

## The Civil Rights Act CBRT Script

A Collaborative Effort by Teachers in a Kennedy Center Workshop Course 2007-08  
Led by Educational Drama Specialist Dr. Rosalind M. Flynn [www.rosalindflynn.com](http://www.rosalindflynn.com)

1 Three, two one—we're live!  
All [gesture]  
2 Channel Five Breaking News!  
3 Forty-three years ago today in the United States, The Civil Rights Act was passed and  
All changed the course of history! [sound effect] [gesture]  
4 What are civil rights?  
5 Um, are they the rights of a civil?  
All [sound effect]  
All Civil Rights are the rights that go with citizenship,  
6 the rights that one acquires simply by being a citizen.  
All Liberty and Equality! [gesture]  
7 How do you know a citizen when you see one?  
8 You can't tell by looking.  
All A citizen just needs to be a legal member of a nation.  
9 I was born in this country.  
10 I passed a test and took an oath.  
All You're citizens!  
11 Did you know that all *U.S.* citizens are supposed to be treated equally under the law...  
All And have equal opportunity?  
12 Well, haven't they always been?  
14 Not before the Civil Rights Act was passed.  
15 So, what exactly is equal opportunity? [gesture]  
All Protection and privileges given to ALL U.S. citizens  
16 guaranteed by  
All The Constitution and the Bill of Rights. [gesture]  
17 Let's go live to the history department at Howard University. Professors? [gesture]  
18,19 Yes?  
17 Weren't the rights of African Americans secured with the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments to  
the Constitution?  
18 They certainly should have been!  
19 But it took an entire century before a full Civil Rights Act was on the books!  
17 Thank you for your time, professors. [gesture]  
18,19 It's been a pleasure. [gesture]  
17 Let's go now to  
All Roving Reporter on the Street! [gesture] [sound effect]  
20 Who was the president of the United States in 1964?  
21 I don't know. Phyllis, do you know?  
22 Was it Abraham Lincoln?  
20 Anyone in the crowd know? [[gesture]  
All [sound effect]  
1 You must not watch the news! It was President Lyndon Johnson.

All That's right! [gesture] President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964.

2 July 2, 1964?

All After the longest debate in the history of the Congress—534 hours!

3 534 hours?! No way!

All That's more than 22 days—nonstop!

20 Forty-three years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, how do you think it has impacted the average citizen?

5 I can now bring my cell phone to school!

All [gesture]

6 It's more than that! Remember in history class—seeing the pictures from before the Civil Rights Act?

7 Blacks and whites could not use the same bathrooms...

All No way?!

8 drink from the same water fountains...

All You're kidding!

9 or sit together on the bus.

All "Shut-Up!"

10 Oh yeah, I remember what that was called—segregation.

All Segregation.

11 Separate schools.

12 Separate restaurants.

13 Separate shops.

14 Signs—Whites Only!

All Segregation—separation based on race. Most uncool. [gesture]

15 Now, because of the Civil Rights Act, we can all be together.

13 ...in the mall, at school, on the bus, everywhere!

All Cool. [gesture]

16 So, that's it? [gesture]

17 No, no, there's more. The Civil Rights Act banned discrimination in other places.

18 Could everyone choose their seats in movie theatres?

All Nope. Not before July 2, 1964. [gesture]

19 What about hotels? Could everyone stay in the same hotels?

All Nope. Not before July 2, 1964. [gesture]

20 Hey—what about women? Could I have gotten any job I was qualified for?

All Nope. Not before July 2, 1964. [gesture]

20 We've come a long way since 1964. Now back to you in the studio.

1 Thanks, Emily. Viewers, look around. Because of this single act, our entire country was changed forever.

2 No longer could employers treat citizens differently because of how they looked, how they lived, or what they believed.

3 One hundred and ninety years after the Founding Fathers declared this country one for life, liberty, and happiness, true equality was at last legislated.

1 From here in the Channel Five studio in the land of the free...

All America—Peace out! [gesture]