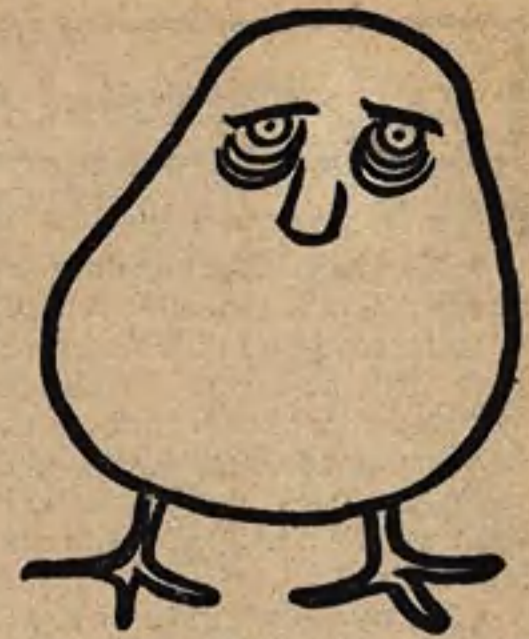


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Lenny Bruce, Tim Leary and the Search for Alienation —or, Which Deodorant Does Lyndon Johnson Use?

by Paul Krassner

I don't know where to begin. The radio announced, "A sick comic came to a sick end last night. . . ." Just another news item. But consider the audacity of a man who would stand on a night club stage—the Gate of Horn in Chicago, December 1962, Lenny Bruce at the peak of his

career—request all lights off except one dim blue spot, ask his audience to have compassion for Adolf Eichmann, and then *become* him, continuing in a German accent:

"My name is Adolf Eichmann. And the Jews came every day to what they thought would be fun in the showers. . . . People say I should have been hung. *Nein*. Do you recognize the whore in

the middle of you—that you would have done the same if you were there yourselves? My defense: I was a soldier. I saw the end of a conscientious day's effort. I watched through the portholes. I saw every Jew burned and turned into soap. Do you people think yourselves better because you burned your enemies at long distance with mis-

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Speak No Evil



See No Evil



Smell No Evil

The Murder of Malcolm X

by Eric Norden

Shortly after 3 p.m. on Sunday, February 21, 1965 Malcolm X walked onto the stage of the Audubon Ballroom at 166th Street and Broadway. The audience of some 400 Negroes and a half-dozen self-conscious whites stirred in anticipation.

At the podium Benjamin X, an officer of Malcolm's Organization of Afro-American Unity, wrapped up his

introductory speech. "And now, brothers and sisters, here is a man willing to lay down his life for you!"

The applause was thunderous.

Malcolm walked slowly to the rostrum. His face was strained, tired, and his step lacked its usual spring. He held up his right hand. "A *salaam alaikem*," he said in a hoarse voice. "Peace be unto you."

"*Wa alaikem salaam*," some 400 voices responded in unison. "And unto you peace."

The tense silence awaiting Malcolm's opening words was suddenly shattered. "Nigger, get your hands out of my pocket!" a man's voice shouted from the middle

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THE MURDER OF MALCOLM X

(Continued from Cover)

of the auditorium. The words—the word—went through the audience like an electric shock.

Heads craned toward the middle of the ballroom to see what was going on. Malcolm's bodyguards rushed from their rostrum posts toward the center of the disturbance.

Malcolm stepped out from behind the podium and walked to the front of the stage. "Now, now brothers, break it up," he said in a weary voice.

In the back of the ballroom there was a soft *crump!* as a small incendiary device was triggered. Smoke spiraled into the air and a woman screamed. In the 4th row on the left-hand side of the ballroom a man stood up with a sawed-off shotgun in his hand. There was a muffled roar as he fired point-blank into Malcolm's chest.

Simultaneously, two men in the first row jumped up with pistols in their hands. "They just stood up in front of me, coolly took aim and shot, just like a firing squad," a woman eyewitness in the 3rd row reported.

Malcolm stood erect for a few seconds under the hail of bullets and then crumpled to the floor.

"He just seemed to melt into the stage," Mrs. Patricia Russell, a psychiatric social worker from New Rochelle later recounted. "It seemed to me to take minutes, like a slow motion film."

As Malcolm lay on the stage the gunmen in the first row emptied their revolvers into his prone body.

In the audience, pandemonium broke loose. Women threw themselves on top of their children. Men fell to the floor or scrambled for cover under the literature tables. Malcolm's wife, Betty, who had attended the meeting with their four children, ran toward the stage, screaming hysterically: "They're killing my husband! They're killing my husband!"

A woman who later identified herself as a registered nurse ran to the stage and threw herself across Malcolm's body. "I was willing to die for the man," she told a *New York Times* reporter. "I would have taken the bullets myself."

One of Malcolm's aides rushed to a phone in the lobby and called Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center for an ambulance. The hospital was directly across the street from the ballroom, but 15 minutes later an ambulance had still not arrived.

Several of Malcolm's guards ran out on foot and brought a stretcher back to the stage. Surrounded by sobbing men and women, they carried Malcolm across the street to the hospital. His body was taken to the emergency operating room where a team of doctors cut through his chest to massage his heart.

It was too late.

At 3:45 in the afternoon a hospital spokesman addressed the knots of milling Negroes keeping vigil on the sidewalk. "The person you know as Malcolm X is dead," he told them.

Most white Americans reacted predictably to Malcolm's assassination. It was generally assumed, before the actual assassins were even identified, that he had been murdered by the Black Muslims, Malcolm's bitter enemies ever since his defection in early 1964.

There was a comforting corollary to this theory: Malcolm had preached "hate," and hate, of the Black

Muslim variety, had in turn struck him down. The *New York Herald Tribune* expressed the mass media's attitude in a smug editorial entitled, "Hate, Full Cycle" in its February 23, 1965 edition:

"The slaying of Malcolm X has shown again that hatred, whatever its apparent justification, however it may be rationalized, turns on itself in the end. . . . Now the hatred and violence that he preached has overwhelmed him, and he has fallen at the hands of Negroes."

Implicit in this view was an unspoken warning to militant Negroes: This is what happens when you go too far. The white press drew this reassuring moral for a few days and then lost interest in the case. But the reaction to Malcolm's assassination in the Negro community was radically different.

Few American Negroes expressed the automatic assumption of Muslim guilt prevalent in the white press. It was well-known that the Muslims feared and hated Malcolm, and would welcome his death, but they were not alone.

Powerful forces, including the U.S. State Department and the CIA, had been deeply alarmed by Malcolm's growing impact, particularly his efforts to internationalize the American racial question by bringing it before the United Nations under the Human Rights provision of the UN charter.

It was not the Muslims who tapped Malcolm's phone, kept him under 24-hour surveillance in the U.S. and followed him closely throughout his trips to Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

If the Muslims had their reasons for wanting Malcolm dead, so did Washington—and American Negroes knew it. Certain aspects of the assassination itself, and the events immediately preceding it, heightened doubts among Negroes that it had been a Muslim operation.

The *N.Y. Times* reported (12/6/65) that "most of Malcolm's admirers appear to believe that he was murdered on orders from the United States Government." An unidentified Harlem woman interviewed by *New York Post* reporter Thomas Skinner the day after the assassination summed up the suspicions of many Negroes: "I don't care if he was shot by Negroes. This was planned, directed and carried out on orders from the white power structure."

Even such a pillar of the civil rights establishment as CORE National Director James Farmer expressed his doubts of the "official version" of the assassination. On February 24, 1965 the *New York Times* reported Farmer's belief that "the killing of Malcolm X was a political act, with international implications and not necessarily connected with black nationalism."

In a more recent interview with this author, Farmer added that "the week prior to his death Malcolm X tried to get in touch with the State Department to demand protection. Now, Malcolm was no fool. If this was a simple thing with the Muslims, he would not wire the State Department."

Farmer revealed that after the assassination, "I spoke to the White House and to officials in the Department of Justice and requested a federal inquiry into the murder. I've heard nothing from them on it."

Farmer was echoing the widespread suspicions of the Negro press and community—suspicions that, almost two years later, have still not been dispelled.

If the Muslims really did kill Malcolm (and three men, two of them quite probably innocent, have been sentenced to life imprisonment on just that assumption) then certain questions have to be answered.

Why, one week after the fire-bombing of his house in Queens, were there no police at the meeting where Malcolm was murdered?

Who were the men who followed Malcolm to the New York Hilton the night before the assassination and tried to gain access to his room?

Who was the "tight-lipped, olive-skinned man with the ferret eyes" whom Malcolm identified as having followed him from London to New York and who fits the description of one of the assassins?

Was Malcolm barred from entering France a week before the assassination, as one North African diplomat claims, because the *Deuxieme Bureau** knew the CIA planned his murder and didn't want him assassinated on French soil?

Why was Malcolm poisoned in Cairo the day before he was to deliver a scathing denunciation of the American Government to the Summit Conference of African prime ministers?

Why was Leon Ameer, Malcolm's New England representative, found strangled to death in his Boston hotel room hours after he had told a public meeting he had evidence that "the white power structure killed Malcolm"?

Who was the "mystery man" arrested outside the ballroom after the shooting as he was being beaten by a mob shouting "He shot Malcolm!"

Why did he disappear from sight immediately after being taken into custody, and why has he not been identified or heard from since?

Who were the two men wounded during the assassination, and why, after initial press reports, have they too dropped out of sight?

Why, on the night of the fire-bombing of Malcolm's home, did a "man in a police uniform" plant a gallon of

*French Department of Alien and Counter-Espionage.



"Jerry, the Negro manikin—she's not light-skinned enough!"

gasoline on a dresser in the house, substantiating Muslim claims that Malcolm had burned down his own home "as a publicity stunt"?

Why did one of the defendants at the murder trial admit his guilt, absolve his two co-defendants, and then claim he and three other men had been paid for the murder by a third party "who was not a Muslim"?

Why, under cross-examination, did the District Attorney not follow up this defendant's admission that in earlier defense questioning the identity of the paymaster had been touched on?

Why did the New York Police Department intimidate witnesses and suppress evidence to fit their own version of the murder?

Why have several of Malcolm's bodyguards, in possession of important information on the murder, fled the country?

Why has Reuben Francis, Malcolm's secretary, been arrested by the FBI and held incommunicado?

Why does Malcolm's widow, Mrs. Betty Shabazz, claim that her husband "knew it was the American power structure that was after his life"?

Why did Malcolm himself tell Alex Haley the day before the assassination that he no longer believed it was the Muslims who were planning his death, but "something bigger"?

And why does Malcolm's sister, Mrs. Ella Collins, declare flatly that "the CIA murdered my brother"?

All these questions and more lay at the root of the problem of who really killed Malcolm. Their solution will shed new light on an affair which, as *Ebony* Magazine quotes one of Malcolm's followers, "Makes James Bond look like a nursery rhyme." It is in Malcolm's brief, brilliant and anguished life that the answers to his death will be found.

