

# Greensboro

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission

*“There comes a time in the life of every community when it must look humbly and seriously into its past in order to provide the best possible foundation for moving into a future based on healing and hope. Many residents of Greensboro believe that for this city, the time is now.” [1]*

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# Introduction

The Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission is novel, in that it stands as a truth commission that embodies many qualities that are uncharacteristic of the various other truth commissions around the world. One well-accepted definition of the truth commission is as follows: *they are temporary bodies generally established by a new or transitional government. Operating independently or with government influence, they seek to bridge unjust pasts with more promising futures based on truth, tolerance, and equity.*[2] Many of the truth commissions around the globe offer empirical evidence and lived experiences that alter this definition to the ends they are attempting to achieve in the name of their community. Greensboro's 2006 Truth and Reconciliation report is a prime example of how a community's distinctive history shapes the mandates and methodology behind the truth commission process. This truth commission was constructed to address the multilayered history of racial and labour-related tensions, that challenged the cohesion of North Carolina's Greensboro population.[3] Many of these historical tensions were evident in the tragic Greensboro Massacre on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979. On this day, the Communist Workers Party (formerly known as the Workers Viewpoint Organisation) had planned an anti-Klan rally designed to address racial hatred and recruit textile mill union members of Greensboro.[4] CWP members were activists, influenced by Marxism, that publicly used the inflammatory rhetoric of "Death to the Klan!" [5] In response, the armed KKK and Nazi Party members arrived at the demonstration and are known to have fired the first shots that resulted in the death of five of the demonstrators, and the injury of various others.[6] In the aftermath, media, police reports, and criminal cases concluded that it was impossible to know exactly who fired the shots, but all unanimously claimed that this event was conducted by external forces.[7]

This backgrounder aims to effectively give context to the history, construction, and legacies of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission in light of the TRC report and scholarly literature that follows the commission process.



Unlike other truth commissions around the globe, Greensboro conducted a grassroots-led commission, that arose from community desire rather than state sponsorship.[8] This allowed a specific community, rather than a nation, to address an event that was preventing the future cohesion and flourishing of the Greensboro residents. Although the truth commission cannot resolve every community problem, the process set the stage for listening to occur. In the currently polarized state of America, the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation report could provide an insight into the possibility of the truth commission process for other communities, or even on a national scale.

[https://hmcwordpress.humanities.mcmaster.ca/Truthcommissions/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/UnitedStates.Greensboro.TRC\\_Report-FULL.pdf](https://hmcwordpress.humanities.mcmaster.ca/Truthcommissions/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/UnitedStates.Greensboro.TRC_Report-FULL.pdf)

# Historical Context

The historical context of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation commission is a microcosm, representative of the larger US labour and racial-related debates that would often incite violence.[9] The GTRC report offers an extensive outline of the historical intersections between communism, the KKK, civil rights, labour relations, and government actors that are central to the historical shared narrative.[10]

Mr. E.R.Zane  
 Chairman of the Committee  
 on Community Relations  
 Piedmont Building  
 Greensboro, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Zane:

I wish to voice my opinion on whether to integrate the lunch counters at Kress's and Woolworth's.

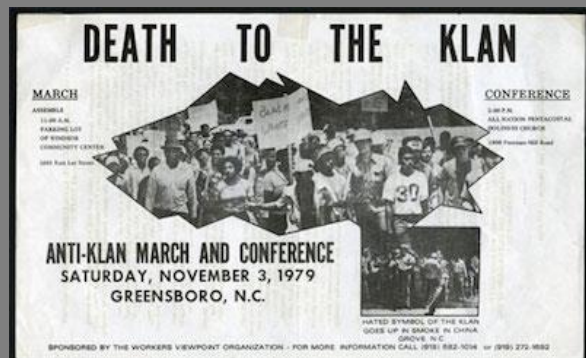
First, I do not believe in integration. I believe in separate but equal facilities, with the emphasis on both separate and equal.

