

Moments of Courage: What Would You Do?

Experience Flow:

The goal of our revamped experience is to create a contemplative space that uses light and audio to lead guests through moments of courage in MLB history while challenging them to think about what they would do in similar situations.

In Their Shoes:

The overall experience will consist of three different moments, each featuring a two-sided wall that is activated by your presence. We'll use light to guide you from moment to moment. A brightly lit circle on the ground signals you to approach the wall where you'll also hear a story unfold—a 20-60-second sound bite detailing a situation that demands a difficult choice. You won't know yet who this story is about or if it's based in truth or fiction. Graphics will light up across the wall in sync with the audio, and you'll be left with a question: What would I do?

The Reveal:

When the story ends, footsteps made of light will appear, leading you to the other side of the wall and offering a brief but important moment of reflection as you walk along this guided path. When you step into the light on the other side, the truth behind the story is revealed.

Story Pacing:

We plan on leading you through the experience in a way that warms you up to more and more difficult choices—ideally using Mr. Aaron's personal story as the final moment of courage. What do you do when your family is threatened? When you receive death threats daily? What are the consequences of my actions—or inaction? As you think about that, you step around to the far side of Mr. Aaron's wall where we reveal that this is what he faced before smashing Babe's record. We also show, though, that he was never alone in his fight. He received letters like the following: "Dear Mr. Aaron: I am twelve years old, and I wanted to tell you that I have read many articles about the prejudice against you. I really think it's bad. I don't care what color you are....It's just some people can't stand to see someone a bit different from them...What do these fans want you to do? Just stop hitting?"

Exhibit Station Lighting Effects



Single lights will illuminate focal points in the experience.

Marquis Grissom Station

Story side

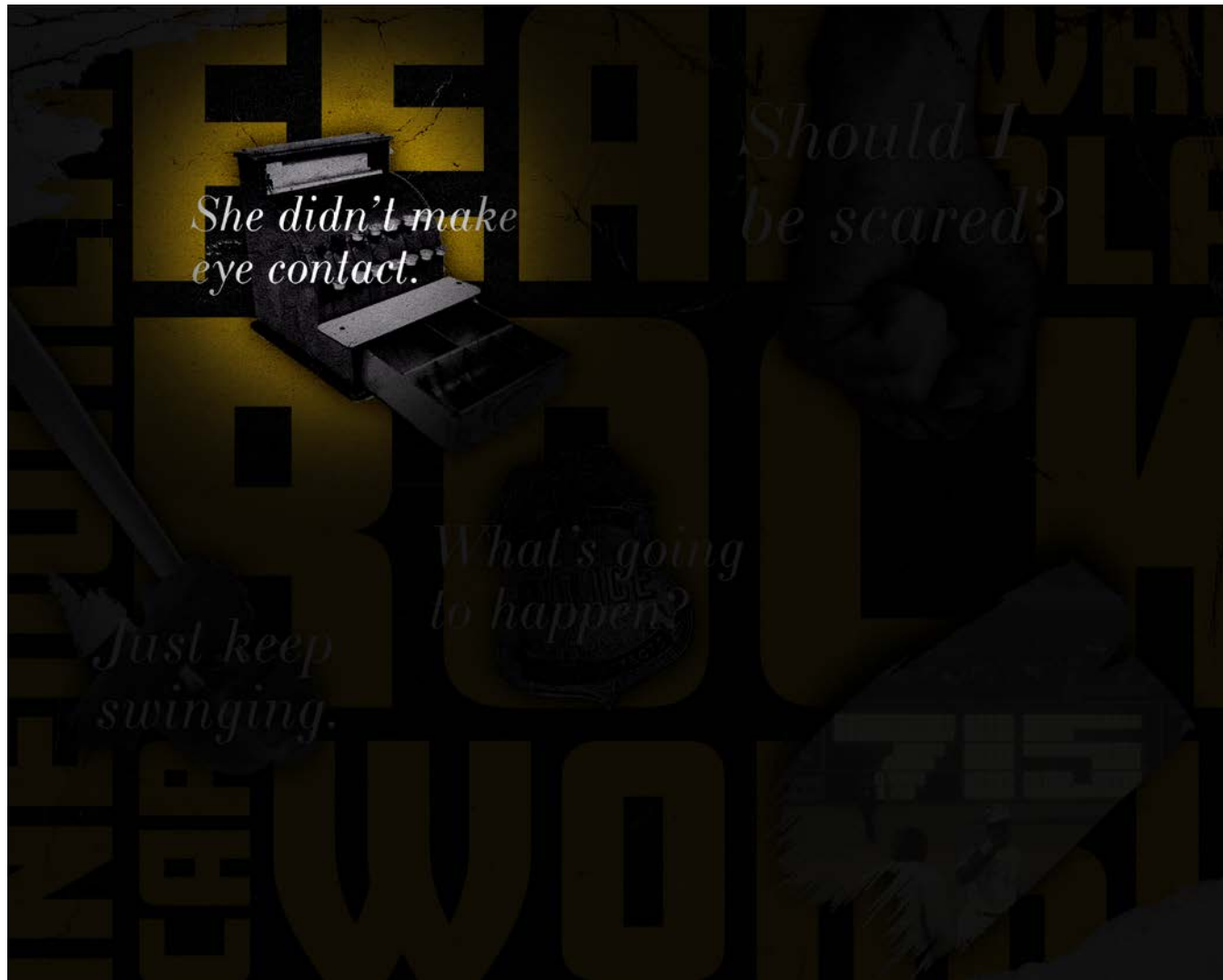


Story side corresponding VO

When you were 6 years old, you saw the historic number 715. Saw a Black man become the home run leader.

Marquis Grissom Station

Story side



Story side corresponding VO

But walking down the street, you also saw people look past you. Saw a white woman cut you in line at the store while you separated groceries for your food stamps. Saw your parents work harder, just to get less.

And you worked, too. Long days fetching water, chopping wood, working the garden. All while the other kids were at school.

