

Sidedoor S7 Ep. 10 King's Speech Final Transcription

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Lizzie Peabody: This is Sidedoor, a podcast from the Smithsonian with support from PRX. I'm Lizzie Peabody.

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Speaker 2: Just 100 years after Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves, 200,000 people converge on the nation's capital to rally for civil rights.

Lizzie Peabody: On August 28, 1963, crowds of people poured onto the National Mall from every direction are the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. This black and white news reel shows people dressed in crisp button up shirts and ties, women wearing long floral dresses. It almost looks like they're going to church, a sea of people singing and carrying signs. It's the height of the civil rights movement, and this is the largest demonstration yet. In fact, it's the largest demonstration in Washington's history at this point. From the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, activists, musicians, and civil rights leaders speak to the crowd.

Speaker 2: The crowd assembled around the reflecting pool before the Lincoln Memorial occupies every inch on the lawns and under the trees. And there's a great swell of cheers to welcome Martin Luther King to the speaker's podium, a man who stands as a symbol of all they are fighting for.

Lizzie Peabody: The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Is the final speaker of the day. And when he steps up to the podium, he creates one of the most admirable moments in American history.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: I have a dream that one day even the State of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream.

Kevin Young: I think one of the powerful things about the speech is it's really become one of the two or three most important speeches in American history.

Lizzie Peabody: This is Kevin Young, Director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Kevin Young: So, 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, you have people coming together in the nation's capital to say, there's work unfinished and there's work to be done. And I think the speech has become the center and the symbol of that.

Lizzie Peabody: What's become known as Dr. King's I Have a Dream speech isn't just one of the most important speeches in American history, it's one of the world's most famous speeches, one of history's greatest speeches. And what might be even more amazing is that it almost didn't happen.

Kevin Young: What I'm struck by looking back is what I didn't know about the speech, which I know now, including that the I have a dream portion of the speech was actually improvised and is not on the written speech.

Lizzie Peabody: That's right. One of the most famous speeches in world history was improvised, spontaneous. But that doesn't mean it wasn't years in the making. So, this time on Sidedoor, we go back in time to trace the roots of King's dream, from a secret friendship to an experimental poem, to the speech we all know today. That's coming up after the break.

[MUSIC]

Lizzie Peabody: You can see the physical copy of Dr. King's I Have a Dream speech right now if you want to. It's at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. And as I was preparing for this episode, I went to check it out. You can see it's rusted where the staples were. It's typewritten. The entire speech is just three pages. There are a couple of hand-drawn notations around words that King wanted to emphasize. While I was at the museum, I talked to a handful of visitors who stopped to read it.

Speaker 5: The speech always gets me right here. Here's a peaceful man advocating for blacks' peace and they assassinate him.

Lizzie Peabody: Decades after King's death, the speech is as powerful as ever.

Speaker 6: Obviously, it's a very emotional thing, especially remembering that these problems are still very much present in our days now.

Speaker 7: I recall as a youngster nine years of age watching the televised presentation live. I feel grateful to have seen it, but unhappy that we as Americans haven't come as far as I would have hoped over the course of my life.

Speaker 8: Racism now to me is just as bad. So, to me, since Martin Luther King made that speech, it's a little better but not really.

Speaker 9: We're going to begin with breaking news. Americans are in the streets tonight demanding after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Protestors: No justice, no peace. No justice, no peace. No justice, no peace.

Speaker 11: And as police move in, they fire tear gas on the crowd.

Speaker 12: Overnight, nationwide unrest.

Speaker 13: We don't want to loot, that's not what we're out here for. But we do want justice and we want equality.

Lizzie Peabody: In spring of 2020, nearly 60 years after King's speech, a Minneapolis police officer murdered George Floyd. In response, protestors took to the streets to demand justice and equality for black Americans. That summer Floyd's sister, Bridget, stood in the same place where Dr. King delivered his I Have a Dream speech.

Bridget: Martin Luther King stood here 57 years ago and he told the world his dream. But I don't think y'all know that we are here right now and have the power to make it happen.

