

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK 2018

# BLOODSWORTH

BY TIM JUNKIN

READER'S GUIDE

Nonfiction @ 2004 A Shannon Ravenel Book—Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill



## WHAT IF EVERYONE READ THE SAME BOOK AT THE SAME TIME, THEN CAME TOGETHER TO TALK ABOUT IT?

When we read a great book, we can't wait to share the experience with others. That's one of the joys of reading. In this spirit, Maryland Humanities created One Maryland One Book to bring together diverse people in communities across the state through the shared experience of reading the same book.

Now in its eleventh year, One Maryland One Book remains Maryland's only statewide community reading program. Each year, the selection process is guided by a common theme. The theme for 2018 is "Justice."

The Maryland Center for the Book at Maryland Humanities partners with public libraries, high schools, colleges and universities, museums, bookstores, correctional facilities, and other organizations to bring book-centered discussions and other related events to communities across Maryland. But One Maryland One Book is not just about reading or literature; it is also about bringing people together for meaningful dialogue.

The book selected for 2018 is *Bloodsworth: The True Story of the First Death Row Inmate Exonerated by DNA Evidence* by Tim Junkin.

### GRAB YOUR COPY

Find a copy of *Bloodsworth* at your local library or bookstore and get reading!

What if a copy of *Bloodsworth* finds you? If you're out and about, you might find copies of the book in unexpected places. Our Wandering Books can be found in a myriad of public spaces from bus stops to county fairs. If you find a copy, it's yours for a short time. Register the book online so we can see how far it travels (instructions are included inside the book). Read it, review it, and then leave it somewhere for someone else to find and enjoy.

### REACH OUT

Each year, more than 15,000 Marylanders read the One Maryland One Book selection. How many of those people are your friends or family? How many are perfect strangers you sit next to on the train or stand in line with at the grocery store? Use the book to jumpstart a meaningful conversation with an old friend or to make a new one.

### PULL UP A CHAIR

We invite you to join Maryland Humanities and thousands of other Marylanders at one of the many book discussions and related events happening around the state in September and October, including the author tour.

To find One Maryland One Book programs in your area, go to [www.onemarylandonebook.org](http://www.onemarylandonebook.org) and click on Events.

For all the latest information, "like" or follow us:

 [facebook.com/MDCenterfortheBook](https://www.facebook.com/MDCenterfortheBook)

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Look for Tim Junkin at several venues in the fall, including the Baltimore Book Festival on Sunday, September 30, where he will be in conversation with Kirk Bloodsworth.

### LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Thank you for joining Maryland Humanities for the eleventh year of One Maryland One Book, our state's largest reading and discussion program. Since the program's launch in 2008, readers across Maryland have embraced our annual tradition of bringing people together from across the state through the reading of one book, selected by a group of literary devotees. Each year we explore the power of literature with fellow readers. Discussions spring up across the state. From book clubs in friend's homes and at libraries to high school and university classrooms to senior centers and correctional facilities, thousands of Marylanders connect in their communities to read our chosen book. This shared experience lies at the heart of One Maryland One Book. Whether you've read with us every year or are new to the program, welcome!

This year's book offers Marylanders a glimpse into the criminal justice system. Kirk Bloodsworth's is a story familiar to far too many individuals and their families in the U.S. While the crime committed right here in Baltimore County was horrific, and the urgency to find the killer following the death of Dawn Hamilton is understandable, the actions by law enforcement and the court system that followed that led to Bloodsworth's incarceration set in motion one of the most horrendous ordeals any of us might imagine. Our system of justice is not infallible, but a common expectation is that it will be fair. As you read *Bloodsworth* you will learn of the many missteps, large and small, which ended in a wrongful conviction. The universal truth is revealed: any of us could be Kirk Bloodsworth.

We encourage you to pick up a copy of *Bloodsworth* and join the conversation at one of our many public discussion programs across the state. A program of the Maryland Center for the Book at Maryland Humanities, One Maryland One Book is made possible each year through the generosity of our sponsors and community partners. We greatly thank them for their support. Find out how you can get involved at [www.onemarylandonebook.org](http://www.onemarylandonebook.org).

