

Blood in the Basement



From

Paralyzing Hate

To

Prosperity

The journey of
Dr. Jackie Mayfield
Founder of ComproTAX, Inc

Lessons for life and for business

Series 1, Volume 1



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The Compro-Event Center



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Bogalusa, LA 1965

By Jackie Mayfield



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By Jackie Mayfield



COMPRO-EVENT CENTER 4155 W CARDINAL DR BEAUMONT, TX 77705

FOUNDER BY DR. JACKIE MAYFIELD, COMPRO-TAX IS OVER 30 YEARS OLD, AND HAS OVER 200 OFFICES, AND HUNDREDS MORE MOBILE OFFICES NATION-WIDE. WE'RE DELIGHTED THAT OVER 23 CITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY HAVE EMBRACED US AS THE COMPANY OF CHOICE FOR COMPLETE AND PROFESSIONAL IN-COME TAX AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

WE INVEST MILLIONS BACK INTO EACH COMMUNITY WE SERVE THROUGH:

- SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS
- CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC SEMINARS
- THE 21ST CENTURY UNDERGROUND RAIL ROAD
- MULT-MILLION-DOLLAR EVENT CENTERS THAT WE CAN CALL OUR OWN - LIKE THE ONE ABOVE.

BLOOD IN THE BASEMENT - FROM PARALYZING HATE TO PROSPERITY: LESSONS FOR LIFE AND BUSINESS (SERIES 1; VOLUME 1)

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BLOOD IN THE BASEMENT - FROM PARALYZING HATE TO PROSPERITY: LESSONS FOR LIFE AND BUSINESS (SERIES 1; VOLUME 1)

www.bloodinthebasement.com

Blood in the Basement – From Paralyzing Hate to Prosperity *Lessons for Life and for Business*

Dr. Jackie Mayfield is the founder of the largest Black income tax and bookkeeping company in the country -- ComproTax, Inc.

Jackie has created a system of apprenticeship for business success that has produced many legitimate millionaires and hundreds who make six-figure incomes.



He's a dynamic speaker and business development coach. He's been called a man's man, a philanthropist, a community man, a mentor, a man of values and of vision, and he is a multi-millionaire.

Clearly, Jackie Mayfield has achieved a pinnacle of success that many of us just dream of. To measure his prosperity by money alone, would do him and you a great disservice. Yearly, he touches thousands. His family and extended family ties are as strong as ever. He can name the angelic guides that God has sent his way to help move him forward. He's in touch with them or their families. There is a joy, peace, and power about him that's unshakable.

However, to get there, he had to get through the "blood in the basement" literally and figuratively.

Some see poverty as some ordained state for character development. Jackie faced the hateful eyes and hands that dished out poverty and death to his family and community. Though he nearly succumbed, he faced the hate without becoming "the hate that hate produced." In doing so, he became a model of transformation without compromise.

For years many have asked him to put his journey to pen so that others around the world might learn and be inspired to achieve his brand of community, national and business success. He has intended to do so, but the priority of serving people, building his company and our community has always won out. Until now.

What you are holding the first in a series of books illuminating Dr. Mayfield's journey. Each volume in the series will also contain lessons for life and for business that are gleaned from his life, his challenges, his failures, and successes.

Thank You

DEDICATED TO MY WIFE BESSIE

WITH ME THROUGH EVERY
LINE OF PAIN AND GLORY



MARCH 3, 1947 - JUNE 17, 2012

You have seen in this volume some of the early family, community and business foundations needed to prepare and propel Jackie Mayfield's quest to turn paralyzing hatred into prosperity.

He's not there yet, and to get there he'll have to wade through more blood in the basement.

- What will he do when Klan bullets morph into corporate glass ceilings?
- Can he overcome a FBI dossier that continues to raise its ugly head?
- Racism won't die; so will he stop challenging it or find a way to mix activism with business success?
- When his new community sees him as too militant, can he win them over without compromising this stand against injustice -- against more blood in the basement?
- Cousin Robert Charles re-enters his life, and there is more blood in the street. Will Bey-Bey intervene again?
- Jackie's overzealous style will cause him to lose an entire business.
- How does he overcome early academic "deficiencies" to make himself over as an income tax and financial services professional to build ComproTax, Inc. into a multi-million dollar income tax and business development enterprise?
- Will his children embrace his sensitivity to injustice, or will prosperity and "integration" spoil them?
- How will Grandpa Louis' teaching that Jackie is made in the image of God sit with Bessie -- a devout Christian and his wife of 47 years?

We've only barely got started on this journey, so there's much more to come. Thank you for joining us so far. Stay tuned. Please sign up online for advanced notification of the next installment in the series @

www.bloodinthebasement.com

Dr. Mayfield's wish is that this is a series to inspire and instruct. Please ask yourself, how can you apply the lessons of his journey to help you overcome the obstacles that stand between you and a prosperity that includes justice for all; that includes a commitment to make sure there's no more blood running in the basement. Please let us know, and join the community talking about Blood In the Basement From Paralyzing Hate to Prosperity at the website above.



