Chapter 1 – Dishonoring the Dead
p. 18 "At the beginning of the twenty-first century," according to Professor Gary Orfield and his colleagues at the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, "American public schools are now 12 years into the process of continuous re-segregation…. During the 1990s, the proportion of black students in majority white schools has decreased… to a level lower than in any year since 1968…. Almost three fourths of black and Latino students attend schools that are predominantly minority," and more than two million, including more than a quarter of black students in the Northeast and Midwest, “attend schools which we call apartheid schools” in which 99 to 100 percent of students are nonwhite. The four most segregated states for black students, according to the Civil Rights Project, are New York, Michigan, Illinois, and California….

p. 19 “In the two largest educational innovations of the past two decades – standards-based reform and school choice – the issue of racial segregation and its consequences has been ignored.” p. 21 There is, indeed, a seemingly agreed-upon convention in much of the media today not even to use an accurate description such as “racial segregation” in a narrative description of a segregated school. p. 23 “Thurgood Marshall must be turning over in his grave…”

Chapter 2 – Hitting Them Hardest When They’re Small
p. 41 In another elementary school, which had been built to hold 1,000 children but was packed to bursting with some 1,500 boys and girls, the principal poured out his feelings to me in a room in which a plastic garbage bag had been attached somehow to cover part of the collapsing ceiling. “This,” he told me, pointing to the garbage bag, then gesturing around him at the other indications of decay and disrepair one sees in ghetto schools much like it elsewhere, “would not happen to white children.” p. 43 When minority parents ask for something better for their kids… the assumption is that these are parents who can be discounted. These are kids that we don’t value.

p. 49 [T]he governmentally administered diminishment of value in the children of the poor begins even before the age of five or six when they begin their years of formal education in the public schools. It starts during their infant years and toddler years when hundreds of thousands of children in low-income neighborhoods are locked out of the opportunity for pre-school education for no reason but the accident of birth and budgetary choices of the government….

Chapter 3 – The Ordering Regime
p. 63 Curriculum materials that are alleged to be aligned with governmentally established goals and standards and particularly suited to what are regarded as “the special needs and learning styles” of low-income urban children have been introduced. Relentless emphasis on raising test scores, rigid policies of nonpromotion and nongraduation, a new empiricism and the imposition of unusually detailed lists of named and numbered “outcomes” for each isolated parcel of instruction, an oftentimes fanatical insistence upon uniformity of teachers in their management of time, an openly conceded emulation of the rigorous approaches of the military, and a frequent use of terminology that comes out of the world of industry and commerce – these are just a few of the familiar aspects of these new adaptive strategies.

Chapter 4 – Preparing Minds for Markets
p. 99 “School-to-work” is the unflinching designation that has since been used to codify these goals, and “industry-embedded education” for the children of minority has now become a term of art among practitioners. Advocates for school-to-work do not, in general, describe it as a race-specific project…. In most suburban schools, the school-to-work idea, if educators even speak of it at all, is little more than seemingly decoration on the outer edges of a liberal curriculum. In many urban schools, by contrast, it has come to be the energizing instrument of almost every aspect of instruction.

Chapter 5 – The Road to Rome
p. 113 In some schools,… the tests themselves and preparation for the tests control more than a quarter of the year. p. 115 The usual administrative rationale for giving tests like these to children in their
elementary years is that the test results will help to show their teachers where the children’s weaknesses may lie, so that they can redirect the focus of their work… In practice, however, this is not the way things generally work, because of the long lapse in time between the taking of these tests and receipt of scores. p. 117 "Test-mandated holdover policies have… chilling effects…. Every time we hold a child over, we are substantially reducing the odds of that child graduating anytime in the future.” p. 118 In many of these schools, traditional subjects such as history, geography, and science are no longer taught because they are not tested by high-stakes examinations and cannot contribute to the scores by which a school’s performance will be praised or faulted. p. 120 The banishment of recess from the normal schoolday is perhaps the ultimate penurious denial. In Atlanta, recess has been systematically abandoned to secure more time for test-related programs since the last years of the 1990s….

Chapter 6 – A Hardening of Lines
p. 135 The demarcations between separate worlds of education are assuming sharper lines. There is a new emboldenment among the relatively privileged to isolate their children as completely as they can from more than token numbers of the children of minorities. In some cities, young middle-class white families have successfully been pressuring their school boards to carve out almost entirely separate provinces of education for their children.

Chapter 7 – Excluding Beauty
p. 163 The insult to aesthetics, the affront to cleanliness and harmony and sweetness, are continuing realities as well for children who must go each morning into morbid-looking buildings in which few adults other than their teachers would agree to work day after day.

