

The 1968 Black Power Protest: How Tommie Smith and John Carlos Sacrificed Their Success  
for the Fight Against Racial Injustice in America.

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Historical Paper

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*"We were just human beings who saw a need to bring attention to the inequality in our country."*

-Tommie Smith<sup>1</sup>

*"I had a moral obligation to step up. Morality was a far greater force than the rules and regulations they had."* - John Carlos<sup>2</sup>

52 years ago, on October 16, 1968 at the Mexico City Olympic games, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, two black Americans, took a stand that changed the world and left a lasting impact not only on the Olympics, but also on racism in America. After finishing first (Tommie Smith) and third (John Carlos) in the 200m dash,<sup>3</sup> they stood before the crowd on the podium. The two wore black gloves and as the "Star Spangled Banner" began, they raised their fists high in the air to symbolize and stand up against the racial injustice black Americans faced. The crowd fell silent, and immediately after the ceremony, Tommie Smith and John Carlos were kicked out of the Olympic Village and the Olympic team by The USA Olympic Committee. Although some abhorred what they had done, and they received death threats and hate mail, many saw them as inspiring heroes. Forty-seven years later in 2005, things had changed

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<sup>1</sup> @usatf. "Tommie Smith: *"We were just human beings who saw a need to bring attention to the inequality in our country."*

John Carlos: "It was not a gesture of hate, it was a gesture of frustration." *"We knew that what we were going to do was far greater than any athletic feat"*." *Twitter*, Oct. 16, 2018, 9:32 a.m.,

<https://twitter.com/usatf/status/1052190560214274049>

<sup>2</sup> DeNeen L. Brown, "A Cry for Freedom": The Black Power Salute That Rocked the World 50 Years Ago." *The Washington Post*, Oct., 17 2018

[www.washingtonpost.com/history/2018/10/16/a-cry-freedom-black-power-salute-that-rocked-world-years-ago/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2018/10/16/a-cry-freedom-black-power-salute-that-rocked-world-years-ago/).

<sup>3</sup> "200m Men." *International Olympic Committee*, Mar. 10, 2019, [www.olympic.org/mexico-1968/athletics/200m-men](http://www.olympic.org/mexico-1968/athletics/200m-men).

dramatically. A statue was built outside their alma mater, San Jose State University, honoring the two athletes who played such an important role in the fight against racial injustice in America.

Tommie Smith was born on June 6, 1944, in Clarksville Texas,<sup>4</sup> a year and a day before John Carlos was born in Harlem, New York<sup>5</sup>. Smith was the seventh of 12 kids. As a child he moved to Lemoore, California where he worked on the weekends in cotton and grape fields with his family.<sup>6</sup> Occasionally, due to his speed as a runner, his father allowed him to skip working to attend track meets. Smith said, “My dad told me, he said boy I’ll let you go to this meet but if you take second place you’ll be back in the fields next Saturday with the rest of your brothers and sisters.”<sup>7</sup> Smith’s speed eventually earned him a scholarship to San Jose State University (SJSU) to run track, where he majored in social sciences. He and his teammate Lee Evans<sup>8</sup> were the hottest young track stars in a program named “Speed City.” However, even with the scholarship, they still had financial problems; after paying rent, they were left with just five dollars for food. Smith enrolled in the ROTC to make extra cash. He was a quiet, reserved athlete who let his running speak for itself, the complete opposite of John Carlos, the new transfer from East Texas State University in Smith’s sophomore year.

“I heard that San Jose State has been blowing a lot of smoke about speed, but I came here to bring the fire.”<sup>9</sup> said John Carlos to Smith and the rest of the SJSU track team upon his arrival. John Carlos was born and raised in Harlem New York in extreme poverty. As a teenager, Carlos

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<sup>4</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Tommie Smith.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, June 2, 2019, [www.britannica.com/biography/Tommie-Smith](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Tommie-Smith).

<sup>5</sup> “John Carlos's Biography.” *The HistoryMakers*, [www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/john-carlos-41](http://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/john-carlos-41).

<sup>6</sup> “1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics.” YouTube video, NB C, October 17, 2018, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ss6qavj29c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ss6qavj29c).

<sup>7</sup> “1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics.” NBC

<sup>8</sup> “1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics.” NBC

<sup>9</sup> “1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics.” NBC

and his friends stole food and clothes from freight trains to give to their poor neighbors.<sup>10</sup> When running away, Carlos was always the fastest and never close to getting caught. Carlos had also followed Malcolm X from a young age and was committed to civil rights which explains his later involvement .<sup>11</sup>

Together, Evans, Smith and Carlos, were known as the speed city trio, and were well on their way to becoming part of the US Olympic team. However, none of them had any idea what they would be a part of the Olympic Games until they met Harry Edwards<sup>12</sup>. Edwards was a discus thrower, basketball player, and SJSU alumni who had become involved in the Civil Rights Movement. He was frustrated with how black athletes were treated and was organizing athletes to boycott the Olympics to protest racial injustice. Colleges, even integrated ones, were much more likely to accept white students over black students and black students were usually only accepted due to their athletic abilities. Crystal Feimster, an associated professor of African American Studies, History and American Studies at Yale University said, “Giving something to somebody else means giving up some of their privilege and power. If a black student gets a spot then that means a white person isn’t getting a spot.”<sup>13</sup> Edwards explained in a 2018 interview with NBC,

“What was going on at San Jose State was going on at all the so-called “integrated schools”. They had us in the locker room, we could go on the field, but we couldn’t

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<sup>10</sup> TheHistoryMakers, and John Carlos. “John Carlos Describes Raiding Food from Freight Trains in the 1950s.” [thmdaproductmedia.blob.core.windows.net/media/story/video/137128](https://thmdaproductmedia.blob.core.windows.net/media/story/video/137128). Accessed 6 Mar. 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Younge, Gary. “The Man Who Raised a Black Power Salute at the 1968 Olympic Games.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 30 Mar. 2012, [www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/30/black-power-salute-1968-olympics](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/30/black-power-salute-1968-olympics).

