and she championed black businesses while advocating for greater equality.

Charlene Mitchell

On July 4, 1968, Charlene Mitchell was nominated for president of the United States by the Communist Party USA. She was the first Black woman to be nominated for the country's highest office by any political party. A midwesterner who saw her share of discrimination, she actively worked to dismantle racism within the economic system by encouraging desegregation.

Patsy Mink

Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color elected to Congress, participated in the passage of much of the 1960s Great Society legislation during the first phase of her congressional career. After a long hiatus, Mink returned to the House in the 1990s as an ardent defender of the social welfare state at a time when much of the legislation she had helped establish was being rolled back.

Communist Party

The Communist Party in America centers on uniting the working class under a socialist society where equal pay and opportunity are given to all.

Shirley Chisholm

The first Black woman elected to Congress ran against Sen. George McGovern (S.D.), who would go on to win the Democratic nomination but lose in a dramatic landslide to Republican Richard Nixon.

Black Girl Magic

Black Girl Magic is a movement that was popularized by CaShawn Thompson in 2013. The concept was born as a way to "celebrate the beauty, power and resilience of Black women."

Slavery Reparations

Reparations for slavery is the application of the concept of reparations to victims of slavery and/or their descendants. There are concepts for reparations in legal philosophy and reparations in transitional justice. Throughout history reparations for slavery have been both given by legal ruling in court and/or given voluntarily (without court rulings) by individuals and institutions. Reparations can take numerous forms, including: individual monetary payments, settlements, scholarships, waiving of fees, and systemic initiatives to offset injustices, land-based compensation related to independence, apologies and acknowledgements of the injustices, token measures, such as naming a building after someone, or the removal of monuments and renaming of streets that honor slave owners and defenders of slavery.

Black Codes

Black codes were restrictive laws designed to limit the freedom of African Americans and ensure their availability as a cheap labor force after slavery was abolished during the Civil War. Though the Union victory had given some 4 million slaves their freedom, the question of freed blacks' status in the postwar South was still very much unresolved. Under black codes, many states required blacks to sign yearly labor contracts; if they refused, they risked being arrested, fined and forced into unpaid labor. Outrage over black codes helped undermine support for President Andrew Johnson and the Republican Party.

Andrew Jackson

Andrew Jackson was an American soldier and statesman who served as the seventh president of the United States from 1829 to 1837. Before being elected to the presidency, Jackson gained fame as a general in the United States Army and served in both houses of the U.S. Congress. He was responsible for the Indian Removal Act in 1831 which led to the Trail of Tears.

The Great Black Migration to the Iron City

The Great Migration was the relocation of more than 6 million African Americans from the rural South to the cities of the North, Midwest and West from about 1916 to 1970. Driven from their homes by unsatisfactory economic opportunities and harsh segregationist laws, many blacks headed north, where they took advantage of the need for industrial workers that arose during the First World War. During the Great Migration, African Americans began to build a new place for themselves in

public life, actively confronting racial prejudice as well as economic, political and social challenges to create a black urban culture that would exert enormous influence in the decades to come.

Black Wall Street, Tulsa, OK

Overnight on May 31 and June 1, 1921, in a period of just about 12 hours, the single largest incident of racial violence in American history occurred in the Greenwood district of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

“More than a thousand African American homes and businesses were looted and burned to the ground; you had a thriving community occupying more than 35 square blocks in Tulsa that was totally destroyed,” Scott Ellsworth, the author of *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*, told Quartz. “It looked like Hiroshima or Nagasaki afterwards.”

The Watchmen

HBO's *Watchmen* kicks off its story not in the present day, but in 1921 during the events of the Tulsa Black Wall Street Massacre, an event that ultimately has a major impact on the series' story. The series' opening follows a young black boy who, as the city erupts in violence around him, is sent out of the city by his parents who perish in the riots. He survives, along with an orphaned baby. The story then picks up in 2019 with a black police officer being shot by a white supremacist group called the Seventh Kalvary, who has taken up arms against the Tulsa police for perceived racial injustice. Woven into the story as the series plays out, viewers are told about an event called White Night in which the Kavalry targeted police officers prompting them to begin wearing masks to conceal their identities, as well as clues about the long-simmering racial unrest as the Seventh Kavalry gets closer and closer to their ultimate goal of destroying Doctor Manhattan and taking his powers so that they can completely push their racist agenda. All the while, the threads of that young boy in Tulsa's story create a direct tie from the racism and brutality of the past to the series' present day.

Sundown Towns

A sundown town is a community that for decades kept non-whites from living in it and was thus “all-white” on purpose. Some allowed a non-white household or two as an exception. Anna and Jonesboro are not unique or even unusual. Beginning in about 1890 and continuing until 1968, white Americans established thousands of towns across the United States for whites only. Many towns drove out their black

populations, then posted sundown signs. Others passed laws barring African Americans after dark or prohibiting them from owning or renting property. Still others just harassed and even killed those who violated the custom. Some sundown towns also kept out Jews, Chinese, Mexicans, Native Americans, or other groups.

