When asked by Trevor Noah, host of ***The Daily Show,*** “Why remember the pain of lynchings?" Bryan Stevenson, head of the Equal Justice Initiative, answered:

“I think that we haven't engaged in the narrative conversation that we need to have.  The North won the Civil War but the South won the *narrative* war.  This idea that white supremacy, racial apartheid, was unacceptable is nothing that we've ever embraced.  And that's why we’ve had this era of terror (lynchings) and that's why we had this era of segregation.  And it's also why we have this presumption of dangerousness and guilt that *still* follows black and brown people.

In South Africa, there was a recognition that we were not going to be able to make progress without some process to “Give Truth”.  A hearing.  If you go to Rwanda, they will tell you about the genocide.  It is not possible to spend time there without hearing about that.  In Germany, in Berlin, you can't go 100 meters without seeing markers and stones that have been placed next to the homes of Jewish families.  The Germans ***want*** you to go to the Holocaust memorial because they are trying to change their identity.  They don't want to be just thought of as Nazis.

But in ***this*** country, we don't talk about slavery.  We don't talk about lynchings.  We don't talk about segregation.  We're preoccupied with the 19th century in my region (the South): hundreds of Confederate memorials and statues.  But nothing about slavery or lynching.  So, I don't think we're going to get free: we are not going to be able to overcome these problems until we confront this history.  We want Truth and Reconciliation, we want unity, but we don't realize those two things are not simultaneous: you've got to have Truth before Reconciliation.  They are sequential.  We haven't done Truth Telling in this country and we won't get where we're trying to go until we do."