

IMPRISONED INTELLECTUALS



AMERICA'S POLITICAL
PRISONERS WRITE ON
LIFE, LIBERATION, AND
REBELLION

Edited by

JOY JAMES

Imprisoned Intellectuals

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This work is dedicated to those ancestors, elders, and youths who seek, struggle, and suffer for freedom; and to all who filter their desire to abolish slavery and social death through compassion for the fragility of life and love.

Chapter Nine

Safiya Bukhari-Alston

Safiya Bukhari-Alston (Bernice Jones) became involved with the Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1969, when she began working at the Panthers' Free Breakfast Program in Harlem. From 1969 to 1971, she served as a section coordinator, selling party newspapers, organizing cell units, and conducting political education classes. In 1971, following the Eldridge Cleaver-Huey P. Newton split,¹ Bukhari-Alston became the head of Information and Communication for the East Coast Black Panther Party, a position she would hold until she went underground in 1973.²

On the morning of December 27, 1973, Bukhari-Alston was arrested with Michael Maurice Alston, Neil O. Thompson, and Harold Simmons as they allegedly attempted to free six Black Liberation Army members from "the Tombs," the Manhattan House of Detention for Men. (Among those held at the Tombs were Francisco and Gabriel Torres, Jalil Muntaqim [Anthony Bottom], Herman Bell, and Henry Brown.) The four were detained by police next to an open manhole two blocks from the Detention Center, which the police alleged they were using to gain access to the prison. According to the *New York Times*, "all were charged with burglary, possession of burglars' tools (a screwdriver, the iron bar and the rope ladder) and criminal tampering (lifting the manhole cover)."³ Bukhari-Alston recalls: "The only thing they could charge us with was third degree burglary on a sewer, which was laughed out of court."⁴ Although there was a paucity of evidence against the defendants, the media sensationalized the arrests; using phrases like "Great Tombs Escape Fails at the Sewer,"⁵ it emphasized the connections of those arrested to the BPP and to other alleged criminal charges. Nevertheless, charges were dismissed on January 22, 1974, for lack of evidence. In spite of (or because of) the acquittal, the police department issued a \$10,000 reward for Bukhari-Alston, based on her membership in the Black Liberation Army (BLA), and failure to appear for trial, warranting that she be shot on sight. Bukhari-Alston went underground as unit coordinator of the Amistad Collective of the BLA.⁶

Bukhari-Alston was captured on January 25, 1975, in Norfolk, Virginia, after a shooting that left her fellow BLA members Kombozi Amistad dead, and Masai

Ehehosi shot in the face. Charged with felony murder, attempted robbery, and illegal possession of a weapon, she was convicted in a one-day trial at which she was not present, sentenced to forty years in prison, and sent to the Virginia Correctional Center for Women in Goochland. There, Bukhari-Alston spent her first twenty-one days in maximum-security segregation. She was only released into the general prison community after she threatened to file a lawsuit. Upon release, however, her movement remained largely restricted given her designation as a "security risk."⁷

Refused desperately needed medical attention and surgery by prison doctors, Bukhari-Alston filed suit against the Virginia Correctional Center for Women. Both the initial suit and the appeal were denied, however, on the grounds that "her complaint amount[ed] to a difference of opinion with prison medical personnel" about treatment. Refused medical care, considering herself a citizen of the Republic of New Afrika (RNA) and therefore a prisoner of war, Bukhari-Alston decided to escape on December 31, 1976. Recaptured on February 27, 1977, she was returned to the Virginia Correctional Center, and was sentenced to an additional year. By using lack of medical attention as a defense, however, she was able to at least secure outside medical treatment, although by this point she was forced to have a hysterectomy. Upon returning to prison, she served the next three years and seven months in maximum-security segregation and, once again, only secured her release into the general population through a lawsuit. In 1983, she was granted parole.⁸

Currently a legal advocate, Bukhari-Alston is cochair of the Jericho Movement, which does educational support work for political prisoners, and cochair of the New York-based Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition.

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NOTES

Research and draft for this biography were provided by Nicole Kief.

1. In the early 1970s, tensions within the Black Panther Party grew as Huey P. Newton and Eldridge Cleaver took increasingly divergent stances on the role of the party, both tactically and ideologically. These tensions played out as a broader conflict between New York and Oakland chapters of the BPP, and escalated when Newton expelled several prominent party members in 1971. The conflict turned deadly when two members, Robert Webb and Samuel Napier, were murdered, and several others left the party as a result. See: Ollie A. Johnson, "Explaining the Demise of the Black Panther Party: The Role of Internal Factors," in *The Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]*, ed. Charles E. Jones (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998), 400-2.

