



Reclaiming Roots, Remembering Them, Reimagining Birth

WHERE BIRTH STARTED,
HOW IT'S TRANSFORMED,
AND WHAT OUR COMMUNITY
DESERVES

Welcome

INDIGENOUS LAND / ANCESTORS / BLESSED JUNE

SACRED ARE THE MOTHERS & THOSE WHO BRING
LIFE ALL AROUND THE WORLD

DO WHAT YOU NEED TO BE COMFORTABLE

ENCOURAGE YOU TO HAVE AN
OPEN HEART AND MIND

BIRTH IS COMPLICATED – ESPECIALLY FOR BLACK
WOMEN

NOT ENDORSING ONE PARTICULAR WAY TO
BRING A BABY INTO THIS WORLD

HARD STORIES – REAL STORIES



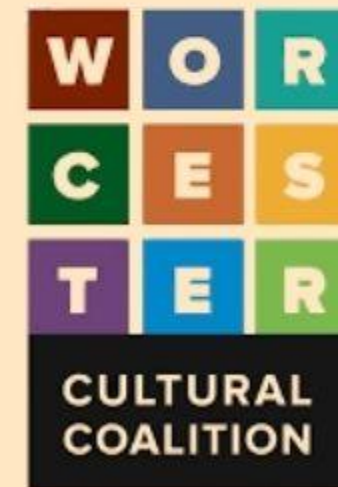
Image: Keith Mallett, *Loving Embrace*, 2001



Who Am I?

Sha-Asia Medina

- Attended Worcester Public Schools
- Awarded Posse Scholarship and Attended Bucknell University
- Graduated in 2019 with Critical Black Studies & Urban Education degrees
- Director of The Village Worcester



Why am I engaged in this work?



JAYBREAL



ETERNAL OM



SACRED TRUTH



KHALID ZAMANI



Image: Lauren J Turner,
Nurturing Hands

What is YOUR “Why?”

WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN TO EMBARK
ON, EXPLORE, AND EMBRACE THIS
IMPORTANT ROLE OF “DOULA”



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What to Expect

- AN AFROCENTRIC PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF BIRTHING IN THE U.S.
- THE STATE OF BIRTHING FOR BLACK FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES
- DOULA ORIGINS & ROLE PLAY
- HEALING THE HEALERS & ADVOCACY
- CLOSING & REFLECTION



Image: Lauren J Turner,
Expecting Radiance

Sankofa



“Go Back & Fetch It”





From the beginning...





“The

THEIR HANDS
THEY KNEW HOW
HOW TO ROCK

THEIR HANDS
HOW TO GET TO

THEIR HANDS
AND TWIST AND
HOW TO MAKE

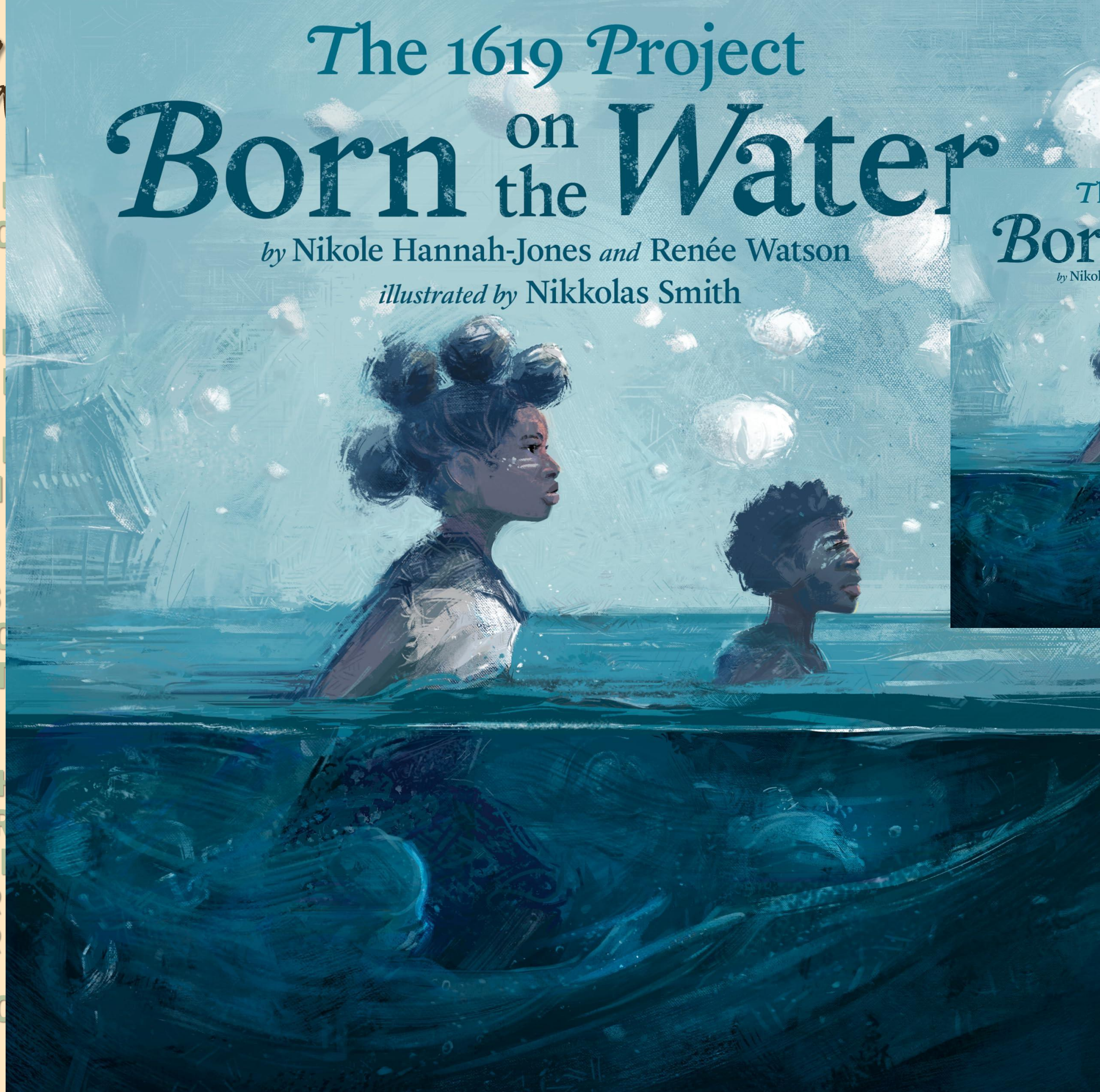
THEIR HEARTS
THEY KNEW HOW
HOW TO CREATE
KNEW HOW TO

