

Nobody Knows My Name: The Marginalization of Mark Clark in America's Collective Consciousness

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Abstract:

In spotlighting the testimonies of police officers while ignoring eyewitness accounts, these newspapers violated many of the journalist standards that reporters are contractually and ethically bound to uphold. 46 Such findings are critical for understanding how media framing influences representations of people, places, and events. Since many individuals acquire their information from news reports, it is likely that the press has affected the thinking of scores of people about the raid that resulted in the murders of Clark and Hampton.

Keywords: Mark Clark | Fred Hampton | Black Panther Party | American history | 1960s

Article:

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NOBODY KNOWS MY NAME: THE MARGINALIZATION OF MARK CLARK IN AMERICA'S COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

By JUDSON L. JEFFRIES and OMARI L. DYSON

Introduction

For many Americans, the 1960s began with tremendous promise as Senator John F. Kennedy (D-MA) was elected to serve as the thirty-fifth president of the United States. Those Americans, especially among America's youth, viewed Kennedy's triumph as a symbol of hope for a better future. Sadly, the decade ended as tragically as it euphorically began. In the summer of 1963, Medgar Evers, a leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was gunned down in front of his home in Jackson, Mississippi. Five months later, President Kennedy's life was cut short by a sniper's bullet in Dallas, Texas. In 1965, Malcolm X, a Muslim religious leader and black nationalist, was killed following a dispute over the leadership and direction of the Nation of Islam. Then, in the spring of 1968, the assassinations of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Democratic presidential hopeful Robert F. Kennedy contributed to the demise of domestic liberalism by the end of that turbulent decade.

The violence that shattered America's hope for a better future in the 1960s included instances of police brutality against leaders of the Black Panther Party (BPP).¹ On December 4, 1969, members of a special unit of the Cook County State's Attorney's office staged a pre-dawn raid on a Black Panther residence on Chicago's Westside based on intelligence claiming that "a cache of illegal weapons, including sawed-off shotguns and riot guns stolen from the Chicago police, was stored in the Panther apartment at 2337 West Monroe Street."² As law enforcement officials stormed the apartment, Mark Clark, Defense Captain of the Peoria Branch of the BPP, and Fred Hampton, Deputy Chairman of the Illinois State Chapter of the BPP, were fatally shot. Photographers for the *Chicago Tribune* took pictures of police officers removing the bodies of Clark and Hampton from the apartment. Although pictures of police officers carrying out the dead following a violent confrontation are not altogether rare, what is noteworthy about the photograph is the expression worn by one of the officers, who seemed to savor the moment by smiling perversely as he looked squarely into the camera.³

Within hours of the incident, rumors and varying accounts of the raid spread like wildfire. In a preemptive move, police officials issued a statement declaring that Clark and Hampton died during a shoot-out that they themselves initiated. Representatives of the BPP countered this claim by describing what occurred that morning as a 'shoot-at' rather

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than a shoot-out. Indeed, a ballistics analysis of the nearly one hundred shots fired during the raid proved that only one came from inside the apartment – a single shot fired from Clark's shotgun. BPP officials further noted that one of the officers shot Hampton in the head at point-blank range while he slept, an assertion supported by the coroner's report.⁴ In essence, according to the Panthers' version of the incident, Clark and Hampton never stood a chance of coming out of the raid alive.

To support their claims, the Panthers provided tours of the bullet-riddled residence to anyone who expressed an interest to view it. Hundreds braved the wintry conditions over the next several days to get a sense of what occurred at 2337 West Monroe Street on the morning of December 4, 1969. Community residents, reporters, filmmakers, elected officials, clergy, and civic leaders visited the apartment. According to some accounts, what many witnessed sickened them. Richard G. Stern, an English professor at the University of Chicago, vividly recalled:

Me and three other colleagues stood in line with about 100 other people waiting to enter the apartment. When we finally entered, it was clear that something very bad, very ugly had taken place there; the place smelled of death.⁵

Charles P. Henry, a professor of African American Studies at the University of California–Berkeley who was then a graduate student at the University of Chicago, remembered anxiously waiting in the cold to view the apartment: "... [it] appeared stark and cold; the mattress on which Hampton and his girlfriend slept was not on a bed frame; the dwelling had been sprayed with bullets. The mattress was soaked with Hampton's blood, it was a gruesome sight."⁶ Others who toured the apartment offered similar testimonies.

Although this event has been described as one of more notable examples of police brutality against the BPP, it has not elicited much scholarly attention. This is surprising for a number of reasons, not the least of which because Chicago, Illinois, is a bastion of intellectual energy—home to a number of reputable colleges and universities, including the University of Chicago, DePaul University, Roosevelt University, Loyola University, and the University of Illinois–Chicago. Yet there are only a limited number of books, newspaper articles, films, testimonies, and journal articles devoted to the raid that resulted in the murders of Clark and Hampton, all of which highlight Hampton's death.⁷ As a consequence, Mark Clark has been marginalized in America's collective consciousness.

