

# Dr. King's Assassination 50 Years Later: Looking Back & Moving Forward, James Stockton's Perspective

By Shawnta S. Barnes - April 3, 2018

*James Stockton was a student at Arsenal Technical High School in Indianapolis when Dr. King was assassinated. Below is his perspective on Dr. King's assassination and how we continue to move forward.*



**Shawnta Barnes: Where were you and what do you remember about April 4, 1968?**

**James Stockton:** Everybody was shocked and sad. We really didn't believe it at first. I don't remember very much. I was in disbelief. Some students at my school were talking about starting a race riot. There were a few fights at the school, but there wasn't a race riot.

**SB: What has changed in the past 50 years?**

**JS:** Nothing much has changed. We don't have a black leader in this country like King. When something happens in the black community, we are pointed towards Rev. Jesse Jackson or Al Sharpton. White people use religion to hold black people back. Yes, religion helped get us through slavery, but now many white people use that to pacify us about what is happening. Our leader does not have to be a preacher. We need to separate from this religion aspect and focus. The leader could be a politician, a lawyer, or a teacher. No one else really wants to step forward because of fear. They don't want to get assassinated like MLK.

**SB: What has stayed the same?**

**JS:** They are still murdering young black men in the streets. They have been doing this for over 400 years. They are shooting them in the back and everything else.

**SB: What do we need to do now in our community to make life better for the future and carry on Dr. King's legacy?**

**JS:** The main thing we need to do is to get alcohol and drugs out of the black community. We need black millionaires to stop preying on poor black people. They are more concerned with making more money than helping the community. Take Michael Jordan, for instance, putting his high-priced shoes out here knowing these kids will steal and kill just to have the most popular shoes on the market. We have enough black millionaires now and they could start businesses to create jobs for our community. Thinking locally, I give

Oscar Robertson credit. Once he got ahead, he gave back. I remember him helping get some homes built here.

We also need more from our black politicians. We need to be mindful of what we are doing on social media. Just look at the news – they are watching our actions online and keeping a record. Our black politicians need to address what our community is doing online because some of what we are putting online can be detrimental to our progress forward.

**SB: What are you doing to make life better for the future and to carry on Dr. King's legacy?**

**JS:** I speak up anytime I get a chance to speak up. I can't just sit back and watch things happen. I've got to get involved.

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