THEIR MINDS
WORLDLY, CUR
WHEN THEY MI
TAUGHT THEIR
TAUGHT THEIR

THEY KNEW HOW
HOW EVEN AN

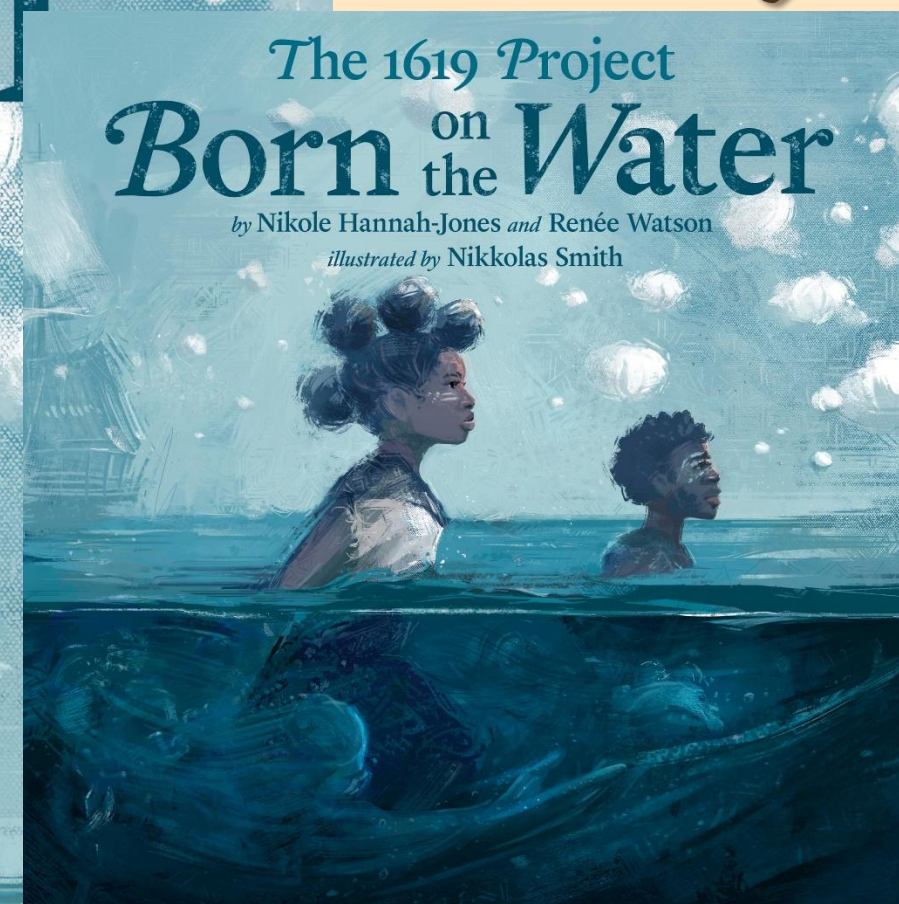
The 1619 Project Born on the Water

by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson
illustrated by Nikkolas Smith



owing”

The 1619 Project
Born on the Water
by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson
illustrated by Nikkolas Smith



D.





DIFFERENT FROM
OTHER FORMS OF
"SLAVERY"

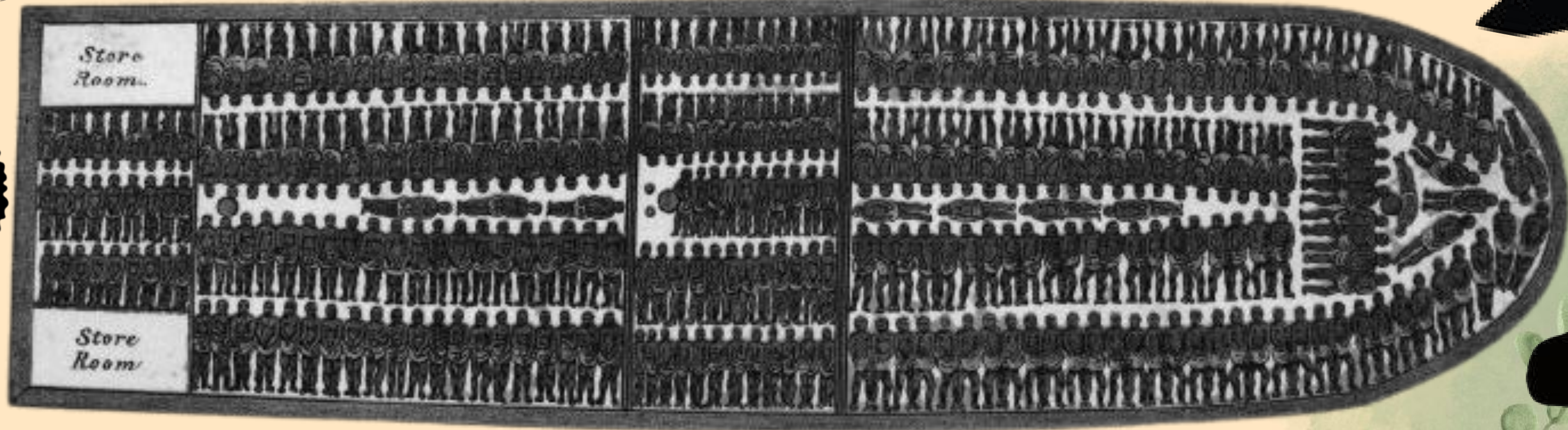
1. Dehumanization
2. Perpetuity
3. Entire world benefits

