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Black Women Pay Equality

Interview with Marc Bayard, Director of And-Still-I-Rise.org

Quanisha: This is Quanisha Smith; the founder and chief activator of The Black Women's Rise movement, for those of you who are new to this community, welcome to Black Women Rise.

We are a community of black women who are ready to take charge of our life so that we can thrive and live authentically. I provide coaching and training to support black women in crafting identities beyond societal historical and personal limitations in order for us to create lives in self love and sustainability and acquire the skill confidence and courage to help us stand in our self-worth; when we achieve those next levels of success.

Here we use career, economic and personal development to support those aims. Today I am so excited to interview Marc Bayard an associate fellow and director for the Institute for Policy Studies, The Black Worker Initiative, with an important issue impacting black women's liberation, our families and our communities. That is black women pay equality. Hi Marc thank you for joining us ... Marc are you still there?

Marc: Yes I am; can you hear me?

Quanisha: Yes, thank you Marc. Thank you for joining us on this issue

Marc: Thank you for having me.

Quanisha: Awesome. A little bit about Marc. Marc Bayard is the associate fellow like I said director of the Institute for Policy Studies Black Worker Initiative. He spearheads the initiative "And Still I Rise" black women labor leader voices, power and promise. An effort



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to engage black women labor leaders and activists in ways to leverage their organizer expertise for the preservation of the labor movement and economic advancement of the black community.

He is a frequent speaker and social commentator for a number of institutions and organizations and Marc's dedication to achieving just and human treatment for workers worldwide and is grounded in his first hand work and extensive in at least 15 countries. Marc hold two masters degrees from Cornell University and George Town University and is a highly regarded scholar of labor politics. He is also the author of a book a biography that is "Standing together in Service." William Lucy, Civil Rights and the American Labor Movement.

That's a little bit about Marc, so welcome Marc.

Marc: Thanks again. It's definitely great to be here and to be talking about such important subjects about black women, black women in work and also black women in the economy. They play such an important role in our economy and it's often if you're listening to mainstream news and media you often don't hear about that and part of our role today is really to uplift that. If you really look at some of the opportunities and challenges for raising black women's voices and raising black women's economic power.

Quanisha: Thank you as you know Rise is an activeness and argument, so we're all about that advancement, will we connect to those next levels. Last week your organization led the black women equal pay day, on July 28th. The campaign called for black women to clock-out at 2:07pm and take to social media to post time card with their photos and companies by the #blackwomenequalpay. Can you please share what was the significance of that change and the cause of black women pay equity.



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Marc: Sure well first let me say that there were a number of organizations involved in this effort. I'll list a few but I'll probably forget a few. The National Women's Law Center was heavily involved, Nine-to-Five I know was also heavily involved in this. The AFL-CIO was also involved in this effort as well as many other organizations. In fact someone told me recently we were trending on Twitter a couple of days because we had so many people involved in this.

The Institute for Policy Studies was definitely involved and the "And Still I Rise Project" was involved and we tried to do our involvement in a number of different of ways. One was obviously activating our network of black women in the labor movement to be engaged in this. Activating the overall labor movement to be very much engaged in this because the many ways for those who work in labor given the fact that people have unionized contracts, so many of these pay equities which are actually dealt with; with unionized contracts.

That does not mean that the labor movement should not be fully engaged in supporting those who are not in labor, which is actually the majority of Americans and really showing solidarity and strength on this issue because it's such an important racial issue. And it's such an important economic issue. We were really trying to work and make sure that the labor movement was engaged in this, that black women's organizations were engaged in this.

The Ms. Foundation for Women was also involved in this. Part of what we did was that we put out piece on Ebony called "Trying to make a dollar out of \$0.64cents; which is an ode to an old "Tupac" song; because we really wanted to get this issue out on the mainstream. We want people to know about it. We want people to understand their roots and we want people to know about possible solutions to deal with it.