Marquis Grissom Station

Story side



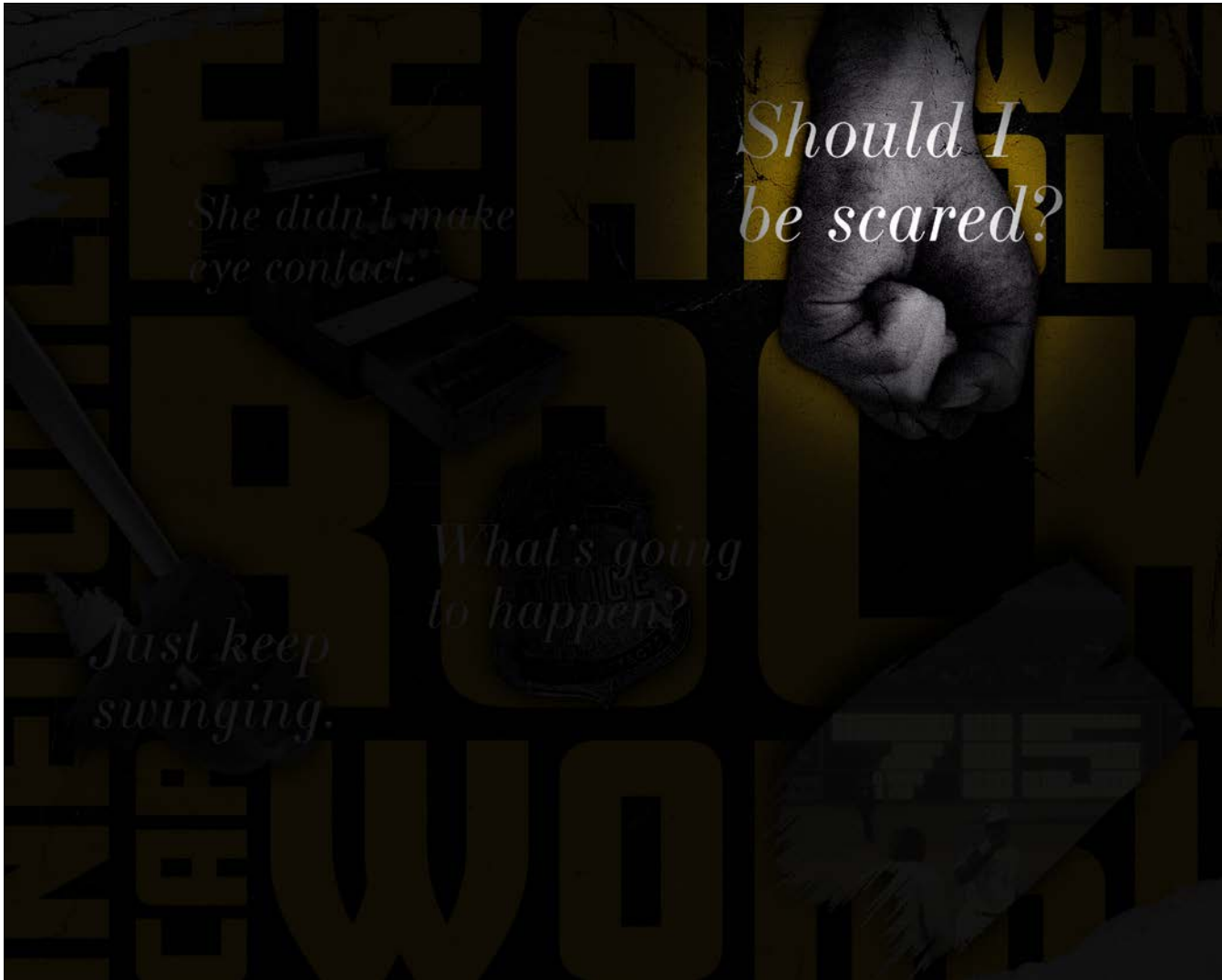
Story side corresponding VO

So when the day was done, it was stickball time. Your time.

Because in this moment, time always stands still. Everything else fades away. You forget the weight of it all. It's just you gripping the bat, eyes focused on the rolled-up sock ball in the pitcher's hand. Until someone yells "Car!" and the game pauses. The moment taken.

Marquis Grissom Station

Story side



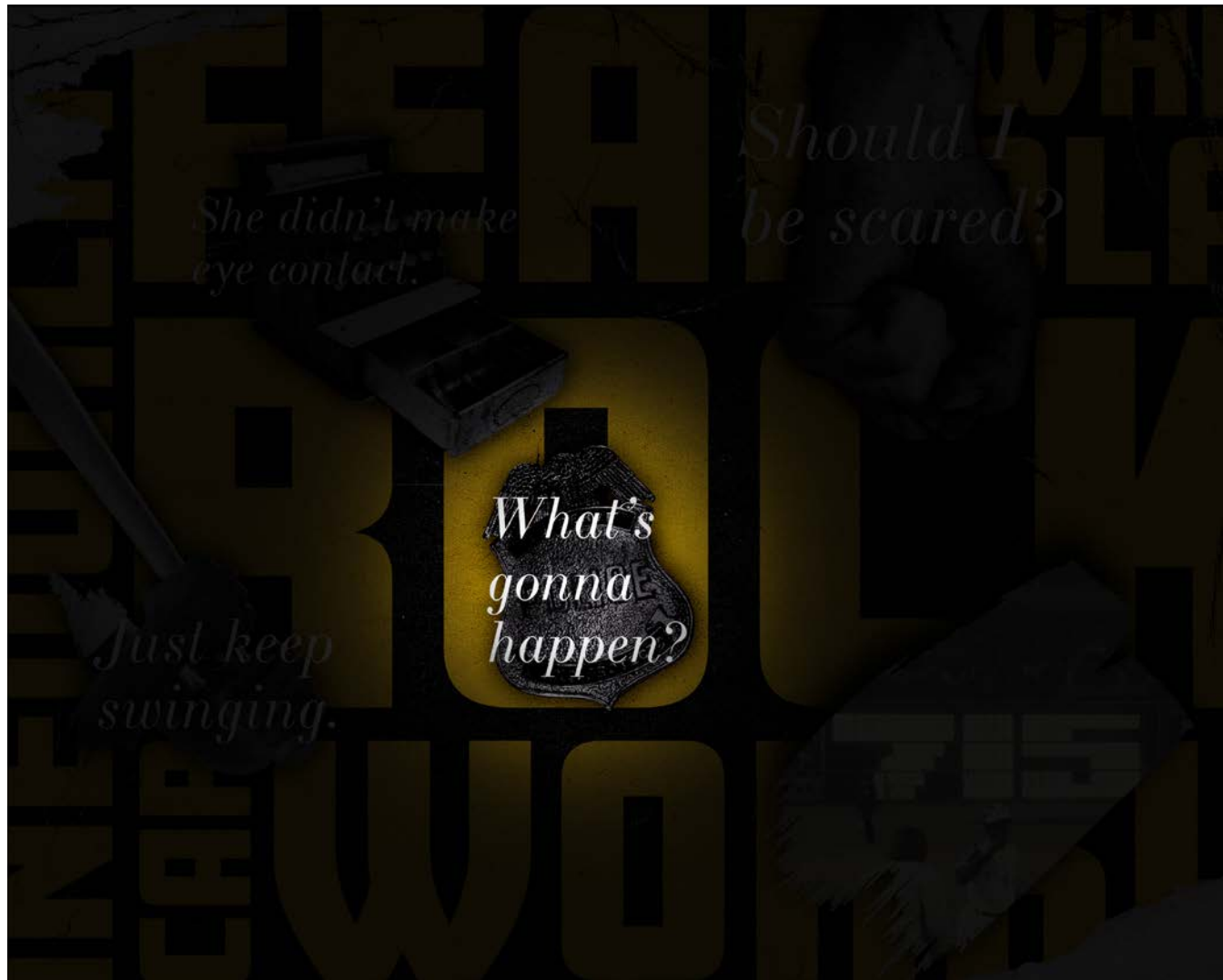
Story side corresponding VO

So when that car gets down the street, the rocks fly. And as it rounds the corner, you lob one perfectly over the house.

But this car comes back. And with it, the weight of life.

Marquis Grissom Station

Story side



Story side corresponding VO

Your friends scatter—all directions. But not you. You stand there as the driver gets out. He walks up, looks you in the eye and says “Did you throw that rock?”

Marquis Grissom Station

Reveal side

That moment started it all.