<https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2016/02/11/greensboro-sit-ins/>

The distinct narratives of the actors involved in the GTRC allude to the territorializing of North Carolina, according to the implications of racial exclusionary practices and the systematic perpetuation of inequality.[11] These practices facilitated the disconnect in historical narratives, which are evident in the recollections of individuals from these segregated groups. According to the 1970 North Carolina census, there was double the number of black households living below the poverty line.[12] Other factors of daily life followed this trend: in the year 1979, 75% of employees were white, the three poorest districts in Greensboro were in black residential areas, and North Carolina was one of the slowest Southern states to practice the desegregation of schools.[13]

During this time of racial exclusionism, Marxist influence grew nationally and integrated with black civil rights groups including the Students Organised for Black Unity (SOBU), and the Greensboro Association of Poor People (GAPP).[14] From the late 1960s onward, black organisations had embodied self-determinism to control their own demonstrations in response to systematic suppression.[15] This national struggle mirrored the global anti-colonial movements and Pan-Africanism to encourage black community action.[16]

In this era of change, Ku Klux Klan membership had increased due to a reinvigoration of the community to encourage new membership.[17] State officials in 1965 were aware that the state had the highest Klan activity in the nation, which put North Carolina in the spotlight to assert the suppression of Klan growth.[18] The significant increase in Klan rallies throughout the 1970s resulted in the influx of confrontations between the Klan/Nazi Party with the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and the CWP.[19]



<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/greensboro-massacre/>

David Cunningham, "Truth, Reconciliation and the Ku Klux Klan," *Southern Cultures* 14, no. 3 (2008): 76, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26391691>

[https://www.essence.com/news/25-old-school-photos-hbcu-students/?utm\\_source=pinterest.com](https://www.essence.com/news/25-old-school-photos-hbcu-students/?utm_source=pinterest.com)



# Historical Context

The following three events are significant historical moments that shaped the Greensboro community.

## Dudley Revolt

In 1969, school administrators at Dudley High School refused to allow student Claude Barnes to act as student government president.[20] Dudley High School administrators had actively removed Barnes' name from the ballot, in response to their fears he advocated for Black Power militancy.[21] Despite this, Barnes had won by a landslide write-in victory, and he was followed by classmates in a school walk-out as defiance to the administrator's decision.[22] On May 21, 1969, students witnessed police brutality as they watched Barnes and other students being arrested.[23]

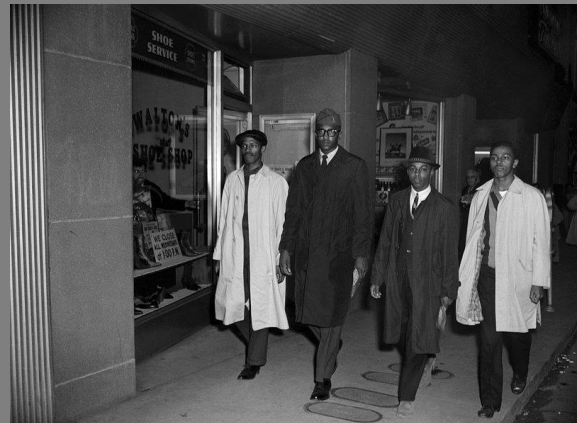
## Sit-In Movement

The Sit-In Movement began in Greensboro on February 1, 1960 and continued to spread through many of the Southern Jim Crow states.[24] On this day, Ezell Blair Jr, Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, and David Woolworth walked into Woolworth's Department Store to buy school supplies and toothpaste.[25] Following their purchase, they sat down at the lunch counter and their act of defiance sparked a nation-wide collective movement to address the racial inequalities of the South.[26]

## "Birth of a Nation"

In March 1979, the FKKKK had obtained the approval of a permit to play the Klan-produced film "Birth of Nation," at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem.[27] The film was a recruitment tool for the KKK, and it depicted freed Black people as drunken sexual predators.[28] Local uproar at the permit approval of the racist film sparked a heavy protest outside the Benton Convention Center, which required heavy police presence to suppress the possible escalation of violence.[29]

As evident by these events, the 1970s were a time of radical cultural, social, and political change that sparked inflammatory violence among the US separatist society.



<https://www.britannica.com/event/Greensboro-sit-in>

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123084365>



# Key Actors



Before considering the key actors of the GTRC, it is important to consider those who passed in the Greensboro Massacre of November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979.