<sup>12</sup> Amy Bass,. *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: the 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2004.)

<sup>13</sup> Hussain, Askari, and Crystal Feimster. “Interview with Crystal Feimster.” 29 Feb. 2020.

become head coach, we couldn't become a college professor. It never dawned on them that the athletes they brought in might one day want to be the athletic director at their alma mater. You come in, you play football and then you go back to where you came from, make room for the next negro.”<sup>14</sup>

In mid 1967, Edwards banded together a group of black athletes who promised to boycott the Olympics due to the racial injustice blacks faced at college and in wider society. Some of Edward's first “boycotters” were the speed city trio. Others included the top ranked college basketball player, Lou Alcindor, who would later be known as Kareem Abdul Jabbar. As the boycott started to take form, it got lots of media attention, and the athletes began to receive hate letters and death threats. One letter sent to Smith said,

N\*gger Smith...You don't know me and I don't know you, however I have heard you are a fast n\*gger. You said off the track you are just another n\*gger... Now call all your n\*ggers together, plan your action (heroic type) and go out and snatch an elderly white lady's purse, or perhaps break a window of an old man's shop. You know, do something real brave, something you and only you n\*ggers are capable of doing.<sup>15</sup>

Even those supportive of civil rights had mixed opinions about the boycott. Many black athletes refused to boycott because they weren't willing to give up a medal or lose their one

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<sup>14</sup> “1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics.” NBC

<sup>15</sup> Amy Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: the 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2004.),

chance at the Olympics.<sup>16</sup> Others were willing to lose anything for the end of oppression and injustice blacks faced and felt it was far more important than a medal. In an interview in 2018 Carlos said, “We tried to get young individuals at that time that had the greatest opportunity to make the Olympic team, to actually consider stepping back from the Olympics, to give up their 15 minutes in the sun, to something far greater than going to win a medal.”<sup>17</sup>

In October 1967, Edwards founded the Olympic Project for Human Rights, (OPHR).<sup>18</sup> The OPHR announced a list of demands that would need to be met for the boycott to be cancelled. They wanted South Africa and Southern Rhodesia to be banned from the Olympics due to their severe oppression of black people and they wanted more black coaches on US track and field teams.<sup>19</sup> Although the boycott was still on, Carlos and Smith attended the Olympic trials. They were put in lanes 1 and 8 which are the worst lanes. It was supposedly a coincidence but Smith said in an interview shortly afterwards, “It wasn’t sheer luck, I’ll tell you that.”<sup>20</sup> As the trials progressed, the demands of the OPHR were met. South Africa and Southern Rhodesia were banned from the Games and there would be more black coaches on the USA team. Edwards called off the boycott and Smith and Carlos qualified for the Olympic team but they were still determined to protest. They didn’t want to put their hands on their hearts and honor America, where there was still so much racial injustice. When asked what would happen, Smith replied, “You can expect almost anything.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Bennett, Donovan, and John Carlos. “John Carlos: This Is My Story.” 30 Jan. 2018, [youtu.be/ak84pq80\\_kg](https://youtu.be/ak84pq80_kg). Accessed 8 Mar. 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Bennett, Donovan, and John Carlos. “John Carlos: This Is My Story.” 30 Jan. 2018, [youtu.be/ak84pq80\\_kg](https://youtu.be/ak84pq80_kg). Accessed 8 Mar. 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Amy Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: the 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2004.),

<sup>19</sup> “1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics.” NBC

<sup>20</sup> “1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics.” NBC

<sup>21</sup> “1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics.” NBC

At the Olympics, the United States team was dominating and winning events left and right. However, many black athletes refused to shake the hand of Avery Brundage,<sup>22</sup> the chairman of the International Olympic Committee. Brundage was a known racist who had told Jewish athletes to go home during the 1936 Berlin Olympics to avoid angering Hitler.<sup>23</sup> When it came time for the 200m heats, Carlos and Smith were expected to easily win, and they didn't disappoint. Both won their heats. In the final, Smith pulled ahead and took the lead. With Carlos looking ahead at Smith, Australian Peter Norman was able to creep into second and beat Carlos by just 4 hundredths of a second. Smith won with a time of 19.83 seconds, a new world record and breaking the 20 second barrier for the first time. Norman, the underdog, came second with a time of 20.06 seconds. Carlos came third with a time of 20.10 seconds.<sup>24</sup> He was nowhere near as focused on the race as he was the protest, "After the race, the first and foremost that jumped to my mind was, now we can get busy, now we can get it on, that was my attitude, let's do what I came here to do."<sup>25</sup> As Smith and Carlos were contemplating what they would do to make a statement, Norman, who was looking on, asked what they were doing. When they told him, Norman decided he wanted in and grabbed an OPHR pin from a nearby athlete.<sup>26</sup> With Norman on their side, the whole podium was fighting for human rights. Carlos and Smith had planned to wear black gloves but Carlos had forgotten his; it was Norman who suggested they each wore one.<sup>27</sup> With everything falling into place they decided what they would do. According to Carlos