Lovecraft Country

HBO's *Lovecraft Country*, based on Matt Ruff's novel of the same name, begins with Jonathan Majors' Atticus "Tic" Freeman traveling home from Florida to Chicago via bus. Tic is an army veteran, but he's also a pulp fiction fan, and an opening dream sequence gives us a tour of his mind. "This is the story of a boy and his dream," the narrator says. "But more than that, it's the story of an American boy in a dream that is truly American." A black and white memory of the Korean War shifts to color as flying saucers fill the sky and H.G. Wells' Tripods from *War of the Worlds* launch a ground assault. Tic awakens from this incredibly surreal dream (not to mention an incredibly surreal start to the series) to find himself in a more familiar world: the back of the bus. Just when Tic thinks he's escaped Jim Crow, offering his middle-finger and a "good riddance" as he crosses the line into Kentucky, a roadside breakdown proves just how omnipresent Jim Crow is in America.

Jim Crow Laws

Jim Crow laws were a collection of state and local statutes that legalized racial segregation. Named after a [Black minstrel show](#) character, the laws—which existed for about 100 years, from the post-[Civil War](#) era until 1968—were meant to marginalize African Americans by denying them the right to vote, hold jobs, get an education or other opportunities. Those who attempted to defy Jim Crow laws often faced arrest, fines, jail sentences, violence and death.

Seneca Village

In the early 1800s, the population of New York City grew very quickly. More and more, residents looked for ways to get away from the city's growing noise and chaos. At the time, open green spaces in New York City were mostly cemeteries. People flocked to them to walk, picnic, and otherwise spend some time closer to nature. In Europe, rich people went to grand public parks like Hyde Park in London to escape the hustle and bustle. Looking to Europe, wealthy New York City citizens argued that they, too, should have a grand park.

Hawaiian Statehood

Hawaii—a U.S. territory since 1898—became the 50th state in August, 1959, following a referendum in Hawaii in which more than 93% of the voters approved the proposition that the territory should be admitted as a state.

Interracial Marriage

Interracial marriage is a form of marriage involving spouses who belong to different races or racialized ethnicities. In the past, such marriages were outlawed in the United States, Nazi Germany and apartheid-era South Africa as miscegenation.

Loving v Virginia

Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1, was a landmark civil rights decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in which the Court ruled that laws banning interracial marriage violate the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. ... The Act prohibited discrimination in public accommodations and federally funded programs. It also strengthened the enforcement of voting rights and the desegregation of schools.

Voting Rights Act of 1965

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, aimed to overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote as guaranteed under the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Title IX, the Early Childhood Education Act

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

Women's Educational Equity Act

The Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) program was enacted in 1974 to promote educational equity for girls and women, including those who suffer multiple

discrimination based on gender and on race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or age, and to provide funds to help education agencies and institutions meet the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Immigration Act of 1924

The Immigration Act of 1924 limited the number of immigrants allowed entry into the United States through a national origins quota. The quota provided immigration visas to two percent of the total number of people of each nationality in the United States as of the 1890 national census.

Carol Moseley Braun

The first African-American woman Senator, Carol Moseley-Braun was also only the second black Senator since the Reconstruction Era. “I cannot escape the fact that I come to the Senate as a symbol of hope and change,” Moseley-Braun said shortly after being sworn in to office in 1993. “Nor would I want to, because my presence in and of itself will change the U.S. Senate.” During her single term in office, Senator Moseley-Braun advocated for civil rights issues and for legislation on crime, education, and families.

Vincent Hallinan

Vincent Hallinan (December 16, 1896 - October 2, 1992) was an American lawyer and candidate for President of the United States for the Progressive Party in the 1952 election.

The Birth of a Nation

The Birth of a Nation, originally called The Clansman, is a 1915 American silent epic drama film directed by D. W. Griffith and starring Lillian Gish.

Democratic Socialist

Democratic socialism is defined as having a socialist economy in which the means of production are socially and collectively owned or controlled, alongside a democratic political system of government. [Democratic socialists](#) reject most self-described socialist states and Marxism-Leninism.

NAACP

The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination.

Iota Phi Lambda

Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc., founded in 1929 in Chicago, Illinois, is a national business and professional women's organization which strives to:
 Unite in sisterhood qualified business and professional women in order to enhance and improve the status of women in our highly complex, competitive business and professional world; Promote increased interest in the broad field of business education among high school and college young women through planned programs and scholarships; Encourage the development of personal goals and leadership potential; and Establish and promote civic and social service activities for youth and adults.

Queen Lili'uokalani

Queen Liliuokalani (1838-1917) was the last sovereign of the Kalākaua dynasty, which had ruled a unified Hawaiian kingdom since 1810. Born Lydia Kamakaeha, she became crown princess in 1877, after the death of her youngest brother made her the heir apparent to her elder brother, King Kalākaua. By the time she took the throne herself in 1891, a new Hawaiian constitution had removed much of the monarchy's powers in favor of an elite class of businessmen and wealthy landowners (many of them American). When Liliuokalani acted to restore these powers, a U.S. military-backed coup deposed her in 1893 and formed a provisional government; Hawaii was declared a republic in 1894. Liliuokalani signed a formal abdication in 1895 but continued to appeal to U.S. President Grover Cleveland for reinstatement, without success. The United States annexed Hawaii in 1898.

Nikki Haley

Nikki Haley, original name Nimrata Nikki Randhawa, is an American politician who served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations (2017–18) in the administration of U.S. Pres. Donald Trump. She was the first woman to serve as governor of South Carolina (2011–17). She is the daughter of Indian immigrant parents.