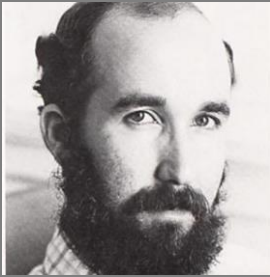
## **Jim Waller**

Jim Waller grew up in a middle-class Jewish family and obtained a medical degree, specialising in pediatrics. In 1973, he set up a clinic to aid American Indian Movement activists who were under siege by the FBI. Also, he was an early white member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and a strong activist.[30]



## **César Cauce**

César Cause graduated from Duke University with a history degree, and whilst at university, he became involved with the anti-Vietnam movement and was concerned about the Greensboro union struggles. He vocalised his opinions in his articles for the WVO newspaper.[31]



## **Mike Nathan**

Mike Nathan grew up in a low-class Jewish family but went on to become the head pediatrician at Lincoln Community Health Center. At the hospital, he served low-class black children. He was a passionate civil rights activist and became a member of the Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR) and Communist Progressive Labor Party (PLB).[32]



## **Bill Sampson**

Bill Sampson was president of the student body at Duke University, he went on to obtain his master's at Harvard Divinity School, and at the University of Virginia Medical School. There he encouraged healthcare workers to support the liberation of South African struggles and was a member of the New American Movement (NAM).[33]

## **Sandi Smith**

Sandi Smith was student body president at Bennet College for Women in Greensboro which meant that she was vocal about the racial, social, and economic struggles of Black people across North Carolina. She was one of the founding members of the Student Organisation for Black Unity (SOBU) and the community organiser for the Greensboro Association of Poor People (GAPP).[34]



<http://collections.museumca.org/?q=collection-item/201054489>

# Key Actors



<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/18/us/18griffin.html>

## Virgil Griffin and the KKK

Virgil Griffin was the leader of the KKK in North Carolina and was in the main Klan caravan during the Greensboro Massacre.[35] In an account of why he attended the CWP demonstration he claims “The reason I came to Greensboro, they put the poster out: “Death to the Klan, said we’s hiding under the ricks, we were scum. I’m not scum.” [36]

Also, Klan informant Eddie Dawson was a significant figure leading up to the demonstration. Two weeks prior to the event, Dawson had reported the potential for Klan violence and the Klan’s intention to attend the demonstration with arms.[37]



<https://www.wunc.org/post/40th-anniversary-greensboro-massacre>

## Nelson Johnson and the CWP

Nelson Johnson was the great-grandchild of slaves and was very active during the Sit-In Movement, and the attempts to sit at the front of buses in North Carolina.[38] He attended North Carolina A&T State University where he became immersed in the Black Nationalist movement and the Marxist ideology of African Liberation Movements.[39] After receiving a grant from the Ford Foundation, Johnson had initiated the GAPP which offered many public services (educational, food services, African awareness, etc.) for the black population in Greensboro.[40]



<https://www.greensborodailyphoto.com/2011/09/h-is-for->

## Greensboro Mayor Keith Holliday

Keith Holliday was the Mayor of Greensboro during the construction of the GTRC and remained to be very vocal about his criticisms of the truth commission process.[41] He argued that “harm can come from an inaccurate truth leading to inaccurate accountability, non-forgiveness and especially from non-reconciliation.” [42] Holliday was concerned with the grassroots organisation of the truth commission process and claimed that if the state officials took the truth commission *seriously* then “the city would (need to) issue an apology for every crime in Greensboro that occurred when we weren’t there to protect our citizens.” [43]



David Cunningham, “Truth, Reconciliation and the Ku Klux Klan,” *Southern Cultures* 14, no. 3 (2008): 76, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26391691>

## GTRC’s Commissioners

Of the seven truth commissioners, there were three African American women, one US citizen of Indian ethnicity, one white woman, and two white men.[44] The selection of the commissioners accounted for a variety in demographic figures to ensure that the report would not be influenced by the bias of a majority in any category.[45]

# November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979

The primary goal of the GTRC was to construct a truth which aimed to reduce “the number of lies that can be circulated unchallenged in public discourse.” [46]. Hence the following section will outline the sequence of events, as listed by the GTRC.