2. "Interview with Safiya Bukhari-Alston."

3. "4 Seized Near Manhole in Alleged Plot to Free Black Army Friends in Tombs," *New York Times*, 28 December 1973.

4. "Interview with Safiya Bukhari-Alston."

5. "Interview with Safiya Bukhari-Alston."

6. "Interview with Safiya Bukhari-Alston"; "4 Seized Near Manhole in Alleged Plot to Free Black Army Friends in Tombs"; "Police Break Gang Plot?" *Tri-State Defender*, 5 January 1974; "3 in an Alleged Plot to Free 6 at Tombs Released by Judge," *New York Times*, 24 January 1974.

7. "Interview with Safiya Bukhari-Alston"; Akinyele Omowale Umoja, "Set Our Warriors Free: The Legacy of the Black Panther Party and Political Prisoners," in *The Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]*, 428-29; Safiya Bukhari-Alston, "Coming of Age," *Notes from a New Afrikan P.O.W. Journal, Book 7* (New York: Spear & Shield Publications, 1979); *United States of America v Bernice Jones*, December 30, 1975.

8. "Interview with Safiya Bukhari-Alston"; *Safiya Asya Bukhari v Virginia Correctional Center for Women*, October 28, 1975.

Coming of Age: A Black Revolutionary

1979

Greek mythology tells the story of Minos, ruler of the city of Knossos. Minos has a great labyrinth (maze) in which he keeps the Minotaur, a monster half man and half bull, whose victims were boys and girls who would make it to the center of the maze only to be killed when they came face to face with the Minotaur. If an intended victim chanced to survive the encounter with the Minotaur, they perished trying to find their way out of the many intricate passages. Finally, Theseus of Athens, with the help of Ariadne, Minos's daughter, enters the labyrinth, slays the beast and finds his way out by following the thread he had unwound as he entered.

The maturation process is full of obstacles and entanglements for anyone, but for a Black woman in America it has all the markings of the Minotaur's Maze. I had to say that, even though nothing as spectacular takes place in the maturation process of the average Black woman—it didn't happen to me—but the day-to-day struggle for survival and growth reaps the same reward in the end in ten thousand different ways. The trick is to learn from each defeat and become stronger and more determined . . . think and begin to develop the necessary strategies to insure the annihilation of the beast. . . .

I am one of a family of ten children. My parents were strict and religious, but proud and independent. One of the strongest influences of my childhood was my mother constantly telling us to hold our heads up and be proud because we were just as good or better than anyone else, and to stand up and fight for what you believe to be right.

There was a lot of competition in my family. Had to be with ten children (all two years apart) growing up, each trying to live up to the other or be better. We were determined not to be caught up in the rut of the ghetto. We were going to get out . . . so each of us worked on our separate goals—ten *individuals*—one family, in our separate world.

We believed that with the right education we could "make it"—so that's the route we took searching for the "American Dream." I was going to be a doctor.

In my second year of college I pledged a sorority—it was here that the rose colored glasses were cracked and rays of reality were allowed to filter in.

The sorority had decided to help "disadvantaged" children as one of our projects for the year and we were trying to decide what country to work with when one of the Sisters suggested that we work in the ghettos of New York. Personally, I'd never even thought of people in the United States being disadvantaged, but only too lazy to work and "make it." I was in for one of the biggest rude awakenings of my life.

A few of us were sent to Harlem to investigate the situation. We talked to people on the street, in the welfare centers, from door to door, and watched them work

and play, loiter on the corners and in the bars. What we came away with was a story of humiliation, degradation, deprivation and waste that started in infancy and lasted until death . . . in too many cases, at an early age.

Even at this point, I didn't see this as affecting me personally, only as a sorority project . . . sort of a tourist who takes pity on the less fortunate.

The sorority decided to do what we could to help the children. The Black Panther Party had a Free Breakfast Program to feed the children going on. I had a daughter of my own at this point and decided that I would put my energies into this.

I couldn't get into the politics of the Black Panther Party, but I could volunteer to feed some hungry children; you see, children deserve a good start and you have to feed them for them to live to learn. It's hard to think of reading and arithmetic when your stomach's growling.

