



A scene from *Selma*.

The Strange Career of the Voting Rights Act: *Selma* in Fact and Fiction

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The only thing that hasn't changed about black politics since 1965 is how we think about it.

—Willie Legette (ca. 1999)

Ava DuVernay's film *Selma* has generated yet another wave of mass-mediated debate over cinematic representation of black Americans' historical experience of racial injustice.¹ The controversy's logic is at this point familiar, nearly clichéd. DuVernay and others have responded to complaints about the film's historical accuracy, particularly in its portrayal of Lyndon Johnson, with invocations of artistic license and assertions that the film is not intended as historical scholarship. In fact, *Selma* and its recent predecessors (*Django Unchained* or *The Help*), like other period dramas, treat the past like a props closet, a source of images that facilitate naturalizing presentist sensibilities by dressing them up in the garb of bygone days. And the specific sensibilities that carry the spate of slavery/Jim Crow-era costume dramas are those around which the contemporary black professional-managerial class (PMC) converges: reduction of politics to a narrative of racial triumph that projects "positive images" of black accomplishment, extols exemplary black individuals, stresses overcoming great adversity to attain success and recognition, and inscribes a monolithic and transhistorical racism as the fundamental obstacle confronting, and thus uniting, all black Americans.

History is beside the point for this potted narrative, as is art incidentally.

The contemporary black professional-managerial class converges [around the] reduction of politics to a narrative of racial triumph that projects "positive images" of black accomplishment.

DuVernay threw the cat out of the bag in discussing her characterization of Johnson's role in the struggle for the Voting Rights Act (VRA). The original script portrayed the president as more centrally engaged and actively supportive but, she says, "I wasn't interested in making a white-savior movie; I was interested in making a movie centered on the people of *Selma*." Of course, her film does not follow through on that pious declaration; she avoids the white savior but only to replace him with a black one. *Selma* is, despite her insistence that it is not, another iteration of King idolatry.² But the "white-savior" comment is helpful because it makes clear that

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representing history is not the point of these films. As English literature professor Jerome Christensen contends in a defense of the film's relation to history, "*Selma* is not education, it's mobilization—it's a movie that wants to move you. Its aim is not accuracy, but to be tragically and poignantly clever." He goes on to assert: "That movie is Ferguson . . . Nothing has changed. That's why Johnson in some sense can't be the hero of the movie. He can't be the white savior, because nothing was saved."³

***Selma* is another iteration of King idolatry.**

From that perspective *Selma* isn't really about the campaign for voting rights at all; as Christensen says, the film is an act of mobilization and what it's mobilization for are above all the status claims precisely of the black PMC, here embodied by black filmmakers and actors and, presumably, the parasitic chatterers who blivate about them. That helps to understand why the ersatz political debate about the film shifted so smoothly into arguments that its director and actors had been "snubbed" for Oscar nominations as well as why the alleged snub is represented as an injustice against black Americans writ large—that is, not simply the individuals who might have been nominated. In a perverse revision of the old norm of labor solidarity, "an injury to one is an injury to all," now it is the black (haute) bourgeoisie that suffers injustice on behalf of the black masses. It's prominent black individuals' interests and aspirations that are asserted—under the flag of positive images, role models, equivalent vulnerability to racism, and other such class-inflected bullshit—as crucial concerns for the race as a whole.⁴

One objection to DuVernay's depiction of Johnson as resistant to pursuing a voting rights law is that it is an unacceptable expression of creative license because (1) it falsifies the history of the civil rights movement in a way that (2) egregiously distorts a significant element of that history and (3) in doing so, leaves an erroneous picture of how the key victories of the civil rights movement were won that moreover (4) can have counterproductive implications for how we think about political strategy today. In addition to those who defend the film on

grounds I have discussed, others have acknowledged its consequential misrepresentations but nonetheless conclude that on balance, even with those faults, the film makes a significant contribution in telling even a flawed version of the story of the Selma campaign to a popular audience. Albert R. Hunt, after critically discussing the substance and implications of the film's treatment of Johnson, rejects Joseph A. Califano's urging not to see the film. Hunt concludes, "You should see this movie, and know the story of Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge. That was brought home to me by my 25-year-old apolitical daughter, Lauren: 'Seeing it is a lot different than reading about it.'"⁵