## GTRC Account Summary of the Events of the Greensboro Massacre

- **6 AM:** Sgt. Comer holds his morning line-up briefing with patrol officers T. R. Johnson and J. T. Williams. Discussion of a “low profile approach to the march” and the Klan/Nazis would attempt to heckle.[47]
- **830 AM:** Eddie Dawson called Det. Cooper to state that Virgil Griffin arrived in Greensboro and was in possession of at least two firearms.[48]
- **During this period:** Approx. 10 Nazis and Klan vehicles arrive at Brent Fletchers house (point of convergence).[49]
- **9 AM:** Cooper called Sgt. Burke to order him to go to the Fletcher house to record the license plates of the vehicles that had assembled.[50]
- **9 AM:** Capt. Thomas said Cooper called to inform him that there were guns, Cooper denies this call.[51]



<https://www.wunc.org/post/40th-anniversary-greensboro-massacre>



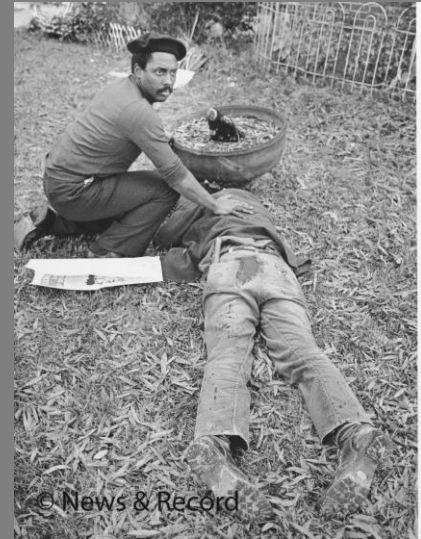
<https://www.wunc.org/post/40th-anniversary-greensboro-massacre>

- **9 AM:** Lt. Spoon visits All Nations Pentecostal Holiness Church to check for bombs. The location is no longer the termination point of demonstration.[52]
- **10 AM:** tactical units report for line-up meeting. Sgt. Comer is not present, on his way to the parade.[53]
- **10 AM:** Spoon claims that he was late to meeting, but Police Attorney Maurice Cawn claims that he was present and heard about guns.[54]
- **During this time:** CWP prepared for demonstration, the attachment of “Death to the Klan!” signs.[55]
- **Significant Detail:** the permit was dependent on the restriction against the possession of firearms.[56]
- **Significant Detail:** GPD claims that there was confusion over the starting location of the protest.[57]
- **10 AM:** media begins to arrive as they expect the march to begin at 11am. [58]
- **1030 AM:** 35 Klansmen and Women/Nazis have gathered at the Fletcher House.[59]
- **1036 AM:** Comer and Williams went to Windsor Center to locate Johnson.[60]

# November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979

## GTRC Account Summary of the Events of the Greensboro Massacre Continued

- **Significant Detail:** Gun bearers listed- Virgil Griffin, Jerry Paul Smith, Roland Wood, Milano Claude, Terry Hartsoe, David Matthews, Mark Sherer, Coleman Pridmore, and Beulah Taylor.[61]
- **1030 AM:** At the police headquarters the briefing has finished, Daughtry told men to eat and be in position by 1130am. [62]
- **11 AM:** CWP demonstrators had stuck provocative images on the flatbed sound truck- Image of Klansman with a noose.[63]
- **11 AM:** Cooper and Police photographer arrive at Fletcher house, most of the vehicles have left.[64]
- **1105 AM:** Cooper tried to radio Spoon and Daughtry that Klansman had left the house, but commanders were not on radio.[65]
- **1113 AM:** Cooper advised Burke that nine vehicles were heading in the demonstration direction.[66]
- **1115 AM:** Daughtry called Spoon to say that caravan was heading to Morningside.[67]