Mr. Donald Rhodes – “You know, Jackie, I’ve been observing you for more than two years now. I’m impressed with your commitment to excellence and what I like to call “stick-ability” no matter what.” That was the beginning of our business relationship. Mr. Rhodes was an honorable man, committed to the idea that we as Black people need to embrace business as an alternative to just looking for a job.



Donald Rhodes

Mr. Rhodes was willing to invest thousands of dollars, buying the initial inventory I needed to open the business. We sealed the deal with a Holiday Inn steak dinner at his request. It was my first time eating in a White-owned restaurant with exquisite décor and ambiance. While happy about the deal and impressed by the surroundings, I was saddened to see us abandon our own Black restaurants and businesses trying to prove to the white society and to ourselves that we deserved to be in their places. This jolt to our self esteem fueled an unintentional boycott of our own. I digress. Mr. Rhodes and I had a great business relationship based on trust, loyalty, and a “like mind” about business. While the business relationship lasted about three years, my friendship with him and his family has lasted forever.

Mr. E. A. Frank – Starting a business is not a bed of roses. Shortly after opening Mayfield’s Service Station and Garage, someone stole my tool set given to me by Grandpa Louis Warren. He had a Sears account, so he purchased them on time when I finished mechanic school. I didn’t know how I would recover. I just new that somehow I would. If ever I needed an angel, I needed him then.



God sent a successful junk-man, Mr. E. A. Frank who I had met through Mr. John T. Nelson. Mr. Frank and his wife - Mrs. Ethel Frank - had also been observing me as a young man who would not let obstacles stop me from accomplishing the task at hand.

Mr. Frank sold me a 1955 Chevrolet pickup truck and some tools on credit. Whenever I tried to pay him, he’d ask: “Jackie, how much money will you have left over after you pay me?” Regardless of how much I’d report having left over, he would say: “You old PO so and so, you don’t have enough money to pay me. I will see you next week.”

That was his way of relieving me of early debt-service, and giving me an opportunity to succeed. He never would let me pay him, even when I could comfortable afford to do so. Mr. Frank looked at me as his son and I to him as another father. He supported me until he passed to the other side. His memory, supports me still.

UNLESS YOU CAN TELL THE FUTURE



It was another day at Phillips 66 gas station and garage on West John St. in Orange, Texas. The station was a gathering place and watering hole – a place for the men to catch up and unwind a bit.

“Jackie who had just become owner of the station at the age of 21 said something about being rich one day, and I was teasing him about that,” said Vernon Dale, a service station regular. “The old man must have heard me because when I came around to the front, he put those eyes on me and said: *“If you don’t know a person you should never say what they can or can’t do, unless you can look into the future.”* I got the message.

This rock-hard and prophetic defense of Jackie became a foundation for his later success. Thomas Nelson, another service station regular, remembers that old man Louis always carried a builder’s plum bob -- the kind you’d hang down when you wanted to make a straight line.

“He’d ask me questions, and whenever I answered that plum bob would move. I don’t know how or why, but that old man knew things about places that he’d never been and things he’d never done.”

Six feet tall and still muscled up, Vernon Dale remembered this about the old man:

“I wasn’t afraid of him. It was just something about him, about the way he looked at you, like he could see through you -- and the way he talked

...



MY ANGELIC GUIDES

Thank you for taking this sojourn with me in this volume and throughout the series.

God has placed people in your life to guide you, to support you, to teach you. But you have to be moving toward your goal and your highest purpose to meet them.

Each volume will highlight angelic guides God sent to aid my quest.

Some I didn’t recognize at first; some didn’t seem like angles at all. Still, they brought lessons and blessings. I am grateful.

Jackie had seen that "something" all his life. He remembers:

I came of age as a teenager in Bogalusa, LA -- the place that the Nation magazine called Klan Town. During the turbulence of 1964 and 1965 when the Klan and the Deacons for Defense clashed in Bogalusa, Grandpa Louis ignored the curfew imposed on Black men. He went anywhere he wanted to go. No one would mess with him.

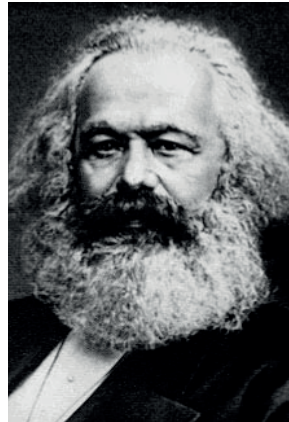
At about 5 ft 8, medium build, silver-gray hair, and light-skinned, he wasn't a threatening or physically imposing man. There was something about him, though. His beard was broad; his eyes were gently piercing; his voice was deep, and though he was a man of many words, his words seemed large -- his concepts deep and almost other-worldly."

Grandpa Louis helped to define and defend me -- the boy and the man.

When I was a boy he wouldn't let me and my sisters play outside of the gate. I'd play with the other children by throwing balls back and forth over the fence. When they got tired, they just left with my ball.