I'm not trying to explain the logic of the Free Breakfast Program for children, but to show how I had to be slowly awakened to the reality of life and shown the interconnection of things.

Every morning, at 5:00 my daughter and I would get ready and go to the Center where I was working on the Breakfast Program—cook and serve breakfast, sometimes talk to the children about problems they were encountering and sometimes help them with their homework. Everything was going along smoothly until the number of children coming began to fall off. Finally, I began to question the children and found out that the police had been telling the parents in the neighborhood not to send their children to the Program because we were "feeding them poisoned food."

It's one thing to hear about underhanded things the police do—you can ignore it then—but it's totally different to experience it for yourself—you either lie to yourself or face it. I chose to face it and find out why the police felt it was so important to keep Black children from being fed that they told lies. I went back to the Black Panther Party and started attending some of their Community Political Education Classes.

FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE POLICE

It wasn't long after that when I was forced to make a decision about what direction I was going in politically. I was on 42nd Street with a friend when we noticed a crowd gathered on the corner. In the center of the crowd was a Panther with some newspapers under his arm. Two police officers were also there. I listened to see what was going on. The police was telling the Panther he couldn't sell newspapers on the corner and he was insisting that he could. Without a thought, I told the police that the Brother had a *constitutional right* to disseminate political literature anywhere, at which point, the police asked for my identification and arrested the Sister and myself, along with the Brother who was selling the papers.

I had never been arrested before and I was naive enough to believe that all you had to do was be honest and everything would work out all right. I was wrong again. As soon as the police got us into the back seat of their car and pulled away from the crowd the bestiality began to show. My friend went to say something and one of the police officers threatened to ram his nightstick up her if she opened her mouth again, and ran on in a monologue about Black people. I listened and got angry. . . .

At the 14th Precinct they separated us to search us. They made us strip. After the policewoman had searched me, I remember one of the male officers telling her to make sure she washed her hand so she wouldn't catch anything.

That night, I went to see my mother, explained to her about the bust and about a decision I'd made. Momma and Daddy were in the kitchen when I got there—Daddy sitting at the table and Momma cooking. I remember telling them about the bust and them saying nothing. Then I told them about how the police had acted and them still saying nothing. Then I told them that I couldn't sit still and allow the police to get away with that. I had to stand up for my rights as a human being. I remember my mother saying, ". . . if you think it's right, then do it." I went back to Harlem and joined the Black Panther Party.

I spent the next year working with welfare mothers, Liberation Schools, talking to students, learning the reality of life in the ghettos of America and re-evaluating a lot of the things I had been taught about the "land of the free and the home of the brave."

It was about this time that I quit school and went to look for a full-time job. I had education and skills but there was always something wrong. It didn't dawn on me what it was until I went to ITT and applied for a job as a receptionist-clerk and they told me I was *over qualified*. I ended up working for my friend's mother in her beauty parlor and spent all of my spare time with the Party.

By the summer of 1970 I was a full time Party member and my daughter was staying with my mother. I was teaching some of the Political Education classes at the Party office and had established a Liberation School in my Section of the community. I had listened to the elderly while they told me how they couldn't survive off their miserly social security checks—not pay rent and eat, too—so they pay their rent and eat from the dog food section of the supermarket or the garbage cans. I had listened to the middle-aged mother as she told of being evicted from her home and sleeping on a subway with her children because the welfare refused to give her help unless she signed over all the property she had, and out of desperation, fraudulently received welfare. I had watched while a mother prostituted her body to put food in the mouth of her child and another mother, mentally broken under the pressure, prostituted her eight-year-old child. I had seen enough of the ravages of dope, alcohol and despair to know that a change had to be made so the world could be a better place for my child to live in.

My mother had successfully kept me ignorant of the reality of the plight of Black

people in America—now I had learned it for myself—but I was still to learn a harsher lesson: *The Plight of the Slave Who Dares to Rebel*.

TURBULENT TIMES

The year 1971 saw many turbulent times in the Black Panther Party and changes in my life. I met and worked with many people who were to teach me and guide me: Michael (Cetewayo) Tabor of the Panther 21; Albert (Nuh) Washington, and "Lost One" who was responsible for my initial political education, Robert Webb. Cet taught me to deal principledly; Nuh taught me compassion, and Robert taught me to be firm in my convictions.