<https://www.wunc.org/post/40th-anniversary-greensboro-massacre>

- **1116 AM:** Burke calls Daughtry to inform that 9 Klansmen/Nazis vehicles are heading in that direction.[69]
- **1117 Am:** Cooper notifies officers on the police radio that vehicles are heading for Everitt and Carver.[70]
- **1120 AM:** 40-50 demonstrators, children, and Morningside residents begin chanting Death to the Klan.[71]
- **1121 AM:** Daughtry asks Spoon whether he heard Cooper's transmission. Spoon denies this happening.[68]
- **1123 AM:** Cooper reports that shots have been fired.[72]
- **1123 AM:** Spoon tells Communication to move all vehicles to Windsor.[73]
- **1125 AM:** Officer League and Bryant arrive to stop the black van, passengers arrested.[74]
- **1127 AM:** Burke radios Daughtry to ask if cars should be blocked. Daughtry busy with arrests. Burke lets the remaining vehicles proceed.[75]
- **1127 AM:** Area is sealed off.[76]



<https://www.wunc.org/post/40th-anniversary-greensboro-massacre>



[https://greensboro.com/z-no-digital/after-the-smoke-cleared-it-was-silence-remembering-the-greensboro-massacre-40-years-later/article\\_91ea1ca0-2d09-5801-8195-225d6c9bd6da.html](https://greensboro.com/z-no-digital/after-the-smoke-cleared-it-was-silence-remembering-the-greensboro-massacre-40-years-later/article_91ea1ca0-2d09-5801-8195-225d6c9bd6da.html)

# Aftermath



## The Media

The local media who attended the demonstration filmed the shooting, which depicted the Klansmen firing towards the crowd of demonstrators, without the claimed threat of a deadly attack.[77] Although many blame the media for their portrayal of the external forces that caused the massacre, the GTRC claims that media are an easy target for blame.[78] Rather, the media was only circulating the “misunderstandings” surrounding the event, that represented the shared individual and community views.[79] Hence, the GTRC provided clarification of communal misunderstanding on the events of November 3rd, 1979.

## Systematic Injustice

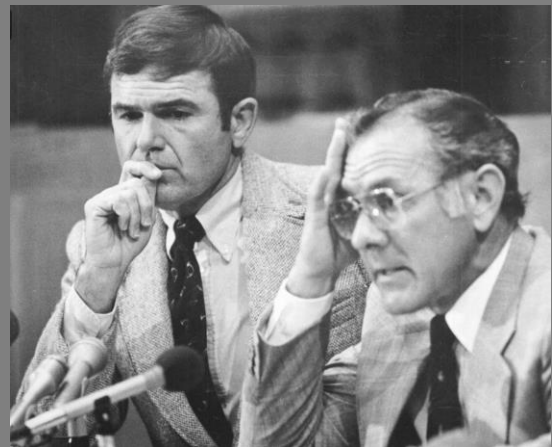
The GPD issued five reports (1979- October 1980) that aimed to look into the events of November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979.[80] Notable points within these reports include:

- The white citizens of Greensboro thought the city was making progress regarding white-black relations.[81]
- The desegregation of schools resulted in the increased social interactions between white-black children.[82]
- Black residents pointed out the systematic injustices of Greensboro.[83]

In the criminal trials that occurred from 1980, the GTRC notes that there was a “problematic jury selection process” that resulted in the election of jurors who did not represent the demographic diversity of Greensboro.[84] These systematic processes justified the requirement of the GTRC, as they failed to account for the community of Greensboro’s needs.

## Mourning

The CWP encouraged the community to embrace the process of mourning to “remember the CWP 5.” [85] This statement is printed on a monument, located in Maplewood Cemetery.[86] The community action of the CWP is referenced as the inspiration for many of the defiant Sit-In Movements across the Southern states. Much of the community was upset about the state official’s decision not to include the Greensboro Massacre in the International Civil Rights Center and Museum in North Carolina. [87]



[https://greensboro.com/z-no-digital/after-the-smoke-cleared-it-was-silence-remembering-the-greensboro-massacre-40-years-later/article\\_91ea1ca0-2d09-5801-8195-225d6c9bd6da.html](https://greensboro.com/z-no-digital/after-the-smoke-cleared-it-was-silence-remembering-the-greensboro-massacre-40-years-later/article_91ea1ca0-2d09-5801-8195-225d6c9bd6da.html)

