



WHY I'M STILL SANDERS

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This election season, Reparations has become my core issue. Our country seems incapable of having the “honest conversation about race” inevitably called for after every caught-on-camera lynching of black people by police or white terrorist attack on a Walmart or house of worship, because such a conversation would require we touch the third rail of American history: the genocide of millions of Native Americans, followed by 300-plus years of slavery, segregation and legally-sanctioned terrorism of African-Americans. No *honest* conversation about race in America can end without acknowledging that the United States has never apologized for these crimes against humanity, or made reparations to the damaged parties or their descendants.

Every day I serve as a Councilman here in America’s Blackest City brings me to the inescapable conclusion that Black America’s problems can be traced back to America’s original sin. The epigenetic fingerprints of white supremacy can be seen everywhere in South Fulton: from underperforming schools to undervalued homes to underinvestment by state, county and commercial interests.

Russia’s Manchurian candidate, Donald Trump, high-jacked an entire political party by exploiting America’s repressed racial animus. The Mueller Report makes clear that Russian President Vladimir Putin — a former KGB agent as skilled at destabilizing governments as any in our CIA — is actively manipulating our President to inflame racial tensions and further polarize our antiquated, two-party government. Racism is now a national security issue.

I endorsed Bernie Sanders in 2016. But in year's hyper-racialized atmosphere, Bernie's plans to address racial inequalities through the universalism of Medicare for All, free public college and criminal justice reform felt too indirect to me. I had taken Putin's bait and was in a fighting mood myself. I searched the vast field of 2020 Democratic candidates for someone to address reparations more explicitly.

Though I found a few candidates I liked, most share a similar flaw: political records at odds with their new, 2020 personas. Moreover, I found myself repeatedly defending Bernie to folks so eager to elect anyone but "another old, white man" that they willfully ignored these 'newer' candidates' political inconsistencies. As I studied their reflections of my own racial animus, I could see how Trump's race-baiting was distorting everyone's 2020 vision.

In June, Vermont's Public Access Channel CCTV released the entire archives of 1980s TV show: [Bernie Speaks](#). The City of Burlington cable access show was created in 1986 by then-Mayor Bernie Sanders to circumvent commercial media and promote his political agenda directly to constituents. Late-night host Trevor Noah featured a few funny clips from the show, exposing America to this forgotten trove of what he called "Bernie gold". I went online and began binge-watching episodes. I was looking for reasons to believe in Bernie again. I found them.

I also found myself.

It was Bernie's 2016 Presidential Campaign that inspired me to run for local office. Little did I know that since winning, I was still following in his footsteps.

Bernie Speaks chronicles a man in his 40s, working in local government, trying to elevate the political consciousness of his people. Over 3 years and 51 episodes, Bernie breaks down how government policies impact everyday people. In conversations with citizens, Sanders explains how federal, state and municipal governments work — and fail. He takes the media to task for keeping us entertained but not educated.

I became a City Councilman at 40. I started my own YouTube channel: [khalidCaresTV](#), which I use as a tool of political education to build support for my agenda to improve the lives of South Fulton's working families — just like Bernie's old, public access show.

I sat watching this vintage version of myself. I cried.

Many of the same issues I discuss on [khalidCaresTV](#) — political education, equitable economic development, divesting in policing and investing in young people before they get into criminal trouble — I saw Bernie address on this 30-year-old TV show. As it turns out, the Blackest City in America is suffering the same problems as overwhelmingly-white, 1980s Burlington, Vermont. Civil rights icon Dr. Martin Luther King was right. We are tied together in a single garment of destiny.

In the wake of our country's first African-American president, 21st century Republicans have resorted to the post-Reconstruction playbook of 19th century Democrats. Race-baiting demagogues are pitting working-class whites against their kin of color while America's top one percent enter another gilded age. Like Dr. King, Bernie Sanders is calling masses of poor and working-class people to political revolution, reminding us all that "this land was made for you and me." Bernie's plans for Medicare for All, free public college and criminal justice reform are not reparations, but they will transform the lives of African-Americans.

Other Presidential candidates *sound* as Progressive as Bernie, but while they waffle on and walk back policy positions they held 4 years ago — Sanders has 40 years of receipts. In 1983, Mayor Sanders signed a Gay Pride Day proclamation, calling LGBT rights a civil rights issue. In 1984, Bernie campaigned for Jesse Jackson while many Black leaders sat silent or endorsed others. In the 1990s, Senator Sanders voted against de-regulating big banks. The deregulation he opposed (but Republicans & moderate Democrats approved) led to the Great Recession of the 2000s in which Black America lost half its net wealth.

Capitalism will not save Black people. We have been, and continue to be, more exploited by American capitalism than anyone in the world. American capitalism must be reformed, and there is no one I trust more to accomplish these reforms than Bernie Sanders — the most consistent player in the political game.

So without any reservation, I endorse Bernie for President of the United States in 2020.

Consistency matters. #StillSanders

In 2017, Councilman khalid became the first #BlackLivesMatter organizer elected to public office in America. He serves on the City Council of Atlanta's new twin city, South Fulton, Georgia.

Bernie Speaks Highlight Reel - <https://youtu.be/Y636rE27TEo>