The car that Marquis Grissom hit with a rock belonged to T.J. Wilson, an off-duty Atlanta police officer. More importantly, Mr. Wilson was a baseball coach and that day, he invited Marquis to join his team.

Growing up, Grissom found education in every adversity. He carried the weight of these life experiences, but instead of being weighed down, he used them as motivation and fuel. That drive was put to the test when a rough start to his professional career with the Jamestown Expos had him considering quitting. But he thought back to those adversities. To everything he'd learned from his parents, teachers and coaches, and he truly focused on the next game. He went 4-for-5 and everything changed.

After only a year and a half in the minors, Grissom joined the major leagues where his impressive 17-year career included becoming a two-time All-Star, four-time Gold Glove Award Winner, 1995 World Series Champion and so much more.

Retiring in 2006 as one of only 10 players to achieve 2,000 hits, 200 home runs and 400 stolen bases, Grissom turned his passion for baseball toward the youth in Atlanta. Following the footsteps of the coaches who helped shape him as a young man, Grissom started the Marquis Grissom Baseball Association, which provides coaching, mentoring, college placement assistance, tutoring and scholarship assistance. The organization also sponsors the Smoltz-Grissom Wood Bat Classic tournament, which is held in Atlanta every year.

Grissom, with his brother Antonio, also led the 2021 Atlanta Braves RBI youth baseball program. The program's goal is to create more development and play opportunities for diverse young athletes across the city of Atlanta and beyond. This year, more than 400 baseball & softball players ages 13-18 stepped up to the plate.



get

Marquis Grissom



Marquis working with young players from the Marquis Grissom Baseball Association and Atlanta Braves RBI.

Reveal side text

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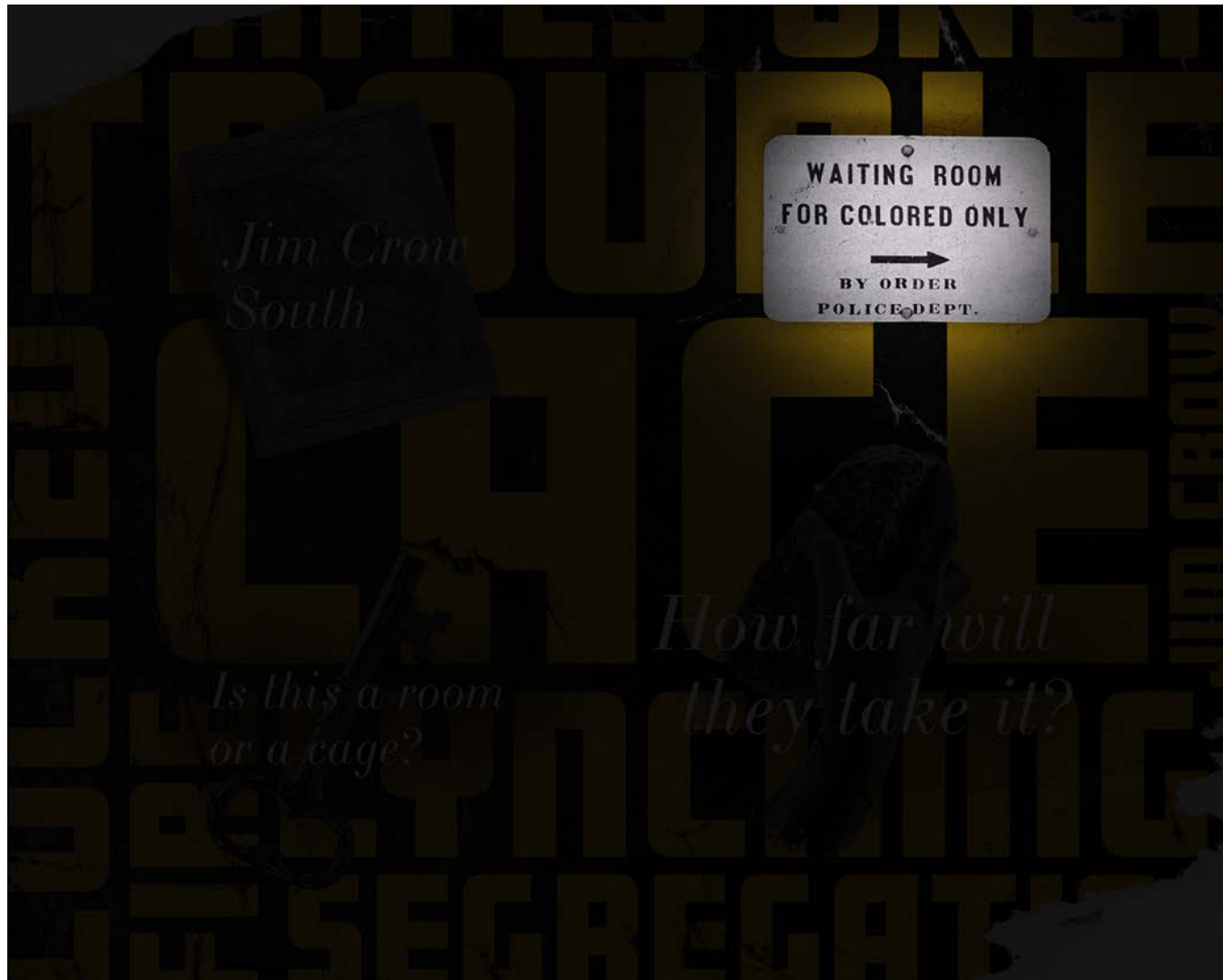
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Marquis' jersey from the 1995 World Series will be displayed approximately 6 feet from the wall on a mannequin in a case similar to the jersey in this image.