# Truth Commission Mandate

The GTRC states that its mandate “was to examine the context, causes, sequence, and consequences,” intending to construct recommendations for community healing after the Greensboro Massacre.[88] While having this extensive mandate, the commission acknowledges the limitations of the TRC process. Unlike global truth commissions, the GTRC was independent of state endorsement, which set the precedent for the participants that this commission was based on the power of dialogue, rather than the state-supported implementation of recommendations.[89]

## Ubuntu

Ubuntu was an African philosophical ideology utilised in the South African TRC and it is loosely defined as follows: “I am because you are.” [90] Similar to western dialogue ethics, Ubuntu’s communicative stance was the inspiration for the mandate of the GTRC, which aimed to encourage dialogue between Greensboro’s residents.[91]

## GTRC Mandate

The primary mandate consisted of a list of four goals, namely: the healing and reconciliation of the community through the dissemination of the truth, reconciling the fragmentation caused by the miscommunication of events on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979, acknowledging people’s emotions, and aiding the facilitation of change through social consciousness, in the hopes of preventing similar events from occurring. [92]

Based on these mandates, the principle of Ubuntu (dialogue ethics) appropriately facilitates social cohesion by providing a space for each divergent group to understand the narrative of their neighbour. This is evident in the selection of attendees including textile workers, former Morningside residents, police officers, Klan members, the CWP, civil leaders, the local media, legal experts, and academics.[93] Additionally, before the GTRC report, there was an “outreach effort” to coordinate “Report Receivers” who pledged to read and analyse the finalised truth commission report.[94] Throughout the GTRC mandate, the report asserts that the grassroots nature of the commission’s construction shall continue in its efforts to begin community conversation, as they recognise this process is not the ends of restorative justice.

GREENSBORO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Presented to the residents of Greensboro,  
the City, the Greensboro Truth and Community  
Reconciliation Project and other public  
bodies on May 25, 2006.

## Victim Centered Justice?

Many truth commissions are based on ensuring *victim centered justice*, but it is interesting to note that the GTRC chose not to use the term “victim” in their report.[95] As the GTRC asserts that their report was to facilitate community healing, it is clear that the term victim would have suggested bias, in that all community members have suffered in the context, event, and consequences from November 3, 1979.

[https://hmcwordpress.humanities.mcmaster.ca/Truthcommissions/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/UnitedStates.Greensboro.TRC\\_Report-FULL.pdf](https://hmcwordpress.humanities.mcmaster.ca/Truthcommissions/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/UnitedStates.Greensboro.TRC_Report-FULL.pdf)

# Truth Commission Findings

*“I noticed how quiet everyone was-they were listening to me. I have given many speeches, sharing the flashbacks with groups large and small. But for me, this was the greatest speaking experience ever.” ~Sally Avery Bermanzohn [96]*

## **Findings**

The GTRC listed a plethora of reasons as to why the events on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979, resulted in the tragic deaths of five community members. But the primary of those reasons was the negligence of the Greensboro Police Department, the KKK/Nazi Party violence, and the inflammatory language of the CWP (WVO).

## **KKK/ Nazi Party**

It was concluded that members of these parties attended the demonstrations with “malicious intent.” However, not all participants “bear equal responsibility” as there were members who did not use deadly force with firearms.[97]

## **WVO/CWP**

This group bore “lesser responsibility,” but was accountable for their choice of inflammatory language, the acts of beating the caravans, and the choice to bring firearms to the protests.[98]

## **GPD**

Most of the commissioners claim that the absence of the police, the orders to maintain “low profile,” and the negligence in the use of the Klan informant Eddie Dawson resulted in the Greensboro Massacre.[99]

## **Institutional Reform**

Despite not being state-sponsored, the GTRC called for the institutional reforms of the city government, some of which include- city employees should be paid a living wage, they should publish annual reports on race relations in Greensboro, and judicial reform by re-evaluating the process of jury selection in the city.[100]

A shared narrative in the historical context of Greensboro had been constructed by outlining the direct causes of the Greensboro Massacre. The GTRC had not directly engaged in individual naming of perpetrators but had attributed blame to the organisations that resulted in the provocation on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979. Also, the same can be said for reform suggestions, whereby the GTRC had labelled the specific institutions that were continuing to support exclusionary practices.