Yes, I missed going out, but not so much, because he created this huge world for us inside the fenced yard. His garden was golden. He grew what seemed like everything: squash, tomatoes, collards, you name it. And we had trees -- apple, pear, pecan, even banana trees.

Once, I even dreamed of becoming a



We don't actually have a picture of Grandpa Louis but we've found a Louis Warren look-a-like: Walt Whitman

Grandpa Louis helped to define and defend me -- the boy and the man.



His garden was golden.



Mr. C.D. Floyd - Mr. Floyd became a trusted friend and a mentor to the young 19 year-old activist turned businessman. Our talks were key to my coming to understand business and to see myself as a businessman.



Mr. & Mrs. C.D. Floyd

Mr. John T. Nelson -- I went over and met Mr. John T. Nelson and asked him for a job. His response: "What do you do?" "I repair automatic transmissions." He looked at me with the same suspicious eye that Mr. Miles had only three days earlier. Nevertheless, he gave me an opportunity to prove myself. This time I only had hours to do so.

Pointing to his lot, Nelson said: "I have a 1957 Chevrolet with a power-glide transmission that is not working. Fix it by the time I get off from my work at Harding and Lawyer, then we will talk about a job."

By the time he returned, the transmission was working perfectly.

"Can you come back tomorrow," he asked. Equally excited, I said "Sure." Only I didn't have a car or a truck. Somehow, I would make the 54 mile trek and be there bright and early. We talked money. Instead of a salary, he offered me a sixty-forty split. "Jackie you get to keep forty percent of everything you make fixing automatic transmission; I keep 60 percent; Deal?"

Deal!

He added: "Now, I don't want you trying to catch a ride from Newton every morning, so you can stay with me and my family until you can get on your feet and relocate your family here."

It took three months of hard work. I had an opening, but no set quitting time. I worked until the job got done. With a lease to a new apartment in Orange, it was time to get Bessie and my first born, Jacqueline. Mr. Nelson stepped in again and organized a moving crew - John Hardin, Dallas Sterling, Eugene Woods and his wife, Patricia. We piled everything we owned, plus a few dreams, onto a Dump truck headed to Orange.

Within a year Mr. John T had added another service station and garage and was becoming successful fast. I was proud to be part of his team and family.

A year later: tragedy struck, and Mr. John T was killed in a car accident. Devastated, his wife, Mrs. Adell could not continue the business. After a few months of continuing to keep the mechanic shop open another of God's angel entered my life - Mr. Donald Rhodes. Mr. Rhodes, another school teacher, approached me about re-opening the service station portion of the business as an investor for a percentage of the income.



MY ANGELIC GUIDES

In future volumes, I'll go into detail about my early development as a businessman in Orange, Texas. For now, I'll leave you with some key angelic guides from that period - those who God sent to help me become a successful business owner when I was 21-years-old. I was immersed into a culture of business that helped to guide me and create the foundation for later business success at United Companies and ComproTax, Inc. Such a description of this culture of business deserves the fuller

treatment that is to come. Right now, please except this literary libation honoring of those who were key to my early business success.

Mr. Robert Miles – When I first arrived in Newton, TX, I was introduced to the educator, Robert Miles. Somehow word had gotten around that I could repair automatic transmissions.

“Jackie, I heard that you fix automatic transmissions.”
“Yes I can,” I responded. Understandably, Mr. Miles looked at me with a jaundiced eye. Few mechanics were skilled in automatic transmission repair; fewer still were 19-years-old claiming such skill.

“Tell you what,” he said. “I got an Oldsmobile with a broken Slim-Jim transmission. I am going to let you show me what you can do. Go ahead and fix it.”

Grateful for the opportunity to prove myself, I said, “Thank you for your confidence in me, I will not let you down.”

Three days later that Slim-Jim was changing gears like it was brand new! You should have seen the smile on Mr. Miles' face when he got back from his test drive. He said, “C'mon, Jackie, ride with me to Orange.” Orange TX - about 54 miles away - was a big city compared to Newton.

Mr. Miles was opening a Laundromat here in Newton and needed to meet with a man name C. D. Floyd who owned a Laundromat already in Orange. While getting pointers about the business from Mr. Floyd, Mr. Miles mentioned to him that I fixed automatic transmissions and was looking for a job. In turn, Mr. Floyd asked me to go across the street and meet Mr. John T. Nelson because he was a mechanic and an owner of a Phillip 66 station with a mechanic shop. He might be able to help me.



Robert Miles

super-farmer with 750 tractors.

Grandpa Louis also grew medicinal herbs. He knew how to use them too. Today, they might call him an herbalist -- practicing herbology. Back then there were other names for it.

My favorite place of all was his shop. He was a stone mason finisher and could build anything. Inside that shop I became a master builder too. I still have three of my carvings from when I was 8 years old -- one is of the Louisiana State Capital, another of Abraham Lincoln, and the last is of a lion climbing a tree.

Early every morning, Grandpa Louis would leave home rolling his wheelbarrow to the rhythmic sound of his tools bumping the



edges. Late every evening, he'd return with money to keep the family afloat.