Bill Lucas Station

Story side



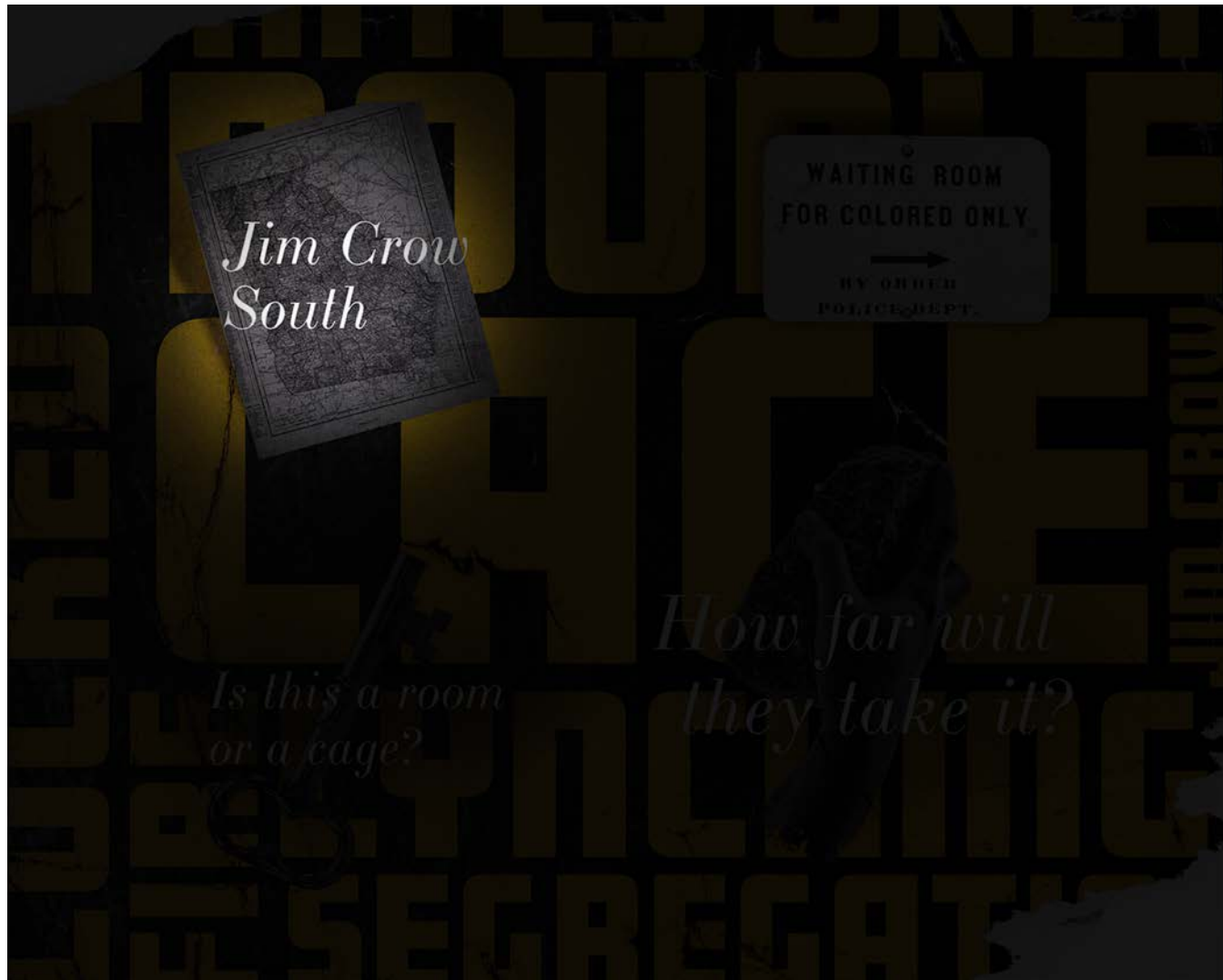
Story side corresponding VO

Imagine you're part of a team, but you're not.

Because you can run the bases all day, but you can't celebrate the win in the same restaurant.

Bill Lucas Station

Story side



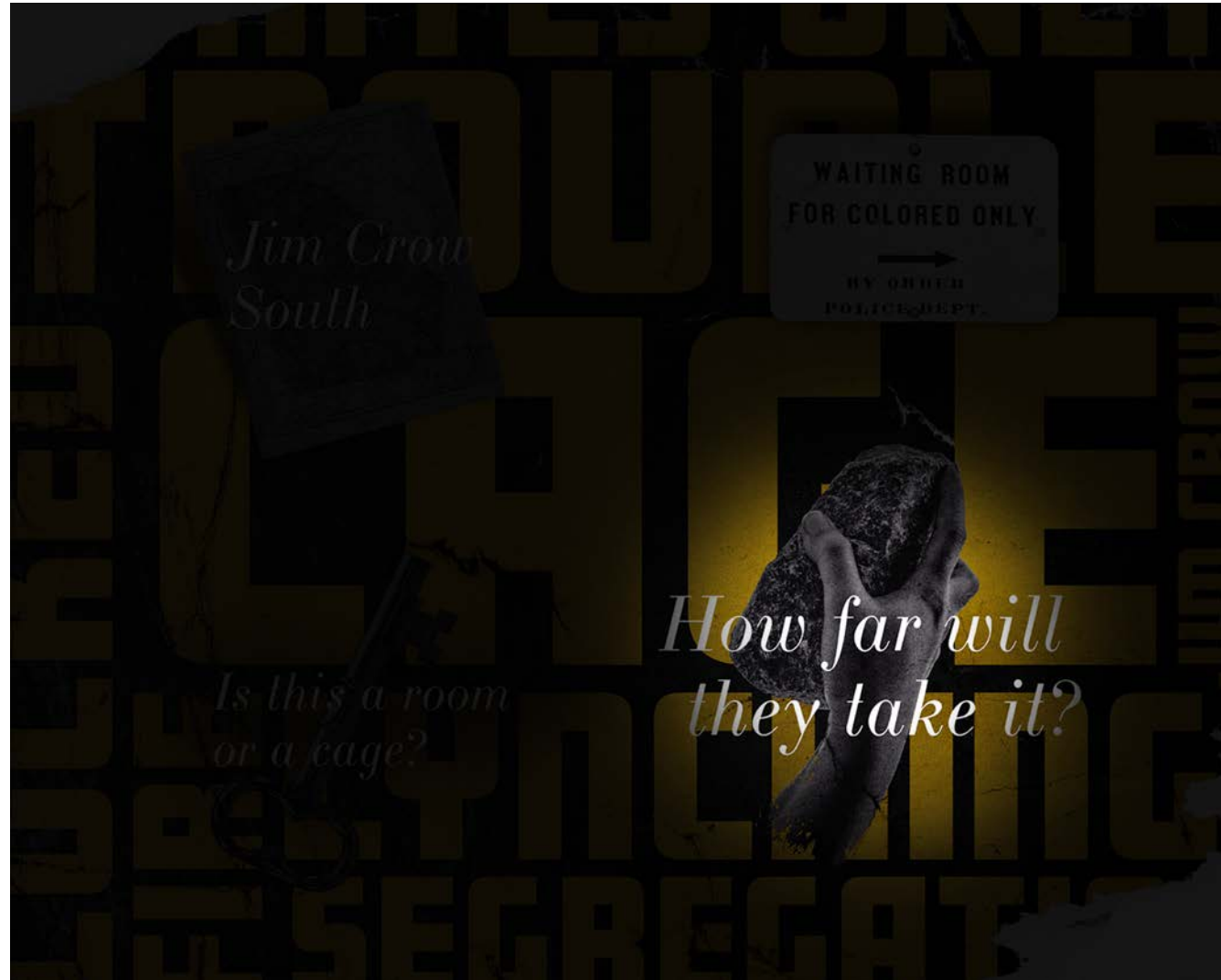
Story side corresponding VO

Because you can put on the same uniform but you can't even stay in the same hotel.

Imagine you travel as a team but it's you and the other Black players who are told you can't even leave your room at night. Because YOU are the target of trouble.

