

*Systemic  
Racism Within  
the Criminal  
Justice System*

**Systemic Racism:  
Institutional  
Historical  
Cultural**

# **DEHUMANIZATION AND CRIMINALIZATION**

## **Conceptions and caricatures of Black People**

- **During Slavery – docility, servile etc.**
- **Jim Crow/Black codes – Designed to control Black behavior**
- **Post Slavery during the time of Reconstruction (1867-1877)**

**Black people would be considered “animalistic,” “savage,” “beastlike” proponents of slavery felt that is prevented these traits in Black People**

**Freed Black people were clearly being a serious threat to white society**

**The narrative of black people being wanton, dangerous, insolent and brutish, addition of crime to the narrative of race**

# **DEHUMANIZATION AND CRIMINALIZATION**

**Equal Justice Initiative's (Bryan Stevenson) resource on Lynching in America documents the racial terror of lynching in the United States**

- (1) fear of interracial sex**
- (2) lynching in response to casual social transgressions**
- (3) lynching based on allegations of serious violent crime**
- (4) public spectacle lynching**
- (5) lynching that escalated into large-scale violence targeting the entire African American community; and**
- (6) lynching of sharecroppers, ministers, and community leaders who resisted mistreatment, which were most common between 1915 and 1940.**

This cartoon is from 1876.



**"IN SELF-DEFENSE."**

SOUTHERN CHIV. "Ef I hadn't-er killed you, you would hev growed up to rule me."

# CONQUER and BREATHE



"The association of the Races in public schools leads to friendship, love and marriage"  
Stated by Walter White, Executive Secretary of the National Association for Advancement of  
Colored People in interview with U. S. News and World Report, printed May 28, 1954.

# **DEHUMANIZATION AND CRIMINALIZATION**

**During Reconstruction, African American political activity would of course inspire hostility. Stereotyping and social control of freed Black people was leveraged with violence at least 35 Black officials were intimidated and murdered by the Ku Klux Klan.**

**Theologian Kelly Brown Douglas the free black body as “guilty,” and “dangerous” tropes i.e. thug, gangster, angry Black woman etc.**

# DEHUMANIZATION AND CRIMINALIZATION

**By 1896 Frederick Hoffman an American statistician wrote a book entitled *Race Traits and Tendencies Of the American Negro* this was one of the most influential studies of crime and race of its time. Here “negro problem” language would gain prominence. Hoffman characterized Black people as “disease prone,” and stated that in Black communities “Crime, pauperism and sexual immorality” were hinderances to the Black community.**

**Race Science – Samuel George Morton – *Crania Americana (1839)*.  
Craniology Skull size and intelligence. Pioneer Fund, Arthur Jensen,  
etc.**