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<sup>22</sup> "1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics." NBC

<sup>23</sup> "1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics." NBC

<sup>24</sup> "200m Men." *International Olympic Committee*, March 10, 2019, [www.olympic.org/mexico-1968/athletics/200m-men](http://www.olympic.org/mexico-1968/athletics/200m-men).

<sup>25</sup> "1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics." NBC

<sup>26</sup> "1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics." NBC

<sup>27</sup> Brown, DeNeen L. "A Cry for Freedom": The Black Power Salute That Rocked the World 50 Years Ago.", WP Company, Oct. 17, 2018, [www.washingtonpost.com/history/2018/10/16/a-cry-freedom-black-power-salute-that-rocked-world-years-ago/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2018/10/16/a-cry-freedom-black-power-salute-that-rocked-world-years-ago/).

it was his idea to raise their fists.<sup>28</sup> As the “Star Spangled Banner” started, Smith and Carlos raised their gloved fists and the crowd fell quiet. As Smith explained in an interview the evening after the protest, “The right glove that I wore on my right hand signified the power within black America, the left glove my teammate John Carlos wore on his left hand made an arch, my right hand to his left hand also signified black unity. The scarf that was worn around my neck signified blackness, John Carlos and me wore socks, black socks without shoes to also signify our poverty.”<sup>29</sup> All three athletes wore OPHR badges.<sup>30</sup> During those two minutes in which the national anthem was playing, the Olympics and the world would never be the same again.

Immediately following the protest Smith and Carlos were suspended from the United States Olympic team and they would never return. They were kicked out of the Olympic Village and sent home with their families, although they were allowed to keep their medals and their titles. There were other protests at the Olympics, such as the many American basketball players who refused to compete at all. However, these were outshadowed by the protest by Smith and Carlos because instead of refusing to compete they went out of their way to protest. Crystal Feimster said, “When somebody’s not playing and they don’t show up there’s nothing to film, there’s nothing to see, but when these young boys are on a national stage and put their fist in the air it was something people couldn’t ignore.”<sup>31</sup> Back in the United States, they were seen as heroes by some and as villains by others. Smith and Carlos received death threats and hate notes

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<sup>28</sup> Boldon, Ato, and John Carlos. “Olympian John Carlos Brings the Fire in Interview with Ato Boldon I NBC Olympics.” NBC, Oct. 17, 2018, [youtu.be/kxZuz-BMm-E](https://youtu.be/kxZuz-BMm-E). Accessed Mar. 8, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> “Black Power Salute Rocks 1968 Olympics - ABC News - October 17, 1968.” Youtube video, November 13, 2018, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZttN9hPvx4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZttN9hPvx4).

<sup>30</sup> Widmer, Ted. “Why Two Black Athletes Raised Their Fists During the Anthem.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, Oct. 16 2018, [www.nytimes.com/2018/10/16/opinion/why-smith-and-carlos-raised-their-fists.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/16/opinion/why-smith-and-carlos-raised-their-fists.html).

<sup>31</sup> Hussain, Askari, and Crystal Feimster. “Interview with Crystal Feimster.” 29 Feb. 2020.

similar to those received earlier. Carlos responded to them by saying in an interview with the New York Post, "I'd like to tell white people in America and all over the world that if they don't care for the things black people do, then they shouldn't sit in the stands and watch them perform."<sup>32</sup> Norman was also punished by the Australian Olympic team and was banned from competing in the 1972 Games due to the role he played.<sup>33</sup> The protest headlined in almost all newspapers and the famous photos of the three men on the podium swept through the world, with many shocked by the removal of Smith and Carlos from the team. "The banishment, almost without parallel, has drawn widespread criticism against the US Olympic committee from black citizens from around the country."<sup>34</sup> Their protest inspired many people, black and white, to stand up and fight against the racial injustice that black Americans faced.

The immediate consequences for Smith and Carlos were severe. Neither had completed their degrees before joining the Olympic team, so they went through hard times in the months following their protests, both moving from job to job. When asked what his hardest struggles were after the protest in an interview with Sports Center, Smith replied, "Mine was finishing college...and then of course no job, married with a 6 month old."<sup>35</sup> Eventually Smith went back to college and got his Bachelor's degree in sociology from SJSU, and later his Masters from Goddard College. Then he began coaching track and teaching sociology at Oberlin College. Smith is now 75 years old, retired, and living in Atlanta, Georgia as of October 2018. Carlos is

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<sup>32</sup> Paul Zimmerman, "Blacks take their ", *New York Post*, Oct. 17, 1 (back cover).

<sup>33</sup> Montague, James. "The Third Man: The Forgotten Black Power Hero." *CNN*, Cable News Network, Apr. 25, 2012, [www.cnn.com/2012/04/24/sport/olympics-norman-black-power/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2012/04/24/sport/olympics-norman-black-power/index.html).