Fortieth-year Commemoration of the Clark and Hampton Murders

In an effort to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the raid that led to the murders of Clark and Hampton, the first author of this study, Judson L. Jerffries, held a community forum to discuss what occurred before, during, and after the raid. The forum included a screening of *The Murder of Fred Hampton*—a documentary film of the raid.⁸ As the organizer and moderator of the event, I had hoped that it would attract people who were of age during the late 1960s who could vividly recall the raid, which it did. I further hoped that some of the attendees would include transplants from Chicago since a population of Columbus, Ohio residents grew up in Chicago, which also occurred.⁹

After viewing the documentary, I facilitated a dialogue among members of the audience. Although the discussion lasted almost ninety minutes, I was amazed that no one asked any

questions about Clark; all of the queries focused on Hampton. Several audience members expressed their admiration for Hampton. When pressed to elaborate, one audience member stated that she admired him because “he gave his life for the struggle—he paid the ultimate price.” When I reminded her that Clark, too, paid the ultimate price for his activism, she nodded in agreement, but offered no comment. What I witnessed that night is something to which both authors of this study have become accustomed. In discussing the raid, scholars and average citizens with whom I have spoken over the years about this event tend to say, “Fred Hampton and Mark Clark” in that order; Clark’s name is always secondary. In fact, Clark’s name often goes unmentioned. Written accounts, films, scholarly writings, as well as newspaper and magazine articles about the raid reflect a similar pattern—highlighting Hampton while slighting Clark. This study seeks to determine how the media (i.e., newspapers) has shaped the public’s conceptualization and recollection of this event in an effort to explain why Clark’s murder has received so little attention.

Literature Review

Although the December 4, 1969, raid on the Chicago Black Panthers and the murders of Clark and Hampton is well known and considered by some as one of the most dastardly acts of repression in late-twentieth-century American history, it is surprising that relatively few academics have studied the incident in either book form or scholarly article. To a large degree, many of the works that have made the raid the subject of inquiry have focused on Hampton and neglected Clark. Of the five books that concentrate on the raid itself, only two are of a scholarly nature. Jeffrey Haas, an attorney for both the Clark and Hampton families, has written an enlightening page-turner titled *The Assassination of Fred Hampton* (2010), which is part memoir and part Hampton biography. The remainder of the book chronicles the day-to-day hustings of the trials that followed the murders. Clark is given short shrift here.¹⁰ Stern’s odd, yet wonderfully imaginative *The Books in Fred Hampton’s Apartment* (1974) found an audience among radicals and college students. The title is a bit misleading, however, as the book covers a variety of topics, including everyday observations; only one brief chapter is devoted to Hampton and the reading material found in his apartment following the raid.¹¹ The remaining books concerning the raid include a biography, *The Essence of Fred Hampton*, published in 1995 and co-written by Hampton’s brother; Michael Arlen’s *An American Verdict* (1973), which provides a concise account of the events surrounding the tragedy and the trial that ensued; and, *Search and Destroy* (1973), an investigative report conducted by a commission headed by Roy Wilkins, then executive director of the NAACP, and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark. The latter two books focus much of their attention on Hampton’s murder, pointing to the culpability of the Chicago Police Department, the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in his death.¹² Unfortunately, Jane Rhodes’s *Framing the Panthers* (2007), which investigates press coverage of the BPP, barely discusses the raid and thus fails to set the record straight regarding the significance of Clark’s role in the organization and his death.¹³

In addition to these books, to date there is only one scholarly journal article devoted to the subject. Journalism and communication scholars Todd Fraley and Elli Lester-Roushazamir offer a textual analysis of the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Daily Defender* in an effort to determine how the press reported Hampton’s murder. Their primary concern is whether that media coverage framed Hampton as a ‘deviant thug’ or

'community activist.' Their findings, while interesting, are not entirely surprising. The *Chicago Daily Defender* emphasized the human side of Hampton and situated his murder within the larger context of racism in American society. The *Chicago Tribune*, in contrast, characterized Hampton as a troublemaker, a rabble-rouser — someone who preferred the use of violence as a means of affecting change. Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir found that both papers reported on the incident in a manner consistent with the beliefs of their respective readership; the *Chicago Tribune* depicted Hampton as a threat to the status quo, whereas the *Chicago Daily Defender* stressed Hampton's work as a community activist on behalf of the city's black populace.¹⁴

Although far from a scholarly piece, reporters Jeff Cohen and Jeff Gottlieb, in an article published in *The Nation* in late 1976, addressed the issue of the civil suit filed by the Clark and Hampton families. Again, Hampton is the focus of the story as evident by the title of the article, "The FBI on Trial: Was Fred Hampton Executed?"¹⁵

Though these sources provide a framework for conceptualizing the circumstances surrounding the murders of Clark and Hampton, the role of the media in shaping people's opinions as they relate to Clark has not been investigated. Given that most people get their information from newspapers and television, it is not far-fetched to assume that the media may have influenced, and continues to influence, how most people recall the circumstances surrounding the murders of Clark and Hampton.

Hypothesis

The authors of this study maintain that media coverage of the 1969 raid focused on Hampton and treated Clark as an afterthought. This framing may explain why Clark has been relegated to the back pages of history and thus marginalized in both the collective memories of many people and in subsequent writings about his death.

Theoretical Significance

Examining the manner in which the media (i.e., newspapers) covered the raid and its aftermath is important for several reasons. First, it reaffirms claims that the media can condition the way one thinks about issues and events and the context in which they occur.¹⁶ Relegating an important figure like Clark to the back pages of history practically renders him invisible, and diminishes his proper place in American history.¹⁷ Second, media coverage of the raid shows how it can assign varying degrees of value to people's lives by deciding who to feature and who to downplay or ignore. Implicit in the media coverage of this tragedy is that Hampton's life was deemed more important than Clark's and that Hampton's murder was more unconscionable than Clark's. On the contrary, Hampton was no more important than Clark, and Clark's murder is no less immoral or egregious than Hampton's. Finally, an examination of media coverage of the raid and its aftermath demonstrates how citizens passively allow the media to determine who is worthy of notoriety and, perhaps, deserving of iconic status. If one were to examine Clark's commitment to the well-being of the African-American community, one would find that it was no less steadfast than Hampton's. The fact that Clark made a conscious and deliberate decision to found a branch of the BPP in his hometown of Peoria, Illinois, knowing full well that doing so meant putting his life in danger is evidence of that.¹⁸ Like Hampton, Clark dedicated his life to a cause in which he firmly believed — the liberation of oppressed people, particu-

larly African Americans. Both history books and the media should reflect this. If scholars and average citizens are cognizant of such matters, they are in a better position to challenge media framing of events and individuals.