Malcolm Little was born in Omaha, Nebraska on May 19, 1925, the son of the Rev. Earl Little, an itinerant Baptist minister who preached the Back-to-Africa gospel of Marcus Garvey. Malcolm was weaned from birth on the bitter milk of the oppressed and disinherited.

His mother, a West Indian, was born as the result of her mother's rape by a white planter, and Malcolm was taught early to hate the "devil's blood" that gave him his light complexion and rusty hair.

At the age of 4, after his family moved to Lansing, Michigan, their house was burned to the ground by a mob of Ku Klux Klansmen.

When Malcolm was six his father's battered body was found under the rails of a streetcar. Malcolm always believed his father had been killed by the Klan and dumped on the tracks.

(Recounting his father's death in his *Autobiography*, Malcolm wrote that "It has always been my belief that I, too, will die by violence. I have done all that I can to be prepared.")

At 15 Malcolm dropped out of school and traveled by bus to Boston to live with his older sister, Ella.

First in Boston and later in New York he gravitated to the cool, zoot-suited world of the Negro hipster. He drank heavily, took up drugs and made the ghetto scene with the ultimate status symbol: a white mistress.

By the time he reached his late teens his cocaine habit was costing him \$20 a day, and to support it he pushed marijuana, sold numbers, and packed a pistol for emergencies. His height and coloring won him the

sobriquet of "Big Red" and in the wartime jungle of Harlem he was a hustler's hustler.

Nightly he commuted "downtown," picking up wealthy white men and women and steering them to Negro prostitutes. No perversion of the white world was a stranger to him; Kraft-Ebbing was his Baedeker, guiding him through the twisted environs of the Caucasian mind.

When Malcolm could no longer support his habit by pimping he traveled to Boston with his white girlfriend and organized a burglary ring. After a few profitable months he was arrested and in 1946 he was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for armed robbery.

"Big Red" celebrated his 21st birthday in the state prison at Charlestown.

Only Malcolm's body was caged in the human zoo at Charlestown. Bored and restless, he began to read ravenously in the prison library. He read the dictionary through, starting with "aardvark," copying the words down on scraps of paper and studying them through the long prison nights.

When relatives told him of a strange new religion preached by a black prophet in Chicago he wrote for information and was personally answered by the Hon. Elijah Muhammad, Messenger of Allah and Shepherd of the Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of the United States.

His correspondence with Elijah Muhammad opened up a new world to Malcolm; a world where black men walked in dignity, proud of their skin, their hair, their heritage, eschewing the physical and mental poisons of the white blue-eyed devils.

Conversion followed revelation, and when he left prison in 1952 he was a fanatic Muslim.

"Big Red" had died in Charlestown.

Malcolm X was born.

Elijah Muhammad was quick to recognize the native intelligence and leadership ability of his new disciple, and appointed Malcolm Minister of Muslim Mosque #7 in Harlem.

Membership and zeal skyrocketed under his direction. Elijah sent Malcolm across the country, reviving moribund mosques and founding new ones. His oratorical genius won thousands of new converts for the Muslims. By the late 1950's Malcolm had become the Paul to Elijah Muhammad's Jesus.

In 1959 the Muslims burst into public attention as a result of Mike Wallace's TV documentary, *The Hate That Hate Produced*.

Overnight, the mass media, which till then had ignored the group, scrambled madly for "Muslim material." As the most articulate spokesman for the movement (Elijah was a clumsy, ineffectual speaker) Malcolm appeared on countless TV and radio shows and was quoted regularly in the press.

Millions of white Americans listened to his bitter denunciations of white society and writhed in guilt-tinged masochism as each new stroke of his verbal whip descended on their collective back.

Malcolm knew that to most whites he was just a freak, the perfect *outré* filler for a two-minute time slot on the evening news, but he welcomed access to the mass media as a means of reaching millions of hitherto unreceptive Negroes.

By the early 1960's Malcolm X was a household word

in America: a bogeyman for complacent whites and many bourgeois Negroes, but a symbol of freedom and independence to the ghetto Negroes. Malcolm said what they had thought for years, and even those unready to accept the puritanical discipline of the Muslims thrilled vicariously at hearing Whitey get it.

But Malcolm's very success held the seeds of his downfall in the Movement. Many Muslim officials, including those members of Elijah's family in the line of succession, feared Malcolm's growing power and tried to put a brake on it. Even the Messenger of Allah seems to have grown worried that Malcolm's public image would eventually eclipse his own.

And by 1963 Malcolm himself was beginning to have doubts about the Movement.

He was still a loyal follower of Elijah, but his appearances at colleges throughout the country had brought him into closer contact with the Civil Rights Movement, and he was disturbed about the Muslim policy of standing aloof from it.

"I thought privately that we should have amended, or relaxed, our general non-engagement policy, Malcolm later wrote in his *Autobiography*. "It could be heard increasingly in the Negro communities: 'Those Muslims talk tough, but they never do anything, unless somebody bothers Muslims.'"

Malcolm was also disillusioned by facts he discovered about Elijah Muhammad's personal life. He learned from paternity suits brought by two of Elijah's former secretaries and the testimony of disenchanted Muslims from Chicago Mosque #2 that the Messenger of Allah had a harem of 7 wives, by whom he had fathered 10 children.

Malcolm's whole existence since leaving prison had been based on his unflagging belief in the divinity of Elijah Muhammad. Now the rock of his faith was crumbling before his eyes.

In desperation, he flew to Elijah's winter home in Phoenix, Arizona and told him everything he had heard. The Messenger denied nothing. But, he explained to Malcolm, he was only following his religious destiny.

"You have always had such a good understanding of prophecy, and of spiritual things," he told Malcolm as they walked beside his swimming pool. "You recognize that's what all of this is—prophecy. I'm David. When you read about how David took another man's wife, I'm that David. You read about Noah, who got drunk—that's me. You read about Lot, who went and laid up with his own daughters. I have to fulfill all of those things."

Elijah's explanation did little to assuage Malcolm's doubts, and the Messenger of Allah realized that his young disciple was no longer totally loyal. By the time Malcolm arrived back in New York, the word had quietly gone out from Phoenix to Muslim Mosques across the country: "Watch Malcolm. He can't be trusted."

Malcolm was frozen out of the Muslim newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*, and no longer privy to the inner councils of the Muslim leadership. But Elijah bided his time, waiting for the propitious moment to formally excommunicate him. He finally seized on some remarks Malcolm had made right after the assassination of President Kennedy.

Malcolm had likened the assassination to the murder of Medgar Evers and Patrice Lumumba and pointed out

that "hate in white men had not stopped with the killing of defenseless black people; hate, allowed to spread unchecked, finally had struck down this country's chief of state." It was, Malcolm claimed, a case of "the chickens coming home to roost."

Malcolm's little homily was no stronger than what thousands of Americans were saying, including Chief Justice Earl Warren in his eulogy at Kennedy's funeral, but Elijah used it as a pretext to "suspend" Malcolm for 90 days as Minister of the Harlem Mosque. He was also prohibited from making any public statements. A few weeks later, the suspension was extended "indefinitely."

Malcolm, now totally disillusioned, realized there was no place left for him in the Muslim movement; 38 years old, with no money of his own, a wife and three children to support, his home and car the possession of the Muslims, Malcolm nevertheless was determined to fight on.

On March 12, 1964 he called a press conference and announced the formation of a new movement, the Muslim Mosque, Inc. (Three months later he organized another, broader group, the Organization of Afro-American Unity, a secular, politically-oriented outfit open to the participation of religious and non-religious Negroes alike.)

In announcing the Muslim Mosque, Malcolm reflected how radically his ideas had altered since his break with the Muslims. "I am prepared to cooperate in local civil-rights action in the South and elsewhere," he said, "because every campaign for specific objectives can only heighten the political consciousness of the Negroes. . . ."

Malcolm had broken the chains of Muslim separatism and was headed on a course of political activism. After ten years as Elijah Muhammad's mouthpiece, he was at last his own man.

In April, 1964 Malcolm made a pilgrimage to Mecca.

To his surprise, he was greeted in the Holy City as a major world figure, entertained by King Feisal and introduced to leading Islamic religious authorities and Saudi government officials.

His experience in Mecca was one Malcolm would never forget. His contact with other Moslem pilgrims completely changed his views on racism and the possibility of black-white brotherhood. In a long, passionate

letter to his aides at the Muslim Mosque he expressed his new viewpoint:

"Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered 'white'—but the 'white' attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen *sincere* and *true* brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color. . . . Each hour here in the Holy land enables me to have greater spiritual insights into what is happening in America between black and white.

"The American Negro never can be blamed for his racial animosities—he is only reacting to 400 years of the conscious racism of the American whites. But as racism leads America up the suicide path, I do believe, from the experiences that I have had with them, that the whites of the younger generation, in the colleges and universities, will see the handwriting on the wall and many of them will turn to the spiritual path of truth—the *only* way left to America to ward off the disaster that racism must inevitably lead to. . . ."

Malcolm appeared apprehensive that his followers might not understand his new attitude to whites.

"You may be shocked by these words coming from me," he concluded. "But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen and experienced has forced me to *re-arrange* much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to *toss aside* some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experiences and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth."

The letter was signed "El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz" (his Arabic name prefixed by the honorary "Hajj" awarded all pilgrims to Mecca). It was significant that the two major changes of thought and attitude in Malcolm's life were accompanied by a change of name.

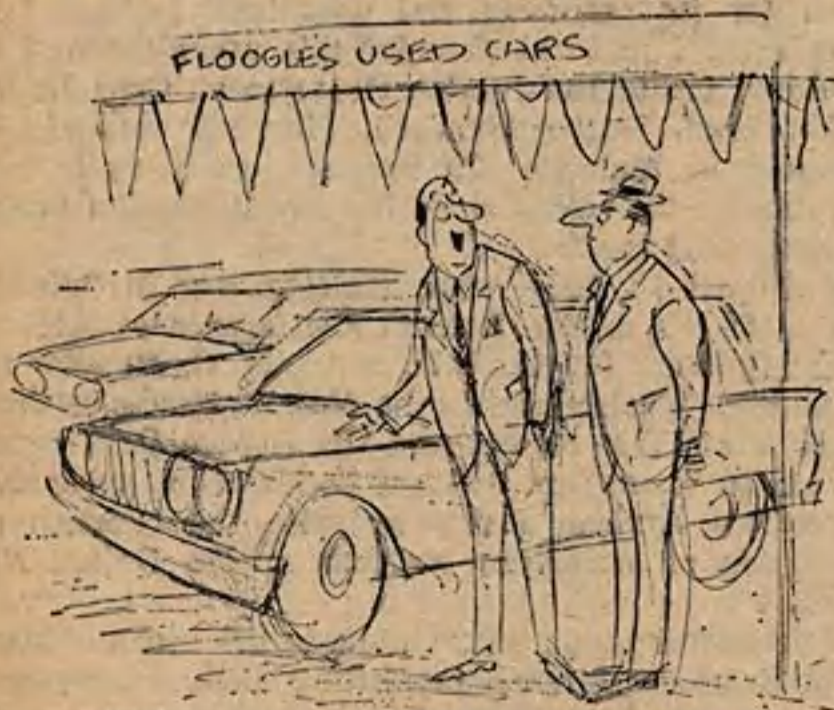
Malcolm Little, converted to Islam behind the bars of Charlestown state prison, emerged Malcolm X; a revelation just as deep occurred in the sacred streets of Mecca, and brought forth El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz.