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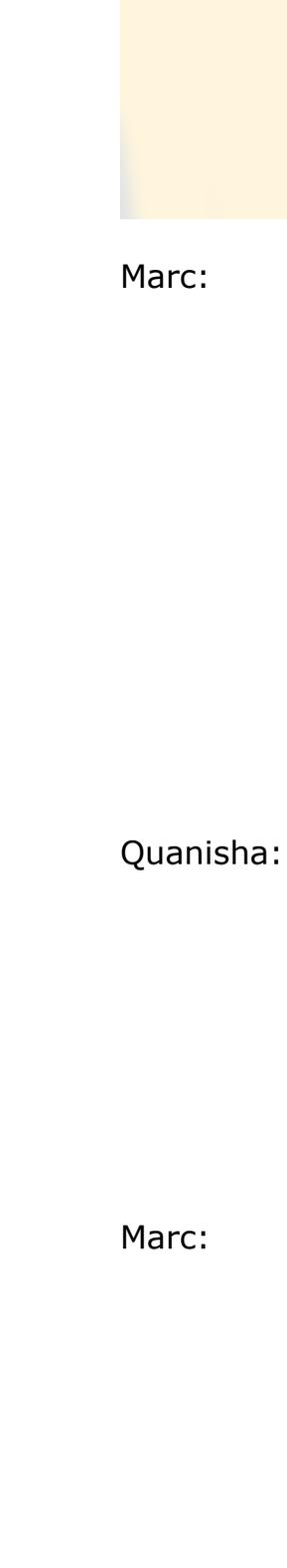
Quanisha: Can you say a little bit more about the issue for those who might not be familiar or who didn't see this trending. I know some of our community; as you know is not very active on social media per se. What is this issue about black women and pay equity?

Marc: The reality is that; that all women whether they'd be black/white/Latina or Asian make less than white males. This data has been captured for a number of years, it's been verified. It is a fact. What sometimes seen is whether it be on bumper stickers or sometimes in the news, is that women make \$0.77 cents to a male dollar, to a white male dollar. That's startling enough but when you start to break this down by race, you find that African American women actually make \$0.64 cents to a white male dollar. Latino women actually make a little bit less than that.

What this day was on July 28th was, there was a calculation that it takes 200 plus days into 2015 for black women to make the exact amount that white males at the end of 2014. So July 28th was actually highlighting the fact that it takes about 208/209 days for black women to make the exact amount hourly that white males make in order to make up that difference, it's a shocking statistic and its shocking that we even have-to-have a day to look at something like this. It both elevates how problematic the issue is, it really does raise some consciousness around the issue.

It really breaks the issue down by race which is also important; but it's definitely a day that we want to eliminate off the calendar.

Quanisha: Yes, what is the impact of black women making less or what are the social implications of that? That \$0.64 cents us making less strategically to white women or white males, how does that impact our communities?



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Marc: It's actually huge, the impacts are huge particularly when you look at the fact that Black women far more than white women are heads of households and are the sole breadwinners. It's a real multiplier effect because if you're making less than white males and you're making less than white females and you are the head of household then that means your entire household is suffering. And given the number of Black women who are heads of households this can really and as we can see in the overall economic statistics where Black people are; a major drag on Black people's ability to live authentic life in the United States.

It's a major issue impacting a goodly number of Black women in the United States, it's not just a flea-flicker statistic it impacts millions-and-millions of Black women and thereby their families.

Quanisha: Right thank you for sharing what we might be learning [individually 00:08:49] or as the larger ripple effect when we think about our families and our communities and those implications. Can you tell me a little bit more about the average fee in advocacy in organizing for this project and I know you said one is a coalition effort in addition to what your organization is doing? Maybe it might be best to tell us a little bit more about the "And Still I Rise Project" or initiate and eradicate this wage gap?

Marc: Definitely "And Still I Rise" was created and launched in May of this year and it's goal is to highlight the voices of Black working women. We focused in on women who are involved in the labor movement because we see the labor movement as an important vehicle for elevating the voices and power of Black women. We really feel that a collective response has far more ability to impact women's economics and society than an individual response.

The "And Still I Rise Project" really highlighted 27 women in the labor movement and when I say labor movement, let's really



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define this. We're talking about teachers, we're talking about nurses; we're talking about women who are trying to work in difficult occupations like construction. We're talking about women who are in the public sector as social workers; these are women that we know. These are women who work in grocery stores and bag food.