Method

The authors of this study used content analysis to determine how the media covered the raid, the murders of Clark and Hampton, and subsequent related events. Newspapers were chosen as the unit of analysis for this study because many people get their information from newspapers, which are often considered America's most reliable news source. The authors of this study examined eight papers that covered the raid and those involved: the *Chicago Sun-Times* (Illinois), the *Chicago Tribune* (Illinois), the *Chicago Daily News* (Illinois), the *Chicago Daily Defender* (Illinois), the *Maywood Herald* (Illinois), the *Peoria Journal Star* (Illinois), the *New York Times* (New York), and the *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.).¹⁹

Each newspaper has its unique qualities. The *Chicago Sun-Times*, the oldest news sheet in the city, is a highly regarded paper which fashions itself as a 'progressive' paper.²⁰ Historically, the *Chicago Tribune* has a reputation as a conservative paper, supportive of Republican Party candidates seeking public office. It is not only the largest circulating newspaper in the state, but also one of the best-selling newspapers in the country. The *Chicago Daily News*, an afternoon daily that ceased its operations in the late 1970s, was known for its aggressive reporting style. The *Chicago Daily Defender*, the first black news daily in the United States—founded on May 5, 1905—that catered to the African-American community, is considered "the most legendary and successful of the national black papers," which prides itself as a militant and radical paper that has sought to meet the needs of its patrons.²¹ In choosing to include the *Chicago Daily Defender* in this study, the authors wanted to see whether there was any difference in the way that a black-owned newspaper framed the event relative to its coverage in the mainstream press.

Because Hampton hailed from Maywood and Clark from Peoria, the *Maywood Herald* and the *Peoria Journal Star* were selected to see how these hometown newspapers covered their native sons. The *Maywood Herald*, a moderately liberal newspaper, reported on the raid by relying on a wide range of sources (e.g., William E. Hampton (Fred's brother), Maywood Mayor Leonard Chabala, and the Maywood Human Relations Commission, among others). By contrast, the *Peoria Journal Star* offered a conservative perspective in its coverage of the raid and the murders of Clark and Hampton which did not look favorably upon its native son.

Finally, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* were included in this study because they are two of the most respected newspapers in the United States. Each paper devoted some attention to the raid and the events that followed it, dispatching at least two reporters to Chicago to cover the incident. All of the articles published in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were original pieces; some of the other papers took their bylines from national papers and/or the wire services.

The authors of this study read all news articles that pertained to the raid over a six-month period, from December 4, 1969, to June 30, 1970. They chose this extended time frame to investigate media coverage of the raid because it provides a large swath of news articles, thus enabling the authors to make more accurate generalizations regarding each paper's coverage of the raid and its aftermath. It is worth noting that unlike this study, most

researchers do not analyze each day's news, but rather every other day's, a randomly selected sample in a given month or everyday coverage over a single month. The problem with these approaches is that the findings may not be representative of that particular newspaper's coverage of an individual and/or event. By contrast, the authors of this study analyzed each day's news in eight newspapers over a six-month period to avoid this pitfall. With the exception of the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*, which are all indexed, articles were obtained by reading each day's newspaper on microfilm and copying all pertinent articles. Since five of the papers examined in this study lack an index, it is possible that a few articles went undetected. Nevertheless, the authors of this study are confident that they read nearly every article concerning the raid and the murders of Clark and Hampton in each of those papers.

In examining how the media covered the raid that resulted in the murders of Clark and Hampton, the authors coded each article as follows: the number of times either Clark or Hampton was mentioned in news articles on the raid; the order in which their names appeared in those articles; and, the number of times each of their names appeared in the story's headline.²²

Results

Based on a content analysis of the aforementioned newspapers, the authors of this study found a significant difference in the manner in which the media treated Clark and Hampton. In each of the eight case studies, Hampton was featured more prominently than Clark (see Table 1). In other words, Hampton's name was mentioned more frequently than Clark's in every newspaper examined. In at least one newspaper (the *Chicago Daily Defender*), Hampton's name was mentioned nearly seventy-two percent of the time compared to twenty-eight percent for Clark (see Table 1). A similar pattern was found in the *Chicago Sun-Times* where Hampton received forty percent more news coverage than did Clark. With the exception of the *Peoria Journal Star*, Clark's hometown paper, none of the Illinois-based newspapers mentioned Clark as frequently as Hampton. Still, when one looks at the order in which Clark and Hampton's name appeared in the *Peoria Journal Star*, one finds that there were only seven instances in which Clark's name appeared before Hampton's in the same sentence. By contrast, Hampton's name appeared first on thirty-three occasions (see Table 1). Native son or not, the coverage of the raid and Clark's murder in his hometown paper was not comparable to that afforded Hampton by the *Maywood Herald* (see Table 1).