But what does *Selma* communicate? Does its vision of the *Selma* campaign as a dramatic event, as much an existential as a political triumph, contribute to making sense of the sources and goals of the civil rights movement, the pursuit of voting rights enforcement, or the relation of either to contemporary problems bearing on race and inequality? If we are reporting on how our children responded to it, my son, who is an historian, commented at the beginning of the controversy about Johnson's role that it is only a matter of time before students show up in his undergraduate courses rehearsing the wrong-headed common sense understanding they would have acquired from the movie or discussions of it. Or, for that matter, from professors of Africana Studies, or English or (for sure) Cultural Studies. Under these conditions, maybe the most pertinent response to DuVernay's film is to lay out an historically richer and thicker account of the struggle for voting rights enforcement and the impact of the VRA on the South, black politics, and American politics in general over the half-century since its passage.

The 1965 VRA, of course, was one of the crowning achievements of the high period of southern black political insurgency that began in the late 1940s and accelerated through the early 1960s. The story of the heroic popular protest campaign, culminating in the violent "Bloody Sunday" Selma march, which created the political environment securing the bill's passage is well known. The most recent irruption of recurrent attempts to undermine voting rights—via the panoply of efforts to stifle voter registration and actual voting, to dilute voting strength

through manipulating reapportionment to pack, stack, or disperse concentrations of targeted groups and finally through direct attack on the VRA itself⁶—only underscores how successful that law has been in democratizing American society. And that success extends beyond opening opportunities for black or Latino candidates to win office or even for black and Latino voters to register their preferences directly. It has substantially altered the political culture of the region as well as the country as a whole.

After open Nazi/Klansman (take your pick; he wore both swastika and hood) David Duke had received a majority of white votes in both the 1991 Louisiana gubernatorial race and a U.S. Senate race a year earlier, I was asked to comment on whether his appeal was a lamentable testament to how little things had changed in southern politics. My response was that his overall performance in those two elections was rather an illustration of the significance of the VRA. Twenty-five years earlier, if Duke had gotten solid majorities of the white vote, he would have been elected. And that is not just a simple arithmetical point about the additive force of the black vote. That by the dawn of the 1990s more than two-fifths of white Louisiana voters had no trouble voting for candidates actively supported by a vast majority of black voters marks a more significant sea change. That deeper shift in political culture and the potential it implies for pursuit of a transformatively progressive politics is also a reason that the reactionary alliance of fascist agitators, racists, and other lunatics and the corporate interests that fund them have become so hell bent on undoing voting rights.

In fact, the contemporary campaign of disfranchisement looks a lot like its predecessor at the end of the nineteenth century, and that similarity should remind us that the VRA did not so much *extend* the franchise to black southerners as *restore* it. Many of us no doubt find in our teaching that, for undergraduates in particular, black American political history is a seamless blur from slavery to Jim Crow and that, notwithstanding a lot of gestural references to black people's "agency," students have no sense of the impact of the Fifteenth Amendment in opening a generation of active and impressive political participation.⁷ The campaign for disfranchisement that intensified in the 1890s was

the direct outcropping of the dominant merchant-planter class's concerns that blacks and white poor farmers and workers could align to challenge ruling class power. That was not a Freudian compensatory fantasy. Enough evidence existed even before the Populist insurgency of the 1890s to sustain those concerns. In *Class, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement*, Jack Bloom describes the context that underlay white elites' fears. The insurgent Readjuster movement in Virginia won statewide office in 1879 on an alliance of black freedmen and white workers and farmers. More than 60,000 black people across the region belonged to the Knights of Labor, and they made up a majority of the Knights' 3,000 members in Mississippi. The Colored Farmers Alliance, linked to the Populist movement, boasted more than 1,250,000 members. Most dramatically, a North Carolina Populist-Republican Fusion ticket swept statewide in 1894, including most of the major cities, and was re-elected in 1896. Tellingly, the Fusion government was overturned in 1898 in a white supremacist putsch conducted by Democratic elites.⁸

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As J. Morgan Kousser indicates, the aggressive campaign of disfranchisement that took place in the 1890s and early 1900s, while certainly fueled and justified by racism, was about disciplining white poor farmers and workers as well as eliminating black voting.⁹ Removing blacks from the electoral equation forced poor and working-class whites to define their political aspirations in terms that presumed the absolute hegemony of the merchant-planter-industrialist class. In his classic study, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, V. O. Key argued that plebeian whites were able to win in the political order thus produced not much more than the trappings of nominal white supremacy. That is all the "southern exceptionalism"—successful disfranchisement (and, after all, northern elites tried and largely failed to disfranchise lower class whites as well)—necessary to explain why the center of gravity of the region's politics has been

distinctively reactionary. That absolute ruling class dominance meant, for example, that southern trade unionists could not count on significant support from state and local elected officials when they attempted to organize in the 1920s and 1930s with predictable consequences. Indeed, quite the opposite was the case.