I didn't know at the time that this was my first and daily lesson in business.

He had no boss; he punched no clock. He left with his skill and his will. Service rendered; he returned with money to make our meager dreams come true.

He didn't seem afraid; he didn't complain, and some of the stone walls he built are still standing in Bogalusa today. Even more are still standing in me.”



"WITH A WHITE WOMAN"

"Shssss. Shisssssss! Get under the bed, quick! The night riders are coming." This was my introduction to Selma, AL in 1955. I was seven years old, and I'll never forget that night.



Emmett Till

Not too far away Emmett Till had been murdered. Jim Clark had just started his infamous 10- year reign as the sheriff of Selma. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, E.D. Nixon and the Blacks in Montgomery were sick and tired of being sick and tired.



Edmund Pettus Bridge

I didn't know any of this.

I was in Selma with my Grandmother Bey-Bey. We were in Selma to get my father, Silas Anderson, out of jail. He'd been accused of "being with a White woman."



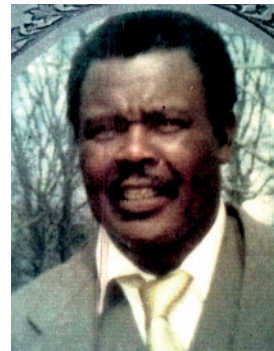
It was tense and the Whites were thirsty for Black blood. In that same year, Selma's masked men and policemen

plotted to kill Black grocery store owner, John Smitherman, for "writing a note" to a White woman. It turned out to be his phone number, so she could call about what she ordered. His home was shot up; his next door neighbor's house was mistakenly burned for his, and a Black man thought to be Smitherman was taken to the Cahaba River.

The White woman my father Silas had "been with" was his wife, my mother, and Bey-Bey's daughter. My grandmother Bey-Bey was summoned to prove that my mother wasn't White, just light skinned.



Hiding In Selma



Silas Anderson

make thirty thousand dollars. Every year I'd have an appreciation celebration for my insurance sales team. One particular celebration stands out. I'd finished what I thought was a great motivational speech, then my youngest sister, Virginia, took the floor and expressed how proud she was of me, and my accomplishments, etc. This had been an especially good year and the place was packed.

As I was looking and listening to my sister, Jenna, I saw the vision of my mother, Louella come over her.

Beautiful as ever, she too was beaming with the pride of a mother to her son. Based on our circumstance, I'd never really felt that from her up close. When she said to me "I love you" my voice began to crack; my knees became weak.

Later as I reflected, I realized that somewhere between the "I'm proud of you" and "I love you," my mother slipped in another message. It was:

"Jackie, remember that you didn't get to this pinnacle alone!"

I had always been grateful, but after her admonition, I could more clearly see the angels that God had placed in my path to help me through to this success.

Her revelation has become my constant refrain and those who know me have heard it many times:

"All you got to do is to pick up your bed and walk. You don't have to know all of how you will get there; just start; start walking in the direction of your goals, and God will send angels to help you get there. No, I'm not talking just about heavenly angels; there will be people -- you might not recognize them at first, but they'll be just what's needed to move you forward along your path to success."



ed to the door. This happened time and time again."

He'd have to create a job for himself. But with no money, and no relatives with money in a hostile racist mostly rural environment, the deck was stacked against him.

"I started to take stock of what I did have."

- Grandpa Louis every morning left with his skill and his will. Service rendered; he returned with money to make our meager dreams come true.
- Bey-Bey would expand her service to generate income to meet the expanding family needs.
- The movement gave me an expanded vision for family, people and the world. It taught me that if the effort was cause-driven, we could organize people to fight and win against the odds.

Would that be enough?

"That was enough to get me started," says Jackie.

From Bogalusa to Newton to Orange, Jackie moved -- starting first as an automatic transmission specialist, then as owner of that Phillips 66 service station and garage that was the community watering hole at only twenty-one-years of age. He kept moving and created the largest Black insurance sales force for United Companies out of Baton Rouge, LA. Obstacles became steppin' stones. On his sales team were two men who would later anchor ComproTax - Yusuf Muhammad and Craig D. Johnson.

"When others would hit the racist glass ceiling," Jackie recalls, "they'd quit and go back to teaching or to relying on their other professional training. I didn't have a fall back. I had to make it work."

It's these times that he remembered another gift from his grandfather, Louis.

"You're made in the image of God, and that's not a physical image; it's a spiritual image; it's an image of creativity, and you can create anything you want."

At one point in the mid 80's, there were weeks where I would



Mama: Louella Anderson

Silas, a 6'4", muscular, cocoa colored man, and my mother -- petite, lively and very determined -- moved from Jasper, TX to Selma for work. He was a Stumper -- pulling and hauling deep-seated pine stumps for resin. He and my mother had just birthed my sister, Jenna.

Now, we were ducking under beds for fear of the night riders and praying that my father would be released from jail.

Bey-Bey prevailed. My father Silas was released. Then she gave them a bit of advice.

"Y'all need to leave this-here place."