<sup>34</sup> "Black and Proud." *Pittsburgh Courier*, Oct. 26, 1968, [theundefeated.com/features/mexico-city-olympics-protest-media-john-carlos-tommie-smith/](http://theundefeated.com/features/mexico-city-olympics-protest-media-john-carlos-tommie-smith/)

<sup>35</sup> "Tommie Smith Weighs in on Kaepernick's Decision." *ESPN*, ESPN Internet Ventures, Sept. 1, 2016, [www.espn.com/video/clip/\\_/id/17426218](http://www.espn.com/video/clip/_/id/17426218).

73 years old, and lives in Palm Springs, California where he is a high school guidance counselor.

<sup>36</sup> After being shunned and not allowed to compete in the 1972 games, Norman retired from track and subsequently became depressed and developed an addiction to alcohol and painkillers. He was never acknowledged or respected by Australia and was seemingly forgotten. It wasn't until 2012, after his death, that Australia apologized for the way Norman had been treated.<sup>37</sup> On October 3, 2006, Norman unfortunately died but Smith and Carlos, who had stayed in touch with him, were both pallbearers at his funeral. Carlos said, "Peter Norman was a man's man and I'll always have respect and admiration for him as long as I live and after that."<sup>38</sup>

Although the Civil Rights Movement brought about enormous change in the United States, some things unfortunately still remain the same. Black people in the United States are still much poorer than whites - White families have 10 times higher wealth than Black families.<sup>39</sup> Racism still exists, for example Black women are more likely than White women to give birth to babies who are unhealthy due simply to the stress of racism.<sup>40</sup> But the fight against racial injustice continues. Smith and Carlos protested over 50 years ago but it is still inspiring many people and

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<sup>36</sup> Dobuzinskis, Alex. "Olympics-Former U.S. Olympians Have No Regrets over 1968 Protest." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, July 21, 2012, [www.reuters.com/article/oly-athl-usa-protest-adv6/olympics-former-u-s-olympians-have-no-regrets-over-1968-protest-idUSL2E8IC65M20120721](http://www.reuters.com/article/oly-athl-usa-protest-adv6/olympics-former-u-s-olympians-have-no-regrets-over-1968-protest-idUSL2E8IC65M20120721).

<sup>37</sup> Blakemore, Erin. "How the Black Power Protest at the 1968 Olympics Killed Careers." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, Feb. 22, 2018, [www.history.com/news/1968-mexico-city-olympics-black-power-protest-backlash](http://www.history.com/news/1968-mexico-city-olympics-black-power-protest-backlash).

<sup>38</sup> "1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics." NBC

<sup>39</sup> Ana Kent, Lowell Ricketts R., and Ray Boshara, "What Wealth Inequality in America Looks Like: Key Facts & Figures," *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis* (blog), August 14, 2019, [https://www.stlouisfed.org/open-vault/2019/august/wealth-inequality-in-america-facts-figures?utm\\_source=Federal+Reserve+Bank+of+St.+Louis+Publications&utm\\_campaign=a457d2ecd3-HFSAAlert\\_11-06-19&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_c572dedae2-a457d2ecd3-57439585](https://www.stlouisfed.org/open-vault/2019/august/wealth-inequality-in-america-facts-figures?utm_source=Federal+Reserve+Bank+of+St.+Louis+Publications&utm_campaign=a457d2ecd3-HFSAAlert_11-06-19&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c572dedae2-a457d2ecd3-57439585).

<sup>40</sup>Rhithu Chatterjee and Rebecca Davis, "How Racism May Cause Black Mothers To Suffer The Death Of Their Infants," *Morning Edition* (National Public Radio, 2017), <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/12/20/570777510/how-racism-may-cause-black-mothers-to-suffer-the-death-of-their-infants>.

sparking new protests, most notably Colin Kaepernick and his kneeling during the playing of the national anthem. Former NBA player, John Amaechi said, “The very same experience that Colin Kaepernick is having now, it's the same experience that John Carlos and Tommie Smith experienced back then... It's amazing. All this time has passed, and there's nothing different about the response, because the status quo is wonderfully convenient.”<sup>41</sup> The 1968 black power salute brought attention and awareness to the racial barrier and racial injustice African Americans faced and as President Obama said in 2016 when welcoming the USA Olympic Team, “Their powerful silent protest in the 1968 Games was controversial, but it woke folks up and created greater opportunity for those that followed”- Barack Obama.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Krasnoff, Lindsay Sarah. “From the Black Power Salute to Colin Kaepernick: What's Changed?” *CNN*, Cable News Network, Oct. 16, 2018,

[www.cnn.com/2018/10/16/sport/black-power-salute-olympics-colin-kaepernick-50th-anniversary-spt-intl/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2018/10/16/sport/black-power-salute-olympics-colin-kaepernick-50th-anniversary-spt-intl/index.html)

<sup>42</sup> Barack Obama. “Remarks by the President Welcoming the 2016 USA Olympic and Paralympic Teams.” Sep. 29, 2016. National Archives, Washington DC.

