

Uncornered and Unconquered  
The Gift of Integrity in Challenging Times  
December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
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North Universalist Chapel Society

Good morning and good Sunday. I hope that this new day finds you well. To all souls, I say, “It is good to be together.”

This morning’s reflection is entitled Uncornered and Unconquered. It’s about telling healthy stories in challenging times, the kind of healthy stories that make us free.

James Baldwin wrote, “The very time I thought I was lost, my dungeon shook and my chains fell off.” Baldwin wrote these words because he believed—and I do—that it is forever possible to break ourselves free from stories that try to corner and try to conquer us...be they the stories told by others or the ones we tell to ourselves.

I’ve been thinking a lot this week about the parents of a young man named Anthony Huber. I can’t imagine what it was like when they heard the ‘not guilty’ verdict in Kenosha. Their son was killed by the man—the boy, really—the shooter in Wisconsin, the teenager who longed to be an avenging hero.

Anthony was 26. He was a skateboarder. So, he was a student of balance and momentum. He knew about style and speed. He studied traction and inclination... and he was full of life and light until he was shot at a Black Lives Matter protest by a gunman who was nine years his junior. After the verdict was handed down, his parents were “brokenhearted.” They said,

[This] sends the unacceptable message [breathe] that armed civilians can show up in any town, incite violence, and then use the danger they have created to justify shooting people in the street.

This is a terrible thing but there were still those who celebrated. Celebration makes sense sometimes. Like when Al Sharpton celebrated the verdict that was reached in the Arbery case. He said,

Let the word go forth...that a jury of 11 whites and one Black in the Deep South [in Georgia, a state known for segregation and Jim Crow, they] stood up in the courtroom and said that Black lives do matter.

The dungeon shook. They broke free of a conquering story.

Linda Dunikoski, the lead prosecutor in Georgia, she celebrated as well. She said,

The verdict today was a verdict based on the facts, based on the evidence. [Our goal] was to bring that to that jury so that they could do the right thing. Because the jury system works in this country, and when you present the truth to people...

In Kenosha, this was not the case. The parents of Anthony Huber did not celebrate. Like I said, they were “brokenhearted.” Then, sadly, a member Congress in

Washington made matters worse.