

as if

DOMINICAN
SISTERS
San Rafael

Gather @Grand Speaker Series



Miss Evers' Boys (TV Movie 1997)

The true story of the U.S. Government's 1932 Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, in which a group of black test subjects were allowed to die, despite a cure having been developed. In 1932 Macon County, Alabama, the federal government launched into a medical study called The Tuskegee Study of Untreated Blacks with Syphilis.

Miss Evers' Boys Film Study Guide (Movie # 6)

- 1 What was the reason for the Tuskegee study? Do you think that this was an ethical study? Explain your answer.
- 2 Describe Miss Evers' role in the Tuskegee Study. What is your opinion of her actions? Think about what she said to keep the men in the program, at assuaging their fear of painful spinal taps by calling them "back shots." Miss Evers made "the Boys" believe that they were receiving medical care that was helping them. She told the men that they had "bad blood" and said that the doctors were trying to help them. Did she really obey the nurses' oath that she said at the beginning of the Senate Subcommittee Hearing?

Nurses' Oath

I solemnly pledge myself before God.

To pass my life in purity

To practice my profession faithfully

To endeavor with loyalty

To assist the physician in his work

To devote myself to the welfare of those patients committed to my care.

3. Describe Dr. Sam Brodus's role in the Tuskegee Study. What is your opinion of his actions at the beginning of the movie during the scene of the boy having trouble breathing? What is Dr. Broadus's motivation to participate in the Tuskegee study? How do feel about his role in getting Miss Evers to support the Tuskegee study?
4. Why did Dr. Douglas say that the Black men could not get the penicillin? What do you think motivated him to lead the Tuskegee Study? How did you feel when you heard how none of the hospitals would help because the test subjects were placed on a list that stated they should not receive medical treatment because they were participants in the experiment? Did Dr. Douglas follow the Hippocratic Oath? The Hippocratic Oath is still held sacred by physicians. An excerpt is provided below:

Hippocratic Oath

- I will prevent disease whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to cure.
 - I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm.
5. One of the Senators compared the Tuskegee Study to Nazi experimenting. From 1933 – 1945, Nazi Germany carried out a campaign to “cleanse” German society of individuals viewed as biological threats to the nations “health.” These policies began with the mass sterilization in the name of improving the German nation and purifying the “Aryan” race. Untreated syphilis can lead to damage to the brain, eyes, heart, nerves, bones, joints, and liver. You could also become paralyzed, blind, demented, or lose feeling in the body. Untreated syphilis can also lead to stillborn or developmentally delayed babies. Do you see any similarities between the Tuskegee Study and Nazi Experiments? In the end, the Senate Subcommittee declared the Tuskegee Study outrageous and intolerable. They said that the study was human experimentation. Was the subcommittees' response of penicillin, financial award, and a formal apology more than 20 years later appropriate compensation for the men and families who lost men in the Tuskegee Study.
 - In 1946 – there were 412 participants.
 - In 1956 – there were 306 participants.
 - In 1973 – there were 127 participants still living (2 of them were Miss Evers' Boys)

6. The movie Roots showed a glimpse of the racist, dehumanizing treatment of African people in the 1700s. During Reconstruction (late 1800s) free Blacks were anxiously awaiting the right to own land, achieve education, exercise their right to vote, and run for and win public office. During the Tuskegee Study, Black lives were deliberately devalued with no recourse. Refugees come to America and find employment, free medical care and can pursue their dreams of living free from persecution. African American men were brought here from Africa over 400 years ago. Later generations were born here, terrorized here, used for experiments here and are still persecuted here in this highly developed nation of America. **What thoughts do you have about how some African American men may feel about living in America? What is the vaccine needed to overcome fear and hatred of black men?**

Resolve Challenge for April/May

African Americans Do Not Trust Healthcare Providers

- Read some of the articles provided below.
- Choose at least one person with whom to discuss some of the details of the articles and the movie:
 - Black Americans do not trust our healthcare system – here’s why <https://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/healthcare/347780-black-americans-dont-have-trust-in-our-healthcare-system?rl=1>
 - Why so many Black Americans mistrust the health care system <https://pix11.com/news/created-equal/why-black-americans-mistrust-the-health-care-system/>
 - Latest Data on COVID-19 Vaccinations <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/latest-data-on-covid-19-vaccinations-race-ethnicity/>

What are the long-term effects of this Tuskegee Study? What should our healthcare system/government do to improve health for African Americans? Do Black Lives Matter? If African Americans cannot trust the legal system, or the health care system or their political leaders - how can they be active participants in the democratic way of life in America?

We look forward to hearing about your discussions on Thursday, May 20, 2021.