Black women and the labor movement have been together for a long time and it's something that we really wanted to elevate because it's not talked about enough. We all know someone who works at the Post Office. We all know women who have been involved in the labor movement and those jobs are good paying jobs that are slipping away, and they really impact our community.

As I said before most labor jobs pay more than the \$0.64 cents to a white male dollar and we need more of those jobs and we need black women and black people to have more access to those jobs and to organize for better jobs like that. That's what really our report highlights and how we felt that this issue was directly related to it because statistics have shown that even in low wage jobs if a low wage job is unionized; you make more.

For example black union workers in low wage jobs earn a medium hourly wage of \$15.60 compared to \$12.05 for non-union low wage jobs. So even in the low wage field if it's unionized that \$3 an hour makes a difference. Those are the kinds of things we're trying to highlight; also the fact what we found, not only what we found but what other statistics have found. For black women being in a union having a union job is a greater economic indicator for future earnings than a college degree.

Let's stop for that for a second. Having a union job means a lot and the problem is that there aren't enough of them and black folks don't have enough access to them. What we are trying to



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do with our project is to really push the envelope both within the black community to demand more and also for unions to do more.

I think if the two come together then whether it be huge low wage employees like Walmart's and others then we'll see a lot of change. The other thing I'd say is black women have been isolated a lot of low wage industries historically and even to this day; whether it be childcare, whether restaurants and serving; or whether it be nursing homes; domestics. These are low paying jobs that have to be made better in order to elevate the majority of black women who are working in those fields.

That's another thing that I report is really about. That's why we do our work and why we really feel this issue is so important and also why we want to tie it into black equal pay day for women; because we wanted to really get this issue out to the mainstream and speaking to you and your audience we're incredibly excited because we think that the more black folks get this information to more they have access to it in a simple, ready easily digestible way; the more that we can demand more typically on the economic front.

We've done a really good job demanding things around civil rights and obviously even though there's a lot of back-sliding and that we continue to fight. Movements like "Black Lives Matter" have really elevated issues around police brutality. Now we also have to think of economic justice we have to take the same fervor with the civil rights movement, we have to continue to fight for the "Black Lives Matter" movement.

We also have to really start looking at these economic gestures issues and we believe working on them collectively. Trying to solely teach women individual techniques on how to get a raise with their employer, that's important but more collective response for people who can't negotiate; imagine if you're a



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domestic worker ... if you could have all the negotiation skills in the world but it's going to be really hard if you are coming to somebody's home every day to take care of their children to have any leverage in a negotiation.

We are trying to deal; and if you're working at MacDonald's or other fast food places it's very difficult to have that leverage and that's why we think that we need to have policy solutions. We've got to have collective responses to elevate black people in general.

Quanisha: Thank you for bringing attention to those might be in need for the Black Women Rise community or just me; my background is in social justice or social economic community organizing that work. Even though we think about that historic, Dr.Kin's next step in his advocacy work the rest was this economic fight, the economic justice fight. This is an issue that we need to continue because really we live in a capitalist society, economic is still important.

I think you wanted to highlight really this role of the collective and the individual. You didn't put it this way but I see it as a both/and phenomenon. We do have to acknowledge that some folks don't have this social power if you want to say or the ability to negotiate because of the different roles, like you said it's harder for a domestic to say; "I'm going to negotiate or push for this." Right do you do a union or you need that collective power to really push social change; I definitely want to highlight that.

In your work have you found that there are somethings or maybe from the movement and from the interview that you have the black women labor organizers are there anythings that are on a individual level that you feel black women can do to work towards this pay equity? And even if that individual is getting active and creating collective change in their organization? Are there any strategies that you found or that other women have



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suggested have been useful in thinking about this; as far as personal empowerment for people.

Marc: Definitely, I think almost all of the women that we spoke to started from a sense of self and the need to have a strong sense of self because this work is very difficult and there will be a lot of challenges. There will be a lot of roadblocks put in people's way. It's definitely important to have a sense of self. It's very important to have a smaller network of peers that you can rely upon in terms of bouncing off ideas and sharing ideas whether that be written or oral or verbal. That's definitely important.