*"They May
Have Been
Empty Handed,
but Not Empty
Headed"*



“Maafa” – The Great Tragedy

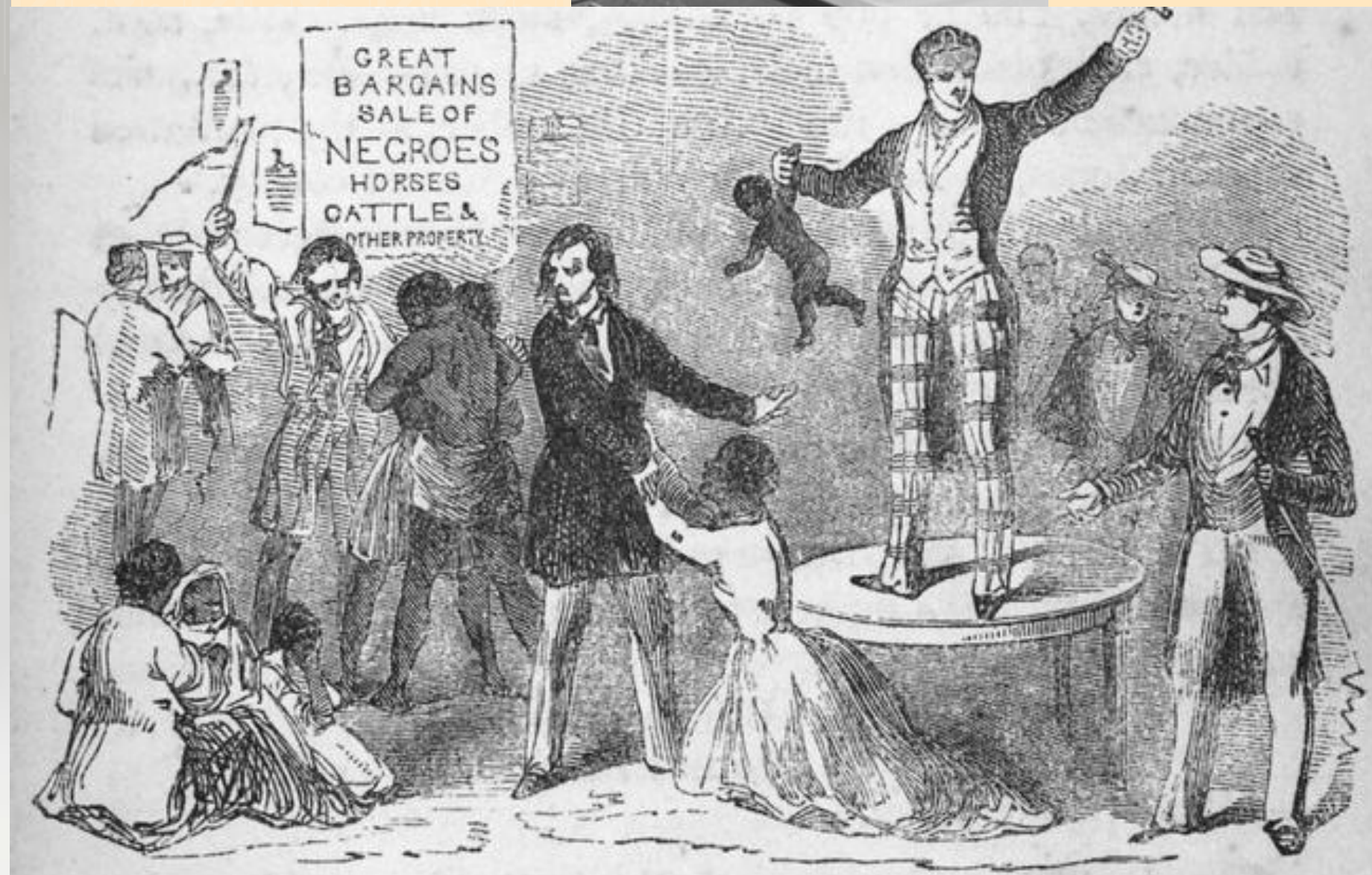
PROJECT OF DISCONNECTING AFRIKAN
PEOPLE FROM THEIR CULTURE BEGINS
IMAGINE (IF WE EVEN CAN)...



What Was...