Lizzie Peabody: And it was at a moment just like this, at a time of racial and civil unrest, that King's dream was first born. In 1955, police in the city of Montgomery, Alabama arrested Rosa Parks. While riding the bus, the 42-year-old seamstress had refused to give up her seat to a white passenger. News of her arrest led the city's black residents to boycott the bus system. Dr. King was a Baptist minister in the city at the time and an outspoken critic of racial segregation.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: And when we planned the bus boycott, we said if we could just get about 50% or 60% of the Negroes of Montgomery not to ride buses, this would be an effective boycott. I think that whole day, we found eight Negroes on the buses. And from that day on, that boycott was more than 99.9 percent effective.

Lizzie Peabody: It was during the 11-month bus boycott in Alabama that the first inklings of King's dream began to take shape. On August 11th, 1956, King gave a speech titled *The Birth of a New Age*.

Jason Miller: At the very end of that, Dr. King talked about a new world, a new world, a better beginning.

Lizzie Peabody: This is Jason Miller, an English professor at North Carolina State University, and author of *Origins of the Dream: Hughes's Poetry and King's Rhetoric*. Miller says King didn't use the word dream in this speech but he started to form the vision he'd deliver from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial years later, "A world in which men will live together as brothers. A world in which men will throw down the sword and live by the higher principle of love."

Jason Miller: He was riffing off a poem by Langston Hughes called *I Dream a World*. He was more interested in the idea of bettering the world than dreaming in 1956.

Lizzie Peabody: This is a portion of the poem, *I Dream a World* by Langston Hughes.

Cayvon Miles: I dream a world where all will know sweet freedom's way, where greed no longer saps the soul nor avarice blights our day. A world I dream where black or white, whatever race you be, will share the bounties of the earth and every man is free.

Lizzie Peabody: Langston Hughes was a leader of the Harlem Renaissance Art Movement of the 1920s and 1930s. He wrote about the lives of everyday black Americans. And King often borrowed phrases from Hughes, as he did with the Bible, the Declaration of Independence, as well as other pastors and civil rights leaders.

Jason Miller: We know this in the world of jazz as riffing, our modern friends know it as the idea of sampling. And this idea of taking from the community only in such a way to show that you're listening and then giving back in such a way to show that it's still relevant today was absolutely key to what Dr. King did. He was always building these ideas, borrowing from other places to do something quite unique.

Lizzie Peabody: And King wasn't the only one who sampled Hughes's language. Lorraine Hansberry's famous 1959 Broadway play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, took its title from Hughes's poem, *A Dream Deferred*. This is Hughes reading that poem.

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Langston Hughes: What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun or fester like a sore and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat or crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?

Lizzie Peabody: Miller says that King took notice of the play's success from his home in Montgomery, reading the reviews in the local newspaper. And just weeks after the debut of *A Raisin in the Sun* on April 5th, 1959, King delivered a new sermon, the title...

Jason Miller: *Shattered Dreams and Blasted Hopes*. The first time Dr. King ever engaged with the dream metaphor was exactly three weeks after debut of *A Raisin in the Sun*. And the entire focus of that sermon was, who here today has not been the subject of blasted dreams and shattered hopes. It's nightmarish conditions that lead one to dream.

Lizzie Peabody: And King didn't just admire Hughes from afar, they were actually close friends. They wrote each other letters, Hughes wrote poems for King, they even traveled together to Nigeria. But it was a friendship that they had to keep secret for good reason.

Jason Miller: Langston Hughes had appeared before Joseph McCarthy in 1953 accused of being a communist. And that Senate hearing tainted his reputation for years.

Lizzie Peabody: This was the Cold War, communists were enemies of the state. King knew he couldn't have any public connection to Hughes because it would hurt the entire cause and completely destroy his credibility as a leader of the civil rights movement.

Jason Miller: And so, from exactly April of 1960 to March 15th, 1965, Langston Hughes was never mentioned by Dr. King in his speeches or sermons because Dr. King was under the greatest FBI surveillance during that time.

Lizzie Peabody: But that didn't stop him from paying tribute to his friend, he just had to be a little clever.