The order in which Clark and Hampton's names appear throughout the coverage of the raid and their murders in the eight newspapers subjected to content analysis in this study is not inconsequential. In fact, the order in which their names appear is emblematic of all of the newspapers examined in this study, including the *Chicago Daily Defender*, which listed Hampton's name first in ninety-seven percent of its coverage of the raid (almost as often as did the *Chicago Sun-Times* as shown in Table 1). This could be explained by the fact that reporters knew Hampton on a personal basis. Since the *Chicago Daily Defender* caters to the African-American community, it is conceivable that Hampton and some members of that paper's staff were well-acquainted with one another. Still, given the long ignominious history of black marginalization in white-dominated American society, one might have expected that the *Chicago Daily Defender* would have taken special care to ensure that Clark received ample attention. Yet, upon close inspection, coverage of the raid and the murders of Clark and Hampton in the *Chicago Daily Defender* reveals that in many

Table 1: Newspaper Coverage of Clark and Hampton

Newspapers	Number of Articles	Amount of Times Clark/Hampton Mentioned ²³		Amount of Times Name Appeared First ²⁴		Amount of Times Name Appeared in Headlines ²⁵	
		Clark	Hampton	Clark	Hampton	Clark	Hampton
Chicago Daily Defender	76	90 (28.4%)	227 (71.6%)	2 (2.9%)	67 (97.1%)	1	11
Chicago Daily News	125	124 (33.8%)	243 (66.2%)	4 (4.0%)	97 (96.0%)	0	20
Chicago Sun-Times	171	239 (35.6%)	433 (64.4%)	3 (2.0%)	150 (98.0%)	1	33
Chicago Tribune	109	165 (40.0%)	247 (60.0%)	7 (7.6%)	85 (92.4%)	2	3
Maywood Herald	17	5 (3.4%)	143 (96.6%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (100.0%)	0	12
Peoria Journal Star	43	84 (56.0%)	66 (44.0%)	7 (17.5%)	33 (82.5%)	0	0
New York Times	30	28 (27.7%)	73 (72.3%)	0	23	0	1
Washington Post	18	32 (49.2%)	33 (50.8%)	1	16	0	0
Total	589	---	---	---	---	---	---

respects, Clark, while not rendered invisible, fared worse in the black press than he did in the white press. Of the Illinois newspapers, only the *Maywood Herald* devoted less attention to Clark than did the *Chicago Daily Defender*. In the latter paper, Clark's name appeared first a mere three percent of the time and he appeared in only one headline as compared to eleven headlines that mention Hampton (see Table 1). Cognizant of how the media has historically slighted African Americans,²⁶ one would have thought that the *Chicago Daily Defender* might have been more sensitive on such matters.

Turning to the headlines, the authors of this study found that newspaper coverage of the raid and the murders of Clark and Hampton is even more lopsided than in the previous two categories. For example, in the *Chicago Daily News* Hampton's name appears in headlines twenty times, but there is no mention of Clark in any headlines. The disparity in headline references to Clark and Hampton in the *Maywood Herald* is equally glaring, but not entirely surprising given that Maywood is Hampton's hometown. Overall, Clark's name appeared in headlines a mere four times across eight newspapers compared to Hampton's, which appeared in over eighty headlines (see Table 1). That Clark's name rarely appeared in headlines is interesting. One would have thought that including both names in the headlines, especially during the early stages of newspaper coverage of the incident, would have been natural and instinctive on the part of reporters (e.g., "Black Panthers Mark Clark and Fred Hampton Killed in Raid"), but this was not so.

Coverage of the raid and the murders of Clark and Hampton in the *New York Times*, the country's most respected news daily, mirrored that of the Illinois press in that Hampton

received the lion's share of attention. What sets the *New York Times* apart from the Illinois press is that Hampton's name appeared in the headlines only once and Clark's name did not appear at all. The *Washington Post*, easily the most balanced of the newspapers in its coverage of the incident, devoted nearly equal attention to Clark and Hampton. Like the *New York Times*, neither Clark nor Hampton's name appeared in the headlines of stories on the raid carried in the *Washington Post* more than once (see Table 1).

Analysis

This study shows that, with the exceptions of the *Peoria Journal Star* and the *Washington Post*, Clark received short shrift in every category across all newspapers examined by the authors. Why did the press devote most of its attention toward Hampton while it downplayed, and, in some cases, ignored Clark? Several hypotheses are offered and examined here in an effort to explain why Clark was couched as an afterthought in press coverage of the incident:

- (1) Hampton received greater press coverage than Clark because he was a Black Panther longer than Clark;
- (2) Hampton held a higher rank within the BPP; hence, he was considered more important and, thus, more newsworthy;
- (3) Hampton had a more impressive résumé than Clark, which made him a more compelling story;
- (4) Hampton received preferential treatment from the press because he was more personable and charismatic;
- (5) Hampton was a BPP leader in Chicago, thus affording him a higher profile than Clark, a party leader in Peoria, Illinois;
- (6) Hampton, at the time of the murder, was unarmed, whereas Clark was in possession of a shotgun which he fired during the raid, making him less of a martyr in the eyes of some; and,
- (7) Hampton was a great orator, which made him attractive to reporters who are always searching for the perfect sound bite and/or controversial statement to include in their stories.²⁷

Neither Hampton nor Clark were longtime members of the BPP. The Illinois State Chapter of the BPP was founded in November 1968; the Peoria branch during the spring/summer of 1969. Clark founded the Peoria branch, making him a Panther for approximately six months, about seven months less than Hampton, who joined the BPP shortly after the Illinois State Chapter had been established. As Deputy Chairman, Hampton was the second highest-ranking BPP officer in Illinois, behind Bobby Rush, the Deputy Minister of Defense. By contrast, Clark was the Defense Captain of a local branch of the BPP. Typically, the top-ranking officer within a local branch is a high-profile personality. To be sure, the Defense Captain is first in command within a local branch, but that position is not on a par with that of Deputy Chairman, especially if the latter position is held by someone in a major city like Chicago. Moreover, in the pantheon of the national BPP leadership, Hampton was considered one of organization's most effective leaders. At the time of his murder, he was being considered for a slot on the Central Committee, the governing body of the BPP.²⁸

