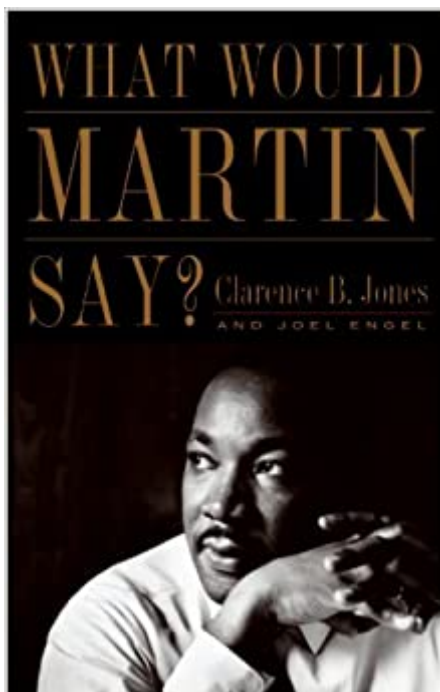


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What Would Martin Say?



Synopsis

On April 4, 1968, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, depriving the world of one of the greatest moral authorities of the twentieth century. He was thirty-nine. King had achieved so much at such a young age that it is hard to believe that he has been gone longer than the brief time he spent on this earth. He spoke out not only on segregation and racism against African Americans, but about many other issues of the day, from police brutality and labor strikes to the Vietnam War. Given the current state of the world, we would all benefit from hearing Martin's voice, if only he were alive today. . . .If anyone would have insight into what Martin would say, it would be Clarence B. Jones, King's personal lawyer and one of his closest principal advisers and confidants. Jones—now seventy-seven, has chosen the occasion of this somber anniversary to break his silence—removing the mythic distance of forty years' time to reveal the flesh-and-blood man he knew as his friend, Martin. Jones ponders what the outspoken rights leader would say about the serious issues that bedevil contemporary America: Islamic terrorism and the war in Iraq, reparations for slavery, anti-Semitism, affirmative action, illegal immigration, and the vacuum of African American leadership. Delving deep into his memories of the man he worked closely beside, and with help from the King Institute at Stanford University and reams of formerly top-secret and now declassified FBI files, Jones offers the guidance and insight his friend and mentor would have provided for us in these troubled times. Many Americans today know of Martin Luther King only from video clips and history books. As Jones so aptly reminds us, this legendary figure was also a warm human being full of life—and more relevant now than ever.

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Customer Reviews

Wonderfully written book.

If you're hoping to find out the political views of the author, Clarence B. Jones, this is the book for you. Or if you'd like to be outraged by a former colleague of Martin Luther King using MLK's legacy to endorse a number of right-wing talking points 40 years after his death, this is also the book for you. I'll save you a read. According to Jones, Martin Luther King would: * be against affirmative action (he also uses this chapter to note how bad black-on-black crime is) * view undocumented immigrants as stealing jobs and lament our poor border security (not content with just speaking for Dr. King, on page 116, Clarence also says that this is also the opinion that God himself has) * be in favor of the Iraq war and panicked about Saddam Hussein smuggling suitcase nukes into Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles, Washington, and New York (Jones must have known MLK *very* well to come up with this oddly specific scenario) * leap to the defense of Israel (itself laudable, though this was the shortest chapter and one can see how if it had been a few more pages, Jones's pro-Israel stance would shortly become an anti-Palestinian screed. Especially given that he spends so much of the next chapter constructing his own Willie Horton ad for Islamic terrorism.)

The first chapter starts off promising: Jones recounts his conversations with King, and King recruited him to join the civil rights movement. But as I continued to read, my skepticism rose. Jones' tether to what MLK said and did begins to stretch more. By halfway through the book, every time I read "what Martin would say is..." I would roll my eyes at the rant that followed which was clearly coming from the mouth of the aging conservative. While the entire book is Jones writing about Jones, the first chapter is the only one where he's honest about this. This is a book of Clarence B. Jones' political views, and that is fine. But the more I read and the more I saw him using his association with King to put his words into the

four-decade-cold mouth of King, the more unconscionable it became. Wide spans of the book don't even bother with trying to justify why 1960s King would agree with 2000s Jones based on Kings words and actions (which arguably would often be quite the opposite). Halfway through the book, I knew I couldn't give this a three-star review. By the end, I knew I couldn't even give it two-stars. One-star. I only wish I read the back cover first so that I could have been warned by the glowing praise given it by Roger Ailes, the disgraced former CEO of Fox News. The book is an insult.

I am so pleased to review this enlightening book, I was so informed, and I am more informed because of it! This attorney has so many on-hand experiences to share with the world! He tells it straight and from a balanced perspective.

I am so impressed with Mr Jones' observations. He takes the historical Martin King and brings him to 2008, addressing topics such as Black-on-Black crime, the current status of 'the struggle', the responsibility of modern Black America, the 'Jena Six', today's modern so-called 'Black Leaders', and a host of others. Mr Jones prefaces each topic with an historical account of how Dr King addressed a similar or identical situation. Mr Jones uses each recollection as a launching pad to address current subjects pertinent in the lives of Black America today, eminently qualifying him to surmise what he believes Dr King would say on the subject in 2008. Most if not all of these journeys in time are the accounts of the man who was present with Dr King at the time. More than just interesting sidebars, they validate Mr Jones as he gives compelling, rational argument for the positions he believes Dr King would take today. Mr Jones does not shy away from topics that he could have just as easily avoided. He could have successfully written a book where he honors Dr King's memory but steps on fewer toes. Mr Jones does just the opposite - he gets his big stompin' boots out and commences to "kickin' & takin". I stopped reading this book and immediately gave it to my niece for a college graduation present. I am ordering additional copies for my son, daughter, other nieces & nephews, as well as a copy for myself to finish. I hope that I see a dog-eared, frequently read copy on their bookshelves in the years to come. Thank you, Mr Jones!-RCH Sr-

This is a needed book, and a good one. The author seems to be really trying to figure out what Dr. King would have said about today's black leaders, affirmative action, about the war in Iraq, immigration, etc. He talks about his history with Dr. King, and tries to make comparisons between then and now. He seems to say that the present black leaders are often in the spotlight for publicity

and not for the "cause," and that affirmative action may, in 2009, keep African Americans from pursuing "excellence" in their chosen field. It was needed then, but even though there is still racism in America, it is at least hidden enough so that those who wish to pursue excellence may usually do so. One thing that becomes clearer to me with this book is how educated, thoughtful, moral, and full of integrity Dr. King was, and I think the author is right in pointing out that nobody has been as effective as Dr. King in the black leadership circles since his death over 40 years ago. Another idea that the author kept coming back to is how one must always pursue excellence in whatever you do. I think he maybe did not go deep enough into the immigration issue-I think Dr. King might have worked harder to help those in Mexico try to change their government so they would be less inclined to come to America. I also think the author missed a huge opportunity to project what Dr. King would have said about the environmental issues, women's rights, and gay rights, and other issues of our time. Overall, though, I think Clarence Jones does an excellent job helping us see into the vision of Dr. King, and how his theology and background shaped what he did, and how he would never ask someone to do something he himself would not do. I hope Jones will write another book addressing more issues of our times, as the clarity and morality of Martin Luther King's vision is sorely needed today.

I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed this first hand account of times spent with Dr. King, but also insights as to what his take would be on many of our current events by a man who would definitely know. A must read!

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