I was leaving with Bey-Bey .

Yes, I was one of original "Bey-Bey's kids." At the time, there was no better place to be.

Though Silas was the only real father I knew, my mother had me with a man that I'd later come to know as Myrtis Magee.

When my mother married Silas Anderson and prepared to move from Bogalusa to Jasper, TX, my Grandmother wouldn't let me leave.

Aunt Olane later told me that my biological father, Myrtis, came back to Bogalusa from California to take me to live with him. Bey-Bey would have none of it.

I was the apple of her eye, and in her mind she saw a special place for me. After Selma, that place was with her back to Bogalusa and Grandpa Louis.

One of my fondest trips with Bey-Bey was a long train ride to



Myrtis Magee far right.

New Orleans. The porters and conductors were in their crisp uniforms with shiny buttons and hats that they tipped at just the right moment. More amazing was that the train was riding on the waters as we crossed Lake Pontchartrain - at least it looked that way to me. After that I dreamed of becoming a conductor.

I remember once we were getting on the bus in Bogalusa. I followed Bey-Bey to the back, then asked, 'Why can't we sit up there?' "Oh," she said, "these seats back here are better; can't you see? They are nice and long, so you can stretch out right here next to me."



Aunt Vee

Little did I know that special place would be shared with all of my brothers and sisters, when 4 years after Selma, my mother died and Bey-Bey and Grandpa Louis took us all in. Now, we really were Bey-Bey 's kids -- all nine of us.

We all piled into the shotgun house on Marks Ave. Uncle Charlie was in the back, and we were everywhere you could be in a 3-room house. We even had a bed in the kitchen.

This was maybe my first real lesson in family. We always were close, but when tragedy struck we became closer.

Everybody pitched in: Aunt Vee, Uncle Willie, Aunt Olane, Grandma Sophie.

We were more than Bey-Bey 's kids. Amidst the new tragedy and the constant reality of oppression,



Aunt Olane

I wouldn't know until much later that the real reason I had been abruptly whisked out of Bogalusa was that the word was out that I would be killed by the White supremacists. It was the hottest and bloodiest summer of the Bogalusa campaign.

During those times out of the house, Jackie met a young woman with the complexion of his Sudanese-looking grandmother. "Highly melanated" and exceedingly beautiful is how he would later describe her. Her name was Bessie.

After some early trials with another boy who wanted to keep Jackie away, he and Bessie dated a bit.

But Bogalusa hadn't lost its lure. Friends had told him of a new Manpower Project jobs training program. If selected, they would teach him automatic transmission repair and pay him \$40.00 per week to attend.

Jackie wasn't interested in automatic transmissions, but he needed the money. He'd have to start to take care of himself and the family even more now.

Though he'd never driven a car, Jackie took to transmission repair like Michael Jackson to a stage. He'd been quite the scholar - a straight A student - before he dropped out of school. The movement had broadened him, aged him, almost killed him, and at the same time given him a life and maturity beyond his years.

Now, like Louis and Bey-Bey, he was learning a skill. One day he got a call from Newton. It was Bessie.

"I'll never forget that day." She said, "Jackie, I'm pregnant, and I just want to know what you're going to do?"

"Of course," I said. "I'm gonna do the right thing." "The right thing was marriage which was the farthest thing from my mind at the time.

Some of my family didn't want me to marry her, but I did genuinely like her, and I knew what it was like to grow up without my father. That wasn't going to happen to my child! Bessie and I would be married.

But how would he take care of his family?

He successfully finished the transmission repair program, but he had no high school diploma, and while the movement had made him, it also had marked him.

"I couldn't get a job," Jackie recalls. "No one would hire me. If they did, once they learned about my activist past, I'd be escort-

erful -- he never told me not to participate in the movement, but he wasn't consumed by fear or anger.

The movement was still in full swing, and I was still swinging in it; just not so wildly. In fact, the summer of '65 was the hottest -- marches, negotiations, armed confrontations.

I hadn't thought of my velvety Black Sudanese-looking great grandmother, Della Jones, for a long, long, time. She too visited me -- more of a memory than an image. Born in bondage, she used to say: "Jackie, we're not of this place."

While she was talking about our ancestral home, Africa, her words were prophetic.

One day, Grandpa Louis told me that my father, Silas, would be coming to take me and my brothers and sisters -- all of us -- to live with him and his new wife, Gloria, in Newton, TX.

"What!? Leaving Bogalusa? The movement? Grandpa Louis?" I did not want to leave. To persuade me, he and Aunt Vee told me I was needed to help protect the others.

Me, Silas, Jr., Virginia, Dora, Larry, and Gloria helped to load our 'just-have-to-have belongings' on to Daddy's stump hauling truck. Daddy had already picked up Gregory. Betty had already married and moved on. George, who was 19 years old, stayed in Bogalusa with Louis.

Newton was about 500 miles west. Going down Highway 190, we must have looked like the Beverly Hillbillies.