The argument that Hampton's credentials were more impressive than Clark's also merits attention. Although Hampton held a higher rank in the BPP, Clark was not only the leader of the Peoria Branch, but also its founder. Both Hampton and Clark were activists at a young age; both were members of the NAACP in their respective hometowns; both had experienced run-ins with the law that landed them in jail briefly; and both attended community college. Unlike Clark, who, according to his sister, was a fair student who did not like school and thus failed to complete high school, Hampton was an honor student and an accomplished athlete, earning three varsity letters in multiple sports. Furthermore, as a budding activist, Hampton developed a strong reputation working with radicals, clergy, gang members, and elected officials. This undoubtedly elevated his personal and political stature.²⁹

In regard to personality, Clark's sister states that her brother was shy and quiet.³⁰ By contrast, Hampton was personable and charismatic. Interviews with former Black Panther members reveal that Hampton had a magnetic personality. This depiction of Hampton is further evident in documentaries that show a lively Hampton interacting with people as well as giving speeches in front of large audiences and small groups, as well as engaging in more personal one-on-one contacts. As Haas points out, "Hampton was an extrovert who got along well with everyone. People wanted to be around Fred."³¹

Concerning their stature and profile, Hampton served as a leader of the BPP in the third largest city in the United States, which afforded him a certain status that Clark could not match as a leader of a local branch of the BPP. Consequently, media personnel were bound to be more aware of Hampton than they would have been of Clark. Hampton was also a great orator. Former members of the BPP interviewed by the authors of this study recall that Hampton had strong oratory skills that were accentuated by a rapid-fire delivery. Aaron Dixon, a former Seattle BPP member, states, "Hampton was a hell of a speaker. He was one of the most dynamic speakers I had ever heard."³² When asked to rank the top three speakers in the party, Dixon replied, "Eldridge Cleaver, Fred Hampton, and Bobby Seale."³³ Jose "Cha Cha" Jimenez, leader of the Young Lords Organization, agrees, adding, "I was blown away by Hampton's speeches."³⁴ Omar Lopez, a member of the Latin American Defense Organization, also remembered that "Hampton was an excellent speaker. I was moved when I heard Hampton speak."³⁵ Given Elnor Clark's description of her brother as shy and quiet, one does not get the impression that Clark possessed great oratory skills. That said, it is unlikely that Clark could command the kind of attention from reporters that Hampton did.

As far as Clark being armed, the authors of this study acknowledge that this is something that cannot be overlooked. This fact, however, should be placed in its proper context. At the time of the Chicago raid, the Black Panthers were under siege by local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies across the country. So, like anyone protecting their home or family, if one's life is threatened self-preservation dictates that he/she might take whatever steps necessary in order to preserve their life as well as that of his/her family. Clark was conscious of the times; like most Black Panthers he understood that a violent police raid of a Panther facility was not uncommon. He was not unaware of the fact that in late July 1969 police had opened fire on the Panther office in Chicago allegedly without provocation. Clark also had to know that a month before the raid that resulted in his murder two police officers were killed in a gun battle with another Black Panther, who was also killed.³⁶ Clark probably assumed that the police, if given the opportunity, would jump at the chance to avenge the deaths of their brethren. Not surprisingly then, when the police

arrived at the Westside residence at 4:30 a.m., Clark had readied himself for an impending attack. The fact that he was holding a shotgun when he was killed may have caused some (including reporters) to view his death as less unconscionable than Hampton's murder. Unlike Clark, Hampton was reportedly defenseless—shot and killed in his sleep.

Discussion and Conclusion

Hypotheses 2, 4, 5 and 7 merit strong consideration. It is conceivable that the press felt compelled to spotlight Hampton because he was a charismatic figure, a high-ranking leader of the BPP in the third largest city in America, one of the country's largest media markets. Again, those who knew Hampton remember his oratory skills, his infectious smile, and his amiable, yet commanding presence. Moreover, by the time he was murdered, Hampton had become an increasingly popular figure on the radical and street scene in Chicago. As Cohen and Gottlieb point out, "Hampton [had] built a reputation as a uniter, bringing together the "Rainbow Coalition" of Puerto Rican, white and black poor people, and engineering a tenuous place among several warring ghetto gangs."³⁷ Hampton's name recognition increased after he stood trial for allegedly commandeering an ice cream truck and handing out seventy-one dollars worth of ice cream bars to children in a Maywood neighborhood. Although the trial was far from high profile, it gave Hampton a certain level of exposure, for better or worse.³⁸ Given Hampton's popularity, one can understand why he was featured so prominently in newspaper coverage of the raid. Unlike Hampton, Clark was not well known within Panther circles outside of Illinois, let alone the wider community at large.

Hypothesis 1 can be rejected outright as the difference in the length of time each man was a member of the BPP is negligible. Hypothesis 3 is not inconsequential, but far from strong as both Clark and Hampton were committed activists with records of service to the black community. As far as their personal backgrounds are concerned, Hampton was an accomplished student (graduating with honors) and a talented athlete; Clark was bright, but did not find school to his liking and eventually dropped out. Hypothesis 6 is perhaps the most intriguing. The idea that reporters may have been more repulsed by Hampton's murder or found it more compelling than Clark's simply because Clark was armed at the time of his death is a bit troubling. If this was the mindset of many reporters, it is problematic on two fronts. First, if all human life is sacred, then news coverage concerning a loss of life should be reflective of that regardless of whether one of the dead was armed and the other unarmed. Second, if one finds Hampton's murder more revolting than Clark's, one unwittingly assigns differing values to their two lives. One concludes, unconsciously, of course, that Hampton's murder is more egregious, hence the loss more tremendous than Clark's death. It is not inconceivable that such thoughts may have shaped media coverage of the events of December 4, 1969, that resulted in the murders of Clark and Hampton.

