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From a powerhouse of five expert Black journalists comes a gripping, thought-provoking survey of the forces that pushed our unjust system to its breaking point after the murder of George Floyd

# SAY THEIR NAMES

*How Black Lives Came to Matter in America*

by Curtis Bunn, Michael H. Cottman, Patrice Gaines Nick Charles, and Keith Harriston

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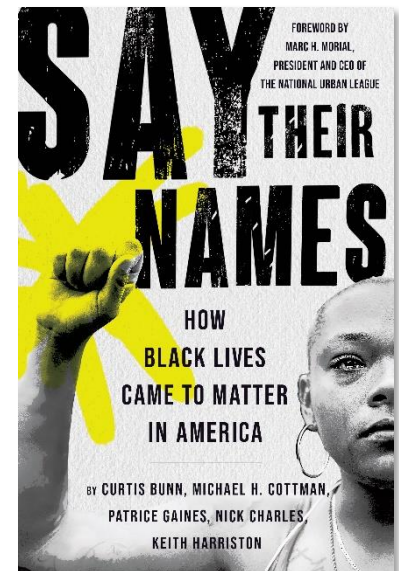
This fall, Grand Central Publishing is honored to present **SAY THEIR NAMES: *How Black Lives Came to Matter in America***—a gripping, thought-provoking survey of the forces that pushed our unjust system to its breaking point following the murder of George Floyd, a definitive catalyst for our country’s present-day racial reckoning.

As the Black Lives Matter movement gives momentum to a long-overdue cultural shift in America’s collective conscience, some might say the story of the weeks of protests in the summer of 2020 began with the 9 minutes and 29 seconds when Police Officer Derek Chauvin murdered George Floyd on camera. Many saw a story where white America had finally witnessed enough brutality, with Floyd’s death being the impetus for the sweeping federal, state, and intrapersonal changes in its wake. The only problem is that it isn't true. George Floyd was not the first Black man to be murdered by police, yet his death came at a time when America was already a country on the brink.

Penned by a powerhouse of five expert Black journalists, **SAY THEIR NAMES** is a deep dive exploration of the historical context behind America’s original sin. By examining how inequality was propagated through history, the authors highlight the disparities that for so long have characterized the dangers of being Black in America.

**SAY THEIR NAMES** shows how Black people in America attempted a series of moderate methods to counteract these inequalities, dating back to Ferguson and the Civil Rights movement before it, to enact change long before the pandemic arrived, and how the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd pushed compliance with an unjust system to its breaking point. Finally, they outline the changes that have resulted from this movement, helping readers understand the magnitude of what we've been able to accomplish, while at the same time proposing necessary next steps to move forward as individuals and as a society.

With a combination of incisive, focused journalism and affecting personal insight, the authors bring together their collective years reporting into one voice, creating a cohesive and comprehensive understanding of racial inequality in America.



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Michael H. Cottman** is an author and award-winning journalist, and Program Editor for the NBCUniversal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team. (NBC News/MSNBC/CNBC.) He is the former Editorial Manager of NBCBLK, a division of NBC News, that offers stories and opinions about the African American experience from the African American perspective. Cottman is a former political reporter for the *Washington Post* and a former reporter for the *Miami Herald*, among other publications. Cottman, who has received numerous awards, was also part of a reporting team that won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for *Newsday's* coverage of a deadly subway crash in New York.

**Patrice Gaines** is author of the memoir *Laughing in the Dark* (Random House 1995) and *Moments of Grace* (Random House 1998). Gaines is a freelance writer, who was a reporter at the *Washington Post* for 16 years. She was awarded a Soros Justice Media Fellowship to write a series of columns about the impact of incarceration on the Black community. Gaines is also a justice advocate and abolitionist.

**Curtis Bunn** is an award-winning journalist at NBC News BLK who has written about race and sports and social and political issues for more than 30 years in Washington, D.C., New York, and Atlanta. Additionally, he is a best-selling author of ten novels that center on Black life in America.