"In the Holy World," Malcolm later wrote in his *Autobiography*, "away from America's race problem, was the first time I ever had been able to think clearly about the basic divisions of white people in America, and how their attitudes and their motives related to, and affect Negroes. In my 39 years on this earth, the Holy City of Mecca had been the first time I had ever stood before the Creator of all and felt like a complete human being."

Malcolm didn't soften in his opposition to white racism. But from that moment on he never failed to draw a distinction between the evil committed *by* whites and the inherent evil *of* all whites. Shortly before his death he wrote:

"In the past, yes, I have made sweeping indictments of *all* white people. I never will be guilty of that again—as I know now that some white people *are* truly sincere, that some truly are capable of being brotherly toward a black man.

"The true Islam has shown me that a blanket indictment of all white people is as wrong as when whites make blanket indictments against blacks. . . ."



"This one was owned by an elderly Negro who drove it under the speed limit for fear of some cop ticketing him."

It isn't the American white man who is a racist, but it's the American political, economic and social atmosphere that automatically nourishes a racist psychology in the white man."

Malcolm's new attitude was not only more humane, it was infinitely more sophisticated. Apart from the moral and religious aspects of the problem, Malcolm had come to recognize that racism was an inherent component of the American system. Instead of scattering his shot at all whites, Malcolm began to train his sights squarely on the political and economic administration of the U.S. Almost subliminally, his position was being radicalized, and he was swinging left.

At the end of April, 1964 Malcolm left Mecca and flew on to a tour of several African countries. Once again, he was astonished at the warmth of his reception. He was greeted as the roving ambassador of an American black nation, praised in the press, feted by diplomats and prime ministers.

In Nigeria, Cabinet ministers vied for his attention. In Ghana, he was received by then-President Nkrumah, who arranged for him to address a joint session of the Ghanaian Parliament—the first American to be so honored. While in Accra he established friendly contact with the Chinese and Cuban Ambassadors, who both held state dinners in his honor. From Ghana he flew on to Morocco and Algeria, returning to the U.S. on May 21, 1964.

If Mecca had a blinding impact on Malcolm's racial attitudes, his African tour was equally important to his political development. He had always stressed the necessity for Negroes to identify culturally and historically with their original homeland, but his discussion with African leaders had opened up the possibility of tangible cooperation between American Negroes and the more radical African states.

An idea began to evolve in Malcolm's mind—the idea of bringing the American racial problem before the U.N. under the Human Rights provision of the Charter. If South Africa could be arraigned before the world body, why not the U.S.?

Malcolm knew the plan could not succeed without the support of the independent African states, and in the summer of 1964 he made another, more extended trip to Africa, spending 18 weeks touring the continent and conferring with African leaders.

On his tour Malcolm visited Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, and Algeria. He held successful audiences with President Nasser of Egypt, President Toure of Guinea, President Ekwueme of Nigeria, President Nyerere of Tanzania, Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Prime Minister Milton Obote of Uganda and President Nkrumah of Ghana.

(Ghana was Malcolm's most fervent ally, and Nkrumah entrusted him with a letter of commission to arrange upon his return for the purchase and installation of a nuclear reactor in Accra.)

No other non-African had ever been so honored and trusted by the African states. According to Rev. Laurence Henry, who knew Malcolm well, "Malcolm became the one black American with whom many high state officials from black Africa could communicate. . . . Thirty-two African nations promised to support Malcolm's resolution to the United Nations concerning human rights for black Americans."

John Lewis and Donald Harris of SNCC, who were on a tour of Africa at the same time as Malcolm, attest to the deep impression he made throughout his travels: "Malcolm's impact was just fantastic. In every country he was known, and served as the main criteria, for categorizing other Afro-Americans and their political views."

Washington was deeply alarmed by Malcolm's African activities. His biting denunciation of U.S. Government inactivity on civil rights, coupled to his growing attacks on "American imperialism," were stirring up anti-U.S. sentiment throughout Africa.

As long as Malcolm had been a Muslim he was no threat to the power structure; the Muslims had developed a rhetoric of violence, but they did nothing. In fact, federal intelligence agencies privately approved of the Muslims because they recruited thousands of the most militant Negroes and diverted their anger into harmless channels.

The Muslims under Elijah Muhammad constituted as much a challenge to the status quo as Father Divine, and had as much influence on foreign policy as Oral Roberts.

But it was quite another thing for Malcolm X to travel across Africa galvanizing public sentiment against Washington, and maneuvering to bring the American racial question before the U.N., a move which, if successful, could prove Washington's most humiliating propaganda reversal of the Cold War. The Government began keeping close tabs on Malcolm and his associates.

Alex Haley, who collaborated with Malcolm on his *Autobiography*, reports that:

"In Washington, D.C. and New York City, powerful civic, private, and governmental agencies and individuals were keenly interested in what Malcolm X was saying abroad, and were speculating upon what he would say, and possibly do, when he returned to America. In upstate New York, I received a telephone call from a close friend who said he had been asked to ask me if I would come to New York City on an appointed day to meet with [a very high government official] who was interested in Malcolm X.

"I did fly down to the city. My friend accompanied me to the offices of a large private foundation well known for its activities and donations in the civil-rights area. I met the foundation's president and he introduced me to the Justice Department Civil Rights Section head, Burke Marshall. Marshall was chiefly interested in Malcolm X's finances, particularly how his extensive traveling since his Black Muslim ouster had been paid for."

On August 13, 1964, while Malcolm was in Cairo to request the aid of the Summit Conference of African Prime Ministers for his U.N. move, M. S. Handler reported from Washington to the *New York Times* that:

"The State Department and the Justice Department have begun to take an interest in Malcolm's campaign to convince African states to raise the question of persecution of American Negroes at the United Nations. . . .

"Malcolm's 8-page memorandum to the heads of state at the Cairo conference requesting their support became available here only recently. After studying it, officials said that if Malcolm succeeded in convincing just one African government to bring up the charge

at the United Nations, the United States government would be faced with a touchy problem.

"The United States, officials here believe, would find itself in the same category as South Africa, Hungary and other countries whose domestic policies have become debating issues at the United Nations. The issue, officials say, would be of service to critics of the United States, Communist and non-Communist, and contribute to the undermining of the position the United States has asserted for itself as the leader of the West in the advocacy of human rights.

"In a letter from Cairo to a friend, Malcolm wrote: 'I have gotten several promises of support in bringing our plight before the UN this year.' . . .

"Officials here today conceded the possibility that Malcolm might have succeeded. . . .

"Although the State Department's interest in Malcolm's activities in Africa is obvious, that of the Justice Department is shrouded in discretion. Malcolm is regarded as an implacable leader with deep roots in the Negro submerged classes. . . . [Malcolm X] has confided in friends that he has been under constant surveillance in New York by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and by the intelligence section of the New York Police Department. . . ."

Throughout Africa Malcolm was followed closely by the CIA. He even got on speaking terms with one of his tails. Malcolm reports in his *Autobiography* that:

"Throughout my trip, I was of course aware that I was under constant surveillance. [One] agent was a particularly obvious and obnoxious one. . . . This one finally got under my skin when I found I couldn't seem to eat a meal in the hotel without seeing him somewhere around watching me. You would have thought I was John Dillinger or somebody.

"I just got up from my breakfast one morning and walked over to where he was and I told him I knew he was following me, and if he wanted to know anything, why didn't he ask me.

"I was, to hear him tell it, anti-American, un-American, seditious, subversive, and probably Com-

munist. I told him that what he said only proved how little he understood about me. I told him that the only thing the FBI, the CIA, or anybody else could ever find me guilty of, was being open-minded. I said I was seeking for the truth, and I was trying to weigh—objectively—everything on its own merit. I said what I was against was strait-jacketed thinking, and strait-jacketed societies."

Malcolm was initially surprised to find that he was followed not only in America but in Africa as well, but he soon got used to his shadows. "It's like staying in a room full of spider webs," he told his wife Betty upon returning home. "If a man is aware of the web, it's visible in that one room—if you go to another country you suppose at first that it's not there, but if you look closely it's still being spun around you."

But there is evidence that the CIA did not limit its activities to surveillance.

In July, 1964, Malcolm was in Cairo to address the African Summit Conference. In his memorandum to the Conference he violently attacked Washington's domestic and foreign policy. He termed the U.S. Government's espousal of civil rights legislation "nothing but tricks of the century's leading neo-colonialist power" and urged the assembled delegates to bring the U.S. before the bar of world public opinion at the U.N.

The American Embassy in Cairo engaged in delicate behind-the-scenes negotiations to have Malcolm barred from addressing the Conference, but its efforts were coldly snubbed by both the Egyptian Government and the Conference organizers.

Washington's efforts to silence Malcolm then appear to have passed from the diplomatic to the intelligence apparatus. Their efforts came closer to success. Malcolm almost did not live to deliver his speech.

When Malcolm first arrived in Cairo he was given accommodations aboard the Isis, a resplendent pleasure yacht moored on the Nile. The Isis harbored "freedom fighters" from all the non-liberated areas of Africa—Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Rhodesia. When the yacht became overcrowded, Malcolm moved out and took a room at the Nile Hilton, which he shared with Milton Henry, a lawyer and civil rights activist from Detroit.

On July 23, 1964, the day before he was to deliver his speech to the Summit Conference, Malcolm dined in the Hilton's main restaurant. Shortly after dinner, Malcolm collapsed in his hotel room, suffering from severe abdominal pains. He was rushed to a hospital.

In an interview with the author, Milton Henry reported that "He would have died if he hadn't been able to get to the hospital in a hurry. His stomach was pumped out, cleaned out thoroughly, and that saved him. But as Malcolm said afterwards, he would have died if he had not got immediate treatment."

Analysis of the stomach pumping disclosed a "toxic substance." Its nature was undisclosed, but food poisoning was ruled out. Malcolm was hospitalized for a day-and-a-half, but against his doctor's advice he managed to appear at the Summit Conference and give his speech. He was shaky for several days afterward. According to Henry, Malcolm believed "someone had deliberately poisoned me." Malcolm tried to find the waiter who had served him, but he had disappeared.

In discussing the incident with Henry, Malcolm stressed "the fact that CIA men were all around him



"Dear, we forgot to invite the necessary white liberal."

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in Cairo." He later told Henry that "Washington had a lot to do with it."

In an interview with this author, Mrs. Ella Collins, Malcolm's sister, reported that Malcolm told her of the poisoning incident on his return from Africa. "He told me that he felt that the CIA was definitely responsible for it. After that he was very careful. In fact, on another occasion there was an affair given in his honor in Addis Abbaba, and in observing the waiter he got a leery feeling and refused the food. He never had any proof, of course, but he always felt sure somehow that he had by-passed another poisoning."