Please join us!

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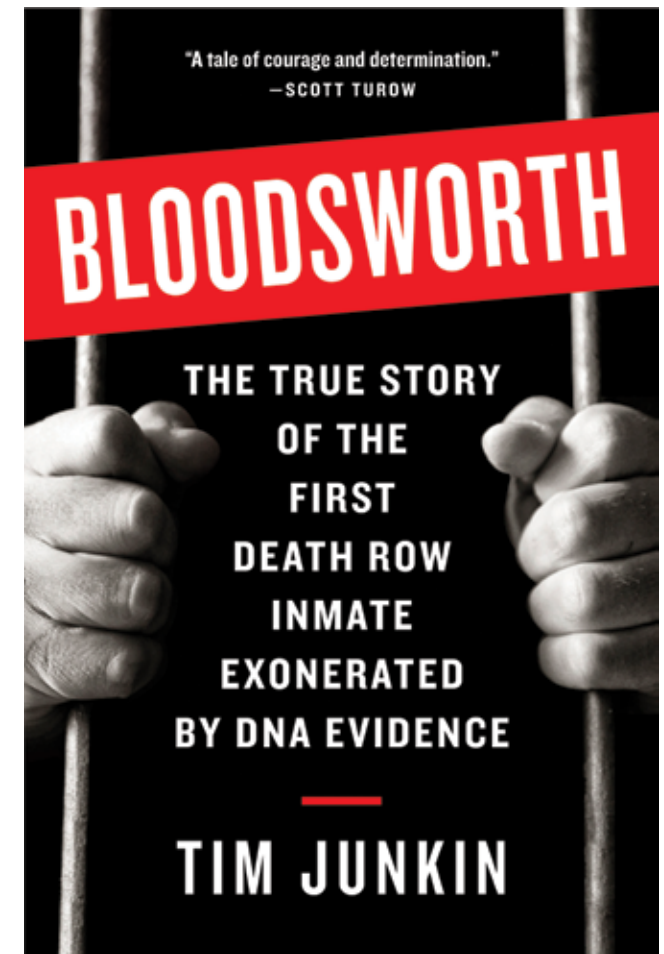


#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Tim Junkin** is an attorney with thirty years of experience as a trial lawyer and advocate of civil rights, an award-winning writer, and a teacher. He spent much of his boyhood in Talbot County, graduating from Easton High School. Today he lives on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Junkin is the author of *The Waterman*, *Good Counsel*, and *Bloodsworth*. He also founded Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy which became ShoreRivers, a Maryland river protection nonprofit, and has received several environmental awards. He graduated from the University of Maryland in 1973 and completed his law studies at Georgetown University Law Center in 1977. He has taught at American University, Georgetown University Law Center, Harvard University Law School, and the Bethesda Writer's Center.

#### ABOUT THE BOOK

Charged with the rape and murder of a nine-year-old girl in 1984, Kirk Bloodsworth was tried, convicted, and sentenced to die in Maryland's gas chamber. Maintaining his innocence, he read everything on criminal law available in the prison library and persuaded a new lawyer to petition for the then-innovative DNA testing. After nine years in one of the harshest prisons in America, Kirk Bloodsworth became the first death row inmate exonerated by DNA evidence. He was pardoned by the governor of Maryland and has gone on to become a tireless spokesman against capital punishment. Bloodsworth's story speaks for more than 160 others who were wrongly convicted and have since been released, and for the thousands still in prison waiting for DNA testing.