Jason Miller: Langston Hughes would come up with these phrases like, *I will love you still*. And Dr. King would move the words around as if they were items in a shell game so that a word at the start would appear at the beginning. In the poem *Brotherly Love*, Langston Hughes wrote, *"I will love you still."* When Dr. King began speaking, he went on these riffs at the end of his talks where he said, *"And we will still love you."*

Lizzie Peabody: King was a skilled craftsman of words, obviously. Sure, you can call it talent, but it was practice too, he worked at it tirelessly. He would spend hours honing each speech to perfection.

Jason Miller: I was stunned in the research that I did finding that Dr. King would have typed versions of speeches, he delivered 10, 11 in times. And on Tuesdays in the privacy of his own setting, he would rewrite them by hand just to make a subtle change to rhythm, the most minor nuance, maybe a word or two. Dr. King always acted as if his highest calling was to be an artistic performer who gave us speeches that we would never forget.

Lizzie Peabody: Even with all this fine-tuning, King realized something seemingly contradictory, some of his best speeches were when he just threw it all out of the window and started riffing.

Jason Miller: Now, the effect of this was so overwhelming that at one speech in Greensboro, that the crowd stood up and did not stop applauding. And so, when he stepped back and then stepped forward to the microphone one more time, he ended his speech early.

Lizzie Peabody: King knew his words were his most powerful weapon in the fight for civil rights, and he made good use of them. By the end of the 1950s, he was giving as many as 350 speeches a year, sometimes delivering up to three a day.

Jason Miller: But by 1962, Dr. King's stature had really taken a hit.

Lizzie Peabody: King had long been hated by opponents of the civil rights movement. But now, division was also growing within the movement. Some student groups felt that King stole the thunder from their events. Other people didn't like the attention and unrest he brought to their towns. And still, others thought his strategy of nonviolent protest didn't go far enough. People who suggested inviting King to their town were sometimes booed publicly. So, by 1962, King found that he wasn't welcome in a lot of places. And that's when he got an invitation from a childhood friend and fellow pastor, would he come speak in the small North Carolina town of Rocky Mount? King accepted. He'd been working on a new idea for a speech, and this might just be the place to try it out.

Jason Miller: In 1962, Dr. King is revising his first sermon about dreams in which he talked about them as shattered dreams and blasted hopes. And in rewrite it, he comes to a line he says, "We as a people have long dreamed of freedom." And he takes his pen on that yellow page and he traces over it five or six, seven times. You can see that the idea of the dream is something he literally can't get past on the page.

Lizzie Peabody: When we come back, Dr. King tries an early version of his, I Have a Dream speech nine months before the March on Washington, and nobody is quite sure what to make of it. We'll have more on that after the break. In November of 1962, Martin Luther King Jr. was on his way to the North Carolina town of Rocky Mount, which was a dangerous place for King to travel.

Jason Miller: Few people realize that in 1962 through 1966, North Carolina had more KKK members than every other state combined in the United States.

Lizzie Peabody: What? Hang on, say that one more time.

Jason Miller: In the early 1960s, the membership of the KKK in North Carolina outnumbered all other states combined. There were billboards right outside of places even like Raleigh, North Carolina that said, welcome to Clansville, USA. Dr. King was actually brought into the city in a hearse under disguise so people wouldn't know his whereabouts.

Lizzie Peabody: Oh my gosh. That's how dangerous it was for King to get into Rocky Mount. And he suspected people were listening in on phone lines to track his movements while there, so his allies in Rocky Mount used code words when talking about him.

Jason Miller: Dr. King liked to eat before his speeches. And so, Helen Gay was a caterer in the town and she prepared the meal. And when Dr. King finally arrived at the house, she picked up her phone and she called her two friends and she said, "The blackberry pie is ready." The

phrase, the blackberry pie is ready, meant that King had arrived and no one could decipher it if they were listening on the phone lines.

Lizzie Peabody: Oh my gosh.

Jason Miller: And so that's the kind of atmosphere Dr. King really had.