Bill Lucas Station

Story side

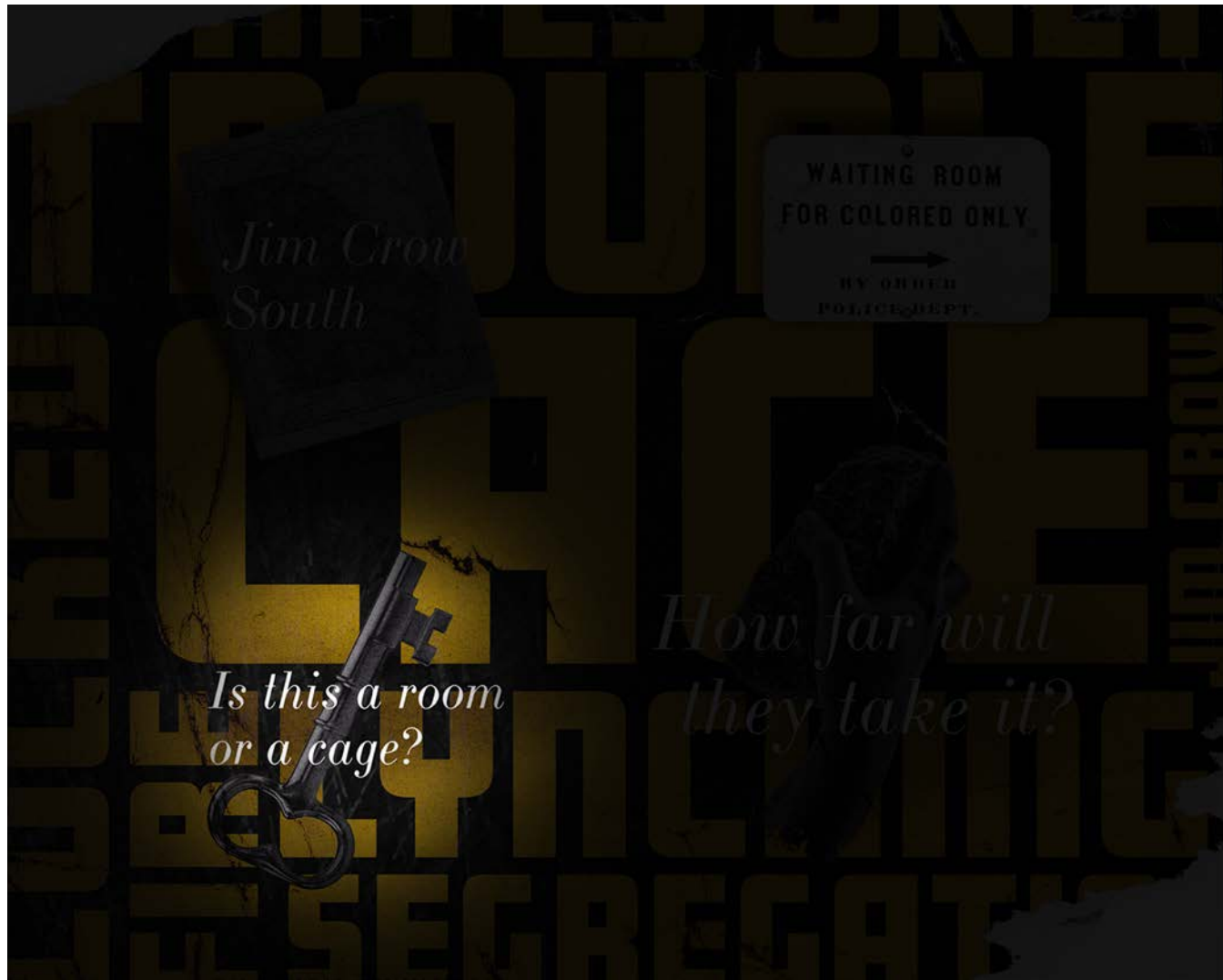


Story side corresponding VO

That if you were to go outside, trouble might just find you—because some people think the color of your skin doesn't belong here.

Bill Lucas Station

Story side



Story side corresponding VO

Imagine if all that is weighing on you as you stand in your room and hear the lock click. Just to make sure you don't get any ideas. What would you do?

Would you have the principles and strength to stand up and make your voice heard?

To be inspired in that moment to go from player to leader?

Bill Lucas Station

Reveal side

“I didn’t hire Bill because he was Black. I hired Bill because he was the best man for the job.”

-Ted Turner



Pictured left: Bill Lucas and Henry Aaron.
Pictured right: Bill Lucas and Ted Turner.



Bill Lucas

That courage led to a ground-breaking future.

Bill Lucas spent six years playing in the Milwaukee Braves farm system. The team held spring training in Waycross, GA, and once there, Black players were given separate rooms and were forbidden from going into town. To make sure they didn't leave, these players were locked in their rooms at night.

Bill didn't accept that. While everyone else stayed silent, he didn't. He spoke out not only against the inequality, but against the clear danger posed by being locked in a room. Dick Cecil, who would later become the Braves general manager, recognized Lucas's leadership abilities in that moment. Years later, when the Braves organization moved to Atlanta, Cecil would hire Lucas to lead the community outreach.

In this public relations role, Lucas introduced the Braves Good Neighbor Program, which provided playing fields and playground equipment to kids. He also spearheaded hiring at the ballpark and created one of the most diverse workforces in big-league ballparks across the country.

Bill Lucas continued through the ranks of the Braves organization, ultimately becoming the first Black general manager in Major League Baseball. The team had just come off two terrible seasons, and Bill immediately set to work. In the three years he held the position, cut short by his untimely passing, Lucas laid the foundation for a team that would go on to win 14 consecutive division championships. When asked about the hire years later, Ted Turner stated “I didn't hire Bill because he was Black. I hired Bill because he was the best man for the job.”

Lucas felt his purpose was to show that a Black person could hold a top position in baseball, and he worked every day to exhibit the kind of behavior that would pave the way to a more equitable future. Despite his incredible efforts and unparalleled mind for the game, it would be 17 years before another Black general manager followed in his footsteps.