Gloria, Dad's new wife, greeted us with open arms. It's quite amazing that she could do so. She had ten children of her own. We made it seventeen. Dad had just built a new Jim Walter home next to hers. So new that they still were putting up the sheet rock and painting when we arrived. Silas was determined to provide. How we managed without killing each other is a testament to the spirit and the culture of our people.

When asked to describe Jackie during those days, Gloria said, "Jackie wasn't any trouble. He actually wasn't in the house much. I mostly remember him sitting on the back porch thinking. He was always thinking about how to make things better for him and the family."

there was the village.

We were home -- loved, protected, cared for.

Like Grandpa Louis, Bey-Bey didn't complain -- at least not to us. I know it was hard burying her first and only child. I re-



member the look of pain etched in her face.

There were more mouths to feed now, so Bey-Bey doubled her work -- taking in more laundry and more orders to mend or make clothes.

Aunt Vee would say: "Oh, she was an excellent seamstress. Her outfits were better than what they sold in the stores."

This was my second lesson in business -- when you're self-employed you can expand your service to generate more income to match the expanding needs of the family.

Though George and Betty were my older siblings, somehow Bey-Bey and Grandpa Louis stitched "protector" and "provider" into the garment of my personality. That's why I carry a sense of responsibility for my family and my people to this very day.



“REAL MEN...”



Charles Sims

On February 21, 1964, three men set out from Jonesboro in the North headed through rough Klan country 300 miles southeast to Bogalusa. There were no super-highways -- just two lane Black tops on backwoods highways like LA-14, US-167, US-71 through small towns and known Klan strongholds -- like Abbeville, Ville Platte and Turkey Creek.

Frederick Douglas, Kirkpatrick, Ernest (Chilly-Willy) Thomas, and The Congress of Racial Equity (CORE) worker Charles Fenton had been key in creating a local armed self-defense league to protect those in the Jonesboro Civic and Voters League, as well as other Black citizens from police and Klan violence. They called their group the Deacons for Defense and Justice.



F.D. Kirkpatrick

It was dark when the group reached Baton Rouge. The disk jockey broke into regular programming announcing that Malcolm X had been assassinated. Seth Hague, winner of the 1998 Loyola University History Writing Award and author of *Militancy, Conflict and the Sustainance of the Hegemony in Bogalusa, Louisiana* writes: "Ominously, Malcolm was in Selma, Alabama less than three weeks prior to his assassination, predicting that the campaign for racial equality may be forced to abandon its non-violent image."



A.Z. Young

These three men were a testament that Malcolm's prediction was correct.

Waiting for their safe arrival was a huge crowd at the Union Hall. Chief among them were organizers and activists from the old NAACP, the Bogalusa Civic and Voter's League (BCVL), CORE and youth who often defied their parents' warnings to stay home or not to get involved.

Once safely in the Union hall, A.Z. Young, Robert Hicks, and Charlie Sims were on hand to greet the three Deacons from Jonesboro. The meeting hall was packed, with members of the BCVL and some CORE workers. After an introduction by Young, Kirkpatrick took the podium to speak.

He placed a Bible on one side of the podium and a gun on the other as he stressed "We have to defend our children." "Yes" ... The crowd roared back.

wheelbarrow he used for his stone mason-finishing. Bey-Bey's diabetes had progressed. Louis was extremely distrustful of the hospitals and their treatment. The sores on her arm witnessed her declining blood circulation. When Bey-Bey was very sick, he wheeled her three miles -- all the way to the Charity Hospital in his wheelbarrow. Five days later she died.

The line was getting thinner ...

"After Bey-Bey died, I was ready for anything." "I started staying in Franklinton - the County seat 20 miles from Bogalusa with Aunt Olane and my cousin, Robert Charles. During our teenage years, we were like two peas in a pod! He wasn't in the movement as much as I was, but Robert was always ready for some action. He was smart, quick, and not afraid of anything."



Robert Charles

In mid-'65 we started planning on doing something big. I mean really big, something that -- if caught -- could have landed both of us in the gas chamber."

Though our movement was self-defense which included retaliatory strikes, it had been disciplined and guided by our love of justice. Now, what we were planning would cross that thin line.

On the eve of our plan's execution, Bey-Bey appeared to me. I could actually see her shimmering image. I could hear her, and her smile was so real. Her eyes touched me, and I began weeping profusely. Robert had never seen me cry - nobody had. He said, "You're not gonna punk out on me now?"

"Robert, I'm through" is all I could say.

From that point we started to drift apart. Still connected as family and in love, but our lives would take different paths.

I began to see Bob Hicks as the planner, the family man, as well as the soldier. I listened more carefully to Farmer talking about the big picture -- our constitutional rights, the law suits, and the larger national movement.

I reflected on how my grandfather had an authority and presence that allowed him to walk through all parts of town even when there was a curfew on the Black community. He was pow-

THE CROSSROAD

As a teenager, full of bloody memories and righteous indignation at the injustices heaped upon his family, his community and his people, it's easy to see how young Jackie could have gotten lost. There is a thin line between militancy for justice and hopeless rebellion -- anarchy.