...Became



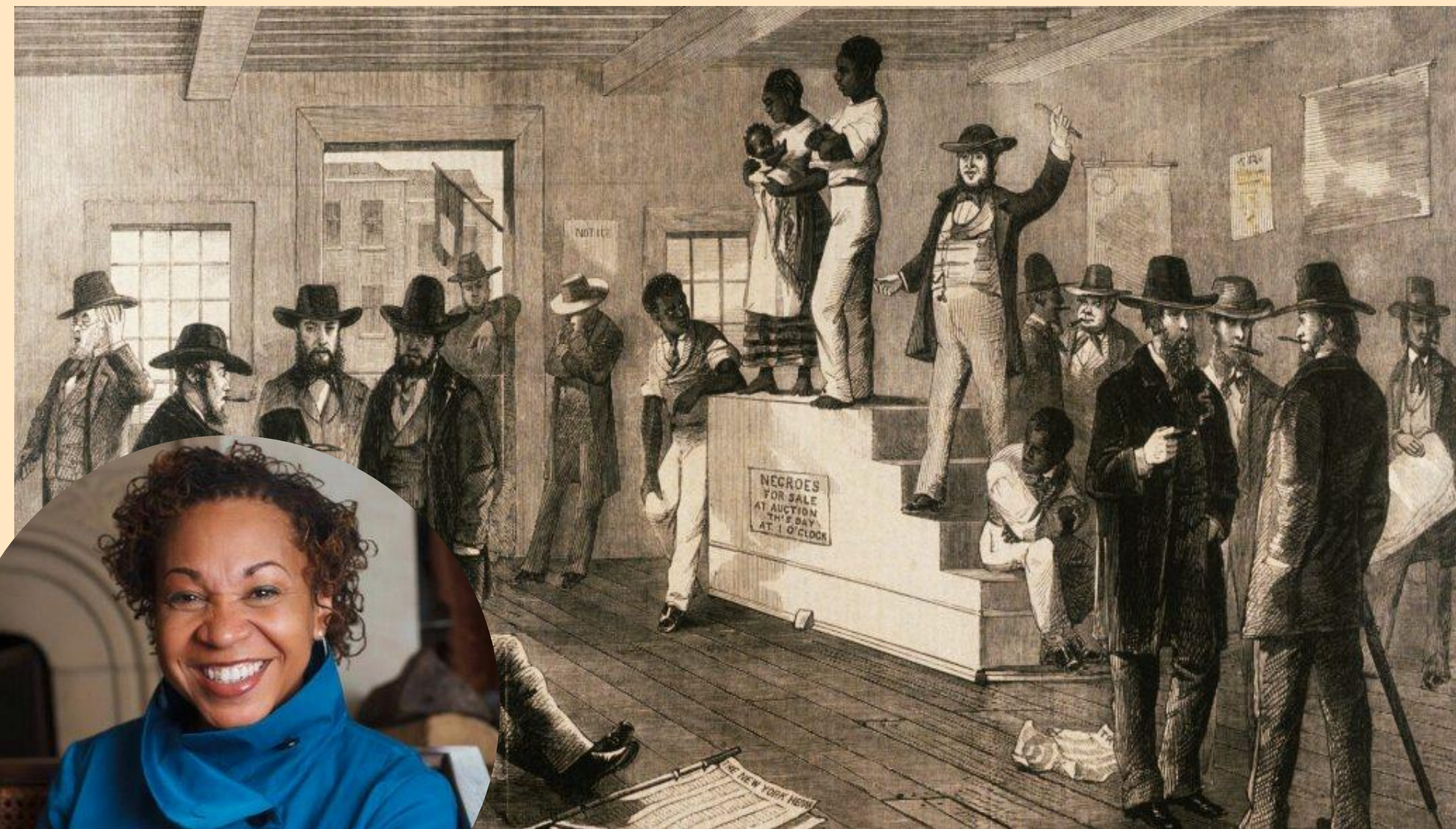


What Was...



...Became

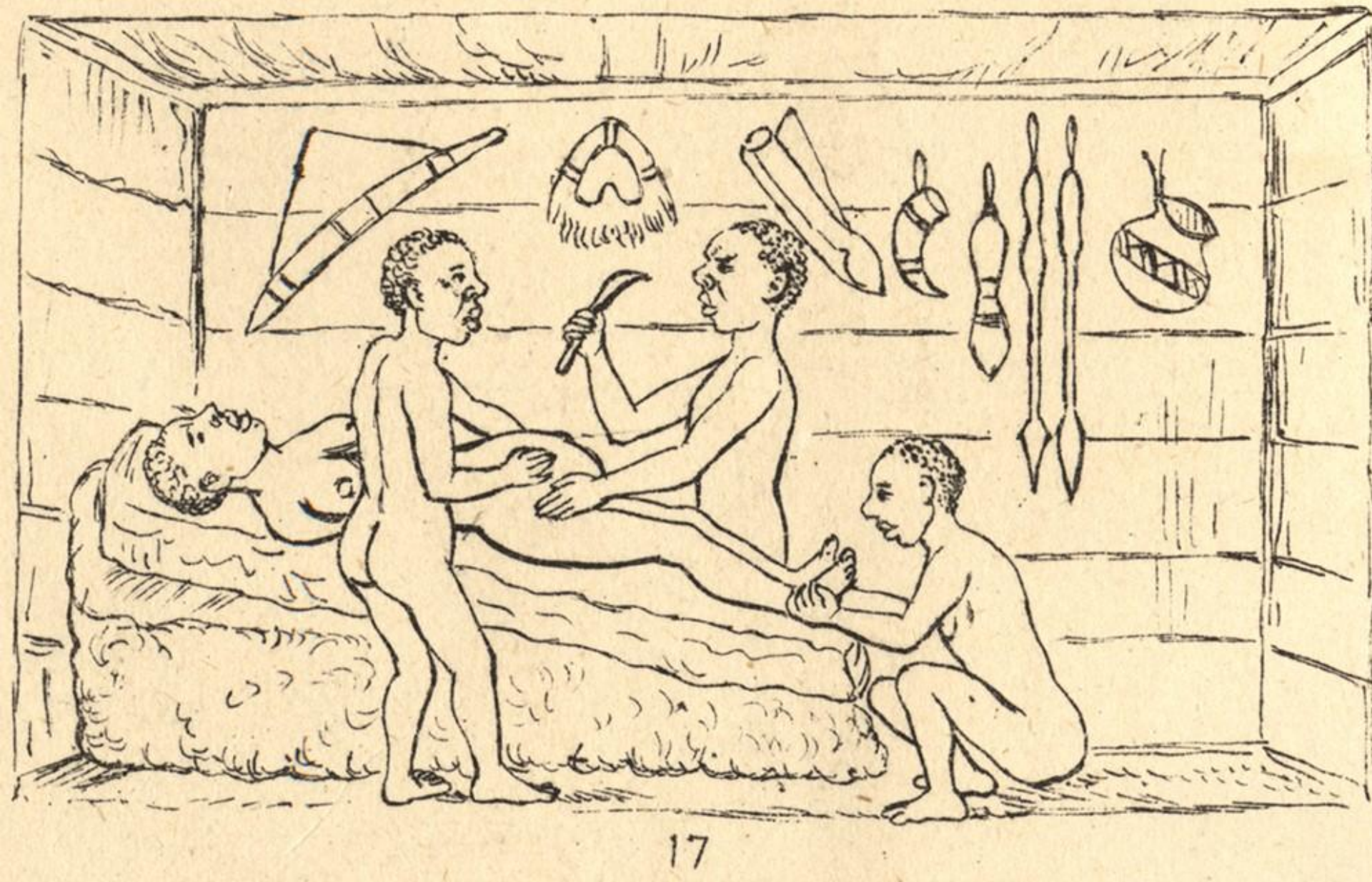
What Was...