Malcolm's poisoning in Cairo was a failure in more ways than one. His speech won tumultuous applause, and shortly afterwards the delegates adopted a resolution condemning U.S. racial policies. No formal stand was taken on bringing the question before the United Nations, but Malcolm received private pledges of support for the plan from several nations.

Upon his return to the U.S. Malcolm stepped up his efforts to hail the U.S. before the UN, but he found little support for the move among the established civil rights groups. It was too "radical," too "anti-American" for their taste. Malcolm was also hampered in building a strong organization of his own by his reputation as a "racist." He writes in his *Autobiography*:

"One of the major troubles that I was having in building the organization that I wanted—an all-black organization whose ultimate objective was to help create a society in which there could exist honest white-black brotherhood—was that my earlier public image, my old so-called 'Black Muslim' image, kept blocking me.

"I was trying to gradually reshape that image. I was trying to turn a corner, into a new regard by the public, especially Negroes; I was no less angry than I had been, but at the same time the true brotherhood I had seen in the Holy World had influenced me to recognize that anger can blind human vision."

Malcolm was not discouraged by the rebuffs he encountered. His travels in Africa had widened his political horizons, and he was moving rapidly to the left, even to the point of establishing working contacts with the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party.

In his public statements he increasingly gave expression to the view that domestic exploitation of American Negroes was part and parcel of "American imperialism's" world-wide drive to control the poorer, predominantly non-white nations.

"This system is not only ruling us in America, it is ruling the world," he said in an interview with the *Young Socialist* magazine shortly before his death. At a public meeting in Detroit he declared that:

"This society is controlled primarily by the racists and segregationists who are in Washington, D.C., in positions of power. And from Washington, D.C. they exercise the same forms of brutal oppression against dark-skinned people in South and North Vietnam, or in the Congo, or in Cuba or any other place on this earth where they are trying to exploit and oppress. That is a society whose government doesn't hesitate to inflict the most brutal form of punishment and oppression upon dark-skinned people all over the world."

Malcolm became an uncompromising opponent of the war in Vietnam long before Martin Luther King opened his mouth on the subject.

"What America is doing in South Vietnam is criminal," he told a meeting of the Militant Labor Forum in 1964. "But the oppressed people of South Vietnam . . . have been successful in fighting off the agents of imperialism. . . . Little rice farmers, peasants, with a rifle, up against all the highly-mechanized weapons of warfare—jets, napalm, battleships, everything else. And America can't put those rice farmers back where they want them. Somebody's waking up."

Malcolm adopted an increasingly pro-Chinese position on international questions. In a telephone interview between Malcolm in London and Afro-American students in Paris on February 9, 1965 he was asked about the recent explosion of China's first atom bomb. Malcolm replied:

"I think it's one of the greatest things that has ever happened. Because up until now the nuclear devices have been in the hands of the Europeans—they have exercised a monopoly over the nuclear weapons or over the ability to produce nuclear weapons. But, now the Chinese have evened it. . . .

"So, as far as I am concerned, it was a very good thing and I do hope they will be able to build bigger ones and better ones every day—because the only language that America understands is the language of power and a dark nation has to be in a position to talk or speak the language that these Imperialists understand."

After his African trips Malcolm leaned more and more to socialism as an alternative to the American economic system, which he believed fostered and institutionalized racism. During his travels he discussed socialism with Marxists in Zanzibar, Guinea, Ghana and Algeria, and on more than one occasion had a fruitful ideological discussion with Ernesto Ché Guevara of Cuba.

(During his U.N. mission in December, 1964 Ché sent a warm message of greeting and support to Malcolm on behalf of Fidel Castro.)

In May, 1964, when asked what political system he desired for America, Malcolm said:

"I don't know. But I'm flexible. As was stated earlier, all of the countries that are emerging today from under the shackles of colonialism are turning towards socialism. I don't think it's an accident.

"Most of the countries that were colonial powers were capitalist countries, and the last bulwark of capitalism today is America, and it's impossible for a white person today to believe in capitalism without racism.

"And if you find a person without racism and you happen to get that person into conversation and they have a philosophy that makes you sure they don't have racism in their outlook, usually they're socialists or their political philosophy is socialism."

Just a few weeks before his death Malcolm expressed his opposition to capitalism in the strongest terms he had yet employed. In an interview with a socialist magazine he declared that:

"It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck. Capitalism used to be like an eagle, but now it's more like a vulture. It used to be strong enough to go and suck anybody's blood whether they were strong or not. But now it has become more cowardly, like the vulture, and it can only suck the blood of the helpless.

As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less victims, less blood to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker. It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely."

Malcolm X was leading American Negroes on a road followed by millions of their brothers in Asia, Africa and Latin America. But it was a road that the U.S. Government had long ago marked *Closed*. It would lead to Malcolm's death.

By the fall of 1964 Malcolm's plan to indict America in the U.N. was in high gear. He had established close working relationships with the U.N. delegations of several African nations, and was a familiar figure in the Delegates' Lounge.

In November, 1964, when the U.S. intervened in the Congolese civil war by dropping paratroops on Stanleyville, Malcolm took the lead in whipping up opposition to the U.S. He lobbied relentlessly with his U.N. contacts, urging them to strongly condemn the move, "unless you want to be next."

Malcolm was one of the driving forces behind the unprecedented hail of abuse rained on Washington during the General Assembly Congo debate in December, 1964.

M. S. Handler reported in the *New York Times* of January 2, 1965 that Malcolm had urged the African delegates not only to attack U.S. intervention in the Congo but to employ "the racial situation in the United States as an instrument of attack in discussing international problems" because "such a strategy would give the African states more leverage in dealing with the United States and would in turn give American Negroes more leverage in American society." Handler added:

"The spokesmen of some African states acted precisely within the framework of these recommendations last month in the Congo debate at the United Nations. They accused the United States of being indifferent to the fate of blacks and cited as evidence the attitude of the United States government toward the civil-rights struggle in Mississippi.

"The African move profoundly disturbed the American authorities, who gave the impression that they had been caught off guard."

Malcolm had become, within a period of 9 months, Washington's black Public Enemy Number One. George



"Darling, my schwartza is threatening to quit!"

Breitman, editor of *Malcolm X Speaks*, writes that:

"The State Department credited him, or rather blamed him, for a good part of the strong stand against [the] U.S. taken by African nations in the U.N. at the time of the latest atrocities in the Congo. As he knew, the CIA and similar agencies take an interest in what the State Department doesn't like" (*Malcolm X, The Man and His Ideas*).

In a domestic context, Washington saw Malcolm as a long-range threat: he was widely popular with the black masses, but plagued with organizational and recruiting problems that reduced his political effectiveness.

But in foreign affairs, Malcolm was an imminent and serious danger; more than any other single factor he was responsible for the growing suspicion and fear with which many African states viewed Washington's intentions.

At the very time that the U.S. was making an all-out effort to penetrate Africa, it found its efforts frustrated by one man, an ex-convict and dope-addict whose record would have made him unemployable as a State Department chauffeur.

It must have been galling that such a man, by galvanizing the African U.N. delegations against America's Congo intervention, had been responsible for America's most stunning setback in the U.N. since the Bay of Pigs fiasco. But Washington did not accept its humiliation with equanimity.

Malcolm was a marked man.

As his anti-U.S. activities grew more widespread and effective, a few of Malcolm's associates and relatives began to warn him of the dangers of government retaliation. He had been under surveillance since he broke with the Muslims, but now there were as many as three different agents shadowing him at one time.

His phones were tapped—"On my home telephone, if I said 'I'm going to bomb the Empire State Building,' I guarantee you in five minutes it would be surrounded"—and the homes of such associates as Alex Haley were bugged.

Malcolm tried to take the situation in stride and even joked about it. (He began to introduce his meetings with the words: "Honored guests, brothers, and sisters, friends and enemies; also ABC and CBS and FBI and CIA.")

But he knew that powerful forces were after him. His widow Betty told this author, "He believed that the power structure in Washington wanted him dead. He once said, 'If anybody kills me it'll be the police surrounding this house.' He was followed wherever he went; it was a constant thing."

As Malcolm's UN move grew to fruition, his sister Ella asked him if he knew to what lengths Washington might go to stop him. "I asked him if he really recognized the importance of his attempt to go to the United Nations," Mrs. Collins told this author.

"He said to me, 'You know, Ella, maybe I haven't fully realized how vital this thing is to the government.'"

"I told him that to take a step of this kind he needed protection, real protection, that he felt secure with. But he couldn't even trust his own bodyguards. I've been informed by reliable sources that there were CIA agents right in the Organization, and I've been given their names. Malcolm knew the dangers, but he said he had to go ahead."

Mrs. Collins urged her brother to leave the country until he was ready to return directly to the U.N., but he felt that such a move would be cowardly. (After the fire-bombing of his home, Malcolm finally acceded to his sister's wishes; plane tickets had been purchased and Malcolm planned to leave for Africa on Tuesday, February 23rd. He was assassinated on the 21st.)

In early February, 1965, Malcolm flew to London to deliver the closing address at the first congress of the Council of African Organizations. From London he was scheduled to fly to Paris to speak before the Congress of African Students.

When his plane landed at Orly on February 9th, Malcolm was told he could not disembark. The French Government had branded him "an undesirable person" and he was ordered to leave the country immediately.

Malcolm had visited France just three months before without experiencing any difficulty, and he was baffled by the expulsion order. In a transcript of a tape-recorded telephone call between Malcolm in London and the Paris student group, recently made available to this author, Malcolm said that:

"I was surprised when I arrived in Paris and was prohibited from landing. I thought that if there were any country in Europe that was liberal in its approach to the problem, it was France. This is why I was shocked when they told me I couldn't land. They didn't give me any excuse for it. I believe the State Department is responsible."

In view of the State Department's unrelenting hostility to Malcolm, his assumption of its culpability is understandable. But President De Gaulle's government is hardly noted for its receptivity to State Department *dicta*. Furthermore, information that has subsequently come to light points a finger in quite another direction.

George Breitman, one of the few perceptive white analysts of Malcolm's career, writes that "After the assassination Malcolm's associates expressed the belief that the reason for his being excluded was that the French Government thought he might be assassinated on French soil, and did not want to bear the onus for such a scandal."

This assumption is more than idle speculation. In April, 1965 my interest in Malcolm's death was first aroused by a highly-placed North African diplomat. This official, who insists on anonymity, said that his country's intelligence apparatus had been quietly informed by the French Department of Alien Documentation and Counter-Espionage that the CIA planned Malcolm's murder, and France feared he might be liquidated on its soil.

The diplomat's country, which enjoyed close relations with France, was so informed because Malcolm had visited it on prior occasions, and possibly might have flown there after his expulsion from France.

"Your CIA is beginning to murder its own citizens now," he commented in elegantly modulated French.