One factor that the authors of this study initially overlooked is that reporters often-times, though not always, take their cues from government officials. In other words, when covering a story involving a public servant, reporters often get the bulk of their information from government sources.³⁹ In the case of the December 4, 1969, raid, it is likely that the news coverage was gleaned from police officers and other law enforcement officials. This is not to say that reporters do not reach out to private citizens or interview witnesses, but they do not do so nearly as often as they solicit comments from local, state, and federal officials. Because Hampton (along with David Barksdale of the Black Disciples, Jose

"Cha Cha" Jimenez of the Young Lords, Jeff Fort of the Blackstone Rangers, and Obed Lopez of the Latin American Defense Organization) was on Ed Hanrahan's most wanted list,⁴⁰ it is plausible that when reporters sought out the Cook County State's Attorney's Office for comment, Hanrahan and other law enforcement officials fed reporters Hampton's name in heavy doses. Consequently, the emphasis on Hampton in news coverage of the raid may have been the result of reporters simply taking their cue from law enforcement officials.

It should also be noted here that some reporters colluded with law enforcement officials to produce news articles that would have a particular desired effect. The FBI had numerous "cooperative journalists" who were willing to ignore their professional ethics and write what they were told. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover reportedly contacted his "cooperative journalists" in the Chicago area after the police raid to express "[the] immediate need for concise compilation of all the violent acts [of the BPP]."⁴¹ One reporter in particular, Ron Koziol, who wrote for the *Chicago Tribune*, collaborated with FBI Special Agent Marlin Johnson in writing stories that portrayed the Panthers as "highly violent."⁴² In doing so, Koziol followed Hoover's post-raid directive to write articles meant to show that the Panthers were "an aggregate of violence-prone individuals who foment and initiate violence."⁴³ It is thus possible that some reporters, working with law enforcement officials, *deliberately* focused their stories on Hampton and framed him in a way designed to evoke contempt rather than sympathy in the wake of his death. If this was the intention on the part of law enforcement officials, the most effective way to accomplish this would be to write about Hampton consistently to ensure that the desired message was reinforced in readers' minds. Moreover, since Hampton, not Clark, was the one with whom the police were preoccupied, the police and reporters paid little attention to Clark.

Whether the press unwittingly or deliberately treated Clark as an afterthought does not change the fact that doing so diminished his sacrifice and relegated him to the back pages of history. Again, it is not far-fetched to conclude that newspaper coverage of the raid that led to the murders of Clark and Hampton has influenced the thinking of scholars and laypersons alike. Indeed, as discussed earlier, it is not uncommon for scholars and laypersons to recall the events of December 4, 1969, and omit Clark's name, choosing instead to focus on Hampton.

The omission of Clark from discussion of the Chicago police raid in December 1969 that caused his death is not only historically negligent, but an inadvertent rewriting of history that is the result of a socialization process promulgated by some sectors of the media. Reporters play an integral role in providing their readers with the tools for creating and sustaining the cognitive, emotional, moral, and ethical beliefs that undergird the political, social, and economic structures of American society. Although it is difficult to correlate audience response to media coverage with any degree of certainty, research concerning the media's impact on people's belief system and behavior is abundant.⁴⁴

The manner in which the media covers individuals and events has important implications for how the public views such matters, not to mention how individuals and events are remembered. On one level, the media functions to inform the public on relevant issues (or those deemed as newsworthy). Yet, on another level, it omits and/or downplays certain stories in spite of their importance. The former is an active process used by those in power to regulate access to information. This process, through manipulation and deception, limits public consciousness.⁴⁵ For example, in late 1970 journalists Beatrice Camp and Jennifer Siebens discovered that both the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia*

Bulletin, in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police Department, regulated reports about police brutality and misconduct. In spotlighting the testimonies of police officers while ignoring eyewitness accounts, these newspapers violated many of the journalist standards that reporters are contractually and ethically bound to uphold.⁴⁶ Such findings are critical for understanding how media framing influences representations of people, places, and events.

Since many individuals acquire their information from news reports, it is likely that the press has affected the thinking of scores of people about the raid that resulted in the murders of Clark and Hampton. The close resemblance between the press's treatment of the two men and the public's perception and recollection of them validates such a claim. In sum, the press's treatment of the circumstances surrounding the death of Mark Clark as an afterthought has undoubtedly contributed to his marginalization in America's collective consciousness – something that serious students of politics and history alike should find unsettling.

ENDNOTES

¹Founded in 1966 by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, as it was originally called, formed in response to police mistreatment of Bay Area residents. Armed with weapons, tape recorders, cameras, and a copy of the California state constitution, the group established armed neighborhood patrols to ensure that the police carried out their duties in an even-handed and impartial manner. When police stopped a motorist or pedestrian, the Panthers would pull up and observe (from a distance of fifteen feet) the interaction, sometimes informing the person of his/her rights. Not surprisingly, these patrols drew the ire of police officers who believed that they were an affront to their authority. As the organization evolved, the words 'Self-Defense' were dropped from its title and the Panthers began to offer services designed to improve poor peoples' lot. Programs such as the free breakfast program for children, the senior citizen escort service, free food and clothing giveaways, and health clinics, among others, were well-received. By the late 1960s, the organization grew from a local outfit into a national movement with a reported forty branches and chapters across the United States. Though many people are familiar with the violent clashes between the Panthers and the police, relatively few know much about the full service programs offered by the Panthers in many of the country's major cities. For further detail, see Gene Marine, *The Black Panthers* (New York: Signet, 1969); Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton* (New York: Random House, 1970); Huey P. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide* (New York: Harcourt, Brace Janovich, 1973).

²Edward J. Epstein, "The Black Panthers and the Police: A Pattern of Genocide?" *New Yorker*, February 13, 1971, <http://www.edwardjayeepstein.com/archived/panthers.htm> (accessed July 21, 2010), 6.

³Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1990). This photo also appears on the back flap of Roy Wilkins and Ramsey Clark, *Search and Destroy: A Report by the Commission of Inquiry into the Black Panthers and the Police* (New York: Metropolitan Applied Research Center, 1973). The photo of the officer smiling is noteworthy because police officers are taught early on (in some cases, at the police academy) to affect a posture of non-expression when in the presence of the public and/or when dealing with civilians. It is important that police officers be viewed as

impartial guardians of the law who take no pleasure in injuring, maiming or killing a suspect, no matter how egregious the offense. Adopting this posture is especially important when media personnel are present. Police officers who are photographed exhibiting the type of emotion that is the subject of this discussion is rare. Those caught in such compromising fashion can expect a verbal or written reprimand for conduct unbecoming of a police officer because such behavior does not project the kind of image that police departments in the United States work hard at cultivating. One reviewer of this article implied that unless the authors examined other photos of officers it would be difficult for them to make such a claim. The first author of this study (Judson L. Jeffries) is well-positioned to offer these insights, as he is intimately familiar with police work.

⁴Wilkins and Clark, *Search and Destroy*, vii-ix; Henry Hampton, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1985*, pt. II (*American Experience*, 1990).

⁵Richard G. Stern, professor emeritus of English, University of Chicago, telephone interview by Judson L. Jeffries, May 20, 2010, transcript of interview in possession of author.

⁶Charles P. Henry, professor of African American Studies at University of California-Berkeley, telephone interview by Judson L. Jeffries, June 20, 2010, transcript of interview in possession of author.

⁷Susan Canton, *Fred Hampton: A Political Assassination*. First Principles of National Security and Civil Liberties, Working Paper 2, No. 3 (1976); Hank DeZutter, "The Death of Fred Hampton: A Special Report," *Chicago Journalism Review* 2, no. 12 (December 1969):1-6.

⁸Mike Gray and Howard Alk, *The Murder of Fred Hampton* (The Film Group and Blackside, 1971).

⁹Concerning the author's hopes regarding the composition of the audience at the event, according to the 2000 census, nearly fourteen percent of those who live in the Near Eastside Community in Columbus, Ohio, are sixty-five years of age and older. And there is a population of Columbus residents who grew up in Chicago, though it is not clear why this is so. There is no documented migration pattern that can be cited to explain this.

¹⁰Jeffrey Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010).

¹¹Richard G. Stern, *The Books in Fred Hampton's Apartment* (London: Hamilton, 1974), 70-72.

¹²William E. Hampton and Robert Templeton, *The Essence of Fred Hampton* (Chicago, IL: Salsado Press, 1994); Michael J. Arlen, *An American Verdict: An Account of the Trial of the State's Attorney and 12 Policemen Who Participated in the 1969 Chicago Black Panther Raid* (New York: Doubleday, 1973); Wilkins and Clark, *Search and Destroy*.

¹³Jane Rhodes, *Framing the Panthers: The Spectacular Rise of a Black Power Icon* (New York: New Press, 2007).

¹⁴Todd Fraley and Elli Lester-Roushazami, "Revolutionary Leader or Deviant Thug? A Comparative Analysis of the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Daily Defender's* Reporting on the Death of Fred Hampton," *Howard Journal of Communication* 15 (July-September 2004):147-67.

¹⁵Jeff Cohen and Jeff Gottlieb, "The FBI on Trial: Was Fred Hampton Executed?" *The Nation*, December 25, 1976, 680-84.

¹⁶See, for example, Doris Graber, *Media Power in Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2000).

¹⁷Clark's lack of national distinction should not detract from viewing him as an important

figure in American history. He is important because he sacrificed his life so that others may live a better life. He is important just as hundreds of civil rights workers whose names were not household words were important, but whose work made a difference in people's lives. Likewise, Clark is important because of the work that he did. He opened up a BPP branch in a city where there was not a tremendous amount of radical activity, which means he could not hide from authorities. He was right out front and there were few other radical groups whose members experienced the repression levied by the police.

¹⁸Elnor Clark, sister of Mark Clark, telephone interview by Omari L. Dyson, March 23, 2009, transcript of interview in possession of author.

¹⁹Around the time of the raid, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Chicago Daily News* were the largest circulating newspapers in Illinois.

²⁰Timuel Black, labor activist, telephone interview by Judson L. Jeffries, April 8, 2010, transcript of interview in possession of author.

²¹Albert Kreiling, "The Commercialization of the Black Press and the Rise of Race News in Chicago," in *Ruthless Criticism: New Perspectives in U.S. Communication History*, eds. William Soloman and Robert McChesney (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 177.

²²This study is not concerned with the nature of press coverage, that is, what was said about Clark and Hampton or whether it was positive or negative. The authors of this study are interested only in the amount of attention/coverage devoted to the two men, the ordering of their names, and how these two factors influence people's perceptions of Clark and Hampton. Consequently, the matter of coder reliability is not an issue, as the metrics with which the authors of this study are interested do not involve subjective interpretations such as whether a story is favorable or unfavorable toward Clark and Hampton.

²³The number of times either Clark or Hampton's name was mentioned throughout the entire six months of press coverage (December 4, 1969 - June 30, 1970) is ascertained simply by counting the number of times each person's name was mentioned. Percentages were then calculated by totaling the amount of times both Clark and Hampton were mentioned, and dividing that number into the number of times each individual was mentioned. For example, for the *Chicago Daily News*, Clark was mentioned 124 times and Hampton 243 times, totaling 367. The percentage was calculated by taking 124 and dividing it by 367 (.3378) and multiplying this number by 100. Thus, in the articles that appeared in the *Chicago Daily News*, Clark was mentioned 33.8% (rounded to nearest tenth), whereas Hampton was mentioned in nearly two-thirds of those articles (66.2%).