Apollo Belvidere



Negro



Young chimpanzee



Greek



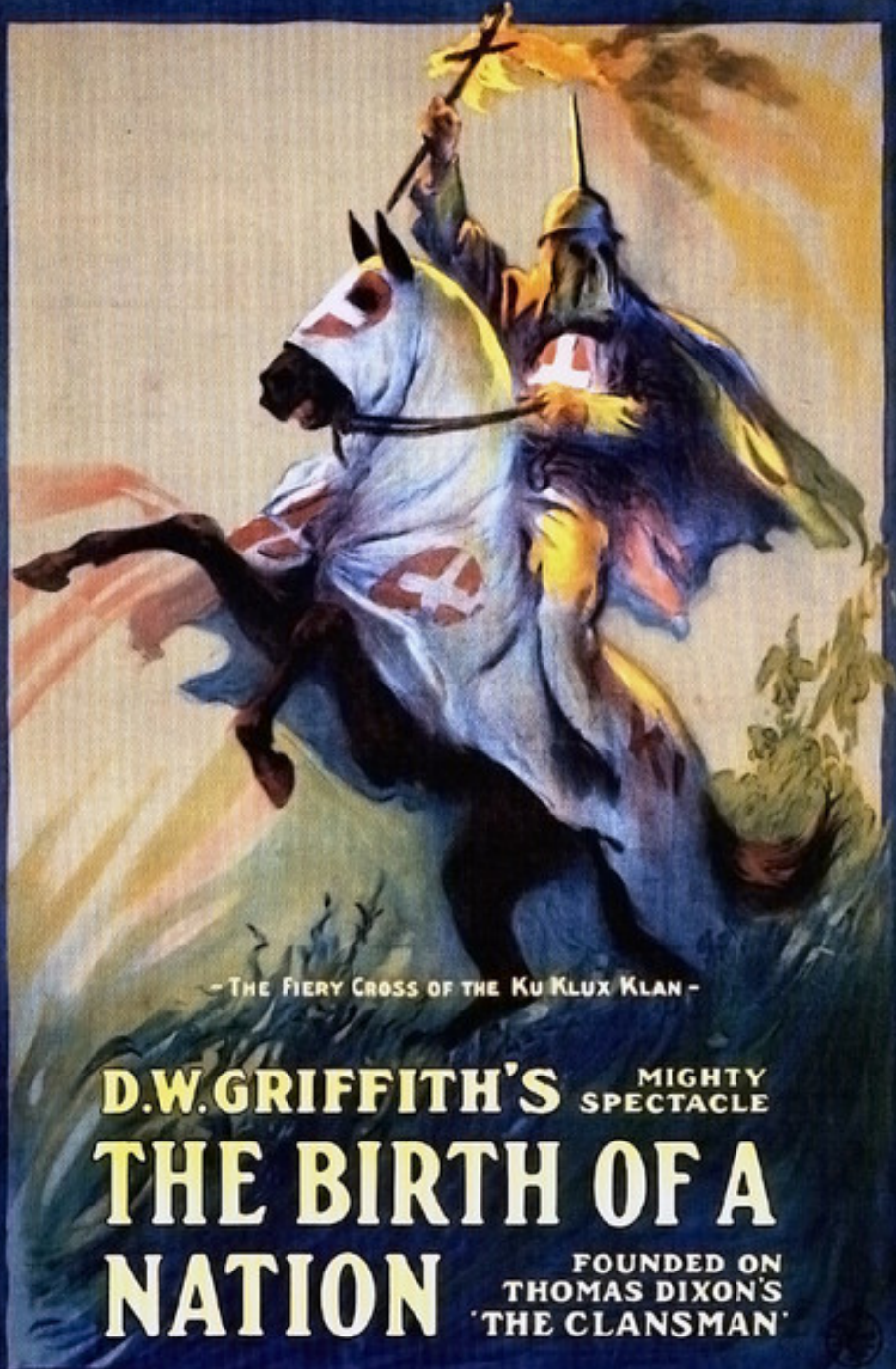
Creole Negro



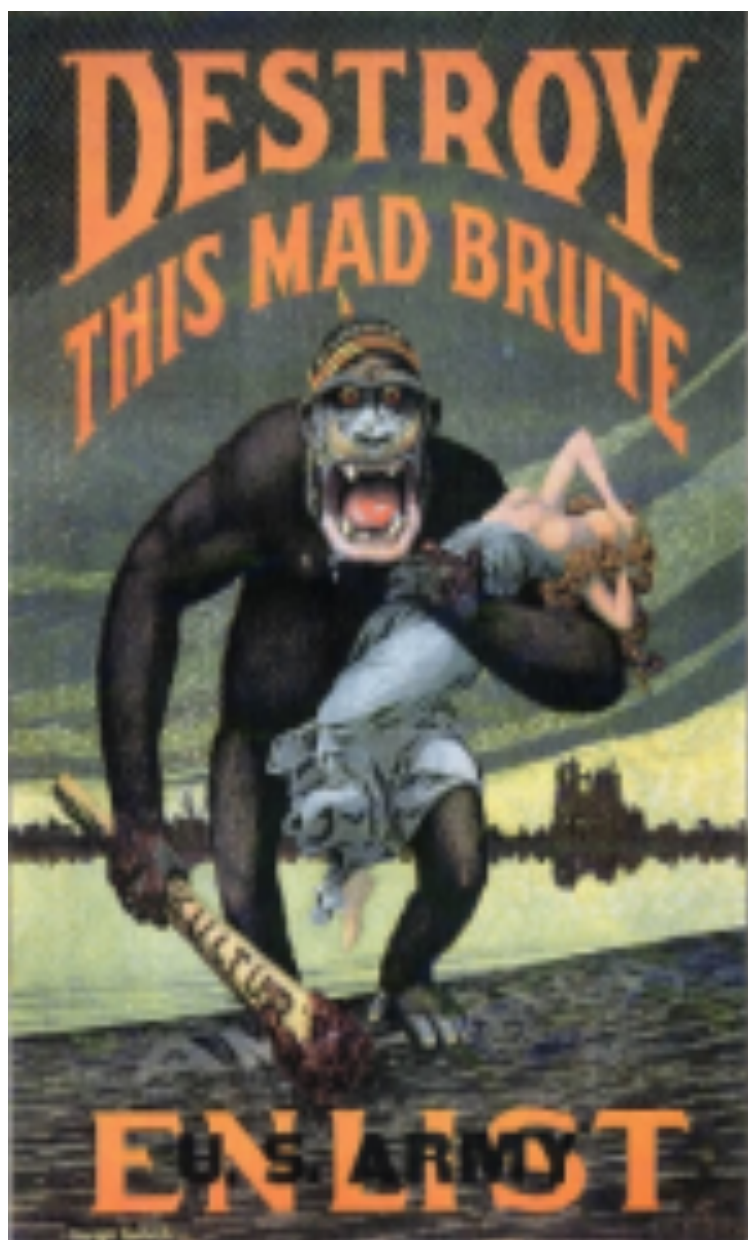
Young chimpanzee

# Birth of a Nation (1915)

## D.W. Griffith







# **DEHUMANIZATION AND CRIMINALIZATION**

**Stereotypes about Black criminality and how they play out in the criminal justice system**

**Disproportionate sentencing and mass incarceration**

**Police mistreatment and brutality**

**Prosecutorial misconduct**

**Bail bonds – Khalief Browder story**

- **The church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

## **Confession of Belhar**

**Systemic  
Racism Within  
the Criminal  
Justice  
System: a  
helpful  
bibliography  
and  
resources**

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- **Chokehold: Policing Black Men - *Paul Butler***
- **The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America - *Khalil Gibran Muhammad***
- **Slavery by Another Name - *Douglas A. Blackmon***
- **Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God - *Kelly Brown Douglas***
- **Ferris State University – Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia**  
<https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow>
- **13<sup>th</sup> - <http://www.avaduvernay.com/13th/>**