On Saturday, February 12, 1965, Malcolm arrived at Kennedy International Airport from London. Ten hours later, at 2:45 A.M. Sunday morning, as he and his family slept in their modest home in East Elmhurst, Queens, four fire bombs were hurled through the windows. The bombs were carefully distributed so as to seal off any escape exit. But the fourth bomb glanced off a window pane and exploded harmlessly on the front lawn. The house was destroyed, but Malcolm, his

wife Betty and their four children narrowly escaped.

Malcolm had always been willing to risk his own life for his beliefs, but the near-murder of his family rocked him. "I'm a marked man," he said in a strained voice at a press conference after the bombing. "It doesn't frighten me for myself as long as I felt they would not hurt my family. . . ."

A bizarre sequel to the bombing was the thinly-veiled attempt of the New York Police Dept. to show that Malcolm had bombed his own home, "as a publicity stunt." For some reason the police did not want the public to take the threat to Malcolm's life seriously, and police officials insinuated to reporters—"off the record"—that it was all a hoax staged by Malcolm himself.

To back up their allegations, policemen on the scene of the fire apparently went so far as to plant a tin of gasoline on the dresser in his youngest child's room.

"When they planted the gasoline I knew it was no longer the Muslims," Malcolm's sister Ella told me. "Only the police could have planted it, because as the fire died down neighbors went into the house to get some clothes for the children from their rooms, what hadn't been burned. And none of them saw this jug of gasoline when they took things from the baby's dresser. And then the police bomb squad arrived and took over the house, and then they produced the gasoline."

Malcolm's widow Betty corroborates her sister-in-law's version of events. "Only someone in the uniform of a fireman or policeman could have planted the bottle of gasoline on my baby's dresser," she told the author. "It was to make it appear as if we had bombed our own home."

At a press conference on Wednesday, February 17th at the Hotel Theresa, Malcolm said that an official of the Fire Department had privately admitted to him that someone had placed the gasoline on his child's dresser. "Fire Marshall [naming him] met me at the [Rochester] airport later and said that yes, it had been planted there." Malcolm told the press that:

"We are demanding an immediate investigation by the FBI of the bombing. We feel a conspiracy has been entered into at the local level, with some local police, firemen and press. Neither I, nor my wife and child, have insurance, and we stand in no way to gain from the bombing. . . . My attorney has instructed me and my wife to submit to a lie detector test and will ask that the same test be given to police and firemen at the scene."

Malcolm charged in his concluding remarks at the press conference that "the police in this country know what is going on—this conspiracy leads to my death."

No metropolitan newspaper reported Malcolm's press conference and his allegations of police culpability.

"The press gives the impression that I'm jiving about this thing," he bitterly told a *New York Times* reporter three days before his murder. "They ignore the evidence and the actual attempts."

The press handled the story of the bombing in such a way that the public either really believed Malcolm bombed his own home to gain a few headlines or automatically assumed that his old enemies, the Muslims, had committed the act.

As far as the possibility of Muslim involvement goes, it was not in character for even the Muslims to fire-bomb

a home full of children; they might have tried to attack Malcolm alone, but their *modus operandum* would not include wiping out his family in the process.

And if, as also might be assumed, the Muslims were merely trying to terrorize Malcolm without killing any one, it was unlikely they would have picked that particular house as their target. The building belonged to the Muslims, and just two weeks before, Malcolm had been ordered to vacate it; the day after the bombing Malcolm's appeal for a stay of eviction was rejected by Civil Court Justice Maurice Weil and title returned to the Muslims.

However deep their thirst for revenge, the Muslims are first and foremost good businessmen; they do not bomb their own property.

Malcolm spent the last days of his life desperately trying to convince the press and public that whoever was out to get him (and he no longer believed it was the Muslims) really meant business. But no one would listen to him.

Malcolm applied at the 28th precinct for a pistol permit to protect himself and his family but he was turned down.

A week later, as Malcolm's widow Betty left Bellevue Morgue after identifying her husband's body, she told newsmen in a bitter, tear-choked voice:

"The police and press were unfair. No one believed what he said. They never took him seriously. Even after the bombing of our house they said he did it himself." Her voice broke. "Now what are they going to do—say that he shot himself?"

The fire-bombing convinced Malcolm that Washington was out to liquidate him. "It was no accident that I was barred from France, and ten hours after I arrived back home my home was bombed," he declared at his February 17th press conference. Malcolm revealed that he had sent a telegram to Secretary of State Rusk lodging an official protest, charging that the government "had no intention to help me or protect my life."

A few days before his assassination he met with Alex Haley for the last time. Haley reports in the Epilogue to Malcolm's *Autobiography* that Malcolm no longer thought it was the Muslims who were trying to kill him. "Things have happened . . . that are bigger than what they can do," he told Haley. "Things have gone beyond that."

His sister, Ella Collins, told me that "On the day before his death, which was a Saturday, we spent the day together. He discussed the fact that the way his house was bombed, and his being barred from France, led him to believe that the plotters of his death were much bigger than the Muslims. In discussing the fire-bombing we both agreed that, with our experience of black people's methods of revenge on each other, this was not the work of black people."

She again warned her brother to leave the country while he could and reports that Malcolm reluctantly agreed, primarily in order to safeguard his family.

"I said to him then, and I believe now," Mrs. Collins said, "that his move to take the race issue to the UN would cause his death. . . . To take the American black problem into the United Nations, after gaining respect from the Afro-Asian and European world, this would have brought about a day of reckoning for the United States Government. And this was why he was killed. Had not he mentioned going into the United Nations

they would have allowed him to live, maybe later finding some way to incriminate him and send him to jail to get him out of the way."

One day before his death Malcolm phoned Alex Haley. It was their last contact.

"His voice was hoarse and seemed agitated," Haley writes. "It was obvious that he was under a great strain. He wanted to tell me something. He said that there were other groups and interests beside the Muslims who were seeking his death."

Malcolm said to Haley that "I know what they [the Muslims] can do and what they can't, and they can't do some of the stuff recently going on."

Haley adds that, "Then—it seemed to me such an odd, abrupt change of subject: 'You know, I'm glad I've been the first to establish official ties between Afro-Americans and our blood brothers in Africa.'" To Haley, who was not privy to Malcolm's political plans, it was an "odd, abrupt change of subject"—in fact, Malcolm was telling his friend the reason he was going to die.

The night before his assassination Malcolm stayed at the New York Hilton Hotel. (After the bombing of their house, his family had been put up by friends in Queens.) Alex Haley recounts in his Epilogue to Malcolm's *Autobiography* that, after he checked in and was given a room on the 12th floor:

"Some Negro men entered the giant hotel's busy lobby. They began asking various bellmen what room Malcolm X was in. The bellmen, of course, would never answer that question concerning any guest . . . the bellmen quickly notified the hotel's security chief. From then until Malcolm X checked out the next day, extra security vigilance was continuously maintained on the 12th floor. During that time, Malcolm X left the room only once."

The two men may just have been part of Malcolm's routine surveillance pattern—or they could have represented something more sinister. (Malcolm was tailed by whites and blacks alike—the CIA makes a point of recruiting black agents at colleges and universities, both for use in Africa and to keep tabs on troublesome Negroes at home.)

Malcolm himself seems to have felt the noose tightening around his neck. His widow Betty told me that "My husband sensed something the night before he was murdered. He called me and said there were 'loads of police around the Hilton' and said he would tell me more when he saw me. I never saw him again."

The next morning Malcolm was awakened in his hotel room by the ringing of the telephone. He picked up the receiver. "Wake up, brother," a man's voice said softly. There was a click and the phone went dead. Before he left the hotel he phoned his wife and sister and mentioned the call.

Malcolm prided himself on his ability to distinguish Negro and 'Caucasian' voices. "That was a white man's voice," he told his wife.

To his sister, Ella, his last words were: "You pray for me, Ella, because I firmly believe now I need it more than I've ever needed it before. So you ask Allah to guide me, because I feel they may have me doomed for this day."

"Not this day," his sister told him. "Yes, this day," Malcolm said quietly.

Four hours later he was dead.

One basic fact emerges ineluctably from the tangled skein of events surrounding Malcolm's murder: he could not have been killed without the assistance—deliberate or otherwise—of the New York Police Dept.

At all his previous meetings at the Audubon Ballroom the building had swarmed with police, assigned both to protect Malcolm and stave off any clashes between his followers and Black Muslims. But at the meeting on Sunday, February 21st, one week after his house had been fire-bombed, the usual police detail was nowhere in evidence.

Mrs. Patricia M. Russell, a psychiatric social worker, wrote an eye-witness account of the assassination for the February 27th *Baltimore Afro-American*. Discussing her arrival at the ballroom ten or fifteen minutes before Malcolm was gunned down, she reports: "The area in front of the ballroom was clear of policemen. There was not one officer in sight."

Another eyewitness, journalist Herman Porter, told me: "I arrived at 2:15, and it struck me as strange that there was such an absence of police. I had attended every one of Malcolm's Harlem rallies in the year since he broke with the Muslims, and at all of them there were at least half a dozen policemen standing outside of the downstairs entrance, or just inside the door. On this occasion I didn't see anyone."

But there *was* one uniformed policeman inside the building. During the trial of Malcolm's alleged assassins one of the witnesses was Patrolman Gilbert Henry. Some significant facts emerged in his testimony.

Henry testified that he had been assigned to the Audubon Ballroom on the day of the assassination. But instead of being stationed at the entrance or in the lobby, as at all previous meetings, Henry was told to conceal himself in the Ballroom's Rose Room, some distance from the main auditorium where Malcolm was to speak.

Patrolman Henry testified that he had been told to stay where he could not be seen and communicate by walkie-talkie with a police detail concealed across the street in the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, the hospital complex where Malcolm's body was taken after the shooting.

Henry was told to notify the police in the hospital "if anything happened"—such as shots or other sounds of trouble. Before Henry could go any further, or be asked why the police expected trouble on that particular day, the Assistant District Attorney choked off the line of questioning and hustled Henry off the stand. The moribund defense attorneys never recalled him.

Immediately after the assassination police officials piously assured the public that they had tried to give Malcolm protection, but were rebuffed. One day after the murder Ted Poston of the *New York Post* reported an interview with Mrs. Betty Shabazz, Malcolm's widow, in the course of which they stopped to listen to television coverage of the assassination.

"It was an ABC-TV round-up last night on the assassination," Poston wrote in the February 23rd *Post*, "and the attractive, round-faced young woman looked on impassively as Deputy Police Commissioner Walter Arm was saying 'Of course we offered Malcolm X police protection many times—as late as the day his house was bombed—but he always refused it.' Not a

flicker of expression crossed her face as she murmured softly: 'That's a lie.'"

And Alex Haley commented, "Deputy Police Commissioner Arm's statement that Malcolm X refused police protection conflicts directly with the statements of many of his associates that during the week preceding the assassination Malcolm X complained repeatedly that the police would not take his requests for protection seriously."

The point, of course, is that it is the police's duty to protect a man in Malcolm's position whether or not he sends them a formal invitation. When a man's house is bombed and he and his family almost incinerated, police protection is automatic and unsolicited. Except, of course, when the man is Malcolm X.