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I mention the dynamics and consequences of disfranchisement for three reasons: (1) I believe it is important to stress the fact that black people openly and enthusiastically exercised citizenship rights for decades after Emancipation, (2) noting those facets of the historical context underscores the broad significance of both the franchise and its loss, and (3) it is also important to recognize that what most crucially connects successful disfranchisement at the beginning of the twentieth century and contemporary efforts is not so much an invariant, transhistorical “racism” (although there has been no shortage of racist argument and targeting involved in each instance) but a very pragmatic attempt by powerful elites to shrivel the electorate to solidify partisan advantages for their narrow programs of upward redistribution. Black people, that is, were targets of disfranchisement in the earlier moment as much as a Republican–Populist voting bloc as because they were black, just as today’s disfranchisement efforts target blacks and Latinos as Democratic voters. Keeping that in mind may help to neutralize some of the pointless banter about whether black teabagger darlings like South Carolina’s Tim Scott are embodied evidence that that reactionary element is not racist or are merely tokens and dupes and/or lunatics. That is not an argument that can be resolved—one side alleges racism, the other denies it—and is moreover not really the point.¹⁰

Many activists struggled to challenge the post–Populist disfranchisement without much success until the changed national political

climate—itself in part a product of increased black voting strength outside the South—opened institutional opportunities. Between 1938 and 1946, black voter registration in the region trebled to more than 600,000. Henry Lee Moon reported that the increases were “most spectacular” in the cities. In 1946 alone, black registration increased in Atlanta from 5,000 to 25,000; 1,200 to 20,000 in Savannah, Georgia; and 2,500 to 15,000 in Jacksonville, Florida. New Orleans recorded a similarly dramatic increase, from roughly 400 black voters in 1940 to more than 28,000 by 1952.¹¹ These dramatic increases in black voting, however, could not translate into much beyond clientelist politics because black voting strength was generally restricted to cities and even there was not a large enough bloc to support pressing more aggressively to shape policy agendas.

Passage of the VRA opened new electoral possibilities in both urban and rural, especially black belt, areas. These new possibilities showed up in exponential increases in black office holding, from fewer than 1,500 nationally in 1970 to nearly 8,900 in 1998. For the first time since the Reconstruction era, black candidates in the South were elected sheriffs and other city and county officials and to state legislatures. (*Selma* concludes with a mostly triumphal montage of freeze-frames of selected individual participants in the events with captions indicating aspects of their future lives. Sheriff Jim Clark appears with the note that he was voted out of office in the next election. It struck me that that suggests one prosaic, material reason for his intransigent opposition to black enfranchisement—knowledge that he would lose his job.¹²) The ranks of black elected officials outside the South grew substantially as well, and the most visible expressions of the new possibilities were the increased numbers of black congressional representatives and the emergence of a phalanx of big-city mayors. The number of blacks in Congress grew from nine in 1969 to forty-three in 2013. By the mid-1980s, what I characterized as black urban regimes—that is, “black-led and black-dominated administrations backed by solid council majorities,” a formulation intended to distinguish racial transitions in local governing coalitions from instances of black mayors like Tom

Bradley in Los Angeles or Wellington Webb in Denver who won office as representatives of electoral coalitions in which non-whites were not a majority—governed in thirteen U.S. cities with populations of one hundred thousand or more.¹³ Many more were elected in smaller cities, typically near-in suburbs that had become largely black in population.

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These transformations in black officialdom were widely lauded, understandably, as fulfillment of the victories of the civil rights insurgency. After all, the early waves of the new black elected officials included many with either civil rights, federal Office of Economic Opportunity, Community Action, or Model Cities experience.¹⁴ Moreover, not only *was* the new stratum of black officials and functionaries directly the product of civil rights and Black Power activism, the election campaigns that propelled the racial transition typically draped themselves in the raiment of popular civil rights insurgency, and candidates commonly presented themselves as embodying the next phase of the victorious movement. Such élan was likely unavoidable in that heady moment. However, as is often the case in politics, the story was more complicated than that.

