



Title **Slave Consultants Narrative** Description The Slave Consultant's Narrative is a short speech purportedly given by a slave owner, William Lynch, on the bank of the James River in 1712, which outlines methods for the control of slaves. Analysis now suggests that the document was written in the mid to late 20th Century. The full-text of the speech is available. The site is maintained by the University of Missouri-St Louis, Thomas Jefferson Library. Keywords - controlled [slaves](#); [slavery](#) Type Papers/reports/articles (individual) URL <http://www.umsl.edu/~libweb/blackstudies/lynch.htm> [English] Classification [Slavery](#) Country of origin United States Format html Date added 1998-01-30



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Thomas Jefferson Library
Reference Department

The Slave Consultant's Narrative

The life of an Urban Myth?

THE SLAVE CONSULTANT'S NARRATIVE

Provenance of the following text is unclear.

This speech was purportedly given by a slave owner, William Lynch, on the bank of the James River in 1712. Analysis now suggests that the document was written in the mid to late 20th Century. If you have information about the origins of the "Narrative", please see the contact information at the bottom of this page.

It is entered into this electronic format not to state an opinion or to give offense to anyone, but to augment Black Studies materials available to electronic researchers.

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Gentlemen, I greet you here on the bank of the James River in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and twelve. First, I shall thank you, the gentlemen of the Colony of Virginia, for bringing me here. I am here to help you solve some of your problems with slaves.

Your invitation reached me on my modest plantation in the West Indies where I have experimented with some of the newest and still the oldest methods for control of slaves. Ancient Rome would envy us if my program is implemented. As our boat sailed south on the James River, named for our illustrious King, whose version of the Bible we cherish, I saw enough to know that your problem is not unique. While Rome used cords of wood as crosses for standing human bodies along its old highways in great numbers you are here using the tree and the rope on occasion.

I caught a whiff of a dead slave hanging from a tree a couple of miles back. You are not only losing valuable stock by hangings, you are having uprisings, slaves are running away, your crops are sometimes left in the fields too long for maximum profit, you suffer occasional fires, your animals are killed. Gentlemen, you know what your problems are; I do not need to elaborate. I am not here to enumerate your problems, I am here to introduce you to a method of solving them.

In my bag here, I have a fool proof method for controlling your Black slaves. I guarantee everyone of you that if installed correctly it will control the slaves for at least 300 years. My method is simple.

Any member of your family or your overseer can use it.

I have outlined a number of differences among the slaves; and I take these differences and make them bigger. I use fear, distrust, and envy for control purposes. These methods have worked on my modest plantation in the West Indies and it will work throughout the South.

Take this simple little list of differences, and think about them. On top of my list is "Age", the second is "Color" or shade, there is intelligence, size, sex, size of plantations, status on plantation, attitude of owners, whether the slaves live in the valley, on a hill, East, West, North, South, have fine hair or coarse hair, or is tall or short. Now that you

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have a list of differences, I shall give you an outline of action- but before that I shall assure you that distrust is stronger than adulation; respect or admiration.

The Black slave after receiving this indoctrination shall carry on and will become self re-fueling and self-generating for hundreds of years, maybe thousands.

Don't forget you must pitch the old Black vs. the young Black male, and the young Black male against the old Black male. You must use the dark skin slave vs. the light skin slaves and the light skin slaves vs. the dark skin slaves. You must use the female vs. the male, and the male vs. the female. You must also have your White servants and overseers distrust all Blacks, but it is necessary that your slaves trust and depend on us. They must love, respect, and trust only us.

Gentlemen, these Kits are your Keys to control. Use them. Have your wives and children use them, never miss opportunity. If used intensely for one year, the slaves themselves will remain perpetually distrustful.

Thank you, gentlemen.

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If you have information about the origins of this document, please contact [Anne Taylor](#).

In late 1993, I added a (now infamous) article to the Library's gopher because I found it interesting. Over the past year, I have been contacted many times about its origin and authenticity. I can prove neither, but it remains on the gopher and now on the Web because it has struck a nerve in many African Americans, sparked debate between us, has been used in a major national event, and seems to be sparking a new word phrase.

It has been the subject on at least three African American listserv discussion groups. And I believe I may have spotted the first usage of a new term: the [Willie Lynch Syndrome](#). (A bid to add to something new to the *Oxford English Dictionary*).

The Narrative is presented here with correspondence about its authenticity between myself and the late Dr. William Pierson * , who was Professor of History at Fisk University; and Dr. Stephen Sheppard, Professor of Law, Thomas M. Cooley Law School; and with relevant portions of the text from The Reverend Louis Farrakhan's speech at the Million Man March, October 16, 1995.

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At the bottom is a link to an email post sent to Samuel Winslow of Rutgers and Lee Bailey of Bailey Broadcasting about the research materials I have used to try and trace our Willie. The idea to set this up as a Web page came from Ms. Katherine Wilkins of the Amistad Research Center at Tulane. (Thanks.)

[* Mike Adams of the *Baltimore Sun* informs me that Dr. Piersen passed away in late December of 1996.]

The Slave Consultant's Narrative

The life of an Urban Myth?

Email to Samuel Winslow and Lee Bailey about researching *The Narrative*.

[Halloween, 1995]

Hello, Mr. Bailey and Mr. Winslow,

Mr. Bailey, I received your phone message Saturday morning and did eventually receive this email--our server here can be quite slow. Mr. Winslow, I received your email this morning.