(When George Lincoln Rockwell, who prides himself on never requesting police protection, arrived in New York City for a public meeting on February 10, 1966, the *New York Times* reported that "a small army of police and plainclothesmen, including 18 mounted policemen, turned out to keep order . . . Rockwell was closely guarded. . . .")

Malcolm himself had previously been given heavy police protection without asking for it. Alex Haley reports one instance where Malcolm went to court to contest the order to vacate his house in Queens and was guarded by "twenty uniformed policemen and twelve plainclothes detectives."

If there were no uniformed policemen to protect Malcolm, there seems to have been a contingent of plainclothesmen in the audience. Their role in events deserves closer scrutiny. Under the headline, "Members of City's Secret Police Unit Saw Malcolm Shot," the *Herald Tribune's* Milton Lewis reported on February 23rd that:

"'Several' undercover plainclothesmen were in the uptown meeting hall at the time Malcolm was shot dead there. . . . According to a high police official, 'several' members of its outstanding unit, the highly secretive Bureau of Special Services (BOSS) were in the Audubon Ballroom. . . ."

"It is no secret that BOSS police—who never wear uniforms—have credentials to cover almost any situation, so that if they were required to have a card or emblem of the Black Nationalist sect it is a safe bet they had them."

A police official told Lewis, "It is sufficient to say that we had him covered."

If BOSS agents were in the ballroom—either as members of the audience or infiltrators in Malcolm's organization—they did not lift a finger to protect him or to apprehend his killers.

In defending themselves against charges of negligence or complicity, the police claim the assassination took them by surprise. (This, despite the fire-bombing attempt on Malcolm's life one week before.) In fact, the N.Y. Police Department was informed that an attempt was to be made on Malcolm's life well in advance of the assassination.

The day after Malcolm's murder the Chicago police force revealed that when Malcolm had visited Chicago in December, 1965 the Los Angeles police intelligence unit relayed a warning that plans were afoot to have Malcolm "killed publicly." At the press conference in

Chicago police headquarters Captain William Duffy, head of the city's police intelligence division, and Sgt. Edward McClellan of the Division's subversion unit, revealed that they had warned New York of a possible murder attempt on Malcolm.

According to the *N.Y. Times* of Feb. 22, "Sgt. McClellan said today at the police headquarters news conference that Malcolm said December 31 that he feared he was being stalked for death here, and the *New York Police were alerted*" (emphasis added). The *Journal-American* reported on February 22nd that "According to the police spokesmen, the department knew in mid-January that an attempt was to be made on Malcolm's life."

There is only one explanation that fits all aspects of the New York police department's behavior, including its attempt to blame Malcolm for the bombing of his own home: Certain high echelons of the department, most likely including officials of BOSS, knew of the assassination attempt and wanted to insure its success.

Thus, when the first murder try failed, and Malcolm survived the fire-bombing of his house, it was essential for the police to play down the seriousness of the attack. If the public really believed an assassination attempt had been made against Malcolm, pressure would have been brought to bear on the police to protect him; and with a second assassination effort already under way, the conspirators could not afford this.

So it was claimed, and a good many people believed, that the whole thing had been a publicity stunt rigged by Malcolm himself; when he argued otherwise and demanded protection, he was coolly ignored by the press.

The police role in the murder itself was apparently a passive one—they just stayed away and left an clear field for the assassins. (It is unlikely that the murderers would have gunned Malcolm down in broad daylight before 400 people unless someone in a position of authority had assured them they would not have to worry about police interference.)

Thus the unsuspecting Patrolman Henry was secreted in the Rose Room of the Audubon Ballroom and told to report back to his superiors when he heard shots.

On the basis of all the available evidence, elements of the New York Police Department were willing accomplices in the assassination of Malcolm X.

Despite police cooperation, the assassination was not an unqualified success. One of the assassins, Talmadge Hayer, 22, of Patterson, New Jersey, was shot in the leg as he fled the ballroom, allegedly by Malcolm X's secretary, Reuben Francis. Hayer was trapped by a mob and almost torn apart before he was arrested by two policemen whose squad car had been cruising in the neighborhood.

(They evidently had not been tipped off to stay clear of the ballroom.)

Hayer had a clip of .45 bullets in his pocket which matched one of the murder guns found on the scene, and his thumbprint was later found on the remains of the smoke-bomb exploded as a diversion in the rear of the ballroom. There is no doubt of his guilt.

The capture of Hayer must have been a severe blow to the organizers of the assassination. Would he talk? If the mob had beaten him to death, or if the "right" cops had taken him into custody, there would have been no problem. But now, with the spotlight of publicity on him, Hayer would have to stand trial.

And there were no Jack Rubys around to silence him.

The police may have tried a more subtle method; police surgeons were instructed to leave the bullet in Hayer's leg for several weeks, although there was no medical reason why he could not have been operated on immediately. Was someone hoping that complications would set in and Hayer would die "naturally"? When he only grew stronger, the bullet was finally removed.

There is some evidence that another of the murderers was caught by the mob, but this time police authorities got to him in time, covered up his traces and spirited him to safety. The first (City) edition of the *New York Times* reported the murder on Monday morning, February 22nd, with the subhead: "Police Hold Two For Questioning." The *Times* revealed that, in addition to Hayer, a second man had been apprehended:

"Patrolman Thomas Hoy, 22, said he had been station outside the 166th Street entrance when 'I heard the shooting and the place exploded.' He rushed in, saw Malcolm lying on the stage and 'grabbed a suspect' who he said some people were chasing. 'As I brought him to the front of the ballroom, the crowd began beating me and the suspect,' Patrolman Hoy said. He said he put this man—not otherwise identified later for newsmen—into a police car to be taken to the Wadsworth Avenue station."

Here, clearly, is a man whom both Patrolman Hoy and the crowd had good reason to believe was involved in the assassination. And yet, from that moment on, no more is heard of him.

Someone had sent out word that the subject was to be dropped, and the press apparently obeyed. For in the Late City edition of the *New York Times*, which is printed only 3 or 4 hours later, the earlier subhead, "Police Hold Two For Questioning," has been changed to "One Is Held in Killing."

A similar feat of legerdemain occurred in the *New York Herald Tribune*. In the first (City) edition of the *Tribune*, put to press early Sunday evening, the subhead under the lead article by Jimmy Breslin on the assassination is "Police Rescue Two Suspects."

Breslin reports in his story that the first suspect, Hayer, had been taken to Bellevue Prison ward while "the other suspect was taken to the Wadsworth Avenue precinct, where the city's top policemen immediately converged and began one of the heaviest homicide investigations this city has ever seen.

But in the next (Late City) edition of the *Tribune*, the subhead has been changed to "Police Rescue One Suspect" and all mention of the second suspect has been edited out of Breslin's story.

What makes the case of this "mystery suspect" even more intriguing is the evidence that he was not a Negro, but appeared to be Puerto Rican or Cuban. In an article on Malcolm's death in the October, 1965 issue of *Ebony* Magazine, Allan Morrison asks, "What happened to the 'thin-lipped, olive-skinned Latin-looking man' who emptied a pistol in the direction of the stage and was rescued by the police from a near lynching at the hands of Malcolm's followers?"

Morrison's description of the "mystery suspect," corroborated by eyewitnesses at the murder scene, tallies almost word for word with Malcolm's description of a man who had tailed him through London and was on the plane that returned him to New York one week before

his death. "He was a tight-lipped, olive-skinned type with ferret eyes," Malcolm reported.

He knew that the CIA employs many Cuban exiles in its overseas activities, and often denounced the CIA-supplied Cuban exile pilots who flew for Tshombe's mercenary air force against the Congolese rebels.)

Malcolm's sister Ella told me that "members of his group who had this man in their hands have passed things on to me. When they were about to attack him further, a policeman pulled a gun and told them that if they attacked this man he would shoot.

"Then the police rushed him to a police car and, according to one member, told him to get down between the seats. Then they raced away.

"It was told me by several people that this man looked like a Cuban or Puerto Rican, he looked like a foreigner. I got good descriptions from two people in particular. They said he was wearing a turtle-neck sweater and was very thin-lipped."

Why has this man disappeared from sight? Why have the police never identified him, or attempted to explain the reasons for his arrest? I have repeatedly tried to contact the arresting officer, Patrolman Hoy, at Wadsworth Avenue and neighboring precincts, but he too seems to have become a non-person. There are two explanations for the mystery 'suspect' that make sense. One is that, as seems likely, the police were cooperating with the assassins, and did everything possible to protect them. The other is that the man was one of the ubiquitous BOSS agents sprinkled throughout the audience, and once he was identified at the Wadsworth Ave. precinct, the police acted to protect his "cover."

But in that case, why did the mob believe he had shot Malcolm?

Another question about the assassination that needs answering deals with the two members of the audience who were wounded. The *New York Times* reported on February 23, 1965 that: "The spectators who were wounded—William Harris of 614 Oak Tree Place, the Bronx and William Parker of 23-05 30th Avenue, Astoria, Queens—were reported in satisfactory condition last night at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center."

After a few brief subsequent references, the press seemed to lose interest in Harris and Parker, and they dropped out of sight as completely as the "mystery suspect." But it seems important to know more about anyone who was wounded during the shooting; the one assassin captured as the scene, Talmadge Hayer, was shot by one of Malcolm's followers, and other of the assassins may have been similarly wounded.

The first of the two men, William Parker, can be safely ruled out as a murder suspect, not only because he was a follower of Malcolm (the CIA and New York Police had infiltrated Malcolm's organization) but because he brought his 4-year-old son with him to the meeting. Parker was apparently wounded in the foot by a shotgun pellet as he tried to protect his son during the shooting.

The case of William Harris is more intriguing. Harris was shot in the right side as he was running from the ballroom, and was hospitalized in serious condition. (The bullet that wounded him, Harris told me in a guarded interview, came from a .32, the same calibre bullet as hit Talmadge Hayer.)

The *New York Times* reported on February 24th that

Assistant Chief Inspector Joseph L. Coyle, in charge of Manhattan North detectives, "said that William Harris, who was in the hospital with a bullet wound in the abdomen, refused to say anything except that he would take care of his own problems."

The brief *Times* report was the last mention in the press of William Harris. One would have assumed that the case of a man seriously wounded during Malcolm's murder would be, if nothing else, good human interest copy—but not in this case.

As the police "investigation" of Malcolm's murder got underway, there was a weird sequel to the assassination.

Leon Ameer, Malcolm's New England representative, traveled from Boston to New York immediately after the assassination to confer with Malcolm's aides. He charged that Malcolm had been killed by "the power structure" and urged that a mediator confer with Elijah Muhammad and members of Malcolm's OAAU to bring the two organizations closer together. There were some indications that Ameer might be Malcolm's successor in the OAAU.

(A week before his death Malcolm had warned, "If my life is worth three cents, then Leon's is worth two cents.")