But it was anarchy, or at least it felt like that to Jackie. Whites escalated violence against Blacks. They openly shot and killed one of the new Black police officers. The FBI, the Constitution and the Courts meant nothing to the Mayor of Bogalusa or the Governor of Louisiana. Then came Bloody Wednesday when Black youth and adults tested the law that had integrated the "White-only" Cassidy Park.

The youth and adults were viciously attacked by White supremacist and the police. The Police Chief Claxton Knight proclaimed, "I'll show you who runs this town." His proclamation was followed by Deputy Vertrees Adams reiteration, "You niggers ain't gonna rule this town."



Bleeding children were taken to the hospital only to be met by Dr. Foster who refused them treatment. They had to drive 60 miles to New Orleans.

More murder by neglect.
More Black blood running.

Jackie remembers, "the blood of our people ran up and down the streets."

White fear/hatred reached a fever pitch.
Black fear/hatred was rising to match it.



"My grandfather Louis never owned a car. All he had was that

All that Jackie could think about while he talked were the night riders in Selma and, most of all, blood in the basement!

"My mother died because of White racism in Lukfin, TX." He recalls:

"In 1957 my mother birthed my youngest brother, Silas, Jr. Shortly thereafter, she became pregnant again. This time she miscarried and became sick. Silas, my father, got word to Bey-Bey. She grabbed me and my sister Gloria and jumped on the first bus to Lufkin. After we arrived, Momma took a turn for the worst. When they rushed her to the hospital, the White nurses and doctors refused to see her in the main facility; instead they shunted her to the basement where the "Negras" were seen.



All she needed was proper care. By the time they transferred her to the ill-equipped "Negra" section, it was too late."



This form of murder-by-neglect was all too common. Thousands of Black men and women died because White controlled hospitals refused to care for Blacks properly, if at all.

For Jackie, ten years old at the time, his mother was a saint – petite, beautiful, nurturing. Her beauty was amplified by her absence while he was with his grandmother, Bey-Bey.

Like any child he looked forward to reuniting with his mother who he knew loved him.

Now, she was gone. Taken! She would never come back to Bogalusa. They would never be reunited.

His mother's blood was on their hands. The images of her blood running in the basement became emblazoned in his mind.

It connected him deeply to what the Jonesboro Deacons were saying and became a metaphor for White injustice and brutality.



Louella

But the brutality of White racial hatred was not inflicted by death alone -- the daily indignities were like death by a thousand little cuts. Jackie felt these too -- mostly through his other mother, Bey-Bey, his grandmother who raised him as her own.

"My grandmother was a seamstress. We'd go downtown to get fabric and sewing items. Her diabetes medicine made her need to urinate more frequently, so I saw her ask time and time again to use the restrooms, only to be directed -- not to the 'colored' restrooms -- but outside. I hurt even today remembering the indignities I saw my grandmother endure at the hands of White racism."

"A few months after this meeting with the Jonesboro Deacons in '64," Jackie recalls, "though I was a straight A student, I dropped out of school partly to help support my family, and mostly to get involved with the movement in a vigorous way to avenge the blood in the basement and the blood by a thousand cuts."

Shouts rang out - waking Jackie from his daze -
Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!

Deacons for Defense! Deacons for Defense and Justice!
 The Union Hall was full of anticipation.

Jackie, his 'cousin,' Robert Charles, and other teenage youth were ecstatic!

"These were real men," says Jackie. "In addition to my grandfather, Louis, these were the men who inspired me - "Chilly-Willy (Earnest Thomas, the founder of the Jonesboro Deacons), AZ Young, Bob Hicks, and Charles Sims.

Because of the presence of informants and the need for Deacon membership to



Archives at the Amistad Research Center include this photo from a 1964 civil rights march in Bogalusa, LA. Leading the marchers are: from left, A.Z. Young (white shirt), Ronnie Moore and James Farmer. The photo is from the collection of Ronnie Moore Papers. (Courtesy of the Amistad Research Center)

to the Klan. They decided to take a detour. Not one of the 300 came that night.

The Klan wasn't about to disappoint them, though. This was Bogalusa. At another night, a carload of Klan members passed and fired shots into the house. Armed, Bob Hicks fired back.

Once, the Klan was chasing the Civil Rights worker, Bill Yates. Barbara remembers, "He was trying to make it to the Hicks 'safe-house.'" Ms. Hicks came outside of the house with her gun to protect him. By the time my mother got to the edge of the property another Black man came to her and Yates' rescue.



"There were *'real women'* with those *'real men!'*"

"They too showed me how to be a man! They showed me what love of self and family and community really is. They showed me that family is not just your nuclear family, and that commitment and devotion are more than prayers and nice sounding words. They showed me the power of love for justice -- a justice for which they lived, and for which they were willing to die.

I didn't know it then, but this commitment to family and community; this love for justice was to become the foundation upon which I would build my businesses, and is the chief reason that I've been successful.

In business, you have to believe in something bigger than you. You have to build a business that really serves others, and sometimes you have to fight to keep your business standing against the inimical forces that seek to kill it.