When the split went down in the Black Panther Party I was left in a position of Communications and Information Officer of the East Coast Black Panther Party. It wasn't until much later that I was to find out how vulnerable that position was.

Many of the members of the Party went underground to work with the Black Liberation Army (BLA). I was among those elected to remain aboveground and supply necessary support. The murders of youths such as Clifford Glover, Tyrone Guyton, etc., by police, and retaliation by the BLA with the assassinations of police officers Piagentini and Jones and Rocco and Laurie, made the powers that be frantic.¹ They pulled out the stops in their campaign to rid the streets of rebellious slaves.

By the spring of 1973, Comrades Assata Shakur and Sundiata Acoli were captured, along with Nuh and Jalil (Anthony Bottom) and Twyman Meyers² was on the FBI's Most Wanted List, and I was still traveling back and forth across the country trying to build necessary support mechanisms.

In 1972 I recognized the need for something other than myself to depend on. You see, in less than two years I'd aged to the point where I realized that nothing is permanent or secure in a world where it's who you know and what you have that counts. I'd seen friends and loved ones either killed or thrown in prison and associates that I'd once thought would never go back, turn states or go back into the woodwork. Nuh turned me on to Islam, which gave me a new security, sense of purpose and dignity.

By 1973 I'd begun to receive a lot of flak from the police because of what they "suspected" I might be doing. Actually it was because I didn't have a record, they couldn't catch me doing anything and I continued to actively and vocally support the BLA members . . . also my homework had been done so well in the community that the community's support was there also.

CAPTURE

On January 25, 1975 myself and some other members of the Amistad Collective of the BLA went into the country in Virginia to practice night firing. We were to leave

Virginia that night on our way to Jackson, Mississippi because I wanted to be there on Sunday to see someone. We decided to stop by a store before we went back to the crib we were staying at so we could pick up some cold cuts to make sandwiches with so we wouldn't have to stop at any roadside restaurants on the way down. We drove around looking for an open store. When we came to one I told the Brothers to wait in the car and I'd go in the store and be right back.

I entered the store, went past the registers, down an aisle to the meat counter and started checking them for all-beef products. I heard the door opening and looked up to see two of the brothers coming in—didn't give it a thought—went back to what I was doing when out of the corner of my left eye I saw a rifle pointed toward the door, in the manager's hand. I quickly got into an aisle just as the firing started. Up to this point I had heard no words spoken. With the first lull in shooting, Kombozi [Amistad] (one of my bodyguards and also a member of the Amistad Collective) came down the aisle towards me. He was wearing a full-length army coat. It was completely buttoned. As he came toward me he told me he was shot. I didn't believe him, at first, because I saw no blood and his weapon wasn't drawn. Then, he insisted again so I told him to lie down on the floor and I'd take care of it.

Masai [Ehehosi] (my co-defendant) had apparently made it back out the door when the firing started because just then he came back to the door and tried to draw the fire so we could get out. I saw him get shot in the face and stumble backwards out the door. I looked around for a way out and realized there was none. I elected to play it low-key in order to try and get help for Kombozi as soon as possible. I was to learn that the effort was wasted. The manager of the store and his son, Paul Green, Sr. and Jr. stomped Kombozi to death in front of my eyes. Later, when I attempted to press counter-charges of murder against them, the Commonwealth attorney called it "justifiable" homicide.

Five minutes after the shoot-out went down the FBI was on the scene. The next morning they held a press conference saying I was notorious, dangerous, etc., and known to law enforcement agencies nationwide—and my bail was set at one million dollars on each count. I had five counts.

TRIAL AND IMPRISONMENT

On April 16, 1975, after a trial that lasted one day, we were sentenced to forty years, and that night I arrived here at the Virginia Correctional Center for Women in Goochland.

Directly following my arrival I was placed in the Maximum Security building and there I stayed until, after being threatened with court action, they released me to general population. The day after my release to general population I was told that the first iota of trouble that I caused I would be placed back in the Maximum Security building and there I would stay.

At that point, and for the next two years, my emphasis was on getting some medi-

cal care for myself and the other women here and educational programs and activities, the priority being on medical care for myself. Inside the prison I was denied it (the general feeling was they couldn't chance hospitalization for fear I'd escape so rather than chancing my escape they preferred to take a chance on my life). In the courts they said they saw no evidence of inadequate medical care, but rather, a difference of opinion on treatment between me and the prison doctor.