Lizzie Peabody: This is like a spy film or something. Once the blackberry pie, that is Dr. King, had arrived safely in Rocky Mount, he held meetings with local organizers. As a favor to his friend, he gave a speech to 1,800 people at an all-black school's gymnasium. This is the first time King ever gave his I Have a Dream speech to an audience, something most people didn't know until a recording was discovered in 2013. And just a heads up, the audio is a little hard to understand.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: And so, my friends of Rocky Mount, I have a dream tonight. It is a dream rooted deeply in the American dream.

Jason Miller: When you really dissect what Dr. King is saying, he is delivering something that's new material. We can tell this because there's a City of Sasser in Georgia and he calls it Sasser County. There's no Sasser County, Georgia. We know that he stumbles at a few places for things that he often knew. And so, all the hallmarks of this speech point to somebody that is testing new material that he's excited about, but hasn't refined in a wrought way.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: Little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and little white girls and walk the streets as brothers and sisters. I have a dream.

Lizzie Peabody: Jason Miller is the one who discovered this original audio recording of King's speech in Rocky Mount. He dissected it countless times, listening back and forth, talking to people who were there that day.

Jason Miller: He captured the imaginations of everybody in that room by talking about a dream in which a world would be completely changed and altered. And this notion was so beyond the listening public that day that they didn't buy it.

Lizzie Peabody: Really?

Jason Miller: And it's quite fascinating. None of the news coverage even referenced it because they were like, "Well, we're talking about voting rights, aren't we? Isn't that what this speech is about?"

Lizzie Peabody: In the spring following this speech in Rocky Mount, King and other civil rights leaders launched a new strategy to end segregation in Birmingham, Alabama. It was called Project C, for confrontation.

Speaker 18: These are the front lines of the battle between Dr. Martin Luther King's Negro disciples of nonviolence and the uniformed forces of Birmingham, led by Commissioner Eugene Bull Connor, who says, "We were trying to be nice to them but they won't let us be." The Negro leaders say this will lay the whole issue before the conscience of the community and the nation.

Lizzie Peabody: In May of 1963, police in Birmingham, Alabama used fire hoses and dogs to clear black protestors from the streets. Men, women, and children were attacked in front of TV

cameras as millions of Americans watched. King's chief of staff, Wyatt Tee Walker said this showdown in Birmingham was the start of the civil rights movement's most important chapter. Millions of Americans watched the violence against black citizens on the evening news and it caught the attention of someone else.

Speaker 19: Now, an address by the President of the United States. speaking live from Washington.

Lizzie Peabody: Then President, John F. Kennedy, addressed the nation shortly after the Birmingham protests, calling for immediate action to end segregation.

John F. Kennedy: The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them.

Lizzie Peabody: The Kennedy administration sent Congress one of the most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation since slavery was abolished. The bill would ban segregation. It would also make racial discrimination in housing and employment illegal. Obviously, this was a huge deal. And King wasted no time, he started rallying across the country to put pressure on Congress to get the bill passed. Just weeks after Kennedy addressed the nation, the largest civil rights demonstration up to that point took place in Detroit, Michigan. And this was the second time King delivered his I Have a Dream speech, which sounded a little different from the first time.

Jason Miller: It sounded very forced to be quite honest. And I know this startles people because we can't even remember Dr. King not being unbelievably compelling.

Lizzie Peabody: This was six months after he'd given the speech in Rocky Mount. And for the audience in Detroit, he got a little experimental.

Jason Miller: Dr. King decides to actually write out his dream in the form of a literal poem. Instead of being poetic, he's going to be a poet.

Lizzie Peabody: King's new version of his dream was laid out in a rhyming poetic style called, wait for it, chiasmic parallelism, which had strict rhyming rules that worked on paper. But out loud, it sounded a little odd. Although it did lead him to come up with one of the most famous phrases he ever spoke.

Jason Miller: Your listeners won't even believe this, Dr. King had a phrase in his fourth line that said, "I don't want my children to go up the same dark days that I grew up within." He said, "They will be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: I have a dream this afternoon that my four little children will not come up in the same young days that I came up within, but they will be judged on the basis of the content of their character not the color of their skin.

Jason Miller: He only arrived at that exact language because he was right writing a rhyming poem for his audience, and within was an off rhyme with skin.