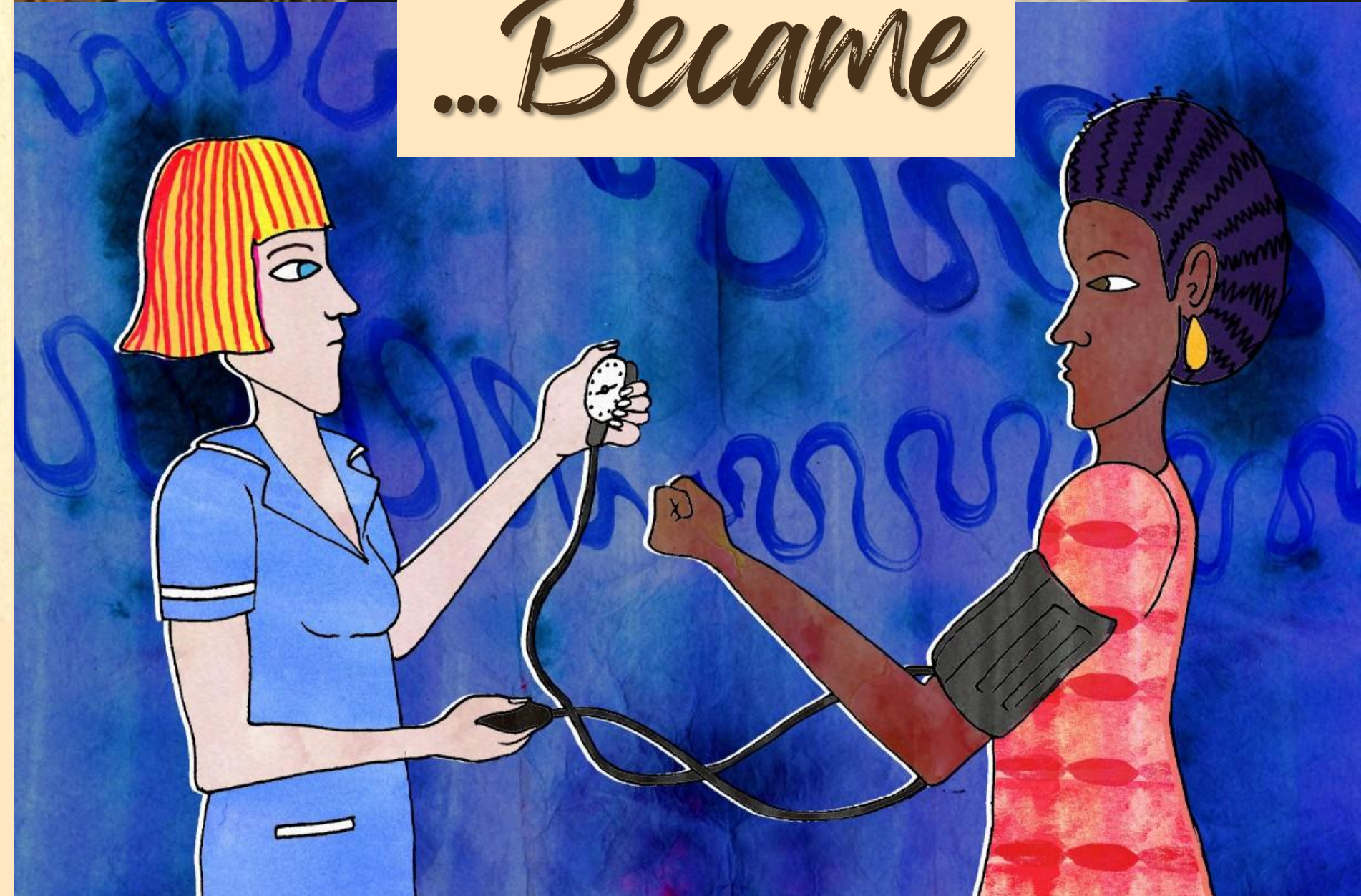
...Became



What Was...