**Nick Charles** has reported, written, and edited for various media at the local and national levels. He has been a reporter/writer and contributor to the *Daily News*, *People*, *NPR*, the *Washington Post*, *The Undeclared*, as well as several other publications. He was the Editor-in-Chief of AOL Black Voices and the VP of Digital Content for BET.com. Charles is the Managing Director of Word In Black, a collaborative of 10 Black-owned media and an editor and spokesperson for Save Journalism Project.

**Keith Harriston** is a Washington, D.C., writer who worked for 23 years as a senior newsroom manager, department editor, investigative reporter, and beat reporter at the *Washington Post*. As a reporter at *The Post*, Harriston twice was a nominated finalist by the Pulitzer Prize Board. Since leaving *The Post*, Harriston has taught journalism at American University, Howard University, and George Washington University, where he currently is a professorial lecturer in journalism.

## PRAISE FOR SAY THEIR NAMES

“Sometimes a seed falls  
And luckily it begins  
To rain. Some folk complain  
But the rest of us watch  
The bud grow and the mint  
Cleanse the air  
And we SAY THEIR NAMES  
About a wonderful  
Book”

—**NIKKI GIOVANNI**

“A thoughtful assessment of the Black Lives Matter movement that illuminates the work still left to do. Recommended for readers newly interested in antiracist activism.” —**LIBRARY JOURNAL**

“An accessible introduction to the latest chapter in the ongoing struggle for civil rights in America.”  
—**PUBLISHERS WEEKLY**

“[A] useful survey of historical and contemporary forces driving the Black Lives Matter movement.”  
—**KIRKUS REVIEWS**

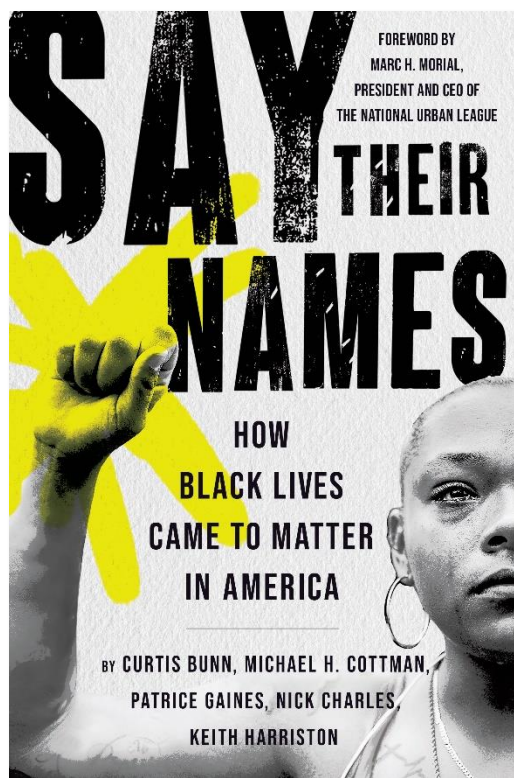
“**Essential reading** for anyone who wants to understand where we are in America’s long struggle with racism and white supremacy—and how we got here...It is not the ‘first rough draft of history,’ but rather a **polished assessment of recent history that will stand the test of time.**”

—**EUGENE ROBINSON**, Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* columnist and MSNBC analyst

“A journey into the collective and immediate consciousness of Black Lives Matter.”

—**DaMARIS B. HILL**, author of *A Bound Woman Is a Dangerous Thing*

“There are perhaps no journalists working in the United States better positioned to put the Black Lives Matter movement and the cultural uprising of 2020 into historical perspective...Through moving personal accounts and a detailed grasp of history, they trace the spiritual legacy of anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells to the fearless women who created #BlackLivesMatter and laid the groundwork for ‘a moment when the world is cracked wide open.’—**MARC H. MORIAL**, President and CEO, National Urban League



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