## Appendix A

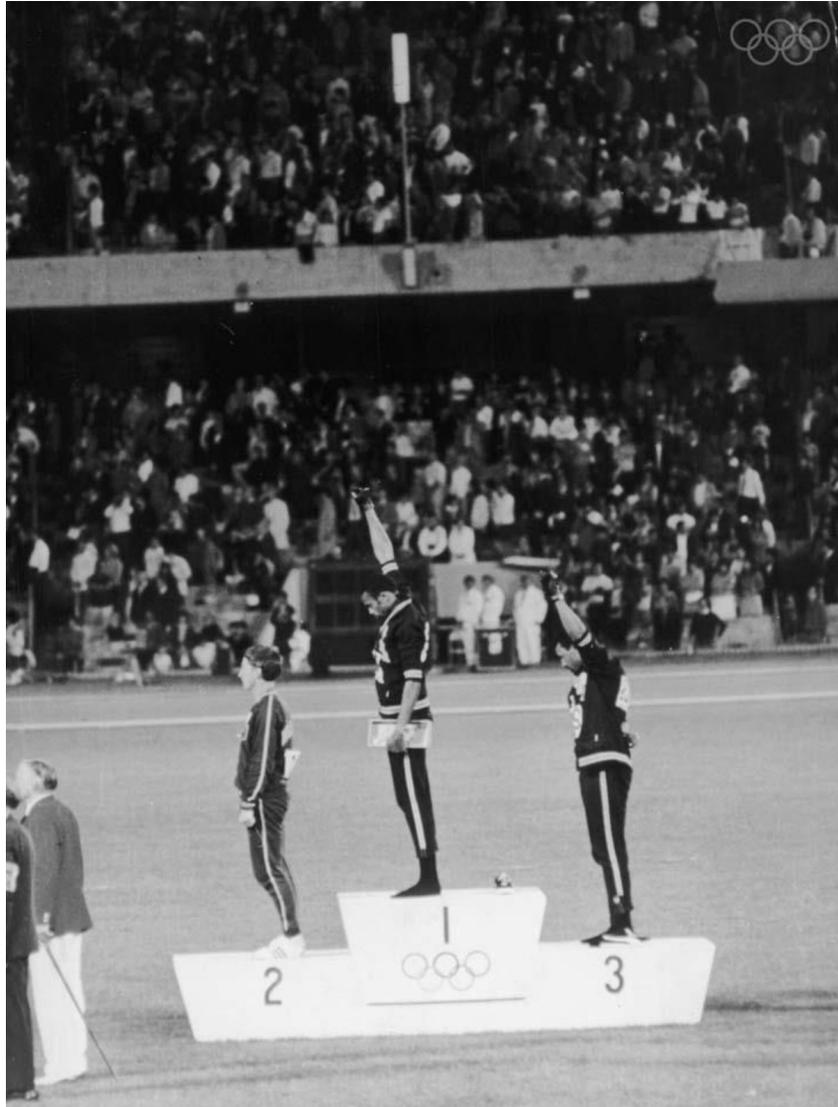


An article from the Parsons Sun explaining the protest and who kicked them out of the Village and why. This was written by the Associated Press (AP) so it was likely in many other newspapers at this time.

"1968 Olympics Black Power salute"

<http://www.rarenewspapers.com/view/581496?imagelist=1>

## Appendix B



This image showing Tommie Smith (middle) and John Carlos (right) and raising their gloved fists on the podium of the 200 metre race. It also shows the other actions they are doing such as not wearing their shoes and showing their black socks.

“Black Power Salute.” Olympic Archives. <https://www.olympic.org/photos/black-power-salute>

