

III. "The Queen Raided" Primary Source Improv

Historical Context

On April 13, 1888, the *National Republican* newspaper published a front-page article titled "The Queen Raided" about William Dorsey Swann's arrest. The article described how "Her majesty shows a fight with a policeman" before party goers were "landed in the station house." The reporter commented that local citizens "doubtless not one... ever knew that on F Street's busy thoroughfare there was such a place."

Read the full article: [National Republican. \(Washington City \(D.C.\)\) 1872-1888, April 13, 1888, Image 1. Chronicling America](#). (Hover over the top right column and use the zoom tool to scroll down and read the full article.)

"The Queen Raided" Primary Source Improv Objective: Analyze bias in historical media coverage and make connections to today.

Analysis Questions:

1. What language does the reporter use to describe Swann and the attendees?
2. How does the headline "The Queen Raided" frame the story?
3. What assumptions does the reporter make about the event and participants?
4. How might this article have influenced public opinion?

Improv Scenarios:

Scenario A: The Newsroom Meeting: *National Republican newspaper office, April 12th, 1888*

- The reporter pitches the story to editors. (Why is this an important or interesting story to tell?)
- Discussion about how to frame the article. (What details will be included or left out? Why?)
- Debate over the headline, considering at least three different possibilities. (What will be the most eye-catching? What are the language considerations in the headline? What is the tone?)
- Decision-making about front-page placement and public impact. (Why is placement on the page important? What are the other headlines on the page?)

Scenario B: Community Reactions: *Washington D.C. street corner on April 13th, the day of the article's publication*

- Community members reading and discussing the newspaper article aloud
- Various perspectives: some shocked, others sympathetic, some defensive
- Debate about privacy and community safety
- Discussion of how the newspaper's language shapes public opinion
- Different views on police actions and Swann's resistance