# Existing Literature

There is copious scholarly literature examining the methodology and effectiveness of the GTRC process and report. One of the primary themes in existing academic literature is the assessment of the report's ability to facilitate conversation in a way that was therapeutic to the community. David K. Androff employs the feminist and social constructionist theory of narrative therapy to identify how seventeen participants constructed their identity and ascribed meaning to their lived experiences.[101] As narrative therapy is grounded on the participation of groups; it is an appropriate framework to apply to the Greensboro truth commission report.[102] Androff claims that the public validation of the shared historical narrative allowed victims to finally obtain acceptance in a society that asserted the official denial of communal justice. [103] However, this study outlined the limitations of many truth commission reports, which often fail to give victims the appropriate time to tell their truths due to poor time management and lack of staff resources.[104] As the GTRC was not state acknowledged, it was limited in state monetary assistance which hindered the experiences of two victims to recount their stories. Jill E. Williams extends this criticism of the truth commission process by answering the question of report legitimacy. A significant criticism of the report arises from the limited resources and personnel, which may have resulted in report bias.[105] Despite this claim, Joshua Inwood claims that the overall GTRC provided the community with the "tools to name their oppression." [106] As the report claimed, the state's choice not to endorse the project made the process more desirable to those who supported the community-driven grassroots method of construction.[107] These authors outline the temporal and resource constraints of the truth commission process, whilst claiming that the report reflects the overall consensus that the GTRC was able to address the concerns of the community, which could go on to begin the process of social cohesion.

David Cunningham's article assesses the methodology of the GTRC report, by using a block model to assess the changes in resident's narratives from 1980 to 2005.[108] In this article, Cunningham describes the "macro-structure of institutionalised memory" in the narratives of the community to make conclusions about the durability of collective memory over periods of time.[109] The image below is a visual used in this source and it outlines the characteristics of the communal narrative, and how it had changed among the CWP, KKK, and the City.[110]

Table 4: Themes in Descending Order of Citation Frequency During 2005 Public Hearings

CWP	City	KKK
<b>Blame: City</b>	<b>Police lacked information</b>	CWP provocation
Context for conflict	Police followed procedures	<b>No conspiracy</b>
<b>Complicity</b>	<b>No conspiracy</b>	<b>Informant</b>
<b>Informant</b>	<b>Shootout</b>	<b>Could have happened anywhere</b>
<b>Trials unfair</b>	<b>Space violated</b>	<b>Context for conflict</b>
Police inattention	<b>CWP violent</b>	<b>CWP violent</b>
<b>Injustice</b>	<b>Context for conflict</b>	<b>Blame: KKK</b>
<b>Police unjust</b>	CWP provocation	<b>Shootout</b>
Blame: KKK	<i>Outsiders</i>	<i>Police unjust</i>
CWP doing good/ unselfish work	<i>Media bias</i>	<i>Outsiders</i>
<b>Media bias</b>		<i>No racial motivation</i>
<b>Victims were targeted</b>		
<b>No CWP provocation</b>		
<b>Police repression/hostility</b>		
<b>City avoiding 11/3</b>		
Massacre		
Uneven fight		
<b>Under siege</b>		
<b>Police incompetence</b>		
<b>Space violated</b>		
<b>Fear</b>		

Notes: The table summarizes several characteristics of the narrative themes offered by each constituency. Themes are listed in descending order of citation frequency. Bolded themes are those that emerged in 2005. Italicized themes were present in 1980 but not in 2005. Themes listed above each dividing line were cited by multiple constituents in 2005.

Cunningham finds that the most significant transformations of narrative occurred as a result of the acquittal of the Klan/Nazi members in 1980.[111] The language had shifted to claim that the police were not representative of the interests of the entire Greensboro community, and the terminology of unfairness became more apparent in narratives.[112] This source highlights the unique temporal aspect of the truth commission process. Had the truth commission occurred in an earlier period, the narratives of the community may have been very different from the report.