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Prosecutor Robert Lazzaro provides a passionate argument for Kirk's guilt in Dawn Hamilton's rape and murder. He at one point says there is no overcoming the testimony of five independent eyewitnesses. We learn that the eyewitnesses were inconsistent in recounting what they saw and had been biased because of seeing Kirk on the news following Dawn's murder. Do you think eyewitness testimony is reliable? How heavily do you think it should factor into a jury's decision?
- 2 Have you ever witnessed something but later found out that what you recall was wrong? Share about that time and how you discovered that your recollection was inaccurate.
- 3 The eyewitnesses, the detectives, the lawyers, and judge all are quick to condemn Kirk. Do you think you would have been swept up in the pandemonium of the case?
- 4 Knowing there was a child rapist and murderer on the loose, do you think the investigators took the proper time and diligence in their investigation?
- 5 Kirk fought very hard for his freedom. What do you think you would have done were you in his situation?
- 6 At the end of the book, Kirk is able to forgive Ann Brobst and the detectives who were convinced of his guilt for 20 years, even after his exoneration. Did Kirk's forgiveness surprise you?
- 7 What did you learn about the U.S. justice system from reading *Bloodsworth*?
- 8 Did *Bloodsworth* have an impact on your view of the death penalty?
- 9 Does the U.S. justice system work? Is it effective?



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Each year we hope that your participation in One Maryland One Book inspires continued exploration of the themes and topics examined in the selected book. This year's selection offers an excellent opportunity to explore America's justice system. The following list of books, movies, and podcasts might be of interest after reading *Bloodsworth*. While we include suggested age groups for the readings, they are just a guide. Feel free to choose based on your interests. We encourage you to continue your exploration!

### ADULT FICTION

*Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward

Jo Jo and his little sister live with their grandparents, while their mother struggles with drugs and their father is in prison. Beautiful writing and a hint of magical realism are the hallmarks of this National Book Award winner.

*Mudbound* by Hillary Jordan

Two men return from World War II to work on a farm, one the brother of the farm owner and the other the son of the sharecropper who works on the farm. They find their return to this country to be unwelcoming to them in ways both small and horrific.

*A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines

Willie Jefferson is sentenced to death in a kangaroo court process, and school teacher Grant Wiggins reluctantly agrees to help Jefferson die with dignity. This modern classic is a beautifully written, complex novel about two black men in the Jim Crow South that explores the intertwined topics of justice, race and, socioeconomic status.

*Native Son* by Richard Wright

The story of a young black man caught in a downward spiral after he accidentally kills a young white woman. Set in Chicago in the 1930s, Wright's powerful novel is an unsparing reflection on the poverty and feelings of hopelessness experienced by low-income people across the country and of what it means to be black in America.

*The Round House* by Louise Erdrich

When a Native American wife and mother, Geraldine Coutts, arrives home severely beaten and traumatized after a savage rape, justice seems unlikely thanks to the antiquated and hobbled legal system imposed on Indian reservations. Coutt's young teenage son, Joe, investigates the crime in this coming of age story, which exposes Native women's vulnerability to sexual assault.

*An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones

Celestial and Roy are young professional African American newlyweds. Suddenly, Roy is arrested and convicted for a crime that he did not commit (and Celestial knows this). After many years incarcerated, Roy returns, but what is left of the life he had begun?

*With Love From the Inside* by Angela Pisel

Grace is on death row for the murder of her infant son and her time is running out. Her execution date has been set and she wants her now-married daughter, Sophie, to know the truth about what really happened to her baby brother, William. This poignant story explores the complex relationship between a mother and a daughter, their quest to discover the truth, and whether or not love can prevail, even from behind bars.

## ADULT NONFICTION

*Unfair: The New Science of Criminal Injustice* by Adam Benforado

Law professor Benforado argues that the adversarial nature of the court system plus the innate and deeply rooted prejudices and faulty memory processes of human psychology add up to an inherently flawed criminal justice system in need of a major overhaul.

*The Boys in the Bunkhouse: Servitude and Salvation in the Heartland* by Dan Berry

For thirty years a group of intellectually disabled men lived in servitude, enduring abuse, neglect, and horrific working conditions at a turkey processing plant until local journalists, social workers, and a labor lawyer helped them achieve freedom. Berry tells the harrowing yet uplifting story of these men and the heroic efforts of those who helped them find justice and reclaim their lives.

*The Anatomy of Innocence: Testimonies of the Wrongfully Convicted*, Laura Caldwell and Leslie S. Klinger, editors

Fourteen exonerated inmates narrate their stories to a roster of high-profile mystery and thriller writers. Lee Child tells the story of Kirk Bloodsworth, who obsessively read about the burgeoning field of DNA testing, cautiously hoping that it held the key to his acquittal, until he eventually became the first person to be exonerated from death row based on DNA evidence.