Reveal side text

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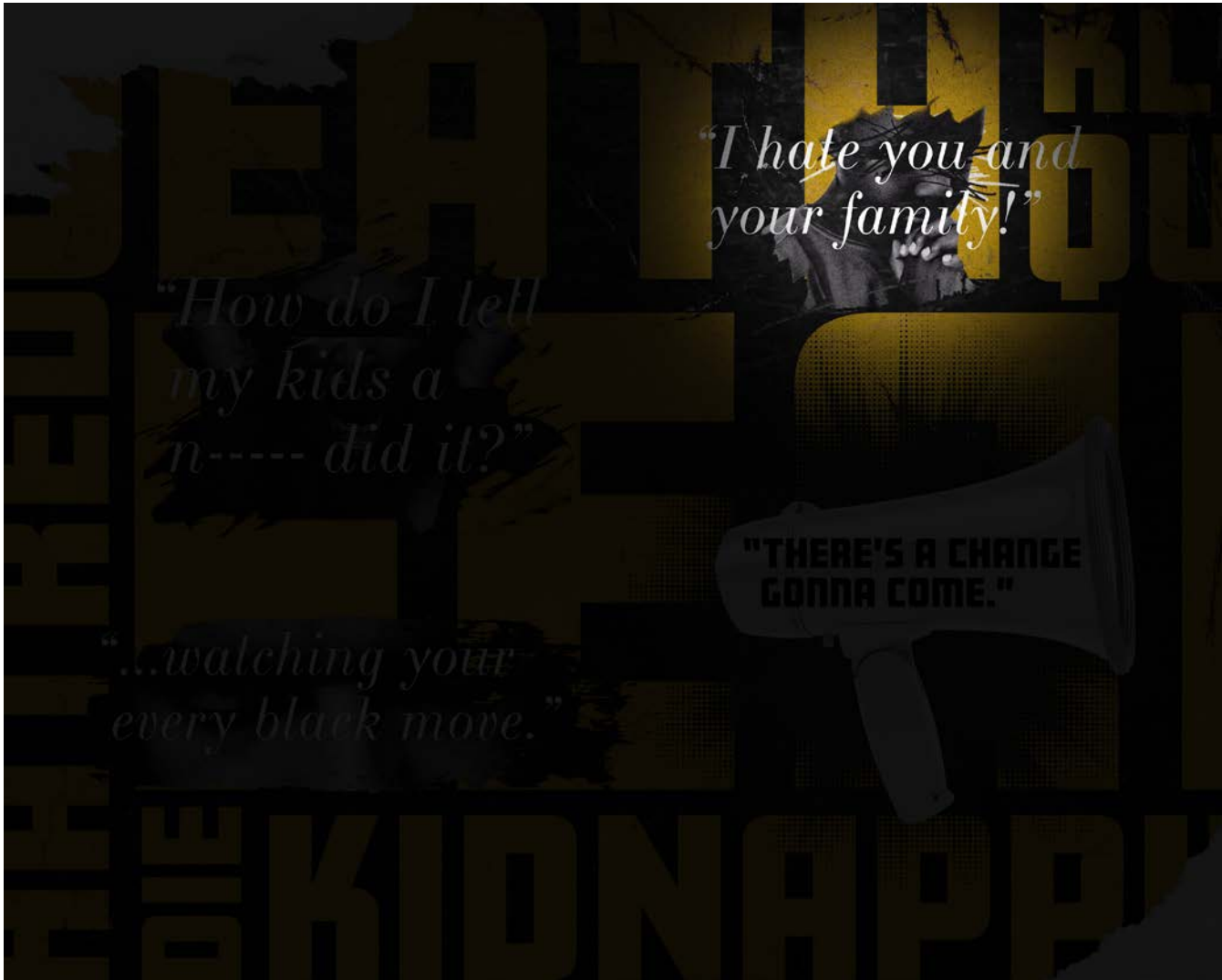
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Hank Aaron Station

Story side



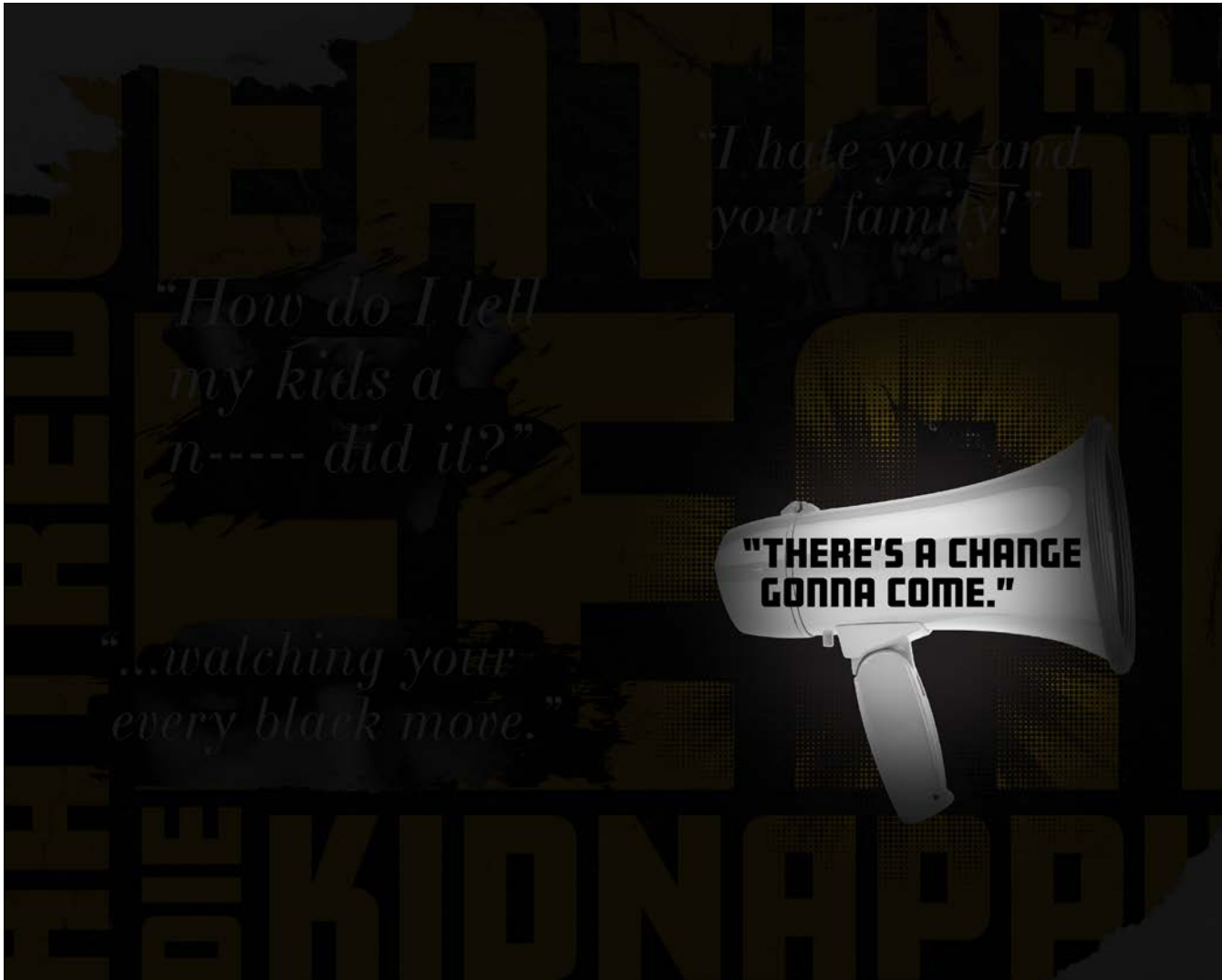
Story side corresponding VO

What if following your dreams threatened the status quo? If playing at the highest levels and demanding your fair place meant you were challenging the entire system?

If people feared what you represent and lashed out because of it. Spewed hate, violence and racism to try to tear you down. To tear your family down. Your kids.

Hank Aaron Station

Story side



Story side corresponding VO

What if as much as you loved this game, it was never just stepping up to the plate; it was stepping into the spotlight, as a hero to many—and as a target for many others. It was becoming a symbol of a movement—a radical shift for greater equity—that millions didn’t want to see.