Making sense of the racial transition within which the black urban regimes were constituted requires examination of the structural and institutional contexts within which transition occurred. In particular, I focused on the significance, in addition to insurgent black political activity, of metropolitan demographic and political-economic reorganization during the decades after World War II. I argued that, for black urban governance at least, two contradictions were crucial to understand: (1) the political-economic conditions that enabled their emergence, including the fiscal stress characteristic to largely minority municipalities, also undercut those regimes' capacities to undertake courses of action that would address the downwardly redistributive

concerns shared disproportionately among the largely minority electoral coalition; and (2) the governing coalitions on which those regimes depend are preemptively weighted toward the pro-growth elites who are committed to programs of aggressive upward redistribution predicated largely on suppressing or preempting the downward redistribution to which the electoral coalition is disposed. I examined Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson's effort in the 1970s to harmonize the latter contradiction in the case of an airport construction controversy by concocting a notion of black political interest that linked it to one of the contending developers' proposal.^{15,16}

More recently, a very interesting scholarship has shown the extent to which racial transition in urban politics characteristically was anchored in alliances between insurgent black activists and functionaries and a rising stratum of aggressively pro-growth liberals. John David Arena's *Driven from New Orleans*, a study of the forty-year attack on low-income public housing in New Orleans, shows in wonderful detail how from its beginning the racial transition that began in the late 1960s in that city was tied to an urban liberalism that was also the cornerstone of the new, rationalized tourist economy and a broader program of targeting public resources to support rent-intensifying development. Arena examines the nexus of racial transition in local government and an emergent black political class, the policy content of post-segregation era racial liberalism, and the roles of philanthropic foundations and neighborhood groups in consolidating and legitimating that developmentalist regime via discourses of grassroots authenticity. Timothy Weaver discusses the emergence of black governance in Philadelphia as a product of a similar coalition. Kent Germany examines the key role of local administration of War on Poverty and Great Society funds in formation of the institutional architecture of racial transition in New Orleans as well as its intricate connections with the emerging racial and growth liberalism in the 1960s, and Megan French-Marcelin studies the role of the Community Development Block Grant program and other federal economic development aid in cementing interracial growth liberalism in New Orleans in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁷

Among its other contributions, this literature throws into relief what is problematic about a common interpretive tendency in the fields of black politics, black American political history, and black studies generally to posit as a central critical analytical category an idealized “black liberation movement,” “black freedom movement,” or “black community” that in effect exists outside or logically and normatively prior to larger political dynamics in American society and political economy. In positing a false coherence, this interpretive posture, which has its roots, as Cedric Johnson’s and Dean Robinson’s work shows definitively, in Black Power and post-Black Power communitarian radicalism, has been problematic—I would argue counterproductive—in both scholarly and civic domains. From its earliest iterations as a leftist or racial populist critique of the limitations of Black Power as ideology and program, going back to the end of the 1960s in Robert L. Allen’s *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* and to some extent Harold Cruse’s critiques of Black Power ideology,¹⁸ that interpretive posture preempted recognizing how emergence of a stratum of public functionaries and aspirants had the potential to alter radically the practical universe of the political for black Americans across the board, from the most mundane aspects of quotidian life on up to larger questions of the nature and direction of public policy at all levels.

Such analytical purblindness was understandable at that historical moment both because the new political regime had not begun to take concrete shape and because the rhetorical force of the struggles against racial exclusion and discrimination reasonably presumed a collective or unitary and popular black interest in opposing racism and racially discriminatory treatment. Furthermore, the popularity of anti-colonial metaphor gave a radical patina to formulations of black Americans as a singular “People.” As a standard of critical judgment, however, that perspective was never adequate for the interpretive or political challenges presented by the evolving post-segregation order or the revanchist turn in national politics begun in the 1970s and its many ramifications down to states and cities and the lives of all working

people as that political turn consolidated on bipartisan terms and intensified over subsequent decades. It can lead only to dead-end arguments—the parallel to pointless debates about whether or not some individual or stance is racist—about whether individual or program X *really* represents the interests of the black community or is a “sell out” or inauthentic.