Almost all of the women spoke about the need and the importance of leadership. Leadership in themselves that they see themselves as leaders or they need to see themselves as leaders and that they're willing to take that risk to be out there as a leader. I think the most important thing is that they do that not solely for any kind of self aggrandizement but with the clear understanding that when they get themselves into these positions of leadership that they will not only be speaking for themselves but they'll be speaking for their larger community.

They're very clear whose back that they stand on. I think that's really important because I think that's very different than traditional models of leadership; very different than so many books that you can read about leadership and successful leaders and seven point plans to be a successful leader. These women are very clear on that and they're also very clear on the important role of mentorship and the fact that everybody needs a mentor whether you're a senior leader or you're someone starting on the job.

Whether it is a union job or whether it's a corporate America job, people need to not only see people who look like them for diversity purpose but also for real inclusion purposes. They need to have that ability to share their experiences in the workplace



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with others like them and they also need a sense that the mentors whether they're laterals or people who are above them that they can really move ideas back and forth and at some point take some action with them.

It's also about self learning and being self critical and understanding. So mentorship is huge in the research that we've done around these black women and work issues. I think you talked about it earlier to me that mentorship; you found that mentorship is really important to your network as well. It's not a surprise. The part of it is then if that something that people want to formalized; how do people go about it?

Again I think that's where you need a bit more of a collective response in order to implement and make something more standard as opposed to an ad hoc or haphazard process. I think what the folks in our report were calling for is a need for this to be structured and a need for this to be built into the process. A need for this to be protection funded so that's it not an additional task that black women take on as part of the invisible and the thought of the amazing amount of invisible work that they do but that's it's actually placed front and center.

Saying; "this is a best practice and thereby this should be utilized the same way ..." I don't know you're incorporating some sigma best practice that you read about in some Harvard Business Review, kind of thing. I think that's the importance of making sure that it's not an additional burden but that it's incorporated into the body of work whether that be a unionized operation or non-unionized operation.

Quanisha: That's so important at least I found that there is; and we see this in a lot of places whether in the class room or in the work. There is an extra burden that people who are from marginalized communities, in this case we'll talk about black women have to take on and trying to level the playing field. In the guide that we

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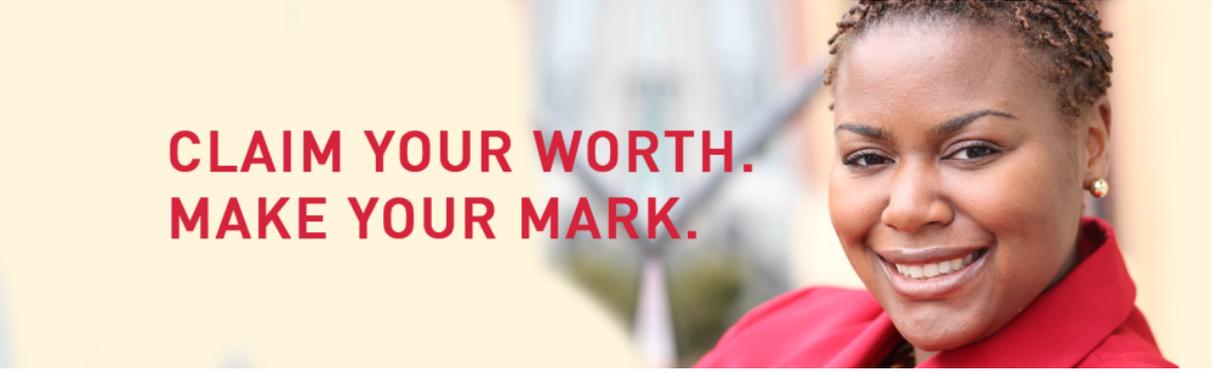
have at www.Blackwomenrise.com, if you go there you'll see the 12 Effective Leadership Resources for Black Women.