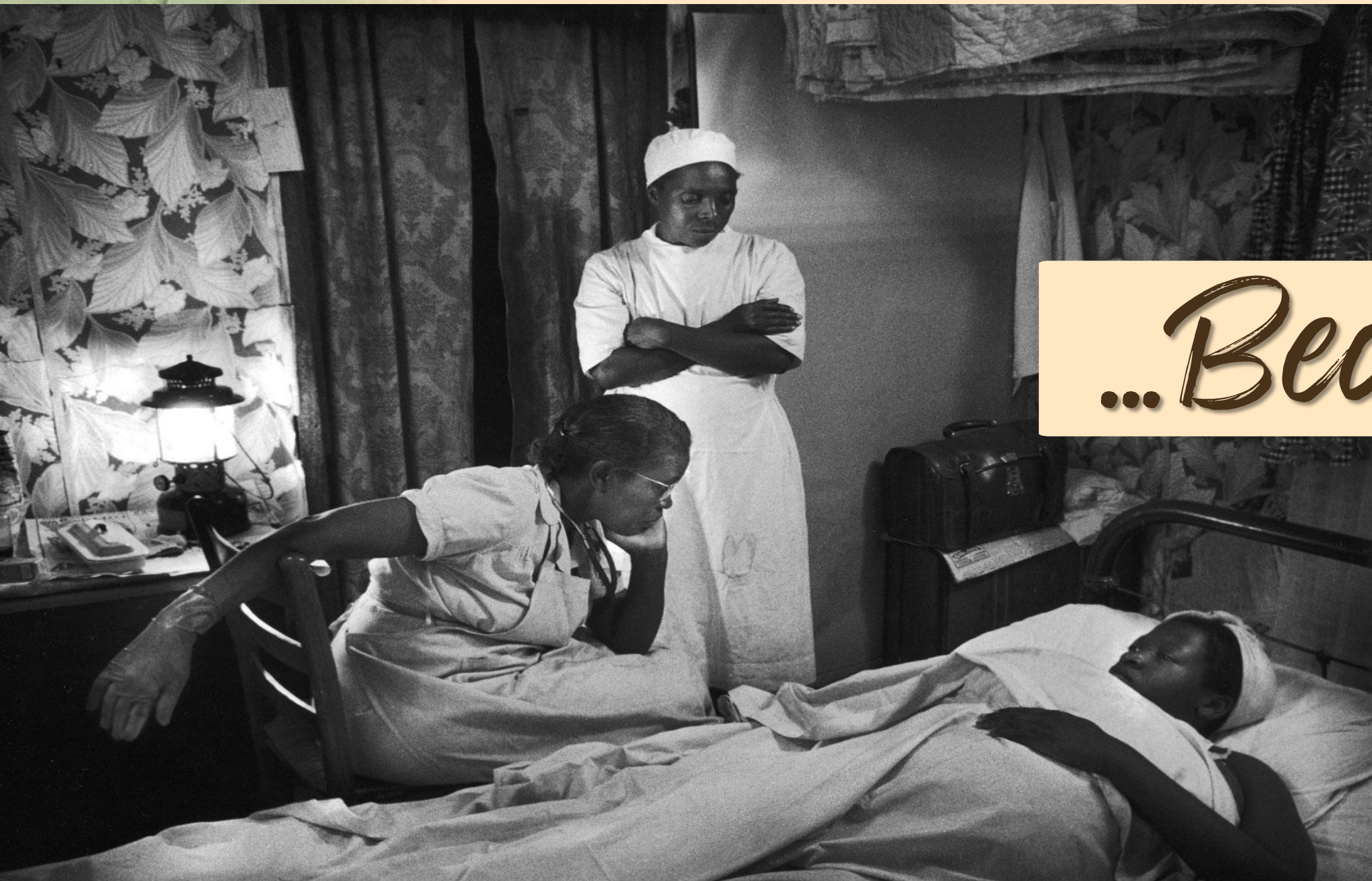
...Became



What Was...



...Became



"Granny Midwives"



GLADYS MILTON



MAUDE CALLEN



MARGARET SMITH



ONNIE LEE LOGAN



BIDDY MASON



MARY COLEY





A Midwife's Duties Goes Beyond the Job

BIRTHS

MATERNAL CARE

ABORTION CARE

MISCARRIAGES/EMOTIONAL PROCESSING

STD/STI/SEXUAL WELLNESS

EDUCATION

ADOPTION

BIRTH CONTROL

POSTPARTUM

FAMILY WELL-BEING

RACISM / ISMS

CONDITIONS FOR BLACK WOMEN

HERBAL REMEDIES

FERTILITY



Transition from Midwives to Institutional Medicine



**BLACK MIDWIVES ARE
THE PRIMARY CATCHERS
OF BABIES FOR EVERYONE**



**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
HOSPITALS, WANT TO
OFFER “MODERN” AND
“ADVANCED” BIRTHING
OPTIONS, AND
“MEDICALIZING” BIRTH**



**CAPITALISM, LAWS AND
REGULATIONS PUSH
MIDWIVES TO THE
SIDELINES AND THERE IS
A DECLINE IN BIRTHS
ASSISTED BY A MIDWIFE**





Black Families & Birth in Hospitals

IN 2023, THE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE FOR BLACK WOMEN WAS 50 DEATHS PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS (NEARLY 3.5 TIMES THE RATE FOR WHITE WOMEN)

PRETERM BIRTH IS A LEADING CAUSE OF INFANT MORBIDITY IN THE U.S. IN 2022, THE RATE OF PRETERM BIRTH AMONG BLACK WOMEN WAS 12%, 1.5 TIMES HIGHER THAN THE RATE FOR OTHER WOMEN OF COLOR/WHITE WOMEN

20% OF ALL WOMEN REPORTED EXPERIENCES OF MISTREATMENT DURING THEIR MATERNITY CARE. 30% OF THOSE WOMEN WHO REPORTED MISTREATMENT IDENTIFIED AS BLACK.

APPROX 1 IN 4 WOMEN MUST RETURN TO WORK 10-14 DAYS AFTER GIVING BIRTH DUE TO THE LACK OF ADEQUATE PAID LEAVE FOR FAMILIES. THIS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTS THE ABILITY TO BOND WITH BABY, HEAL, AND ESTABLISH BREASTFEEDING ROUTINE.

THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT GAP IN THE BLACK PERINATAL WORKFORCE AS IT STANDS AND IN GROWING A MORE INCLUSIVE PERINATAL WORKFORCE IN THE FUTURE



Honoring those We Have Lost

WHO SHOULD BE STILL BE HERE...



CANDI MILLER



**SHA-ASIA
WASHINGTON**



AMBER THURMAN



ETERNAL OM

Birth for Black Families in 2026

IF YOU HAD TO USE ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE
THE STATE OF BIRTHING FOR BLACK FAMILIES IN
OUR COMMUNITY TODAY, WHAT WOULD IT BE?



Image: Lauren J Turner,
Tastes of Life



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Where Do We See Doulas for the First Time?