## Appendix C

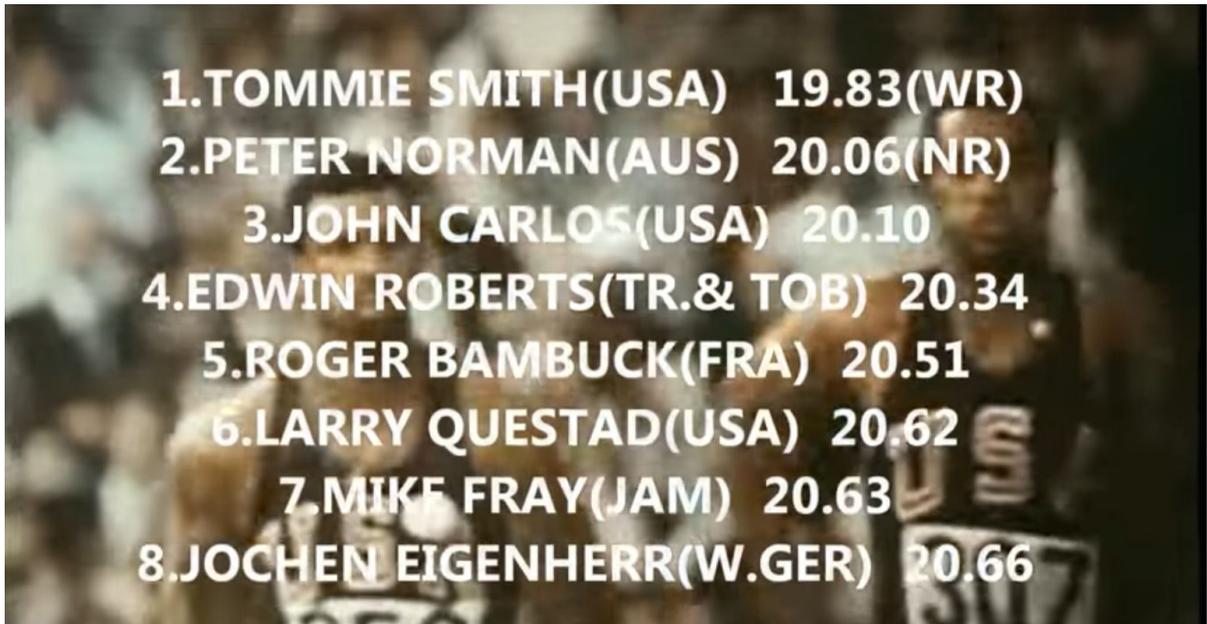


This photo of Lee Evans (left), Larry James (centre), and Ron Freeman (right) was taken the day after Tommie Smith and John Carlos were sent home by the US Olympic Committee. They are seen wearing black berets as a sort of tribute to Smith and Carlos but Evans, James, and Freeman suffered no consequences for their actions.

“Lee Evans, Larry James and Ron Freeman (USA)” Olympic archives.

<https://www.olympic.org/photos/lee-evans-larry-james-and-ron-freeman-usa>

## Appendix D



This is a picture showing the final results of the 200m finals shows that Tommie Smith set a new world record and how close Norman and Carlos were. As seen next to Tommie Smith's time of 19.78 seconds, it says (WR) which stands for world record. Behind the results is an image of Tommie Smith (right) and John Carlos (left) in mid race.

# Annotated Bibliography

## Primary Sources

“1968 – A Mexico City Documentary I NBC Olympics.” YouTube, NBC, 17 Oct. 2018,  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ss6qavj29c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ss6qavj29c).

This documentary was probably my most important source and was the most useful in writing the paper. It is an hour and a half long film with first-hand interviews with almost everyone who was significant in the protest including Tommie Smith, John Carlos, Harry Edwards and many more. As you can see in my paper, much of my information and quotes came from this source and without it my paper wouldn't be what it is.

“1968 Olympics Black Power salute”

<http://www.rarenewspapers.com/view/581496?imagelist=1>

This website showed pictures of a newspaper article published in the *Parson Sun* on October 18, 1968, two days after the protest. It gave me information on the reasons for the removal of Smith and Carlos and on the reactions of the public.

“200m Men.” *International Olympic Committee*, 10 Mar. 2019,

[www.olympic.org/mexico-1968/athletics/200m-men](http://www.olympic.org/mexico-1968/athletics/200m-men)

This showed the results of the finals of the 200m mens race at the 1968 Olympics.  
It's from the official Olympic website and has the official results.

“200m(WR)Smith/Norman/Carlos:1968 Olympics, Mexico City.” YouTube, Youtube, 10  
May 2013, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWI9raEM1-4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWI9raEM1-4).

This video showed footage of the 200m finals at the 1968 Olympics and not only  
was this video interesting to watch but it also showed segments of the protest  
afterwards and is where I got the image of the results that is seen in Appendix D.

Ana Kent, Lowell Ricketts R., and Ray Boshara, “What Wealth Inequality in America  
Looks Like: Key Facts & Figures,” *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis* (blog),  
August 14, 2019,  
[https://www.stlouisfed.org/open-vault/2019/august/wealth-inequality-in-america-facts-figures?utm\\_source=Federal+Reserve+Bank+of+St.+Louis+Publications&utm\\_campaign=a457d2ecd3-HFSAalert\\_11-06-19&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_c572dedae2-a457d2ecd3-57439585](https://www.stlouisfed.org/open-vault/2019/august/wealth-inequality-in-america-facts-figures?utm_source=Federal+Reserve+Bank+of+St.+Louis+Publications&utm_campaign=a457d2ecd3-HFSAalert_11-06-19&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c572dedae2-a457d2ecd3-57439585).

This is a series of charts from the Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Consumer  
Finances showing how bad racial inequality still is in the United States. I used this  
source for the statistic at footnote 39.

Associated Press. “Black Power Outdoes Gold Medal.” *The Norwalk Hour*, 17 Oct. 1968,  
pp. 1–1,

news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1898&dat=19681017&id=AvIIAAAAIBAJ&sjid=IQUNAAAAIBAJ&pg=5623,4232679&hl=en.

This is a newspaper from The Norwalk Hour the day after the protest and contained the reactions of the public and it's also where I got information about Avery Brundage and how many black athletes refused to shake his hand to due his reputation.

Bennett, Donovan, and John Carlos. "John Carlos: This Is My Story." 30 Jan. 2018, [youtu.be/ak84pq80\\_kg](https://youtu.be/ak84pq80_kg). Accessed 8 Mar. 2020.

This interview with John Carlos was his point of view of the protest and everything leading up to it and the aftermath of it. It also gave me the quotes on footnotes 16 and 17 explaining the sacrifices they make and how their protest was bigger than winning a medal.

Boldon, Ato, and John Carlos. "Olympian John Carlos Brings the Fire in Interview with Ato Boldon I NBC Olympics." NBC, 17 Oct. 2018, [youtu.be/kxZuz-BMm-E](https://youtu.be/kxZuz-BMm-E). Accessed 8 Mar. 2020.