We talk about a lot of the strategies instead really learning your strengths. Forming your own team for figuring out how to get coaching and mentorship and I've found that I actually have to pay for a lot of those things because we don't readily have access in organization; like you said in a structured way to black women leaders. So black women who can really maybe give you in perspective as well as share resources; I have had also had to do a lot of research on where are these leadership books. Like you said; not the standard your essential books, the leadership books that have been written for black women many of them by black women and that's why came up with this guide to offer one resource that's structured and really available. Here you don't have to take the time; I already have it for you, "here's a book."

Marc: I think that's fantastic.

Quanisha: You do have-to-have this extra time that we have to put into doing this. How much money and time did I have to spend if you did have a structured way I could have saved and many other women could have saved time and money, because maybe our union or our organization understood the value of this. Not only the success of the organization but the success of the workers and our lives and economic livelihood in that; thank you for mentioning that that is a burden as often on people [of color 00:21:47] particularly black women and having to have this advancement.

Marc: I think you're absolutely right with that and what we are saying is that we want unions to be another tool in the toolbox to black women to know is available. We wanted people to know the history. We want people to know the good the bad and the ugly but also to know that overall it has been an amazingly successful



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mechanism historically for elevating black people and moving black people into middle-class.

Think about cities like Detroit and the motor city back in the day, all of those jobs at Ford, GM and Chrysler were union jobs. People moved from the south to north to take those union jobs in those factories, when they humming places like Detroit were humming. Baltimore very similarly, so many of these hot spot cities that were dealing with so many issues; Baltimore used to be a thriving city with a number of African Americans working in a range of different unions and at different factories, both black men and black women.

We want people to know that history. We want people to know that black women today make up the second largest percentage of folks who are in unions. People don't know that only second to black men. Black people are still in unions, the public sector and when we talk about the public sector we're talking about everything from EMT's and fire fighters, teacher, nurses and social workers black women make up the largest percentage of public sector employees.

When you hear about places like Wisconsin where the governor is cutting public sector jobs, or they tried that in Ohio. You have to look at the fact, it's not just about the fire fighters or the EMT's or the police officers, it's about the black women working in the Postal Office, the black women working in the social services. We want to make sure that that history is captured because those are very good jobs that have not just wages and benefits but pension when you retire.

So it's not just about today's wages it's about being able to retire. We want black women to really see unions as a viable vehicle going forward not just for historical and anachronistic thing but a viable vehicle going forward. That's what the story of



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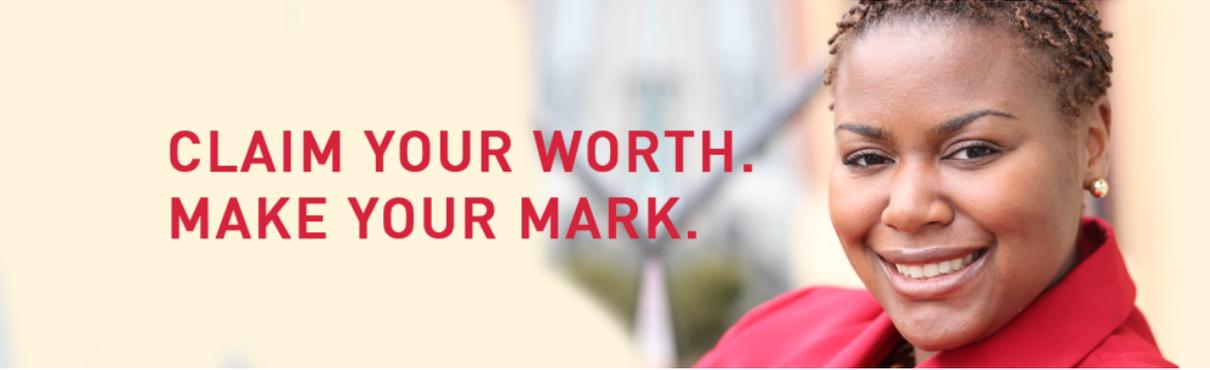
“And Still I Rise” are about, every single woman is talking about the future, not about the past.