²⁴The amount of times either Clark or Hampton's name was cited first in order throughout the entire six months worth of press coverage was ascertained by simply counting the number of times the reporter/editor cited Hampton's name before Clark's and/or Clark's name before Hampton's. Only those news articles that mentioned both men were analyzed for obvious reasons. Percentages were calculated in the same fashion as is presented above. For example, in the *Chicago Daily News*, Clark's name appeared first 4 times Hampton's 97 times. The sum of these numbers is 101. To calculate the percentage for Clark, the authors of this study divided 4 by 101 (.0396) and multiplied this number by 100. Thus, for articles in the *Chicago Daily News*, Clark was mentioned first four percent of the time (rounded to the nearest tenth).

²⁵The amount of times Clark and/or Hampton's name appeared in the headline of a story was calculated by counting the number of times one or both names appeared in a story's headline. In instances where both names appeared in the headline of a given story,

both men were given credit. It should be noted that there were numerous articles in which neither Clark nor Hampton's name appeared in the headline. The authors of this study did not calculate percentages for 'amount of times name appeared in headlines' because Clark's name appeared in headlines so few times.

²⁶See, for example, Stephanie Greco Larson, *Media & Minorities: The Politics of Race in News and Entertainment* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); Catherine Squires, *African Americans and the Media* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2009).

²⁷Many of these hypotheses were derived and formed as a result of the discussion that occurred between the first author, Judson L. Jeffries, and members of the audience at the African American and African Studies Community Extension Center at The Ohio State University on the evening of the fortieth anniversary of the raid that resulted in the murders of Clark and Hampton.

²⁸Aaron Dixon, former Seattle member of the BPP, telephone interview by Judson L. Jeffries, July 20, 2010, transcript of interview in possession of author.

²⁹Cohen and Gottlieb, "The FBI on Trial," 680; Elnor Clark, sister of Mark Clark, telephone interview by Judson L. Jeffries, March 1, 2010, transcript of interview in possession of author.

³⁰Elnor Clark, sister of Mark Clark, telephone interview by Judson L. Jeffries, March 1, 2010, transcript of interview in possession of author.

³¹Jeffrey Haas, attorney for the Clark and Hampton families, conversation with Judson L. Jeffries, June 29, 2010. A conversation differs from an interview in each of the followings ways: (a) the initiator does not request an interview, and the subject has not consented to one; (b) the exchange is not structured in any way; and, (c) the discussion is rather short (between five and ten minutes).

³²Aaron Dixon, former Seattle member of the BPP, telephone interview by Judson L. Jeffries, July 20, 2010, transcript of interview in possession of author.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Jose "Cha Cha" Jimenez, former leader of the Young Lords, telephone interview by Judson L. Jeffries, June 28, 2010, transcript of interview in possession of author.

³⁵Omar Lopez, member of Latin American Defense Organization, telephone interview by Judson L. Jeffries, July 23, 2010, transcript of interview in possession of author.

³⁶The December 4th Committee, *Fred Hampton, 20th Commemoration* (Chicago: The December 4th Committee, 1989), 4.

³⁷Cohen and Gottlieb, "The FBI on Trial," 680.

³⁸Contrary to the opinion of one "Panther scholar" who reviewed this article, conversations with Chicago residents of that period as well as with the attorney for both the Clark and Hampton families confirm that while the trial obviously put Hampton's name in the news it was not by any measure a high profile trial. According to Haas, "it was rather low-profile actually." Jeffrey Haas, conversation with Judson L. Jeffries, August 1, 2010.

³⁹Graber, *Media Power in Politics*, 18-19.

⁴⁰Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton*, 108.

⁴¹Ward Churchill, "To Disrupt, Discredit, and Destroy," in *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party*, eds. Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas (New York: Routledge, 2001), 84.

⁴²Mike Royko, *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1971), 7.

⁴³Ibid., 19.

⁴⁴See, for example, David L. Paletz, *The Media in American Politics* (New York: Longman, 2002); Richard M. Entman, *The Black Image in the White Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Doris Graber, *Mass Media in American Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2009); Doris Graber, Denis McQuail, and Pippa Norris, *The Politics of News* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2008); Susan Herbst, Garrett J. O'Keefe, Robert Y. Shapiro, Mark Lindeman, and Carroll J. Glynn, *Public Opinion* (New York: Westview Press, 2004).

⁴⁵Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2003); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc., 2000).

⁴⁶Len Lear, "Daily papers and police conspire to hide truth, researchers find," *Philadelphia Tribune*, December 5, 1970, 5. This was not an isolated incident. Another example where law enforcement officials worked closely with reporters at that time occurred in Los Angeles. In 1970, the Los Angeles office of the FBI identified two local reporters it believed might be willing to help in the effort to discredit the BPP (Memorandum from Los Angeles field office to FBI headquarters, February 16, 1970; Memorandum from FBI headquarters to Los Angeles field office, [March] 1970, the latter document bearing Director Hoover's initials). In June 1970, FBI headquarters approved an anonymous letter informing a *Variety* gossip columnist that Jane Fonda had appeared at a Panther fund-raising gala, hopeful that "... Fonda's involvement with the BPP cause could detract from her status with the general public if reported in a Hollywood 'gossip column.'" (Memorandum from FBI headquarters to Los Angeles field office, June 25, 1970). One month later, FBI officers supplied information to a Los Angeles TV news commentator who agreed to air several anti-Panther news segments (Memorandum from Los Angeles field office to FBI headquarters, September 10, 1970). Copies of the memos cited here were acquired by the authors from the U.S. Department of Justice through the Freedom of Information Act.