The "medical treatment" for women prisoners here in Virginia has got to be an all-time low, when you got to put your life in the hands of a "doctor" who examines a woman who has her right ovary removed and tells her there's tenderness in her right ovary; or when this same "doctor" examines a woman who has been in prison for six months and tells her she's six weeks pregnant and there's nothing wrong with her and she later finds her baby has died and mortified inside of her; or when he tells you you're not pregnant and three months later you give birth to a seven pound baby boy; not to mention prescribing Maalox for a sore throat and diagnosing a sore throat that turns out to be cancer.

In December of 1976 I started hemorrhaging and went to the clinic for help. No help of any consequence was given, so I escaped. Two months later I was recaptured. While on escape a doctor told me that I could either endure the situation, take painkillers, or have surgery. I decided to use the lack of medical care as my defense for the escape and by doing so do two things: (1) expose the level of medical care at the prison, and (2) put pressure on them to give me the care I needed.

I finally got to the hospital in June of 1978. By that time it was too late, I was so messed up inside that everything but one ovary had to go. Because of the negligence of the "doctor" and the lack of feeling of the prison officials, they didn't give a damn, I was forced to have a hysterectomy.

When they brought me back to this prison in March of 1977, because of the escape, they placed me in Cell 5 on the segregation end of the Maximum Security building—the same room they placed me in on April 16, 1975. To date, I'm still in that cell, allegedly because of my escape, but in actuality because of my politics.

How do I know? Because since my being returned to this institution on March 24, 1977 other women have escaped and been brought back and have been released to general population—and yesterday (after twenty-two months) my co-defendant on the escape charge was okayed for release to general population. I was denied.

Despite all of the emotional and physical setbacks I've experienced, I've learned a lot. I've watched the oppressor play that same old game on Black people they've been playing for centuries—divide and conquer. Black women break under pressure and sell their men down the river and then the oppressor separates the women from their children. In two strokes the state does more damage than 30 years in prison could have done if the women had supported the men.

And now, more than ever before, Black women—New Afrikan women—have developed a mercenary outlook on life. They are not about family, community and us as a people anymore. They're about looking good, having fun and "making it." Women's liberation is what they're talking about, failing to grasp the realization

that true women's liberation for Black women will only come about with the liberation of Black people as a whole, so that for the first time since our forefathers were snatched from the Afrikan continent and brought to America as slave labor, we can be a family, and from that family build a community and a Nation.

The powers that be were totally disconcerted when Black mothers, wives, daughters and Black women in general stood by and, in a lot of cases, fought beside their men when they were captured, shot or victimized by the police and other agents of the government. They were frightened of the potential to wreak havoc that Black women represented when Black women began to enter into the prisons and jails in efforts to liberate their men. They were spurred into action when they were confronted with the fact that Black women were educating their children from the cradle up about who the real enemies of Black people are and what must be done to eliminate this ever present threat to the lives of Black people.

During the last four years of my incarceration I've watched and didn't speak because I didn't want to chance alienating the "left" as Black men and Black women have fooled themselves into believing that we were "making progress" because (1) Patricia Harris, a Black woman, is part of the U.S. president's cabinet, and (2) Andrew Young is the Ambassador to the U.N.—failing to realize that it's all politics—American style. And, twenty women of all races are working together for Women's Liberation. There is no real progress being made. As a matter of fact, one of [former president Jimmy] Carter's best friends, Vernon Jordan, head of the Urban League, had to concede in his annual economic review *The State of Black America, 1979*, that the "income gap between Blacks and whites is actually widening."³

The sacrifices Black women have made in search of Black womanhood, like the sacrifices made by the people of Knossos in its efforts to slay the Minotaur, have been many, harsh and cruel—but We too can slay the beast (in our case American racism, capitalism and sexism) and out of the ashes build a free and independent Black Nation in which We can take our rightful place as Women, Wives and Mothers, knowing our children will live to be men and women, our men will be allowed to recognize their manhood—support and defend their families with dignity.

TOGETHER BUILDING A FUTURE FOR OURSELVES!
Build to Win!

COMING OF AGE: AN UPDATE [JANUARY 18, 1980]

It's two years since I wrote the original article . . . lots of things have happened . . . Assata Shakur was liberated; Imari Obadele⁴ was released . . . the Klu Klux Klan regrouped and revamped;⁵ sixteen Black children are missing and presumed to be dead in Atlanta;⁶ eight Black men murdered in Buffalo;⁷ pregnant Black women shot in Chattanooga;⁸ Ronald Reagan will take office in two days.⁹

It's two months since I was released from the Maximum Security Building (after spending a total of three years and seven months) . . . had to go to court to do it . . . it too was an eye opening experience . . . they said the reason they were keeping me housed in that building was because I was a "threat to the security of the free world."