I think that your audience will really appreciate some of these stories and I think they will truly see themselves reflected in so many of these different stories, because these are real women talking about what they had to do to survive. What their solution was with unionization.

Quanisha: Thank you for bringing it to the forefront, we learning from our history but currently sharing where black women are working and the power that unions have and are having are really impacting our lives and our future on and the legacy that we all want to leave. What are the next steps for this work and this campaign and how can people specifically black women get involved?

Marc: I think we are so excited to be part of the larger wave of “Black Lives Matter” in the sense that so many issues around, the whole net roots conference for example. The fact that these “Black Lives Matter” activists stood in front of two of the democratic parties most progressive and said; it’s good that you’re talking about economic justice, but economic justice takes on so many different facets in the black community.

You cannot separate economic justice from social justice and you cannot separate economic justice from racial justice and you can’t separate economic justice from state sponsored violence. I’ll give you two examples; both Michael Brown’s mother and Trayvon Martin’s mother are union members people don’t know that. Michael Brown’s mother is part of the United Food and Commercial Workers those are the folks when you go to supermarkets they’re the cashiers, they’re the folks who bag your groceries.



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They're the folks who are stock clerks, Michael Brown's mother is part of that union. Trayvon Martin's mother was part of the office of professional employees union. She worked for the Miami-Dade Government. She was an office worker, they're both union members. For black folks again economic justice, racial justice ... sometimes in the progressive white economic world these issues are separated.

They talk about Gross Domestic Product, they talk about minimum wage but they don't talk about the fact that as bad as it might be to work at Walmart if you have a criminal record you can't even get a job at Walmart. These issues can't be separated in our communities. I think that's why again what we're trying to highlight and push; is to really push that inter-sectionality between these issues so that our communities really understand that when you're fighting...

Not only our communities understand but that unions and civil rights groups that are more traditional have to understand that linkage too. That again economic rights and racial justice can be hand-in-hand. In fact they've always been hand-in-hand. Black people coming to the United States was about economics; white slave owners wanted to have black people work for free to do work. It has always been the case and the more people we get closer to that reality the better our issues and our arguments and the richer the debate and discussion can be when you separate the two you basically water both sides of the argument.

You have less chance of winning. It's an incomplete story; if you only sell someone half a story you're left scratching your head. How did you get this way in a country where everybody can pull themselves up from their bootstraps. First of all let's be clear that's myth that someone created and not everyone can ... Read your history and understand your history and then put it into today's text book situation.



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You asked a big question and I gave a big response. A particular slice of this is we are aggressively trying to promote education around the importance of black women being involved with the labor movement. We're talking with women's organizations. We're talking with civil rights organizations, we're talking with labor unions about this and we're talking with the general public about this because we want to really spark a conversation.

We think that to be in this moment that we're in around "Black Lives Matter" it also elevates our debate and discussion as well and we are very much appreciative of being part of that larger conversation. Another report I would definitely encourage the audience to look at is a report called blackworkersmatter - #blackworkersmatter. It really goes into much more, people want to know much more about statistics and details or some people might.

That report gives you a lot more data in relations of black folks today how they got that way, how a lot of these trends have been historic and solutions that can come out of this. Again really believe in that collective responses and in some ways the collective responses can really help elevate individual responses. It's back to your point about either/or I think individual responses are important but I think you really need to...

Let's put it this way someone has to create the track before Jesse Owens can run. We need the collective response first and then individuals can shine in their full glory, that's the way that we look at some of this work that we do. We really want to create those path ways so that individuals can really be their whole selves both in the workplace and in their home lives.

Quanisha: Like I say it's always a both/and paradigm and actually the holistic view that bell hooks actually talked about that we need both the collective and the individual working together. It sounds



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really the next step is people getting informed to going to Blackworkersmatter going to; and I'll for a minute where you want people to go but getting informed and then sharing. You need to raise awareness about these issues.

The ones informed sharing the information is about other folks can really get their knowledge and their consciousness elevated about this issue and how it's impacted us. And currently what we can do to really start making efforts to maybe join a labor movement, organize/advocate for labor in our organization or some other places where we can get involved in this collective action work.