On March 13, 1965 Ameer delivered a scathing speech before the Boston Militant Labor Forum, a branch of the Socialist Workers Party. "I have facts in my possession as to who *really* killed Malcolm," he told the meeting. "The killers aren't from Chicago [Muslim headquarters]. They're from Washington."

He promised to hold a press conference in the near future to reveal evidence proving the "power structure's" responsibility, including documents and tape-recordings he had been given by Malcolm before his assassination.

"I know my life is worth nothing," Ameer told the audience. The next morning his dead body was discovered by a chambermaid in his room at Boston's Sherry Biltmore Hotel.

He had died of strangulation.

The police immediately announced that the cause of death was an epileptic fit. But Ameer's wife revealed her husband had a complete medical checkup just one month before—"and there was no hint of epilepsy." She also disclosed that when her husband's body was discovered, his blackened tongue protruded between his lips; in an epileptic seizure severe enough to cause death, the tongue is generally swallowed, causing asphyxiation.

Mrs. Ella Collins, Malcolm's sister, who lives in Boston and knew Ameer well, told me: "I firmly believe that Leon Ameer was assassinated. . . . In Boston everything was kept very quiet. The police hushed it all up." Mrs. Collins added, "I spoke to his wife on the telephone. She said that she'd been married to him for 11 years, and he'd never had an epileptic fit of any kind. But that's what the police kept telling her did it."

The slaying of Leon Ameer was an object lesson to Malcolm's other aides. Earl Grant, who had in his possession most of Malcolm's tapes and files, fled with them to Ghana. James Shabazz, his #2 man, dropped out of sight. Reuben Francis, his secretary, who had been indicted for shooting Talmadge Hayer, jumped bail and went into hiding.

Eight months later he was arrested by the FBI while the trial of Malcolm's three alleged assassins was in progress, but he was never allowed to testify despite the vital importance of his testimony to the case against Hayer. His present whereabouts, and the disposition of the charges against him, are a complete mystery. For those who had been close to Malcolm, silence became equivalent to survival.

The capture of Talmadge Hayer at the murder scene placed the police in a difficult position. He would have to stand trial, with all the risks that entailed. But all eyewitness reports of the assassination indicated that a total of 5 gunmen had been involved.

Initial press reports of the assassination also reported that five men were involved; thus the *N.Y. Post* stated on February 23 that "four alleged Hayer accomplices who vanished from the ballroom are still at large" and the *Herald Tribune* reported the same day that "at least five men were believed to have taken part in the plot."

If only *one* man were tried for the murder the police would be admitting incompetence and might stir up latent doubts about their own role in events. In order to reassure the public, scapegoats had to be found who could be framed for the murder and made to stand trial along with Hayer. Fortunately for the police, two such men were ready at hand.

Two enforcers for Black Muslim Mosque #7 in Harlem, Thomas (15X) Johnson and Norman (3X) Butler, had been arrested in December, 1964 for the shooting of a Muslim defector, Benjamin Brown. (Brown was not seriously wounded.) At the time of Malcolm's assassination they were both out on bail awaiting trial on assault charges.

Here, someone in the police department seems to have realized, were the two perfect patsys. The public would have no difficulty believing them capable of Malcolm's murder; had they not already attempted to kill another Muslim defector, of much less importance? It was decided to throw Butler and Johnson into the pot with Hayer.

After going through the motions of an "intensive investigation," Butler was arrested on February 26th and Johnson on March 3rd. The police went to fantastic lengths to convince the public the two men were dangerous criminals.

After Butler, an alleged karate expert, was arrested a story was given to the press that when he had been apprehended a month earlier for the shooting of Brown the police had approached him wearing steel alloy face masks as protection against his karate attacks. Before he was subdued, the police handout claimed, Butler had cracked the mask of one cop with a single karate chop. This fairy tale soon evaporated.

Reporters who had accompanied the arresting officers revealed the whole story as a complete fabrication.

When Hayer, Johnson and Butler were finally brought to trial in January, 1966, almost a year after Malcolm's murder, the prosecution contended that Butler and Hayer had created the diversion in the center of the auditorium, while Johnson felled Malcolm with a shotgun blast. Butler and Hayer then were supposed to have run towards the stage firing with pistols at Malcolm's prone body.

However, all reliable eyewitness evidence indicates that 4 men were actually involved: one who caused the diversion in the middle of the ballroom and didn't participate in the shooting, another who fired a shotgun from the fourth row and two men in the first row who emptied their pistols into Malcolm as he fell to the stage. There was one way to conclusively determine the actual number of assassins. Peter Kihss reported in the *N.Y. Times* on Feb. 25, 1965 that "the police were in possession of motion pictures that had been taken at the Audubon Ballroom . . . where the killing took place." These films would have been invaluable evidence—but there has been no further mention of them by press or police. They have dropped out of sight as suddenly and thoroughly as the 'mystery suspect' who may well have appeared in the film along with his four accomplices.

Hayer's guilt was conclusively demonstrated at the trial, both through evidence such as his thumbprints on the remains of the smoke-bomb and through reliable witnesses who identified him as one of the gunmen. But the case Assistant District Attorney Vincent Dermody presented against Butler and Johnson was incredibly weak.

No material evidence linked them to the crime; their guilt rested solely on the testimony of 10 witnesses, carefully hand-picked by the DA's office from among the 400 people who attended the meeting where Malcolm was killed. Four of these witnesses identified Johnson and six identified Butler. The testimony of every one of these prosecution witnesses is riddled with evasions, distortions and outright lies.

They were all carefully coached and manipulated throughout by the police and the District Attorney's office, and those most important to the DA's case were arrested on a variety of trumped-up charges prior to their testimony. Out on bail at the time of the trial, such witnesses knew that their fate depended on how closely they cooperated with the prosecution.

The most telling of the witnesses against Butler and Johnson were Cary Thomas and Charles Blackwell, both of whom corroborated the prosecution case in every detail. In the chaos that accompanied the shooting both Thomas and Blackwell claimed to have seen everything happen just as the prosecution said it did, and identified Hayer, Butler and Johnson as the three assassins.

Cary Thomas, the "star witness," had been held in jail under \$50,000 bond since March, 1965. He identified Hayer and Butler as the two men who caused the disturbance in the center of the ballroom. He testified they then charged to the stage firing at Malcolm with revolvers. Thomas added that he also saw Johnson standing near the stage with a sawed-off shotgun in his hand.

Thomas' testimony fitted the prosecution case letter-perfectly, and veteran trial reporters told this author, who attended the trial daily for six weeks, that his testimony was vital in turning the jury against Butler and Johnson. (The jury itself never took notes, and as the trial's seemingly interminable evidence droned on, several members could be seen dozing in the jury box.)

Thomas' own role in events was rather clouded. As one of Malcolm's bodyguards it was his duty to protect his leader's life, with his own if necessary. But, as the *Post* reported on January 27, 1966:

"His had not been the role of the hero on the day

of the slaying. . . . He had been strategically placed in the Audubon Ballroom, and by his own admission armed with a .357 Magnum pistol. He testified that he had been carrying a gun since he was 15. . . . But the initial round of rapid fire had sent him scurrying for cover under the table."

There are a number of interesting facets to Cary Thomas' testimony. For one thing, in the days after the shooting he never mentioned to Malcolm's widow or any other of Malcolm's friends and associates with whom he was in close contact that he had seen all the assassins clearly and could identify them. It was only after March 2nd, when he was arrested by the police, that his story began to take shape.

For a "star witness," Thomas' own background hardly induces faith in his veracity.

The defense attempted to introduce into testimony a psychiatric report from Bellevue on Thomas, who had been hospitalized in 1963 after he ran through the streets screaming: "I did *not* kill Jesus Christ! I did *not* kill Jesus Christ!" The judge refused to admit the report into evidence.

By his own admission Thomas had been a heroin addict and, at a time he was supposed to be a member of the rigidly puritanical Black Muslims, an alcoholic.

The most interesting thing about Thomas (which the inept, court-appointed defense attorneys did not impress upon the jurors), was the peculiar genesis of his testimony. When he testified before the Grand Jury that first indicted the three defendants in March, 1965, he told an entirely different story.

At the trial in January, 1966 he testified that Hayer and Butler caused the diversion, while Johnson fired the shotgun. But in his earlier Grand Jury testimony he swore under oath that *Johnson* and Butler caused the diversion, while *Hayer* fired the shotgun. This fitted the early police version of the murder.

But after the .45 bullets in Hayer's pocket were traced to one of the murder weapons this story had to change, so Johnson became the shotgun-wielder and Hayer was shoved back into the audience with Butler. Cary Thomas willingly switched stories, perjuring himself in the process.

(The hold the police had over Thomas was powerful. While he was initially held as a material witness to the shooting he was placed in alimony jail, a relaxed, barracks-style detention center. But in June, 1965 he applied for release. The police promptly accused him of committing arson while in the alimony jail, and he was transferred to a regular prison. After that he caused no more trouble, and willingly played out his role as "star witness" against Butler and Johnson.)

The only other witness to identify all three co-defendants as being involved was Charles Blackwell, and he too gave an entirely different story to the Grand Jury. Like Thomas, Blackwell was one of Malcolm's bodyguards. He was stationed at the left-hand side of the stage when the shooting began.

Blackwell at first gave signs of being as much a "star witness" as Cary Thomas. He followed the prosecution version of events right down the line, and conveyed an impression of quiet integrity.

He told the court that Hayer and Butler started the diversion in the middle of the ballroom and ran towards him firing at Malcolm. He then heard a shotgun blast right behind him but did not see who fired it. As

he moved to stop the two men, Butler pointed his pistol at him and he fell to the floor.

When they turned to flee, Blackwell testified, he chased after them, and as he ran down the aisle in pursuit he saw a man "looking startled, or frightened," who then turned and ran into the Ladies' Lounge. He identified this man as Johnson. (Why, in the aftermath of a shooting that had thrown the entire ballroom into hysteria, he would stop to notice a man who appeared "startled, or frightened" was never brought out.)

With minor variations, Blackwell's story echoed the testimony of "star witness" Cary Thomas, and his general demeanor and his calm, sincere voice favorably impressed the court. But Charles Blackwell's luster was quickly tarnished.

It was revealed that in his Grand Jury testimony on March 9, 1965 he too had told a totally different story. There he testified that Hayer and Butler were sitting in the front row, and that two other men had created the disturbance in the middle of the ballroom, neither of whom he could identify. He told the Grand Jury that he had never seen anyone shooting at anybody.

Q: "Did you see anybody fire a gun?"

A: "No, I didn't."

But at the trial he gave a detailed and dramatic description of Hayer and Butler pumping bullets into Malcolm. The only part of his Grand Jury testimony which he repeated in the courtroom was his identification of Johnson as the "startled, frightened man" who had fled into the powder room.

When trapped in his contradictory testimony, Blackwell tried to justify his perjury before the Grand Jury (he was, he said, telling the truth at the trial) on the grounds that he had not wanted to admit that Buler and Hayer had been sitting right beside him and he had done nothing to stop them.

