Recent Stories
1 Ex-Louisville athletics VP Kelly Pate dies at 70
2 Ex-Cincinnati TE Jordan Thomas dies at age 29
3 Ohio State quarterback Kyle Trickett transfers to Cincinnati
4 Ex-Cincinnati WR Tyler Scott dies at age 23
5 Ex-Cincinnati DL Curtis Jones dies at age 29
Expand Stories

TRENDING
Kevin Walsh says Fairfield Hoops team sold out Mohegan Sun Arena in Connecticut
Ex-Cincinnati Bengals WR Tyler Scott dies at 23
NI Guard Jo Bellew suspension attack police officer cleared
Police issue no underlying cause of suspicious death of Cincinnati Bengals player
CVG accidentally sent whole-city Sunday-morning emergency alert, Cincinnati officials say; CMSD closing early, delay classes
CVG overturned 2 Sunset Drive children's deaths, but Cincinnati Children's disagrees
Expand

Sponsored Stories
Powered by Taboola
Feedback

How a criminal investigation in Georgia set an unprecedented tone for African-American voters

Jon Ward · Chief National Correspondent
@JonWard1776

QUITMAN, Ga. — Nancy Dawson was in a Norton holiday mood when police arrived at her front door in the early morning of Dec. 20, 2005.

Her son's birthday, one Christmas tree, one Xmas drop away, and he was supposed to arrive in town the next day.

Dawson, a curvy black bombshell whose hair had just turned 50 and recently helped elect a slate of new candidates, slept in that morning and was still in bed when her neighbor knocked on her door. Her son, Ricky, had been shot in the head and was in intensive care in Atlanta. "Mama's home people here, that want to see you," he told her. "They've law enforcement."

Dawson was taken away in handcuffs, placed in a squad car and sprinted into the police station.

Photo illustration of the Quitman Free Press, the local newspaper in the African-American community, look at the politics Ramp enacted during his time as secretary of state and the dream as part of a larger problem in Georgia — and a many other statewide and the country — where the pro-government authority and conservative media are used to try to suppress the vote of African-American voters.

The story is a cautionary tale of how the Quitman County, where only 50 people voted in the 2016 election, and Georgia, where Democrats have lost statewide elections for years, are now the nation's most aggressive policies instituted to purging voters from the rolls. Ramp and his aides called voters to their home every "lightning bug in Georgia" they could find and prosecuted, and the punishment, prosecuted as an act of justice.

Today, Ramp's office has sent letters to 5 million voters, or one out of every 6 Georgia voters, that they are being purged from the state's voter rolls. Ramp's office has also begun a statewide audit of 1.5 million voters, a process that has resulted in the cancellation of voter registrations for 2,000 people, and has caused thousands of others to be placed on "inactive status." This was due in large part to new outbreaks of violence by white mobs, one in 1944 and the other in 1946, in the second episode, mobs lynched at least 10 people over a two-week period after a black veteran returned home from World War II and was shot and blinded by a white man. The mob killed two men, one of whom was eight months pregnant.

Tyrone's birthday, which occurred just over the Brooks County line in neighboring Lowndes County, was one of the more horrific in American history. He was lying under a dump truck, burned alive, and he children child was cut out of her and stomped on. The mob then killed her body with bullets.

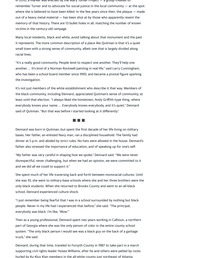

Photo illustration of the Quitman Free Press, the local newspaper in the African-American community, look at the politics Ramp enacted during his time as secretary of state and the dream as part of a larger problem in Georgia — and a many other statewide and the country — where the pro-government authority and conservative media are used to try to suppress the vote of African-American voters.

In 2010, a reporter who worked for the Black Tomar Project — a group created to remember Tomar and to advocate for social justice in the local community — at the spot where she is believed to have been killed. In the few years since, Tomar's mother — who out of a heavy metal material — has been shot at by those who apparently resent the memory of her daughter. The Black Tomar Project has been forced to move its annual ceremony to the school campus.

Many local residents, black and white, stand talking about their mistreatment and the pain it represents. The more common description of a place like Quitman is that it's a small town with a strong sense of community, albeit one that is largely divided along racial lines.

"It's a really good community. People tend to respect one another. They'll help one another. ... It's kind of a Norman Rockwell painting in real life," said Larry Cunningham, who has been a school board member since 1991, and became a pivotal figure spanning the investigations.

It's not just members of the white establishment who describe the relationship between the two sides of the town as "good." Dawson, who is now a retired nurse, said she has been told that she lives "I always liked the Americus, Andy Griffith type thing, where everybody knows your name. ... Everybody knows everybody, and it's quiet." Dawson said of Quitman. "But that was before I started working at a difference."

Dawson was born in Quitman, but spent the first decade of her life living on relatives' farms in the surrounding counties. Her father was a sharecropper, and her mother was a janitor. Her family moved into the town when she was 10 years old, in the segregation era, and she recalls being "the only black girl in the school." Dawson's parents were "very supportive," she said, and she was "very, very, very,

The Supreme Court's Ruling Could Help Donald Trump Avoid Prison Time, Experts Say | Donald Trump | Days | Year | Trump | Supreme Court | Ruling | Prison | Time | Experts | Donald |

Dangerous world bridges to avoid no matter what

USA TODAY

'We are hurt': Buffalo community mourns after deadly supermarket shooting: Latest updates

Crowds marched near the Buffalo, New York, store Sunday morning, chanting: "We are mourning, we are hurt." Latest updates on the deadly shooting.

3h ago

Associated Press

Kim blasts pandemic response as North Korean outbreak surges

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un blasted officials over slow medicine deliveries and ordered his military to respond to the surging but largely undiagnosed COVID-19 crisis that has left 1.2 million people ill with fever and 50 dead in a matter of days, state media said Monday. More than 564,860...

3h ago

The Week

Pennsylvania Senate candidate John Fetterman suffers a stroke ahead of primary

Pennsylvania Senate candidate John Fetterman suffers a stroke ahead of primary

3h ago