Oh, my. I seem to have really started something here. My co-worker, Raleigh Muns, and I had been debating what to do about the narrative. Initially, we couldn't prove it true or false. Documentation and teaching of American history being what it is, not finding it in standard sources doesn't prove it false. It first went up in late 1993, when Raleigh was teaching me how to create and load gopher documents. It's been up, without comment, until last year, when we were contacted by Ms. Ywone Edwards of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Prof. Piersen of Fisk contacted us a few months back about its origins and provided me with a critique which points to the narrative being a much-latter-day document. Raleigh and I decided not to remove it and to add what, at the time, seemed a good warning to people accessing it on the gopher. In the mean time, I continued to look for provenance.

Prof. Piersen's critique carried weight just shy of gospel. But when we left it up, we thought that someone might come along and say "Hey, that wasn't written until 1920 or 50" or some such. Even as an

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inauthentic document, it says something about the former and current state of African America. Assuming Prof. Pierson's critique is on target, I think it likely that it's a '60s or '70s document. Comparing the text to my family member's experiences (e.g., my light-skinned aunt was able to find a job in a department store in the late '50s, when my mother was judged too dark to employ, etc.), it reads as pre- or early Civil Rights era. I don't see the kinds of skin tone, hair, and other superficial divisions among us in my everyday that are being talked about in the text. (If I've been sheltered, please tell me.)

Enough butt-covering, now it's time to talk about where I got it. The publisher who gave me this wanted to remain anonymous on the gopher version because he couldn't trace it, either, and until now I've honored his wishes.

It was printed in a local, widely-distributed, free publication called "The St. Louis Black Pages", 9th anniversary editon, 1994*, page 8. It was accompanied by a line drawing. If you're able to receive binary files, I'll scan, upload, and send it you.

*(At the risk of talking down to you, it's not unusual for printed materials to be "post-dated"-- the 1994 edition came out in 1993)

Finally, we will post a more stringent warning on the narrative. I haven't consulted with Raleigh, yet, but I'd like it to remain on the gopher in the hopes of finding where and when it originated. Whether it's an 18th century or 20th century document, I don't think I'll find many who would deny that the "divide and conquer" strategy was used against us.

You both have my permission to repost this message. If I may, I'd like to have the listserv addresses where this is being discussed.

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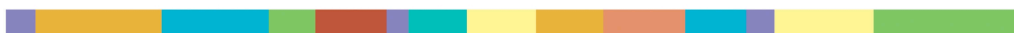


The Reverend Louis Farrakhan
Million Man March Speech, excerpt
Washington Mall, Washington, D.C., USA
October 16, 1995

...Now, atonement demands of us eight steps. In fact, atonement is the fifth step in an eight-stage process. Look at our division, not here, out there. We, as a people who have been fractured, divided and destroyed because of our division, now must move toward a perfect union. Let's look at a speech, delivered by a white slave holder on the banks of the James River in 1712, 68 years before our former slave masters permitted us to join the Christian faith. Listen to what he said. He said, 'In my bag, I have a foolproof method of controlling black slaves. I guarantee every one of you, if installed correctly, it will control the slaves for at least 300 years. My method is simple. Any member of your family or your overseer can use it. I have outlined a number of differences among the slaves, and I take these differences and I make them bigger. I use fear, distrust and envy for control purposes.' I want you to listen. What are those three things? Fear, envy, distrust. For what purpose? Control. To control who? The slave. Who is the slave? Us. Listen. He said, 'These methods have worked on my modest plantation in the West Indies, and they will work throughout the South. Now, take this simple little list, and think about it. On the top of my list is Age, but it's only there because it starts with an A, and the second is color or shade. There's intelligence, sex, size of plantation, status of plantation, attitude of owners, whether the slaves live in the valley or on a hill, north, east, south or west, have fine hair or coarse hair, or is tall or short. Now that you have a list of differences, I shall give you an outline of action. But before that, I shall assure you that distrust is stronger than trust, and envy is stronger than adulation, respect or admiration. The black slave, after receiving this indoctrination, shall carry it on and will become self-refueling and self-generating for hundreds of years, maybe thousands of years. Now, don't forget, you must pitch the old black male against the young black male and the young black male against the old black male. You must use the female against the male, and you must use the male against the female. You must use the dark-skinned slave against the light-skinned slave and the light-skinned slave against the dark-skinned slave. You must also have your white servants and overseers distrust all blacks. But it is necessary that your slaves trust and depend on us. They must love, respect, and trust only us. Gentlemen, these keys are your keys to control. Use them. Never miss an opportunity. And if

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used intensely for one year, the slaves themselves will remain perpetually distrustful. Thank you, gentlemen.' End of quote.

So spoke Willy Lynch [sp] 283 years ago. And so, as a consequence, we, as a people, now have been fractured, divided, and destroyed, filled with fear, distrust, and envy. Therefore, because of fear, envy, and distrust, of one another, many of us as leaders, teachers, educators, pastors, and persons, are still under the control mechanism of our former slave masters and their children.

And now, in spite of all that division, in spite of all that divisiveness, we responded to a call, and look at what is present here today. We have here those brothers with means and those who have no means, those who are light and those who are dark, those who are educated, those who are uneducated; those who are business people, those who don't know anything about business; those who are young, those who are old; those who are scientific, those who know nothing of science; those who are religious, and those who are irreligious; those who are Christian, those who are Muslim, those who are Baptist, those who are Methodist, those who are Episcopalian, those of traditional African religion. We've got them all here today. And why did we come? We came because we want to move...

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