Hank Aaron Station

Story side

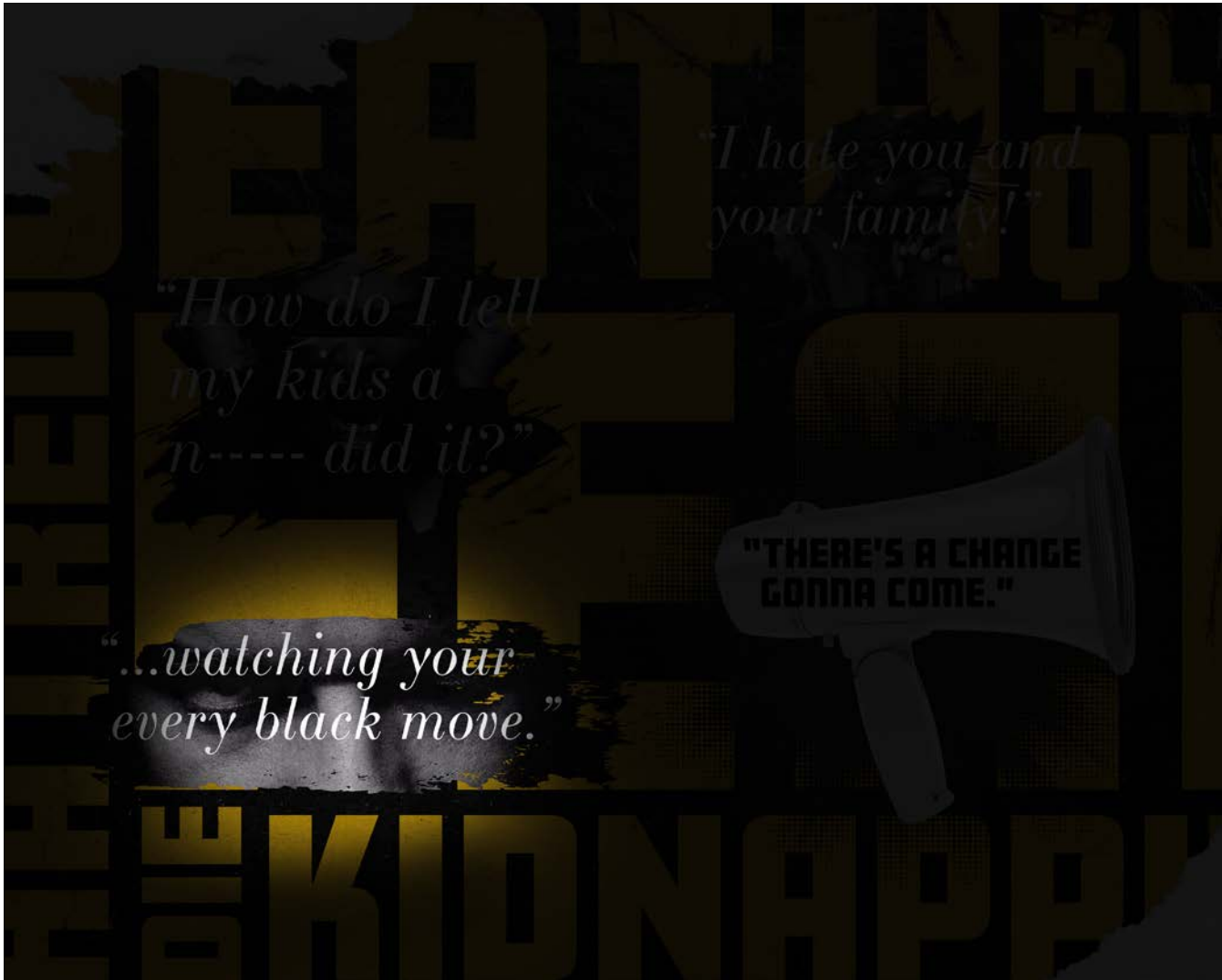


Story side corresponding VO

What if you carried the weight of the game, the weight of your people, the weight of fighting to stay focused—because it’s not a baseball record that’s at stake, it’s a white man’s record at stake.

Hank Aaron Station

Story side

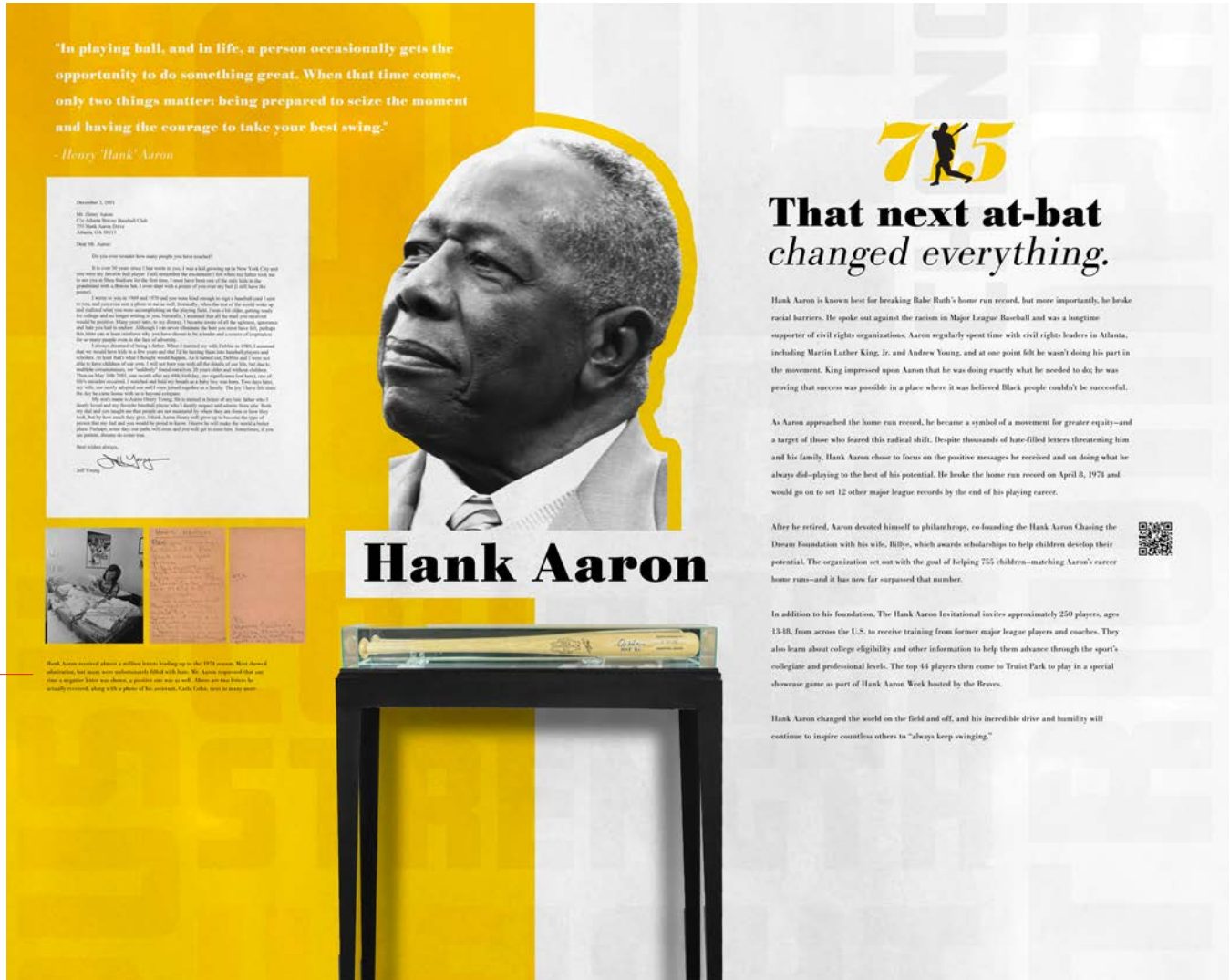


Story side corresponding VO

What would you do if your next at-bat could be your last?