In our current political moment, in which even flamboyantly race-conscious black people embrace career opportunities and ideological rationales attendant to the destruction of public education, privatization of public goods and services, and the dynamic of rent-intensifying real estate development commonly described as gentrification or neighborhood upgrading and revitalization, formulations that presume an idealized “black community” or “black masses” as a collective political subject obscure the real processes through which the larger revanchist regime gains legitimacy among black officials and citizens as its imperatives take on the character of pragmatic common sense. An extreme, or extremely ironic, illustration of this accommodation is Howard Fuller, once also known as Owusu Sadaukai, who was a legendary Black Power radical in North Carolina, a key figure in 1970s Pan-Africanism, then a Marxist–Leninist–Mao Zedong Thinking trade union activist. Sometime after returning to his Milwaukee hometown, Fuller became the city’s school superintendent and established a reputation as a teachers union foe, and is now the founding eminence of the Black Alliance for Educational Options, the main black pro-voucher, pro-charter, militantly anti-teachers union organization. However, dramatic cases of radicals’ apparent conversion are less meaningful than are the many, far more insidious instances of following “natural” trajectories along a track of non-governmental organization (NGO)–driven “community activism,” as Arena describes, or other forms of “doing well by doing good” that lead precocious undergraduates to Teach For America and other organizations of neoliberalism’s *Jungvolk*. Similarly precocious public officials like Cory Booker or Barack Obama insistently define racial aspirations—indeed all concerns with social justice—in line with the interests of financial capitalism, and many, many others all down the pyramid of social standing and power also imagine individual

futures and “success” in savoring fantasies of pursuing personal advantage by operating within what a broader perspective reveals are the structures of neoliberal dispossession. An interpretive posture that posits an unproblematic “black community” or “black masses” as a normative standard cannot adequately conceptualize the relatively autonomous tendencies toward neoliberal legitimation in black politics; much less can it confront them politically.

Fortunately, recent years have also seen the appearance of a scholarly literature that actively investigates differentiation and class tensions *within* black politics, both in contemporary life and in the Jim Crow era when presumptions of unproblematic racial unity made more sense empirically. In addition to the work of Arena, Marcelin, Johnson, and Robinson I have already mentioned, Preston Smith’s *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis* is a study of intraracial tensions and conflict in housing politics in post-war Chicago; Michelle Boyd’s *Jim Crow Nostalgia* examines a black on black gentrification initiative and attendant political dynamics on Chicago’s South Side in the 1990s and early 2000s, and Touré Reed’s *Not Alms but Opportunity* examines the class character and contradictions within the National Urban League and its Chicago and New York branches’ programmatic approaches to the organization’s articulated goal of racial uplift over its first forty years. The collection *Renewing Black Intellectual History* presents a set of case studies that exemplify the benefits of an approach that proceeds from the presumption that political processes, differentiation, and structurally rooted antagonisms do not begin at the boundaries of the black American population and have been integral in shaping black Americans’ politics no less than any other.¹⁹

Recent years have [brought] scholarly literature that actively investigates differentiation and class tensions within black politics.

What we have observed is ultimately a natural entailment of the VRA, insofar as it facilitated black Americans’ participation in the routine arrangements of American politics. That

remains a significant victory of the civil rights movement. Election of a black sheriff in Madison Parish, Louisiana, not only democratized police–community relations; it also was an element in facilitating black incorporation into other opportunity structures unavailable under the regime anchored by disfranchisement. The VRA has contributed to altering political and social life in the region in other progressive ways as well. It has also contributed significantly to altering the character of black politics, in addition to ways I have already mentioned, by throwing into relief the fact that the interests of black elected officials and the black political class in general are not necessarily isomorphic with those of a “black community,” no more than is the case with respect to any politicians and their constituents in the American political system. Their limitations underscore, or should, the fact that electoral politics is a domain, albeit a necessary one, for consolidating and institutionalizing victories that have been won on the plane of social movement struggle. In that sense, the victory condensed in the forms of participation enabled by the VRA is necessary—a politics that does not seek institutional consolidation is ultimately no politics at all—but not sufficient for facing the challenges that confront us in this moment of rampant capitalist offensive against social justice, but neither are the essentially nostalgic modalities of protest politics often proposed as more authentic than the mundane electoral domain. It is past time to consider Professor Legette’s aphorism and engage its many implications. And that includes a warrant to resist the class-skewed penchant for celebrating victories won in the heroic moment of the southern civil rights movement as museum pieces disconnected from subsequent black American political history and the broad struggle for social justice and equality.