*Adnan's Story: The Search for Truth and Justice After Serial* by Rabia Chaudry

Baltimore County student Adnan Syed was convicted of murdering his high school girlfriend. His story is the subject of the award-winning podcast, *Serial*. Family friend, attorney Rabia Chaudry, lays out the evidence which she believes supports Syed's claim that he is innocent.

*Not a Crime to Be Poor: The Criminalization of Poverty in America* by Peter Edelman

Do we have a two-tier criminal justice system: one for those who can pay fines, bail, and legal fees, and another for those who cannot? Is prison the new poor house? Edelman concludes the burden of legal expenses falls disproportionately on those least able to afford it, resulting in entrenched poverty and disenfranchisement.

*Tinderbox: The Untold Story of the Up Stairs Lounge Fire and the Rise of Gay Liberation* by Robert W. Fieseler

In 1977, thirty-one people died during an arson attack on a blue-collar gay bar, and several others suffered from wounds both physical and mental. This little-known incident—a galvanizing tragedy in the South and the struggle for gay rights—is a story of civil rights and justice in the face of tragedy.

*Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America* by James Forman, Jr.

A former public defender analyzes the role African Americans play in the country's mass incarceration epidemic and how hindsight reveals their good intentions to be highly detrimental.

*Infinite Hope: How Wrongful Conviction, Solitary Confinement, and 12 Years on Death Row Failed to Kill My Soul* by Anthony Graves

Poignant and skillfully wrought, Graves writes about fighting for his dignity, trying to maintain his sanity, the excruciating reality of being innocent behind bars, and how he endured one setback after another as he and his lawyers chipped away at the state's case against him. *Infinite Hope* is an argument against the death penalty through one man's personal story.

*The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row* by Anthony Ray Hinton and Lara Love Hardin

Anthony Ray Hinton spent three decades trapped in solitary confinement after he was convicted of two murders he hadn't committed. He recounts his dramatic battle for freedom and shows how you can take away a man's freedom, but you can't take away his imagination, humor, or joy.

*Beneath a Ruthless Sun: A True Story of Violence, Race, and Justice Lost and Found* by Gilbert King

Accused of rape, developmentally delayed teen Jesse Daniels was involuntarily committed to a hospital for the criminally insane in 1957, judged unfit for trial. He spent 14 years there before his release. Author King exposes both the inhumanity of the mental health institutions of the time and the bigoted Lake County, Florida law enforcement system led by Sheriff Willis McCall, a man notorious for his corrupt and racist administration of justice.

*Truevine: Two Brothers, a Kidnapping, and a Mother's Quest: A True Story of the Jim Crow South* by Beth Macy

In 1899, young Willie and George Muse, albino African American brothers, were kidnapped and exhibited as "freaks" in circuses around the world. *Truevine* tells two stories: one of the brothers' mother, a domestic worker, who battled in a racist legal system for 28 years to bring her sons home; and the broader story about the exploitation of people, often with physical disabilities, as sideshow acts.

*Ghost of the Innocent Man: A True Story of Trial and Redemption* by Benjamin Rachlin

Willie Grimes, a manual laborer, was convicted of raping an elderly woman. This is the story of an innocent man's life behind bars for 24 years, until North Carolina's Innocence Inquiry Commission uncovered exculpatory evidence in Grimes' case leading to his release.

*Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson

Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, has likely done more than any American in both fighting unfairness in our criminal justice system and raising awareness of this unfairness. This widely lauded book acts as both his personal story and the story of some of those he has helped.

*We Matter: Athletes and Activism* by Etan Thomas

Thomas spent many years in the NBA where he was a vocal activist, but that was in a pre-Internet age. Now, when many athletes are being told to "stick to sports," Thomas allows them to share their thoughts on activism and justice.

