

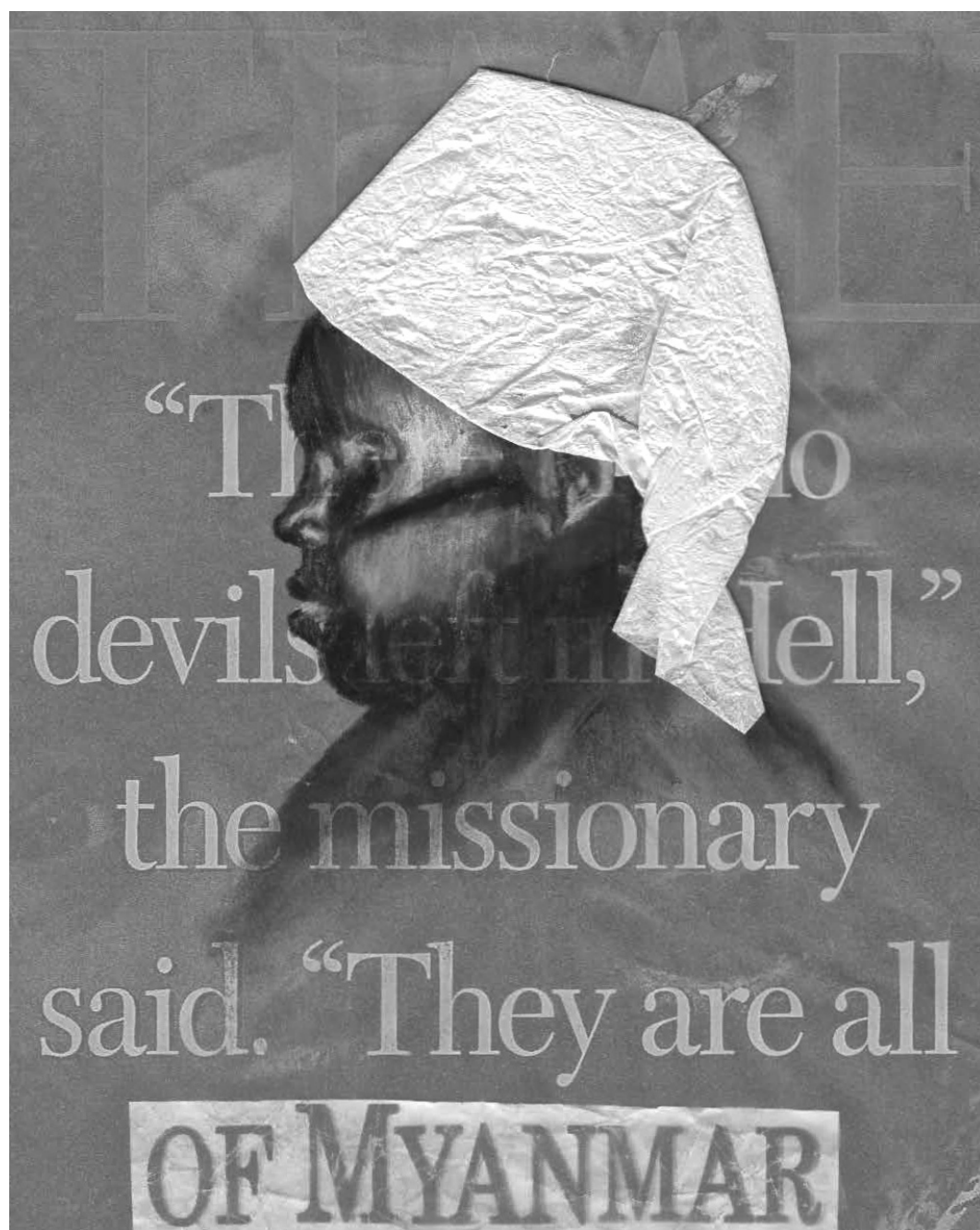
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JULIE SCOTT
ON
GROWING UP DURING WATEGATE
VS.
NOW

Pending



DELPHINE SCHRANK
ON
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN RWANDA
VS.
NOW

Pending

[VISUAL BY TRUDY HALL]

About 20 years ago I published a book about the lynching of African-Americans, thousands of blacks (mostly men) put to death by mobs for alleged crimes, often sexual in nature, in the decades between the Civil War and the mid-1960s. One thing (among many) that stunned me was that at the worst point in lynching history black victims were being lynched every other day in America.

The practice, often abetted by police, was carried out by whites fearful of blacks acting with full citizenship rights and of other related changes in Southern communities. Lynchings reinforced white dominance and terrorized all black Americans, especially those residing in the rural South, crushing their aspirations and discouraging their social mobility.

Today we live with a worrisome death toll from a new form of “every-other-day” terrorism — Americans killing other Americans in mass shootings. Here the cause may not be overtly racial (although statistically far more white men than blacks or Hispanics own guns) but the widespread ownership of ever more powerful weapons seems similarly based on a deep and profound fear — the fear of change, of crime, of losing one’s job, fear of a loss of social dominance to women, gays, elites, immigrants, and non-white racial and ethnic groups, as well as pervasive economic uncertainty and a sense of insecurity.

The crusade against lynching was a major social change effort in the years before the Second World War. It succeeded slowly — in the press, in the courts, through shifts in public opinion — and in incremental stages, although one can argue that the lynching ethos (the presumption of black criminality and the willingness to deal summarily with a despised and feared minority) has never fully vanished — that it lingers today in racial profiling and the biased treatment of blacks by police and the courts.

Like the scourge of lynching, mass shootings and the uncontrolled proliferation of guns pose a problem even the most optimistic reformer must assume will be years in the unmaking.

— Philip Dray, author of *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America*.

[FILM BY TRUDY HALL]

JILL DI DONATO
ON
GENDER INEQUALITY
TOPIC TBD

Pending



[EDITOR'S LETTER]