What can I say? It seems that the political scene in America has come full circle and Black people are once again the scapegoats for everything that goes wrong in white America. They no longer feel the need to pacify us with poverty programs and token jobs.

Sitting in a Maximum Security cell for three years and seven months afforded me an opportunity to reflect upon my life and the lessons I was forced to learn . . . but now the learning process is over . . . it is time to put what I've learned into practice . . . freedom will only be won by the sweat of our brows.

AFTERWORD 12 YEARS LATER

Yesterday, October 21, 1994, we buried a close comrade, friend and brother—Breeze Barrow. Less than two weeks ago, we buried another close comrade, friend, mentor and father figure—Nathaniel Shanks. Both of these brothers were strong Panthers and had been on the streets holding the line, maintaining the stand while we had been locked down in the dungeons of this country.

Reverberating through my mind for years has been the incantation of Che Guevara, "Wherever death may surprise us, it will be welcome as long as this our battle cry reach some receptive ear and new hands reach out to intone our funeral dirge with the staccato of machinegun fire and new cries of battle and victory." Now, today, this minute, this hour (as Malcolm would say) I've come to realize that picking up the gun was/is the easy part. The hard part is the day to day organizing, educating and showing the people by example what needs to be done to create a new society. The hard painstaking work of changing ourselves into new beings, of loving ourselves and our people and working with them daily to create a new reality . . . this is the first revolution, that internal revolution.

I'm coming to understand what they meant when they sang the words, "The race is not given to the swift, nor is it given to the strong, but to him that endures to the end," and what was meant by the fable of the "hare and the tortoise." Some people declare themselves to be revolutionaries, members of one organization or another i.e., I was one of the first Panthers, or I used to be a Panther . . . and only come out when there's some major celebration where Panthers are on display . . . and live off of their former glory, not understanding that it's not about what you used to be, but what are you doing now. They ran a quick race, utilizing all for the moment and grew tired and gave up. It may take a little longer to do it the hard way, slow and methodical, building a movement step-by-step and block-by-block,

but doing it this way is designed to build a strong foundation that will withstand the test of time and the attack of the enemy.

If we truly are to create a new society, we must build a strong foundation. If we truly are to have a new society, we must develop a mechanism to struggle from one generation to the next. If we truly are to maintain our new society after we have won the battle and claimed the victory, we must instill into the hearts and minds of our children, our people, ourselves this ability to struggle on all fronts, internally and externally, laying a foundation built upon a love for ourselves and a knowledge of the sacrifices that went before and all we have endured.

There is much to be done to achieve this. There is a long road ahead of us. Let's do it.

NOTES

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1. *Editor's note*: On April 28, 1973, police officer Thomas Shea, searching for "two black males in their early 20's," shot and killed ten-year-old Clifford Glover in a South Jamaica, N.Y., lot after pursuing Glover and his fifty-year-old stepfather, Add Armstead. Shea was later acquitted. Murray Schumach, "Police-Call Tape Played at Trial," *New York Times*, 24 May 1974, 37; Laurie Johnston, "Jury Clears Shea in Killing of Boy," *New York Times*, 13 June 1974, 1.

Fourteen-year-old Tyrone Guyton was killed on November 1, 1973, by police from the Emeryville, Calif., Police Department in what many black activists and community members regarded as racist murder. In protest against his murder and the murder of several other black youths by police, including Clifford Glover, Claude Reese, Alberto Terrones, and Derrick Browne, the Jonathan Jackson/Sam Melville Unit of the New World Liberation Front (Symbionese Liberation Army) bombed the Emeryville Police Station on November 13. "Symbionese Liberation Army Communiqué #1," *Claycheck* www.claycheck.com/patty/docs/comm1.htm; "Communiqué Issued by the Symbionese Liberation Army (under the name 'New World Liberation Front') following the bombing of the Emeryville Police Station on August 13, 1975" *Claycheck*, www.claycheck.com/patty/docs/comm813.htm.