Hank Aaron Station

Reveal side



Hank Aaron received almost a million letters leading up to the 1974 season. Most showed admiration, but many were unfortunately filled with hate. Mr. Aaron requested that any time a negative letter was shown, a positive one was as well. Above are two letters he actually received, along with a photo of his assistant, Carla Cohn, next to many more.

Reveal side text

That next at-bat changed everything.

Hank Aaron is known best for breaking Babe Ruth's home run record, but more importantly, he broke racial barriers. He spoke out against the racism in Major League Baseball and was a longtime supporter of civil rights organizations. Aaron regularly spent time with civil rights leaders in Atlanta, including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Andrew Young, and at one point felt he wasn't doing his part in the movement. King impressed upon Aaron that he was doing exactly what he needed to do; he was proving that success was possible in a place where it was believed Black people couldn't be successful.

As Aaron approached the home run record, he became a symbol of a movement for greater equity—and a target of those who feared this radical shift. Despite tens of thousands hate-filled letters threatening him and his family, Hank Aaron chose to focus on the positive messages he received and on doing what he always did—playing to the best of his potential. He broke the home run record on April 8, 1974 and would go on to set 12 other major league records by the end of his playing career.

After he retired, Aaron devoted himself to philanthropy, co-founding with his wife Billye the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation, which awards scholarships to help children develop their potential. The organization set out with the goal of helping 755 children—matching Aaron's career home runs—and it has now far surpassed that number.

In addition to his foundation, The Hank Aaron Invitational invites approximately 250 players, ages 13-18, from across the U.S. to receive training from former major league players and coaches. They also learn about college eligibility and other information to help them advance through the sport's collegiate and professional levels. The top 44 players then come to Truist Park to play in a special showcase game as part of Hank Aaron Week hosted by the Braves.

Hank Aaron changed the world on the field and off, and his incredible drive and humility will continue to inspire countless others to “always keep swinging.”

“In playing ball, and in life, a person occasionally gets the opportunity to do something great. When that time comes, only two things matter: being prepared to seize the moment and having the courage to take your best swing.”
- Henry 'Hank' Aaron

Pledge Station

Reveal side

VOICES OF TODAY

Racism still impacts athletes in 2021. The stories below reflect challenges that go beyond the game.



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

"Last summer I participated in a protest in Tallahassee. I've always had a heart of activism. As we were walking, a truck ran through us and two white men were driving... Educating people has been the number one thing, at that point we can move forward."

*Alexis Scott, Softball
Political Science*



Morehouse College

"Harris almost made me walk away from a game that I truly love. I've been told to leave the place better than when I arrived. I did so by enduring the challenge so that others would not be discouraged."

*David A. Coleman II, Baseball
Dual-Degree Engineering*



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"A driver didn't like that my friend double-parked in front of my house. We made eye contact, he parked ... and started yelling. 'You think you're tough? You think you're going to tighten me up? Tighten me up, n-----.' He was boasting that he went to prison for years. I responded with how many years I've gone to college."

*Darrin Brown, Baseball
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"Each season in high school, I dealt with racial taunting, misuse of my last name, even challenges playing consistently, yet my resolve to become the best me I could be—and with my faith—maintained my forward progress. Even after what we endured during the COVID-19 pandemic as I arrived my Freshman year, nothing thwarted my self love or my humility to be a member of the Morehouse College baseball team."

*Mykal Poindexter, Baseball
Kinesiology*

Do you have a story to tell? Tweet using **#MyMomentsOfCourage** to share your experience and connect with others.

Marquis Grissom, Bill Lucas and Hank Aaron showed incredible courage, perseverance and strength in the face of adversity. Now it's our turn. Together, we can make a difference. We can make our voices heard. And it starts right now by reciting the following words aloud and signing the pledge card.

"I pledge to always keep learning. To listen and to be aware. To support those who need it. Because whether I've experienced inequality or not, I acknowledge that it exists, that its effects are devastating, and that I can help end it."

Below are real voices to get involved. Learn about these organizations. Support them. Discover your own path to making an impact. Spread the word.



Chasing the Dream Foundation	Clark Atlanta University
Henry Louis Aaron Fund	The Last Hero by Howard Bryant
100 Black Men of America	YMCA of Atlanta
Morehouse College	Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Special thanks to: Billie Aaron, Delroy Lucas, Marquis Grissom, Alton Turnerbaum, Howard Bryant, Darryl Baker, Casey Wright, Carla Coker, Alvin Brown, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Morehouse College, Clark Atlanta University, and many other amazing heroes who helped preserve, shape and share these stories and legacies of courage.

ALWAYS KEEP SWINGING.



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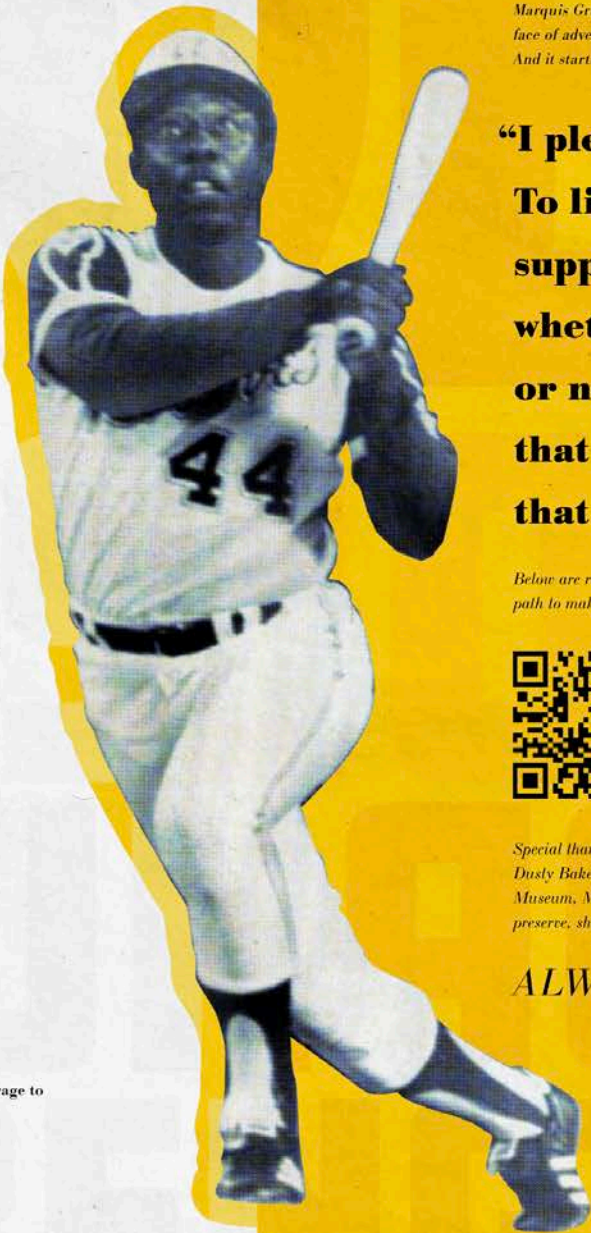
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ALWAYS KEEP SWINGING.

Pledge Station text continued

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Outstanding Needs

CAU logo in .eps or .ai format

Landing page QR code for charities landing page from NCCHR

QR codes for each wall featuring each hero's specific charities

Approved trigger warning copy from NCCHR

Pledge card text