Lizzie Peabody: After this massive demonstration in Detroit, there was a feeling that real change was possible. Everything that student protesters, religious leaders, allies, and others had worked and bled for years looked like it would pay off in a very real way. Momentum was on

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their side. This was the moment to send a message to the president and all the elected leaders in Congress, this movement wasn't backing down. And what better way to deliver this message than to show up on their front lawn, the National Mall.

Jason Miller: Nobody had come to the city of Washington, DC in these large numbers to demonstrate. There had been, of course, gatherings and protests. But to say that it was unparalleled is no understatement.

Lizzie Peabody: On August 28th, 1963, a quarter of a million people showed up on the National Mall for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Jason Miller: Remember, there's no social media, there's no way to connect with these people other than flyers and word of mouth.

Lizzie Peabody: King's keynote address would be the big finish to the entire March. He and his advisors had been working on it for months, honing it to perfection, making the final tweaks, or...

Jason Miller: It seems that they had forgot that Dr. King had to speak. So much had gone in-

Lizzie Peabody: Really?

Jason Miller: Absolutely

Lizzie Peabody: No. How? How do you forget that?

Jason Miller: So much work had gone into who's going to be where and what's going to happen that we seem to think that they have this sense of, oh my gosh, we have to actually come up with a speech.

Lizzie Peabody: So, the night before King's big speech, he and his advisors were furiously working through the night to try to figure out what he was going to say the next day. Besides the people on the National Mall, there would be millions of Americans watching at home, including the president of the United States. King had a long repertoire of speeches and sermons that he'd given over the years, but would any of them work for this exact moment? So, everyone was throwing out ideas for what he should say.

Jason Miller: One man, Clarence Jones, came up with this idea that maybe we should talk about a bad check, a promissory note, this idea that we have been given a check march insufficient funds, but we do not believe the vaults of justice are bankrupt. He came up with that because weeks before he'd been in the great Nelson Rockefeller's private vaults bailing out \$10,000 in cash to get people out of Birmingham, Alabama on bail. And he had to sign a promissory note.

Lizzie Peabody: So, King said, "Throw it in the speech." And then someone brought up the dream that King had been workshopping. But King's chief of staff thought the speech should be focused on specific actions, get this civil rights legislation passed. This isn't the time for big lofty ideals, focus on the task at hand.

Jason Miller: The meeting ends like this, Wyatt Tee Walker says, "Don't use that I have a dream thing. It's old, worn out, and tried, I've heard it too many times." Clarence Jones is writing voraciously, "Let's do this." And Dr. King says, "I need to counsel with the Lord."

Lizzie Peabody: Alone in his room, King wrote out the speech that he would give the following day. It was 4:00 in the morning when he handed it over to Dorothy Cotton, who typed it up and sent copies to the press. Another copy was set aside for King to read from at the podium. The words, I have a dream, are nowhere in any of them. The next day, as the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom got underway, speaker after speaker address the crowd.

Speaker 21: We've got freedom, freedom, freedom now.

Speaker 24: The time is now, the place is here.

Speaker 23: That it is not only in America, that the battle for freedom and dignity of peoples is being waged.

Lizzie Peabody: By the end of the long hot day, Dr. King stood up at the podium in front of the Lincoln Memorial. And when he started his speech...

Jason Miller: He followed the rules of what he usually did, was starting out very low. How can a glass be filled if it's already full? And so, he liked to start very slowly, very calmly. And he gave the moment an incredible nobility by referring to the shadow of a great man in whom we stand.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

Jason Miller: Dr. King, like all performers, is feeling the audience and they become loud cheers. And who can even imagine what it would feel like to look out at an audience to which you can't find the back of? So, there are plenty of moments for him to pause when the audience reacts, claps, and cheers. And his eyes are twitchy and he's getting comfortable and settled in.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked insufficient funds.

Lizzie Peabody: If you watch the video of King delivering his speech, you can see him reading from the manuscript. But he's gaining momentum and feeling the energy from the crowd. And then...

Jason Miller: There's a line in the prepared remarks where Dr. King was going to quote the words of Amos.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: ... satisfied until justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.