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Notes

1. Maureen Dowd, "Not Just a Movie," *The New York Times*, January 17, 2015, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/18/opinion/sunday/not-just-a-movie.html?_r=0.
2. DuVernay's vision of the local movement does not extend much beyond King and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) confederates at all. Glen Ford rightly criticizes *Selma*'s characterization of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) radicals' relation with King and the SCLC. DuVernay reduces the tension to an expression of some of the SNCC activists' ultimately petty and juvenile turf-protectiveness. Political or strategic differences are beyond her purview. While license is what it is, and the SNCC/SCLC tension is arguably not crucial to the story she wants to tell, her choice to portray James Forman in particular as a young, narrow-minded hothead may be as revealing as it is gratuitous and inaccurate. Forman was one of the most systematically leftist voices in SNCC, a Korean War veteran, a former teacher and organizer before going to join SNCC and was actually a year older than King. DuVernay's film describes King as having "led the Civil Rights movement for thirteen years" until his assassination in 1968. That view is consistent with her trivialization of SNCC; it is also in no way correct. King, for example, was not even the principal force driving or the main attraction at the 1963 March on Washington, which was most of all the project of A. Philip Randolph and his Negro American Labor Council. See, for example, William P. Jones, "The Unknown Origins of the March on Washington: Civil Rights Politics and the Black Working Class," *Labor* 7, no. 3 (2010): 33-52; William P. Jones, *The March on Washington: Jobs, Freedom, and the Forgotten History of Civil Rights* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014). In fact, I know several people who attended the march and left before King spoke because it was a long, hot day, and he was at that point in the minds of many activists just another preacher, albeit a courageous and progressive one. Forman provides an interesting, while clearly partisan, account of the ongoing SNCC/SCLC tension and its grounding, at least from a SNCC perspective, in his *The Making of Black Revolutionaries: A Personal Account* (New York: Macmillan, 1972). Ironically, in light of DuVernay's depiction of a resistant if not hostile Lyndon Johnson, Forman's criticism of the SCLC's role in the Selma campaign hinges precisely on its surreptitious alliance with the Johnson administration throughout the campaign (441-42).
3. Quoted in Cara Buckley, "When Films and Facts Collide in Questions," *The New York Times*, January 21, 2015, C1.
4. Brittney Cooper, "Maureen Dowd's Clueless White Gaze: What's Really Behind the *Selma* Backlash," *Salon*, January 21, 2015, available at www.salon.com/2015/01/21/maureen_dowds_clueless_white_gaze_whats_really_behind_the_selma_backlash/.
5. Albert R. Hunt, "A Villain in *Selma*, but Not in Real Life," *The New York Times*, January 18, 2015, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/19/us/politics/a-villain-in-selma-but-not-in-real-life.html>.
6. For only one recent illustration of current efforts to suppress minority voting see "Long Lines at Minority Polling Places," *The New York Times*, September 24, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/25/opinion/long-lines-at-minority-polling-places.html>.
7. See, for example, Eric Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders during Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996). Foner's compendium covers only those officials elected prior to Hayes-Tilden.
8. Jack M. Bloom, *Class, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement: The Changing Political Economy of Southern Racism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South: 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951); Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 1894-1901* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Thomas Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); David Cecelski and Timothy Tyson, eds., *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
9. J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).
10. Adolph Reed Jr., "The Puzzle of Black Republicans," *The New York Times*, December 18, 2012.

11. Henry Lee Moon, *Balance of Power: The Negro Vote* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1948), 179; Arnold R. Hirsch, "Simply a Matter of Black and White: The Transformation of Race and Politics in Twentieth-Century New Orleans," in *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*, ed. Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 273.
12. While it is a reasonable exercise of artistic license that the film does not depict Selma's local politics at all, that it does not do so avoids the potentially complicating fact that the white mayor, Joe Smitherman, who was elected the year before the Selma march, remained in that office until 2000.)
13. Adolph Reed Jr., *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 79.
14. See Albert Karnig and Susan Welch, *Black Representation and Urban Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 50-78.
15. Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug*, 163-77.
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