Chapter 8 – False Promises
p. 201 It was only 14 years ago, in 1991, that President George H. Bush announced an education plan known as America 2000, which was described as “a nine-year crusade” to radically reform the nation’s schools…. Few substantial new resources were provided to the states and local districts to achieve these goals, however. p. 202 And, indeed, before the president left office, many of his goals had more or less dissolved into thin air…. Ten years later, President George W. Bush unveiled another ambitious education plan. “No child,” we were told this time, in what was partly a recasting of the promises that had been made in 1991, was to be “left behind.” p. 203 If the president had used his leadership to advocate for transfers not only within school districts, but between them, the transfer option might have had real meaning and, indeed, if earnestly enforced, it might have opened up the possibilities for mightily expanded racial integration in suburban schools surrounding our core cities.

p. 204 The cost of building new and safe schools for the children in our urban districts or rebuilding those that can be salvaged, has been estimated by the General Accounting Office at well above $100 billion and, if the rewiring of schools for Internet access is included, at about $200 billion…. The president has provided no such infusion to build or modernize the schools of urban districts and has allocated only half the funds that Congress authorized to enable schools to meet the terms of the new law. p. 205 In perhaps the most stunning breach of faith shown by the Bush administration, the fiscal limits that the president has put in place have led to a sharp decline in the proportion of low-income children served by Head Start programs. p. 209 At the heart of the agenda Mr. Bush and his associates have been promoting for our public schools, there lies the “scientific” model of accountability and measurement that consciously applies the practices of business management to guarantee efficiency in operation of a classroom, school, or district, while, in general, bypassing questions about inequality, to the degree that this is possible.

Chapter 9 – Invitations to Resistance
p. 215 What do we need to do to alter these realities? p. 216 “Before we gave up on integration, we should have tried it,” wrote Jack White, a columnist for Time magazine, nearly ten years ago. Public schools, he charged, are “so separate and vastly unequally that Plessy v. Ferguson, not Brown v. Board of Education, might as well be the law of the land…. Herewith, a radical proposal…. Revive the civil rights movement, which went into limbo long before some of its most important goals were accomplished.”
p. 221 “A political movement is a necessary answer,” he [Gary Orfield, Harvard Graduate School of Education] began. “We cannot look to the courts to do it in the present age. We cannot look to the two political parties, the Republicans and Democrats to do it. We need to reach out to a broader sector of the nation to initiate a struggle.” Entirely apart from teachers and administrators such as those I’ve noted here, he urged me to reflect on one too frequently forgotten sector of the population: those hundreds of thousands of successful black adults who can witness to the consequences of desegregated schooling from their own experience as students. p. 222 “We now have far more educated black adults who have participated in desegregated schooling and who don’t want to go back. We also have a lot more white adults who have experienced school integration and have seen it work successfully.” Most of these people are not “doing anything politically today,” he [Orfield] said, “but we should challenge them to act…. “p. 235 “There’s a saying, ‘Hard cases make bad law.’ If you start with the hardest cases in the country, you’re not going to come up with the right answers. You don’t need to desegregate New York in order to desegregate Des Moines!” – and he spoke of other middle-sized and smaller urban districts, county districts, and suburban districts elsewhere in the nation “where the obstacles are of an order of far lesser magnitude,” he [Orfield] said, and the resistance less intractable.

Chapter 10 – A National Horror Hidden in Plain View: Why Not a National Response?
p. 240 “Racist beliefs are so profound and the supportive structures have now been in place so long that after an upheaval like the one we lived through 40 years ago, it leaves the nation morally exhausted” with “a huge desire not to be obliged to think of it again.” And yet, he [Roger Wilkins, attorney, journalist, now professor of history and American culture at George Mason University, and son of our own Helen Claytor of Grand Rapids] said, “the nation must be asked to think of it again…."

p. 251 “Today,” he [Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. of IL] said, “we have a ‘states’ rights education system’ – 50 states, 3,067 counties, 95,000 public schools in 15,000 locally controlled districts in which 50 million children go to separate and unequal public schools. We need the assistance of the Constitution to correct this. Until we have it, ‘savage inequalities,’ to use your words, will not be an aberration in the system – it will be ‘the system’ as it stands.”

Chapter 11 – Deadly Lies
p. 273 The longer this goes on, the further these two roads divide, the more severe and routinized these race-specific pedagogies may become, the harder it will be to find a place of common ground on which the children of the many ethnic groups and social classes in our nation’s public schools will ever actually meet.

p. 280 The achievement gap between black and white children, which narrowed for three decades up until the late years of the 1980s… started to widen once more in the early 1990s. p. 284 “I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations,” the president said again in his campaign for reelection in September 2004. “It’s working. It’s making a difference.” It is one of those deadly lies which, by sheer repetition, is at length accepted by large numbers of Americans as, perhaps, a rough approximation of the truth.

Chapter 12 – Treasured Places
p. 299 Schools can probably survive quite well without their rubric charts and numbered standards-listings plastering the walls. They can’t survive without good teachers and, no matter what curriculum may be in place, whether it’s approved by state officials or by Washington or not, they are no good at all if teachers are unable to enjoy the work they do and be invigorated by its unpredictables.

Epilogue
p. 316 “Sometimes,” he [Congressman John Lewis of GA] said, “you have to ask for something that you know you may not get. And still you have to ask for it. It’s still worth fighting for and, even if you don’t believe that you will see it in your lifetime, you have got to hold it up so that the generation that comes next will take it from your hands and, in their own time, see it as a goal worth fighting for again. A segregated education in America is unacceptable. Integration is, it still remains, the goal worth fighting for.”