NATURAL BIRTH MOVEMENTS IN 1970

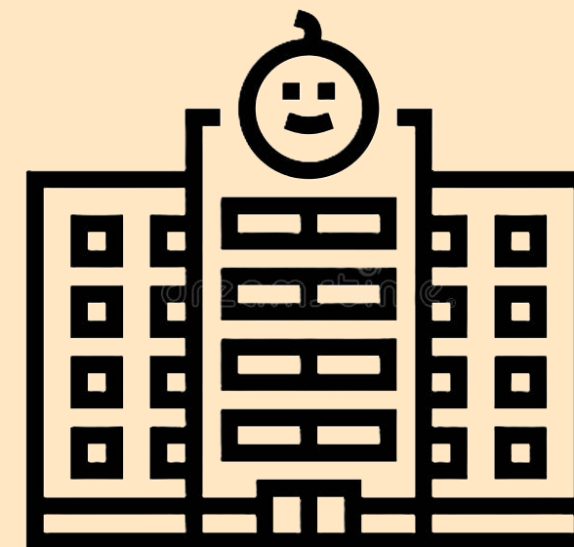
- WHITE WOMEN WERE COMPLAINING THAT THEY WERE OVERMEDICATED WHEN GIVING BIRTH
- BLACK WOMEN WERE RAISING CONCERNS THAT THEY WERE BEING HARMED AND NEGLECTED IN HOSPITALS WHEN GIVING BIRTH
- THOUGH BIRTH SUPPORT PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AROUND, WE DON'T SEE DOULAS AS WE DO NOW UNTIL THE 1970S & 1980S



Let's Try a Bit of Doula Role Playing...

AMAZING
DOULAS

BIRTHING
FAMILIES



BIRTH CENTER



HOSPITALS



HOMES





Scenario #1

DURING LABOR, A BLACK BIRTHING CLIENT IS STRIVING TO HAVE AN UNMEDICATED AND NATURAL BIRTH. THE HOSPITAL STAFF IS PRESSURING THE BIRTHING PERSON TO AGREE TO AN INDUCTION OR C-SECTION BECAUSE THE LABOR IS TAKING TOO LONG AND THE CLIENT IS FEELING OVERWHELMED AND INTIMIDATED.





Scenario #2

YOUR CLIENT IS A WEEK POSTPARTUM
AND IS RAISING THEIR BABY ON THEIR
OWN. THEY ARE STRUGGLING WITH
BREASTFEEDING, LACKING SLEEP,
AND SEEMS WITHDRAWN.





Scenario #3

YOUR CLIENT HAS DEEP ANXIETY
THAT THE HOSPITAL STAFF MAY
DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THEM AS A
PERSON WHO IDENTIFIES AS QUEER
AND SPEAKS WITH AN ACCENT.
BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THEIR
PREGNANCY, THEY WILL HAVE TO GIVE
BIRTH AT A HOSPITAL.





Scenario #4

THE CLIENT IS HOME AND FEELING GRATEFUL THAT THEY HAVE A HEALTHY BABY. HOWEVER, THEY SHARE WITH YOU THAT THEY ARE STILL PROCESSING EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED DURING THEIR BIRTH BECAUSE IT WAS NOT WHAT THEY ENVISIONED. THEY WANTED TO HAVE A NATURAL BIRTH AND THEY HAD TO INSTEAD HAVE A C-SECTION AND THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO SEE THE BABY UNTIL MANY HOURS AFTER THEY WERE BORN. THEY ARE GRAPPLING WITH BEING GRATEFUL AND DISAPPOINTED AND SHARE THIS WITH YOU