This 44 minute long interview with John Carlos spoke about his upbringing and his involvement and interest in civil rights as a child. This also provided me with the information that the form of the protest was Carlos' idea.

“Black Power Salute Rocks 1968 Olympics - ABC News - October 17, 1968.” *YouTube*, YouTube, 17 Oct. 1968, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZttN9hPvx4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZttN9hPvx4).

This showed an interview with Tommie Smith in which he described the meaning of all the different clothing items they wore and what they symbolized. It is also where I got the quote on footnote 29.

“Black Power Salute.” Olympic Archives.

<https://www.olympic.org/photos/black-power-salute>

This was the famous photo of the three men on the podium with Smith and Carlos with their fists raised high in the air. It comes from the official Olympic archives and is the picture seen in Appendix B.

“John Carlos's Biography.” *The HistoryMakers*,

[www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/john-carlos-41](http://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/john-carlos-41).

This was a simple biography of John Carlos providing me with basic information about him such as his place of birth, date of birth and other small facts.

“Lee Evans, Larry James and Ron Freeman (USA)” Olympic archives.

<https://www.olympic.org/photos/lee-evans-larry-james-and-ron-freeman-usa>

This was the photo used in Appendix C showing Lee Evans, Larry James, and Ron Freeman wearing black berets as a way of supporting Tommie Smith and John

Carlos who were sent home. This photo was taken after they swept the podium in the 400m race.

TheHistoryMakers, and John Carlos. "John Carlos Describes Raiding Food from Freight Trains in the 1950s."

thmdaprodmedia.blob.core.windows.net/media/story/video/137128. Accessed 6 Mar. 2020.

This was an interview with John Carlos in which he spoke about his childhood and the story of how he and his friends stole food from freight trains to give to their poor friends and families who were desperately in need of it.

"Tommie Smith Weighs in on Kaepernick's Decision." *ESPN*, ESPN Internet Ventures, 1 Sept. 2016, [www.espn.com/video/clip/\\_/id/17426218](http://www.espn.com/video/clip/_/id/17426218).

This interview with Tommie Smith was in 2016 after the controversy of NFL player, Colin Kaepernick, kneeling during the playing of the National anthem, very similar to the protest of Smith and Carlos. Smith spoke about what he went through after the protest and how he suffered.

UPI. "'Black Power' Salute Reprimanded, Olympic Athletes Suspended." *The Bulletin*, 18

Oct. 1968, pp. 5-5,

[news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1243&dat=19681018&id=kfpXAAAIAIAJ&sjid=u\\_YDAAAIAIAJ&pg=5984,2678777&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1243&dat=19681018&id=kfpXAAAIAIAJ&sjid=u_YDAAAIAIAJ&pg=5984,2678777&hl=en)

This is a newspaper article of The Bulletin published two days after the protest and it gave me information about how Carlos and Smith were removed and how they found out which I unfortunately had to cut out of my paper due to the word limit.

UPI. "Smith, Carlos Raise Black Power Issue at Games." *Bryan Times*, 17 Oct. 1968, pp. 7-7,

[news.google.com/newspapers?nid=799&dat=19681017&id=4phPAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=bVIDAAAAIIBAJ&pg=918,995362&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=799&dat=19681017&id=4phPAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=bVIDAAAAIIBAJ&pg=918,995362&hl=en)

This newspaper article from the Bryan Times on October 17, 1968, one day after the protest, gave me basic information on what happened and what people thought of it and what their reactions were after the protest.

@usatf. "Tommie Smith: *"We were just human beings who saw a need to bring attention to the inequality in our country.* John Carlos: *"It was not a gesture of hate, it was a gesture of frustration. "We knew that what we were going to do was far greater than any athletic feat".*" *Twitter*, Oct. 16, 2018, 9:32 a.m., <https://twitter.com/usatf/status/1052190560214274049>

This tweet by the official USA track and field team is where I got the quote by Tommie Smith that I used at the beginning of my paper.

## Secondary Sources

“Black and Proud.” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 26 Oct. 1968,

[theundefeated.com/features/mexico-city-olympics-protest-media-john-carlos-tommie-smith](https://theundefeated.com/features/mexico-city-olympics-protest-media-john-carlos-tommie-smith)

This picture of an article from The Pittsburgh Courier showed how black citizens were outraged by the decision to kick Smith and Carlos out of the Olympic village and is where I got the quote used on footnote 34.

Brown, DeNeen L. “‘A Cry for Freedom’: The Black Power Salute That Rocked the World 50 Years Ago.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 17 Oct. 2018,

[www.washingtonpost.com/history/2018/10/16/a-cry-freedom-black-power-salute-that-rocked-world-years-ago/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2018/10/16/a-cry-freedom-black-power-salute-that-rocked-world-years-ago/).

This article by the Washington post was more focused on the protest itself instead of the reasons for it and the aftermath of it. It gave me specific information and details saying what exactly happened at the protest.

Bass, Amy. *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: the 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete*. University of Minnesota Press, 2004.

This book by Amy Bass gave me great information about Harry Edwards and the founding of the OPHR and how the protest came into action and the whole backstory in full detail. This is also where I got the hate letter sent to Tommie Smith.

Blakemore, Erin. "How the Black Power Protest at the 1968 Olympics Killed Careers."