Our philosophy in COMPRO-TAX is a WE concept. It is grounded in this movement and is best expressed by the African proverb:

I am because we are and because WE ARE, therefore, I AM."



were real men.”

Once when Robert (Bob) Hicks put up two White civil rights workers, Bill Yates and Steve Miller from Berkeley, California, the Police Chief came to Hicks' home spewing some Jim Crow law that prohibited a White from staying in the same house with a Black person, and demanding that we put the White students out.



Barbara Hick-Collins

Bob was smart and knowledgeable about the law and he knew that the Civil Rights Act had already knocked down that law. “Still,” says his daughter, Barbara Hicks-Collins, founder of the *The Robert “Bob” Hicks Foundation for Human and Civil Rights* “they could have arrested and killed him.”

“When he turned to my mother,” says Barbara, mother said: “Bob, those are some mother’s children, and you can’t put them out of this house because you know we will never see them again. They will kill them just like they did those three Core Civil Rights workers, Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner.”

When Bob told the sheriff that he would not give the Civil Rights workers up, the sheriff responded that there are over 300 Klansmen on their way and he couldn't provide Bob or the students any protection.



Robert “bob” Hicks

While the police remained parked outside, Barbara -- just a teenager at the time - got on the phone calling for help. At first a handful of men showed up; then another handful; then another, and another until a small army of real men- armed Black men - had answered the call.

Barbara remembers, “They came from all directions, some on foot and most were carrying more than one gun.” Some were in trees, some on top of the roof, some up and down the block. The police who were still outside of the Hicks house got word

be kept secret, it wasn’t until much later that night at Robert (Bob) Hick's home that the Bogalusa chapter of the Deacons for Defense and Justice was formed.



Word had gotten out about the meeting, and the Klan laid in waiting for those Jonesboro trouble-makers to hit the road for home early the next morning. Expecting such, the new Deacons provided armed cover for them to get out of town. Cunningly, they got past the initial blockade of Klan and the chase was on from Bogalusa to Covington for over 25 miles. With speeds exceeding 100 miles-per-hour and armed to the teeth, the new Deacons escorted their guests out of harm’s way.

However, this was Klan-Town. Over the months and into the summer, the Klan under various uniforms and badges, including the FBI's, was successful in killing and intimidating many Black and White civil rights workers.



James Farmer
founder of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

Jackie became even more active in the fight for justice in Bogalusa. He'd faced angry mobs of Whites when BCVL and CORE lead marches in that summer of '64. Showing their determination, BCVL proclaimed, "We are not interested in ‘race relations.’ We speak of freedom, justice, and equality. We are citizens, not ‘race relations,’ and we assert our citizenship.” The Deacons were there too. They were invisible, and their actual members, numbers and chapters were never to be known.

The marches were often lead by James Farmer, principal

Jackie remembers:

"While media directed most of the nation's attention to Martin Luther King, Jr., a great man in his own right, we looked to James Farmer. Farmer risked his national position with CORE to advocate that they continue to support the armed defense movement in Bogalusa, even though such support violated their national "nonviolent" stance.

Much more than his reputation, Farmer risked his life to continue to support our demonstrations in the death struggle that gripped Bogalusa."

In 1963, Louisiana State troopers armed with guns, cattle prods and tear gas, hunted Farmer door-to-door when he was trying to organize protests in the town of

Plaquemine near New Orleans, LA -- just 60 miles from Bogalusa.

At one point, a friendly F.B.I. agent told Farmer that an informant had infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan in Louisiana, and had reported that the Klan had voted to kill Farmer the next time he set foot in Bogalusa.

"I was meant to die that night," Farmer once said. "They were kicking open doors, beating up Blacks in the streets, interrogating them with electric cattle prods." A funeral home director had Farmer "play dead" in the back of a hearse that carried him along back roads and out of town.

Jackie continues,

"We knew that neither Farmer nor any other national civil rights organization would protect us. We looked to ourselves -- to men like AZ Young, Charles Sims and Robert (Bob) Hicks who were leaders in the BCVL.

You see, the Klan wasn't a fringe element in Bogalusa. The Klan ran the town from the Mayor on down, that's why Nation's Magazine called it Klan-Town."

The Deacons put up the fight of their lives. Media myth, notwithstanding, they changed the course of the civil rights movement organizing in over 41 cities, and according to **Akinyele Umoja**, Chair of the Black Studies Department at Georgia State University, and author of *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement*

"the ideological shifts in the movement were becoming apparent ... both SNCC and CORE supported armed self-defense. National CORE leadership, including James Farmer, publicly acknowledged a relationship between CORE and the Deacons for Defense in Louisiana. This alliance between the two organizations highlighted the support and concept of armed self-defense many southern-born Black people embraced. A significant portion of SNCC's southern-born leadership and staff also supported armed self-defense."

In the end the Deacons for Defense and Justice made their memory a legacy, and they made a real man of the still youthful Jackie Mayfield.

"They didn't have a bow in their backs," says Jackie. "They