Doula Work is

LOVE

SPIRITUAL

SACRED

CONNECTED

HEAVY

EMOTIONAL

IMPORTANT

PERSONAL

HARD

EXHAUSTING

REWARDING

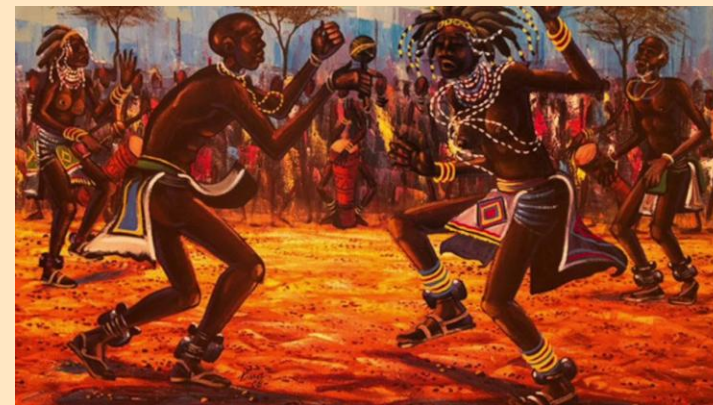
POWERFUL

LIFE SAVING

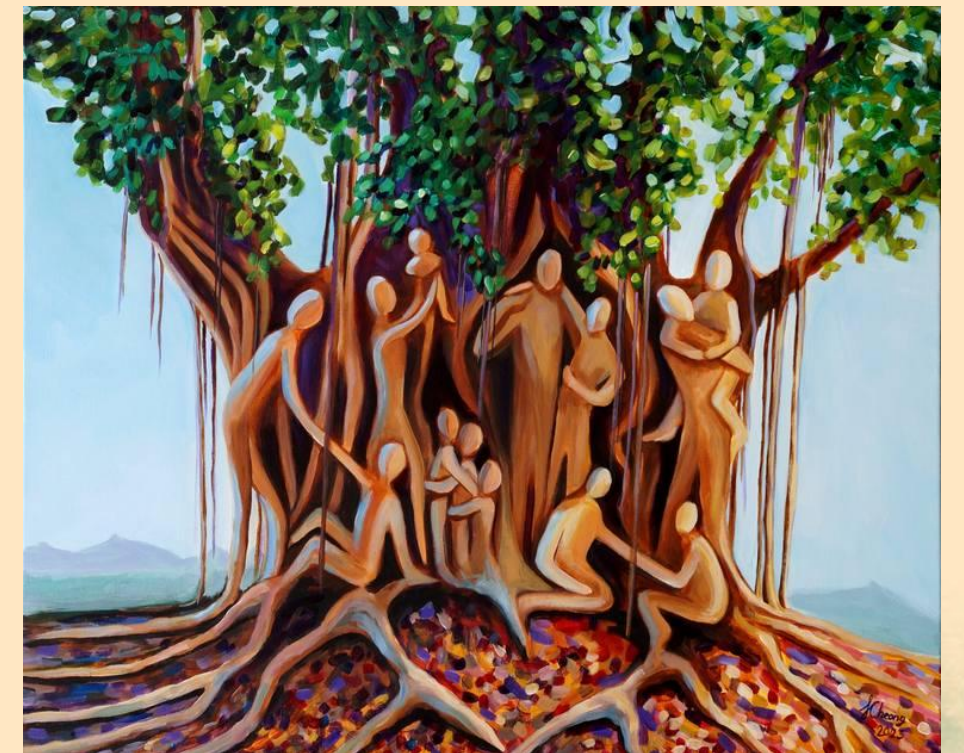
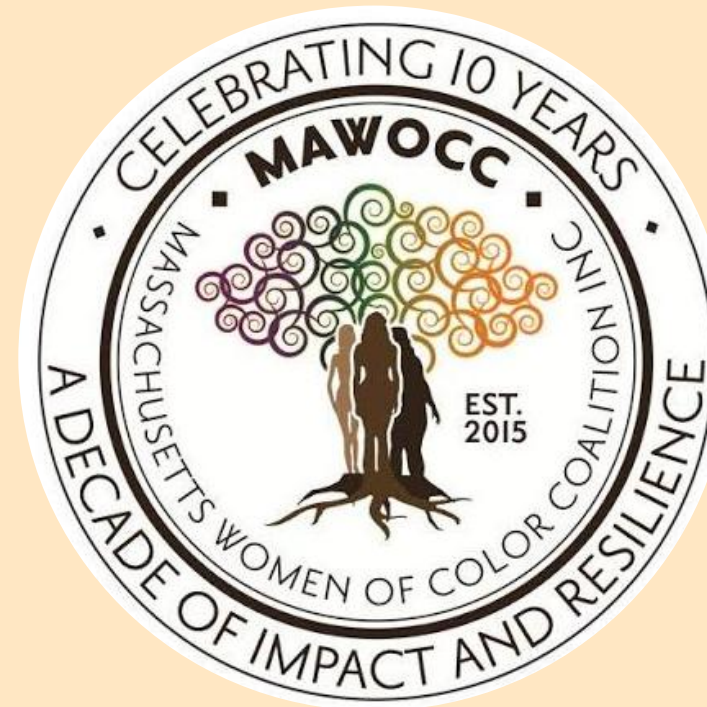
ANCESTRAL



How Do We Heal the Healers?



Advocacy in Solidarity with Community Doulas

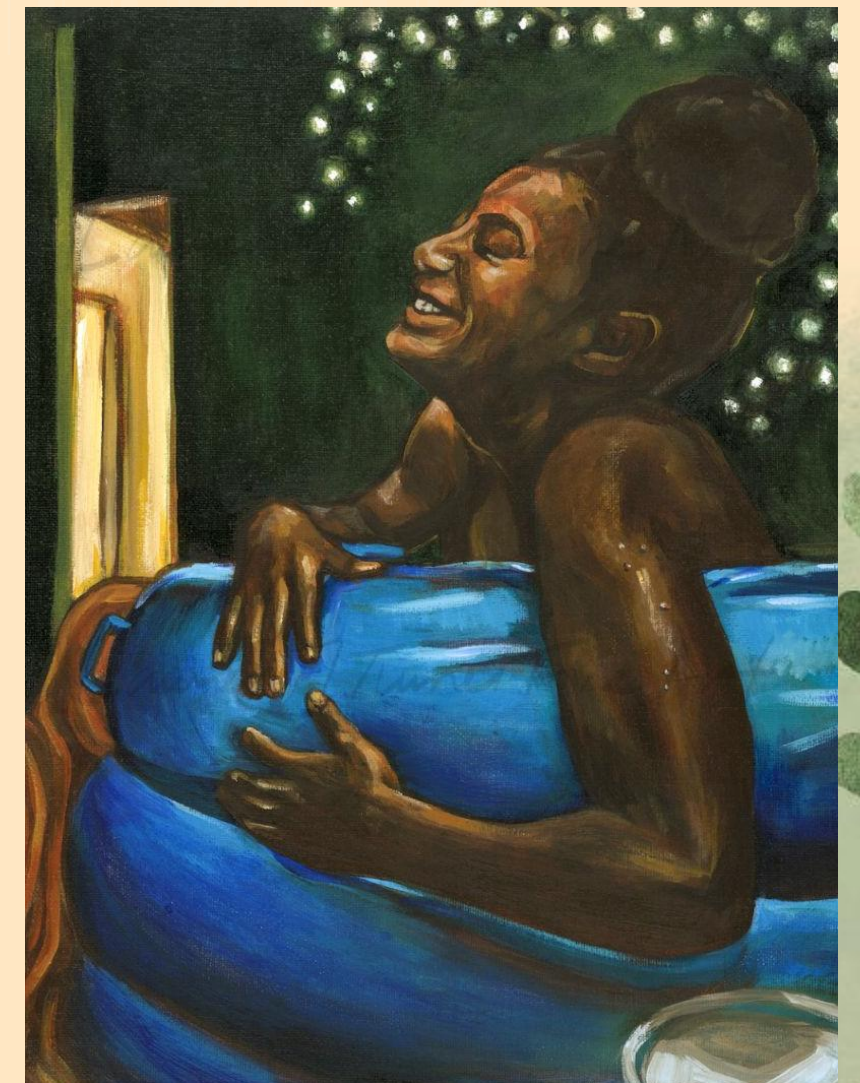


Where Do We Want to Go?

IN ONE WORD, WHAT DO YOU WISH FOR
BLACK FAMILIES WHEN GIVING BIRTH?



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Honor our
Ancestors &
Make a Way for
the Generations
to Come





Thank You
SHA-ASIA MEDINA

THE VILLAGE WORCESTER@GMAIL.COM

508-556-0439

*“There is always light,
if only we’re brave enough to see it.
If only we are brave enough to be it.”
– Amanda Gorman*

LET’S DOULA THIS!



What Do YOU Need to Do This Work?

WHAT DO DOULAS NEED TO BE
SUCCESSFUL IN WORCESTER?



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