Jason Miller: I'll always wonder if something inside of him sparked. And at that moment, he started thinking about altering his speech.

Lizzie Peabody: The story goes that at this moment, famous gospel singer, Mahalia Jackson, who had performed shortly before Dr. King called up to him.

Kevin Young: She says, "Tell them about the dream Martin." And that really inspired him to take what had been a four-minute speech into the epic we know now.

Lizzie Peabody: This is the Smithsonian's Kevin Young again.

Kevin Young: The tradition he's in is one of call and response, this isn't simply talking to us. And even his responding to Mahalia Jackson's urging to tell them about the dream, Martin is in a way part of this call and response tradition. And he embodied it so powerfully.

Lizzie Peabody: So, the crowd and even people on the stage are responding to Dr. King's words. And then he looks up from the typed speech on the podium and turns his head to the sky.

Jason Miller: Alerting everyone that he was either getting a message from the gods or following his own heart or being inspired by the moment. He certainly was not reading off that paper anymore.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: So even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.

Jason Miller: When Dr. King started inserting, I have a dream, it was the most perfect combination of everything he'd been preparing for up to that moment.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

Jason Miller: He'd tried it out and saw it's success in places like Rocky Mount in 1962, he'd taken it a little too far as a piece of literature in Detroit. So, with one eye, he was thinking about speeches he'd delivered in the past, with the other, he was in the moment, he was in right now. Words like transport and sublime come to mind.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountainside. Let freedom ring. And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, Black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, free at last, free at last, thank God almighty we are free at last.

Lizzie Peabody: President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law the following summer. It banned segregation and made employment discrimination illegal. That same year, Dr. King became the youngest man ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize, he was 35 years old. Martin Luther King Jr. Was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee less than five years after giving his, I Have a Dream speech. Over the course of his life, King gave an estimated 2,500 speeches. Many are well remembered, but none as much as the one he gave from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in late August of 1963. Kevin Young says on that day King put into words the struggle for freedom and liberation that black Americans have been fighting for for centuries.

Kevin Young: I think that there was a sense that this was the culmination of a movement and the moment. It became the symbol of a movement that was continuing and ongoing. And we could say it started with the Montgomery bus boycott of '55 but, of course, extends earlier than that, from slavery to freedom, from the civil rights movement to the current movements that are afoot. So, it's really an important piece in that larger story, if not the most important.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: So even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream.

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Lizzie Peabody: You've been listening to Sidedoor, a podcast from the Smithsonian with support from PRX. To learn more about Dr. King's famous speech, check out our newsletter. You can subscribe at si.edu/sidedoor. We'll include a link to the website where you can hear King's first dream speech in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. And you can see the physical copy of Dr. King's I Have a Dream speech at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. It's on temporary loan from Villanova University for the next few years. For help with this episode, we want to thank Kevin Young, Jason Miller, and the person who brought Langston Hughes's words to life for us, Cayvon Miles.

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Lizzie Peabody: We also want to thank the people who shared their thought with us about Dr. King's speech at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Beta Washington, Howard Margoles, Malika Gonzalez, and Greg Ferris.

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Lizzie Peabody: Our podcast team is James Morrison, Nathalie Boyd, Ann Conanan, Caitlin Shaffer, Tami O'Neill, Jess Sadeq, Lara Koch, and Sharon Bryant. Episode artwork is by Dave Leonard. Extra support comes from Jason and Genevieve at PRX. Our show is mixed by Tarek Fouda. Our theme song and episode music are by Breakmaster Cylinder.

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Lizzie Peabody: If you want to sponsor our show, please email sponsorship@prx.org. I'm your host, Lizzie Peabody. Thanks for listening.

[MUSIC]

Jason Miller: No one's ever found this. I had the chance to hold a copy of it and I have a copy of it with me now. But Dr. King's first try, his speech was entitled Normalcy Never Again. And it's one of the three worst speeches he's ever written. He sat down to try to come up with a speech apparently a few weeks before or days before, and he came up with a terrible line, Normalcy Never Again. Thank goodness he didn't deliver that in 1963.

[MUSIC]