# Existing Literature

Joshua Inwood's article *Righting Unrightable Wrongs* examines the GTRC's ability to address the racialized territorialities through activism based on the commission report.[113] Inwood claims that the US South developed the concept of racialized territoriality, where territoriality is defined as the process of coding geographic spaces according to racialized categories that "reinforces inclusions and exclusions." [114] The prevalence of this practice in the South stems from what critical scholars call "master narratives" that legitimize the application of violence in response to race.[115] Virgil Griffin's statements in the report exemplified that violence was justified in the cases of excluding practices that were believed to be anti-American. Inwood claims that these were similar to larger global discourses that likened otherness to the threat of communism, which was evident in the Cold War.[116] The GTRC allowed for the creation of an official history that incorporated the "experiences of oppression" for the community members who have been systematically excluded from doing so.[117] Cunningham extends upon the examination of the Klan/Nazi groups by claiming that race-oriented violence became more likely in locations where there is a "perceived race-based competition." [118] Cunningham claims that the GTRC extended beyond judicial action to encourage the process of accountability as well as restoring community cohesion in Greensboro.[119]. As an independent commission that chose to blame institutions rather than individuals, the GTRC created an atmosphere that facilitated dialogue and reminded the community about accountability for a shared narrative of the past. These two articles outline the limitations of retributive justice by highlighting the fragile line between maintaining cohesion while asserting accountability. Truth commissions can be desirable to all stakeholders of a polarized community, where state bias and personal interests can take priority in the judicial system.

James W. McCarthy III's article *The Embrace of Justice* utilises the Christian ideology of Miroslav Volf to examine the ethics of reconciliation. [120] Volf's account claims that the four types of exclusion are elimination (killing), exclusion (ethnic cleansing), assimilation (group merges with the dominant group), and abandonment (group vulnerability to other groups).[121] Volf advocates for "transcended justice" that looks beyond the justice of a particular community.[122] However, McCarthy claims that Volf is too vague in his broad application of transcended justice and assumes that all other forms of justice are not as effective. [123] Rather, McCarthy explores the GTRC's success in employing the principle of Ubuntu which affirmed each community's "epistemological stances" while accommodating multiple justices.[124]



McCarthy's argument follows the trend of the other authors in this section, which claim that the commission process allowed for the integration of all of Greensboro's ideologically different groups. Also, it is significant to assess the limitation of the truth commission process to understand the potential for truth commissions to delve into other polarizing topics in American history.

[https://hmcwordpress.humanities.mcmaster.ca/Truthcommissions/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/UnitedStates.Greensboro.TRC\\_Report-FULL.pdf](https://hmcwordpress.humanities.mcmaster.ca/Truthcommissions/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/UnitedStates.Greensboro.TRC_Report-FULL.pdf)



# Outcomes and Legacies

Many community-driven organisations stem from the conclusion of the GTRC. This section will outline some of those communal services, and the legacies that implicate US society now. In the recommendations section of the GTRC, the report includes a list of acknowledgments that should occur following the commission process. Some of these included the formal recognition of November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1979 as a tragic event in Greensboro's history, the apologies of members who contributed to the series of events on that day, and a community effort to integrate this shared historical narrative into the city.[125] Two of these communal legacies are as follows:

## College Education Services

Greensboro's cohort of college faculty and students developed workshops in college to integrate the study of the GTRC report into college education.[126] One group of students in a truth commission class at UNCG constructed a curriculum that would provide a version of their education to students in grade eight.[127]

## International TRC Conference

In July 2006, two months after the initial release of the report, Greensboro hosted the International TRC conference which brought together global representatives to discuss in detail the truth and reconciliation efforts occurring in their respective nations.[128]

## Greensboro Police Scandal

Sally Bermanzohn's reflection on the GTRC outlined the Greensboro Police Scandal that occurred just after the conclusion of the commission process.[129] In this event, a black police officer located a listening and tracking device in his vehicle.[130]. Additionally, a black book was located in the vehicle of the assistant police chief of Greensboro, listing 114 black resident's names, as well as the 19 black officers of the GPD.[131]

Although the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation commission was unable to address this police scandal, it is an event that demonstrates the existing work required to achieve systematic change in Greensboro. In light of the recent Black Lives Matter protests across America, the GTRC report has the potential to kickstart the process of reconciliation in other states or nationally across the United States. Similar to Greensboro, state officials have yet to officially address the racial injustices that occurred in a large portion of American history. The Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation commission report may hold the methodology of how to address this polarized historical narrative.



# Endnotes

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