## CHILDREN AND TEENS

*Gaijin: American Prisoner of War*, written and illustrated by Matt Faulkner

During World War II, Koji, a boy with a Japanese father and a white mother, is relocated to an internment camp for Japanese Americans. This graphic novel's title is a Japanese word that can mean "outsider" and is illustrative of Koji's treatment by whites and Japanese alike. (children's graphic novel)

*Blood, Bullets, and Bones: The Story of Forensic Science from Sherlock Holmes to DNA* by Bridget Heos

Take a trip through the (sometimes bloodcurdling) history of forensic science. Poisons, fingerprints, autopsies, and crime scene investigations contain scientific clues that help solve crimes and mete out justice. (teen nonfiction)

*Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* by Philip Hoose

This 2010 biography of teenage activist Colvin was instrumental in giving overdue recognition to the young girl who refused to give up her seat on the bus months before Rosa Parks. (children's nonfiction)

*Trell* by Dick Lehr

After a 12-year-old African American girl became the innocent victim of gang-related gunfire, an immediate manhunt was on to catch the murderer. In this page turner, based on a true story, the daughter of the wrongfully imprisoned man persuades a reporter and a lawyer to help her prove her father's innocence. (teen fiction)

*March* Trilogy by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, illustrated by Nate Powell

Many years ago, John Lewis and other student activists drew inspiration from the 1958 comic book "Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story." Now, his own graphic novels bring those days to life for a new audience, testifying to a movement whose echoes will be heard for generations. (teen fiction)

*Monster* by Walter Dean Myers

While on trial as an accomplice for murder, 16-year-old Stephen writes a film script to figure out how he ended up in this situation. This older title won the very first Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature. (teen fiction)

*The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

The story of an historic bookstore in Harlem, which served as a gathering space for prominent African Americans to share ideas for changing the world. (children's picture book)

*Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty* by G. Neri, illustrated by Randy DuBurke

Neri's biographical graphic novel about an 11-year-old who became a young gang member and murderer is based on a true story from the 1980s, but sadly still has relevance today. (teen fiction)

*Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down* by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney

Pinkney retells the momentous Woolworth's lunch counter sit-in, when four college students staged a peaceful protest that became a defining moment in the struggle for racial equality and the growing civil rights movement. (children's nonfiction)

*The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas

Teens Starr Carter and her friend Khalil leave a neighborhood party and are pulled over by the police, who end up shooting Khalil because his hairbrush is mistaken for a gun. Starr must navigate her two worlds—the disadvantaged black neighborhood of her family and the wealthy, primarily white school she attends—while she comes to terms with speaking out about what she witnessed. (teen fiction)

For an extensive selection of multicultural and social justice books for children, teens, and educators, visit Social Justice Books: A Teaching for Change Project at [www.socialjusticebooks.org/booklists](http://www.socialjusticebooks.org/booklists).





## MOVIES

*13th* (2016, 1 hr. 40 mins., rated MA, Netflix) – Directed by Ava DuVernay

This award-winning documentary, written and directed by Ava DuVernay, examines the legacy of slavery and its relationship to both the contemporary mass incarceration of African Americans and the profitability of the prison-industrial complex.

*Conviction* (2010, 1 hr. 47 mins., rated R) – Directed by Tony Goldwyn

The inspirational true story of a sister's unwavering devotion to her brother. Betty Ann Waters gets a GED, college degree, and graduates from law school in an 18-year quest to free her wrongfully convicted brother, Kenny. Finally, with the help of the Innocence Project and DNA evidence, Kenny's conviction is overturned.

*Fantastic Lies* (2016, 1 hr. 42 mins., NR, ESPN 30 for 30) – Directed by Marina Zenovich

Race, sex, violence, wealth, and privilege are actors in this documentary about a supposed crime that riveted the nation in 2006: an exotic dancer accused members of the vaunted Duke University lacrosse team of raping her at an off-campus party, at which they had hired her to perform. Part of the ESPN 30 for 30 series, this film explores the uncomfortable truths behind a case in which the court of public opinion demanded a guilty verdict.

*Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills* (1996, 2 hrs. 30 mins., NR) Directed by Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky

This documentary and its sequels led to the movement to “Free the West Memphis Three.” After 18 years in prison, the three were released and continue to support the wrongfully accused.

*Rectify* (Series 2013–2016, rated TV-14) – Created by Ray McKinnon

After spending 19 years on death row for the rape and murder of his teenage girlfriend, Daniel Holden is going home. His conviction has been vacated due to new DNA evidence, thrusting him back into a world he no longer knows. As he struggles to adapt, his return will reignite the fears of a small town and threaten to shatter his family's fragile peace.

*The Hurricane* (1999, 2 hrs. 26 mins., rated R,) – Directed by Norman Jewison

Denzel Washington stars in this true story of Ruben “Hurricane” Carter, a prize-winning boxer who was convicted of triple murder, in part due to the testimony of two witnesses with long criminal records of their own.

## PODCASTS

*74 Seconds*

<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/528752250/74-seconds>

This podcast from NPR, listed as one of *Time* magazine's best of 2018, focuses on the police shooting of Philando Castile.

*Actual Innocence*

[www.actualinnpod.com/](http://www.actualinnpod.com/)

*Actual Innocence* is a podcast that tells the story of people who served time for crimes they did not commit. Each episode will introduce an exonerated person and the story of how the criminal justice system failed them.

*Ear Hustle*

<https://www.earhustlesq.com/about/>

*Ear Hustle* is a partnership between San Quentin inmates and an artist on the outside, produced in San Quentin's media lab. Inmates tell their own stories that will bring out a range of emotions.

*Undisclosed*

<http://undisclosed-podcast.com/about/>

*Undisclosed* investigates wrongful convictions and the U.S. criminal justice system by taking a closer look at the perpetration of a crime, its investigation, the trial, and ultimate verdict...and finding new evidence that never made it to court. Two of the cases have ties to Maryland (Freddie Gray and Adnan Syed) and the author of *Adnan's Story* is one of the hosts.

*Wrongful Conviction with Jason Flum*

<http://www.revolverpodcasts.com/shows/wrongful-conviction-with-jason-flum/>

A podcast about tragedy, triumph, unequal justice, and actual innocence. Based on the files of the lawyers who freed them, *Wrongful Conviction* features interviews with men and women who have spent decades in prison for crimes they did not commit.

## WEBSITES

To learn more about the topic of justice, visit the websites of these organizations that focus on wrongful conviction, exoneration, mass incarceration, and the reformation of the criminal justice system.

Equal Justice Initiative: [www.eji.org](http://www.eji.org)

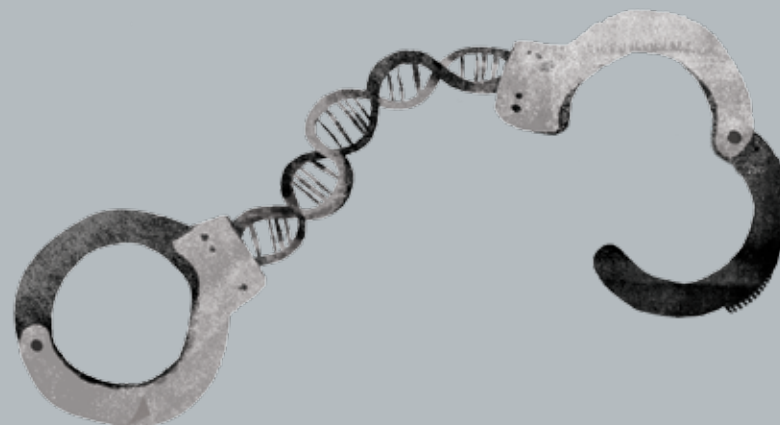
Innocence Project: [www.innocenceproject.org](http://www.innocenceproject.org)

National Registry of Exonerations: <https://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/about.aspx>

National Institute of Justice: <https://www.nij.gov/topics/justice-system/wrongfulconvictions/Pages/predicting-preventing.aspx>



## NOTES



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Maryland Humanities  
108 West Centre Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

(410) 685-0095  
[www.mdhumanities.org](http://www.mdhumanities.org)

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