How can people stay connected with you or this larger coalition effort for the "Black Women Equal Pay" movement?

Marc: Definitely like us on Facebook. We've got a Facebook page "And Still I Rise" that's definitely one way folks can definitely sign up to get information about the "And Still I Rise" project on the website. It's "And-Still-I-Rise.org" and folks can sign up they can see the report and they can also sign up to be on our newsletters and get information from us. Myself if folks want to "Tweet" I am at #Marcbayard; so folks can also send information that way.

We definitely want to get people involved myself and my college Kim Freeman Brown who was the lead author on this report we'd love to talk to your network. We'd love to if you guys would love to be interested in writing future information and articles in any webinars that you do or something like that, we would love to be connected to your network as well. We've gone to a number of conferences this summer, sharing this information and we'd love to be invited to different conferences that people in your network are involved too.



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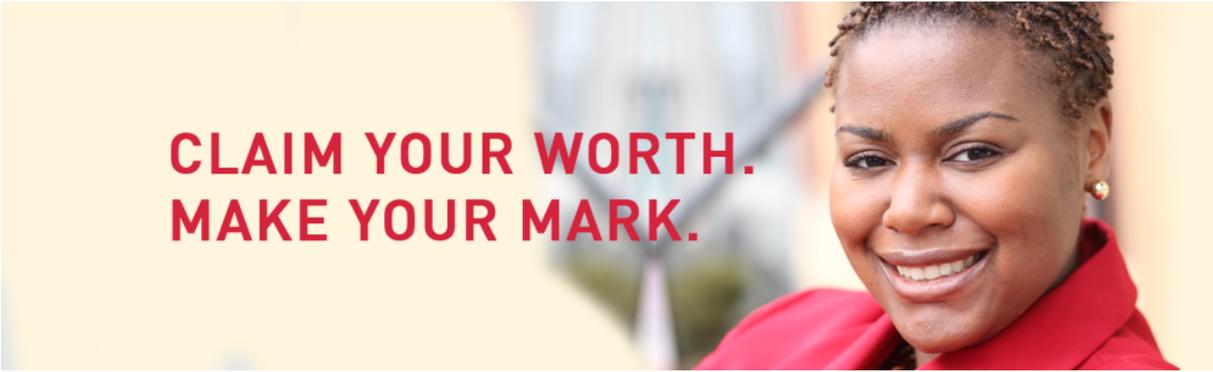
We'd really love to share this information that a lot of black women mainstream organizations. We'd love to share this information with sororities. We'd really like to make sure that women who are struggling individually at work realize that possibly part of this struggle is about race and it's about gender. It's about so many issues and it's not solely about their individual effort. In fact there has been some really good studies that has been done around black women in management, so it's not just black women employee but around black women in management being passed over and ignored.

This is definitely a systemic issue and we want to really think about this stuff systemically and again to think about unions as a possible solution to some of these issues as well. That's really the goal of our work.

Quanisha: Well great thank you for taking the time today to share this information and this issue. Many of the solutions that are connected with the black women rise community, everyone that's listening share this interview, stay connected like we said go to the And-still-I-rise.org.

This is such an important issue and we talked heavily, I wrote an article about the state of black women leadership, where I talk about the recent black woman management study and how many of us we want to be leaders. We actually are more ambitious than they found in the white women who were in the study, but when we are in a position of leadership we feel stifled or many of us are being overlooked despite being qualified in credentials for leadership positions.

There is a lot of work like you said that needs to be done systemically and I hope that we all can be proactive contributors to changing that whether in our own lives but as a collective. Like you said when black women are in leadership, we really change the world because we do come with a perspective of not



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thinking about the “I” we think about the “We.” We think about the impact that it has on our families, our communities and the larger society.

Thank you so much Marc for spending this time with us today and we really appreciate it.

Marc: Great and feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions or concerns or anything of the sort.

Quanisha: Awesome. If you would like more information on Black Women Leadership and Social change please stay connected with the Black Women Rise Movement. You can go to the blackwomenrise.com or Quanishasmith.com and please check us out on Facebook and

Until next time everyone, keep the love. Quanisha.