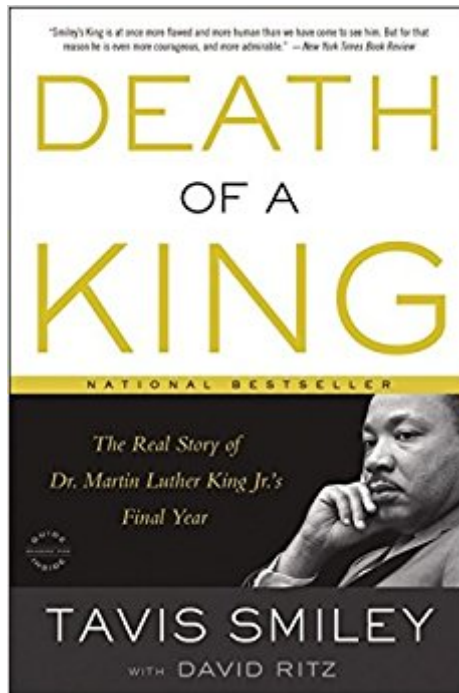


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# Death Of A King: The Real Story Of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Final Year



## Synopsis

The New York Times bestselling chronicle of the last twelve months of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life. The real story about Martin Luther King Jr.'s final year has been buried by time and revisionist history. In *DEATH OF A KING*, bestselling author and award-winning broadcaster Tavis Smiley recounts the final 365 days of King's time on Earth, revealing his tribulations and trials--denunciations by the press, rejection by the president, dismissal by the black middle class, and assaults on his character. Smiley conducted new interviews with King's family and associates, but he also wrote from a personal place, painting a vivid, narrative portrait. Here is an exceptional glimpse into King's world--adding both nuance and gravitas to his heroic legacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Tavis Smiley's genius is to isolate the last year of King's life (though never losing sight of the context of the entire life) to shine a light on "the fear and trembling and sickness unto death" that seems to be the inevitable destiny of all great spirits. We must never forget the totality of King's great mission of combating racism, poverty and militarism. As I read this book, especially regarding his discomfort with Coretta's activism, I reflected as I often have that he surely would have learned the lessons of feminism if he'd lived a little longer. I suspect that he would have been shocked but then proud that it was his daughter who followed him into the pulpit. But I digress. King's last year crystallized the important insight that the Christian obligation to pick up the cross brings more pain than glory. The church has prettied-up that stark symbol of state-sponsored execution. King was not executed by

the state, but the government he had indicted as the "greatest purveyor of violence" must be considered complicit in his death. No national holiday or monument can remove the blood stains from our hands until we fulfill the promise of American democracy that he articulated at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963.

"Death of a King" is one of those books that changed my life after reading it. Never have I read a book that so intricately described a person that I have heard about so much in my life. Tavis Smiley (with David Ritz) put together a truly powerful book that shows the complexity of following your heart, even when the crowd is no longer with you. In this book, you see the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. after the "I Have a Dream Speech". The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who had to battle people questioning his moves against the Vietnam War, questioning the efficacy of non-violence, and people questioning whether Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. really could bring about the "Dream" he so believed in. Yet, you also get to see the other side of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that is rarely discussed. You see the Dr. King, who likes to joke, is worried about his duties as a father, listening to Aretha Franklin, and trying to keep his struggling non-profit together. You'll see the depressed side, the personally morally conflicted side, the angry side, the tired side, and more. After seeing so many frozen images of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a civil rights activist, this was the first book I read that treated him as a human. It's a truly multi-faceted and well-researched book that I would put in the same category of Alex Haley's "Autobiography of Malcolm X". I encourage anyone who wants to do a deeper study of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and his life to read it. I got this book from the library, but I'm buying it for my personal collection. There is great content for reflection in each chapter. It is amazing that Tavis Smiley was able to capture the essence of Dr. King's life in one year in the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Really loved this book which is not only well written but tells a story that few knew. Here was a man who in spite of his own acute depression and the hatred of nearly the entire nation Dr King never gave up his belief in nonviolence. This story of Dr Kings last year on earth paints a picture of a real flesh and blood man and not the cardboard saint we have created in our minds. Mr Smiley is to be congratulated for telling this story which portrays Dr King as a real person with all his faults and all.

The publisher has done a rotten job of summarizing this book. Here, paraphrasing the author as he just spoke on the Jon Stewart show, is the bottom line: The minute that Dr. King turned against militarism and denounced the USA as the greatest purveyor of violence upon the world, he was first

marginalized and then assassinated. "The System" was fine with Dr. King focusing on racism, and even poverty, but it would not tolerate for one moment his questioning the military-industrial complex and the national security state. The author -- whom I found to be very inspiring, coherent, and concise -- a brilliant articulator of the key points in the book -- goes on to have a conversation with Jon Stewart about how the USA simply cannot handle truth-tellers in relation to "big money" matters such as elective wars (racism and poverty being "little money" matters, and deliberately so). Dr. King was ultimately assassinated by a US Army sniper on detail to the FBI and under the personal direction of J. Edgar Hoover. The story is told in *An Act of State: The Execution of Martin Luther King* and has also been documented and validated in a judgment by a federal court awarding the King family the single dollar in damages they requested. I will mention in passing, because somehow Reddit noticed it today and sent the world to my website, that Henry Kissinger, the dowager empress of the political servant class, is a war criminal (see *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*) and now famous for two quotations, both immortalized at Phi Beta Iota the Public Intelligence Blog: Military men are 'dumb, stupid animals to be used' as pawns for foreign policy and, my personal favorite that captures everything wrong with the two-party tyranny of political servants to the financial class: "The illegal we do immediately; the unconstitutional takes a little longer." Dr. King died because he recognized that our national security state has turned both our own country and the world into a cesspool instead of heaven on Earth, and this is one of the reasons we have problems not just with poverty, but with illegal immigration. In my view, the best way to honor Dr. King today would be to dismantle this national security state (along with the two-party tyranny) and reboot American democracy by putting ALL of the people back into self-governance. NO ONE now considered a candidate for president in 2016 has the combination of intelligence and integrity necessary to form the necessary coalition to make that happen. Please buy the book -- this may be one of those world-changing "aha" experiences we all so desperately need if we are to restore the idea that is America. A few other books that complement this one in the above context: *War is a Racket: The Antiwar Classic by America's Most Decorated Soldier* *Grand Theft Pentagon: Tales of Corruption and Profiteering in the War on Terror* *Grand Illusion: The Myth of Voter Choice in a Two-Party Tyranny* *935 Lies: The Future of Truth and the Decline of America's Moral Integrity* *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central-Eastern Europe* *A Power Governments Cannot Suppress* *The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People* Best wishes to all, Robert David STEELE Vivas THE OPEN SOURCE EVERYTHING MANIFESTO: Transparency, Truth, & Trust

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