New York Police Officers Joseph A. Piagentini and Waverly M. Jones were murdered in Harlem on May 21, 1971. While the legitimacy of the evidence in the prosecution's case was questionable, Black Liberation Army members Jalil Abdul Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom), Herman Bell, and Albert "Nuh" Washington were convicted of the murders. Muntaqim was denied parole in 2002, and Bell is up for parole in 2004; Albert "Nuh" Washington died of liver cancer in April of 2000 while still incarcerated in New York. "New York State Task Force on Political Prisoners: Clemency Petition."

New York Police officers Rocco Laurie and Gregory Foster were murdered on January 27, 1972. While no witness could confidently identify the killer(s), members of the Black Liberation Army were accused of the murders. See: Gerald C. Fraser, "4 at Murder Site Testify at Trial," *New York Times*, 30 January 1974, 21; Associated Press, "Murder Witness Recants on Identity," *New York Times*, 31 January 1974, 37.

2. *Editor's note:* Twyman Ford Meyers, twenty-three-year-old Black Liberation Army member, was killed in a shootout with the FBI and New York Police Department officers on November 14, 1973. See: John T. McQuiston, "Fugitive Black Militant Is Killed in Bronx Shootout with Police," *New York Times*, 15 November 1973, 93.
3. *Editor's note:* Vernon Jordan, *The State of Black America* (New York: National Urban League, 1979).
4. *Editor's note:* Imari Obadele, former president of the Republic of New Afrika, was accused of "encouraging" the August 18, 1971, murder of a Mississippi police officer at the organization's headquarters and charged with the murder, despite the release, on grounds of self-defense, of others accused. See Associated Press, "Black Convicted in Police Slaying," *New York Times*, 7 May 1972; Associated Press, "4 Black Separatists Freed, Leader Is Held for Inquiry," *New York Times*, 12 October 1971, 18.
5. *Editor's note:* In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Ku Klux Klan witnessed a resurgence in visibility and membership in the United States and Canada. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith estimated that in 1980, the Klan boasted 10,000 members and 100,000 "sympathizers" in twenty-two states, representing the largest increase in membership in ten years. A Justice Department study during the same year warned that the "Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," a faction headed by Bill Wilkinson, posed a serious threat because of its use of violence. See "US Study Urges Agencies to Cooperate against Klan," *New York Times*, 24 November 1980, A19; "Ku Klux Klan Is Seeking New Members in Toronto," *New York Times*, 30 June 1980, A8.
6. *Editor's note:* Between August 1979 and January 1981, sixteen black children, two girls and fourteen boys, disappeared from their homes in and around Atlanta; several of the bodies were found suffocated, bludgeoned, shot, or strangled. Police reported that they were "baffled by the absence of an apparent motive for the slayings." See "Hundreds Search in Atlanta after the Discovery of Skeletons," *New York Times*, 11 January 1981, 20.
7. *Editor's note:* On September 22-24, 1980, four African American men were shot in the head in Buffalo. On October 8 and 9 of the same year, two black Buffalo taxi drivers were murdered and found with their hearts cut out. On December 29 and 30, two more black men were fatally stabbed in Buffalo and Rochester respectively. In addition, three African Americans and one Latino were stabbed to death in New York City, an incident police suspected to be linked to at least some of the Buffalo-area murders. Although Joseph Christopher, a white private in the U.S. Army, was convicted of three of the Buffalo shootings, the decision was overturned by the New York State Court of Appeals in 1985. See "Murder Convictions Against '22-Caliber Killer' Overturned," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 July 1985, 11; "Inquiry on Killings Shifted to Georgia," *New York Times*, 26 April 1981, 43.
8. *Editor's note:* Bukhari-Alston likely refers to the killing of thirty-year-old Dorothy Brown, a pregnant black woman, by a white police officer in Jackson, Mississippi, on August 29, 1980. Police contend that, upon receiving a call from neighbors claiming that Brown was drunk and threatening them with a gun, Officer Gary King arrived on the scene and, when himself threatened with Brown's weapon, shot her four times. Witnesses, however, claim that Brown had calmed down prior to King's arrival. On September 6, black and some white members of the community marched in front of City Hall protesting Brown's death and calling for the resignation of Police Chief Ray Pope, accused of covering up numerous incidents of police brutality against African Americans. See "Blacks in Jackson, Miss. Protest Killing of Woman," *New York Times*, 7 September 1980, Z30.
9. *Editor's note:* Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as the fortieth president of the United States on January 20, 1981.