*History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 22 Feb. 2018,

[www.history.com/news/1968-mexico-city-olympics-black-power-protest-backlash](http://www.history.com/news/1968-mexico-city-olympics-black-power-protest-backlash).

This article was mostly about Peter Norman and how after he was shunned by the Australian government and Olympic team his career derailed and his life went downhill which eventually led to his death in 2003.

Davis, David. "Olympic Athletes Who Took a Stand." *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution,

1 Aug. 2008,

[www.smithsonianmag.com/articles/olympic-athletes-who-took-a-stand-593920/](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/articles/olympic-athletes-who-took-a-stand-593920/).

This article by David Davis of the Smithsonian provided me with a basic summary of the whole protest including its later effect. It also gave me information on where Smith and Carlos are now and what their lives are like.

Dobuzinskis, Alex. "Olympics-Former U.S. Olympians Have No Regrets over 1968 Protest."

Reuters, Thomson Reuters, 21 July 2012,

[www.reuters.com/article/oly-athl-usa-protest-adv6/olympics-former-u-s-olympians-have-no-regrets-over-1968-protest-idUSL2E8IC65M20120721](http://www.reuters.com/article/oly-athl-usa-protest-adv6/olympics-former-u-s-olympians-have-no-regrets-over-1968-protest-idUSL2E8IC65M20120721).

I didn't really use this website much but it's where I got the fact about Tommie Smith now living in Palm Beach and his current situation.

Hussain, Askari, and Crystal Feimster. "Interview with Crystal Feimster." 29 Feb. 2020

This interview was a great help. Crystal Feimster is an associate professor of African American studies and also the mother of an ex classmate and friend of mine. I conducted a 19 minute interview with her and is obviously where I got her two quotes and lots of other really important information about the results of the protest and the impact it had in the civil rights movement.

Krasnoff, Lindsay Sarah. "From the Black Power Salute to Colin Kaepernick: What's Changed?" *CNN*, Cable News Network, 16 Oct. 2018, [www.cnn.com/2018/10/16/sport/black-power-salute-olympics-colin-kaepernick-50th-anniversary-spt-intl/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2018/10/16/sport/black-power-salute-olympics-colin-kaepernick-50th-anniversary-spt-intl/index.html).

This article by Sarah Lindsay Krasnoff of CNN explains how similar the protest by Tommie Smith and John Carlos was to the protest by Colin Kaepernick and how many aspects of America have unfortunately not 100% changed.

Montague, James. "The Third Man: The Forgotten Black Power Hero." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 25 Apr. 2012, [www.cnn.com/2012/04/24/sport/olympics-norman-black-power/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2012/04/24/sport/olympics-norman-black-power/index.html).

This article was about Peter Norman and his role in the protest and also about how his life was ruined after the protest due to his support for Smith and Carlos.

Obama, Barack. "Remarks by the President Welcoming the 2016 USA Olympic and Paralympic Teams." Sep. 29, 2016. National Archives, Washington DC.

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/29/remarks-president-welcoming-2016-usa-olympic-and-paralympic-teams>

This write up of President Obama's speech welcoming the 2016 USA Olympic and Paralympic Teams is where I got the quote that I finished my paper with about how Smith and Carlos "woke people up" to the fact of how badly blacks were being treated not just in America but on a worldwide scale.

Rhithu Chatterjee and Rebecca Davis, "How Racism May Cause Black Mothers To Suffer The Death Of Their Infants," *Morning Edition* (National Public Radio, 2017),

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/12/20/570777510/how-racism-may-cause-black-mothers-to-suffer-the-death-of-their-infants>.

This article is about how the stress of racism can cause Black woman to have unhealthy babies and how Black infants have a much higher rate of death than White infants. I used this source for the fact at footnote 40.

Smith-Spark, Laura. "Australian Olympian Honored over 1968 Protest." CNN, Cable News Network, 28 Apr. 2018,

[www.cnn.com/2018/04/28/asia/peter-norman-australia-honor-intl/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2018/04/28/asia/peter-norman-australia-honor-intl/index.html).

This article described the sufferings of Peter Norman and how he sacrificed so much by being a part of this protest and how it wasn't until after his death that he was acknowledged for what he did by the Australian government.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Tommie Smith." *Encyclopædia Britannica*,  
Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2 June 2019,  
[www.britannica.com/biography/Tommie-Smith](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Tommie-Smith).

This is where I got the basic information about Tommie Smith such as his date and place of birth.

Widmer, Ted. "Why Two Black Athletes Raised Their Fists During the Anthem." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 16 Oct. 2018,  
[www.nytimes.com/2018/10/16/opinion/why-smith-and-carlos-raised-their-fists.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/16/opinion/why-smith-and-carlos-raised-their-fists.html).

This was a long New York Times article by Ted Wilmer summarizing the whole protest and what happened before, during, and after it and the reasons for the protest. It was one of the first sources I used and provided me with the basic knowledge I needed to understand my topic as well as providing lots of information.

Younge, Gary. "The Man Who Raised a Black Power Salute at the 1968 Olympic Games." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 30 Mar. 2012,  
[www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/30/black-power-salute-1968-olympics](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/30/black-power-salute-1968-olympics).

This article in the Guardian was mainly about John Carlos; it's where I got the information about how he stole from freight trains and is why I searched more about this and found the interview where he described this experience.