"I was ashamed to say I left my post," Blackwell said, "and that I went to the floor when [Butler] pointed his gun at me. I didn't want anyone to know." When he was asked if he had lied in his Grand Jury testimony, Blackwell replied, "Yes, I did."

The jury had at best a choice of perjuries, but for some arcane reason apparently chose to believe that Blackwell was telling the truth in his courtroom testimony. Veteran crime reporters at the trial told me that, next to Cary Thomas, Blackwell's testimony was the most important factor in swinging the jury against Butler and Johnson.

The other three witnesses who identified Johnson, and the five who identified Butler, were even less believable and more contradictory than the two "star witnesses," Cary Thomas and Charles Blackwell.

A case in point: Edward DiPina, a 70-year-old floor waxer, dramatically left the stand to point an identifying finger at Norman Butler. He had, according to DiPina, definitely been one of the assassins. DePina was a dignified and good-natured old man, and his testimony at first appeared impressive. But not for long. Under cross-examination he firmly identified one of the defense attorneys, Charles T. Beauers, as the detective who drove him to Bellevue Hospital to identify the wounded Hayer. Even after his mistake was pointed out to him, he continued to insist that his identification was correct. From then on he contradicted himself on every major point of his testimony, floundering pathetically in the witness box. The consensus of the trial

reporters was that senility had triumphed over the DA's coaching.

(We were all a bit grateful to DePina, however, for adding the sole note of humor to the proceedings. At one point, when it was brought out by the defense that he had been arrested some time ago for knifing a woman in upstate New York. DePina was asked what kind of a knife he had used. He thought a moment, obviously confused, and then smiled brightly. "Just a second, I'll show you," he said and pulled a heavy clasp knife from his pocket, its long blade glinting brightly. The old man was so pleased with himself that the Judge didn't have the heart to even reprimand him.)

DePina was an alien, originally from Portugal's Cape Verde Islands, and he testified that he had joined Malcolm's OAAU in an effort to get enough money to return home. He received no financing from Malcolm's group but he boasted on the witness stand that "I'm going back soon now." The more cynical reporters assumed that the DA had promised him return fare if he "cooperated" in his testimony. If so, DA Dermody must have wanted his money back after the mess the old man made of things.

Another typical witness was Vernal Temple, a 23-year-old dishwasher who identified Butler and Johnson as two of the assassins. He said he had whirled to face the men after he heard shots somewhere behind him. He suffered from an ear-drum defect that had impaired his hearing since the age of two; he had great trouble hearing the questions of attorneys standing a few feet away from him. But, he said, his hearing had been perfect on the day of the assassination.

He was able to identify Johnson, he testified, because he had seen him once before in 1962, at a Muslim convention in Chicago. He couldn't remember anything else about the convention—where he stayed, what his bus fare was, even the name of a friend of his who had loaned him the bus fare. But he clearly remembered Johnson, whom he had seen only once 4 years before in a crowded auditorium!

Witnesses like Thomas, Blackwell, DePina and Temple could have been slashed to ribbons by any first-year law student. But Johnson and Butler's court-appointed "defense" attorneys, after a few tepid forays, always let them off the hook.

One unusual aspect of the trial was the introduction of two "secret witnesses." During their testimony, spectators and press alike were barred from the courtroom.

George Barner reported in the *Amsterdam News* on February 12, 1966 that the hearing of secret witnesses at the trial "marked the first remembered time when such a step had been taken in a homicide in the 26-year-old Criminal Courts building at 100 Center Street. And only one other such exclusion could be recalled there for any other type of trial: the Mickey Jelke-Pat Ward vice hearing several years ago." (At the Jelke trial the press and public were barred when the name of a high Washington official was about to be entered into evidence.)

I subsequently learned the name of the two mystery witnesses.

The first was Ronald Timberlake, and he told the closed court he was an employee of the Transit Authority. The TA personnel office have no such employee listed on their records, substantiating speculation

among trial reporters that "Timberlake" was in actuality an undercover police agent.

The second "secret witness" was named Sullivan. He is an FBI agent.

The nature of the two men's testimony, beyond the fact that it was detrimental to defendant Butler, has never been made public, in the best tradition of "Star Chamber" proceedings.

Butler argued in his defense that he had been at home the afternoon of the assassination, suffering from an inflamed vein in his right leg. Dr. Kenneth Seslove of Jacobi Hospital in the Bronx testified that the morning of the assassination Butler had been treated at the hospital for "a superficial thrombophlebitis," a painful infection which makes walking difficult. "I gave him bandages and a shot of penicillin," Dr. Seslove told the court, "and told him to keep his leg elevated."

Butler left the hospital shortly before 1:00 p.m., and returned home. Two witnesses placed him in his house at the time of the murder. Mrs. Gloria Wills said she telephoned Butler's home minutes after she heard a radio bulletin that Malcolm had been killed, and he answered the phone. Mrs. Juanita Gibbs also testified that she called shortly after 3:00 p.m., the time Malcolm was killed, and spoke to Butler.

His only other witness was his wife, Theresa, who said he came home around 1:00 p.m. and lay down to rest his bad leg. She swore he never left the house that day. (In murder trials the testimony of a defendant's wife and immediate family is almost automatically disregarded.)

Johnson's defense claimed that he had been home taking care of household chores the entire day. A neighbor, Edward Long, testified that he visited Johnson in his apartment around 3:30 in the afternoon, less than 20 minutes after Malcolm had been shot.

Johnson's defense was also supported by the testimony of Earl Greene, an eye-witness to the assassination. The prosecution charged that Johnson had fired the sawed-off shotgun at Malcolm, but Greene testified that the man who wielded the shotgun was "very stout, very dark, and had a heavy beard." (Johnson is slender, clean-shaven, light-skinned and of medium height.)

Green had been sitting on the right-hand side of the ballroom when he saw this stout, dark-skinned man with a beard fire at Malcolm. His testimony was particularly impressive—except to the jury—because, as a supporter of Malcolm, he was hostile to the Muslims and was unlikely to have perjured himself on Johnson's behalf.

But the strongest witness for Butler and Johnson was their co-defendant, Talmadge Hayer. On February 28, 1966 Hayer took the witness stand and in a dramatic move confessed his guilt and absolved Butler and Johnson of any involvement in the murder.

Hayer told a stunned courtroom he had "decided to tell the truth" after a brief conversation with his two co-defendants in the "bull-pen" adjacent to the courtroom. "They said it was about time," Hayer quoted the two men as telling him. "We were wondering when you were going to do this."

When the judge asked Hayer why he had decided to confess, he replied simply: "I just want the truth to be known—that Butler and Johnson didn't have anything to do with this crime. Because I was there. I know what happened and I know the people who were there."

According to the *Times* of March 1st, Hayer "said he had had three accomplices, but he declined to name them. He said he had been approached early in the month of the murder and offered money for the job, but he declined to say by whom. . . . One thing he did know, he said, was that no one involved in the murder was a Black Muslim."

Hayer revealed that he had been promised \$3,000 for the job by a go-between who approached him in Harlem, and "was not a Muslim." When Assistant DA Dermody scornfully asked Hayer why he did not reveal the name of this paymaster, he replied that "If Mr. Chance [a defense attorney] had kept asking me on one point he would have found out."

Dermody dropped his questioning like a hot potato and—incredibly—Chance did not backtrack and try to elicit the question that had somehow touched on the identity of the organizer of the assassination, a point crucial to the fate of his client.

Throughout the trial, the court-appointed defense attorneys conducted themselves with desultory inadequacy. They apparently had neither the time, the money



nor the inclination to conduct an investigation into the one area that could have saved their clients—the organizers of the plot against Malcolm, and the fact that the Muslims were not involved.

Although Hayer told the court several times that "the only reason" he had confessed was to protect two innocent men, his motivations may have been somewhat more complex. Part of the "contract" for Malcolm's murder reportedly provided that Hayer's family would be paid the money if anything went wrong. Apparently this provision had not been fulfilled, and as Hayer saw the evidence piling up against him, and hope of acquittal fading, he must have grown bitter.

Hayer may have decided to employ a form of not-too-subtle pressure on his unknown paymasters. He revealed enough to frighten them, but not enough to expose the conspiracy or his co-assassins (all three of whom Hayer claims to have known for over a year).

Hayer's confession is all the more convincing because his account of the assassination is the only one advanced at the trial that corresponds to the initial press reports and to the testimony of eyewitnesses. Hayer testified he and his accomplice both sat in the front row and shot at Malcolm with revolvers while a third man fired a sawed-off shotgun from the fourth row.

According to Hayer, the man who started the diversion by shouting, "Nigger, get your hands out of my pocket!" sat in the center of the ballroom, and took no

part in the actual shooting. Unlike the prosecution case, which artfully twisted evidence to conform to its own thesis, Hayer's description of the murder is fully consonant with the facts as reported by eyewitnesses and newsmen at the murder scene.

It also answers the major question pertaining to Butler and Johnson's guilt—how could two men, well-known "enforcers" for the Muslim Mosque, enter a ballroom closely guarded by their former comrades-in-arms who had defected with Malcolm? Why were they not recognized and ejected, or at the very least frisked for weapons? Incredibly, this simple question, vital to Butler and Johnson's defense, was never once asked of any of the witnesses by attorneys for the two defendants.

Talmadge Hayer, of course, supplied the answer—neither Butler nor Johnson was ever in the Audubon Ballroom, and both had been ruthlessly framed by the Police Department, which intimidated witnesses and suborned perjury in order to convict them and protect the real assassins.

Despite Hayer's dramatic confession and the testimony of defense witnesses that Butler and Johnson had been in their homes at the time of the murder, the somnolent jury chose to accept the DA's case. Judge Marks, a pasty-faced little man with arctic eyes and a bored expression, charged the jurors to accept what they wished of Hayer's courtroom confession and disregard the rest—implying that the jury should accept his confession of guilt but disregard his testimony about a conspiracy and Butler and Johnson's innocence.

(Marks was apparently selected by the powers-that-be for this trial on the basis of his reputation as a "hanging judge"; the *NY Post* reported in a profile on Feb. 17, 1966 that Marks habitually "presides over first-degree murder trials in which, as it happens, the defendants are usually convicted. . . . In fact, when capital punishment was abolished in this state, five of the 20 inmates of the death house were there as a result of trials heard by Supreme Court Justice Marks.")

On April 15, 1966 Hayer, Johnson and Butler were sentenced to life imprisonment. A life sentence in New York State means the defendants will become eligible for parole after serving 26 years and 8 months in prison.

In any murder case, a primary factor in determining guilt is *motive*. From the day of Malcolm's death the mass media, encouraged by the police, assumed that only the Black Muslims had a motive for the crime. There is no doubt that the Messenger of Allah and his followers hated Malcolm with all the frenzy the orthodox reserve for the heretic.

But the Muslims are anything but impulsive. Before Elijah Muhammad reached a decision on such a dangerous matter as assassinating Malcolm he would have coolly weighed the pros and cons of the matter. Malcolm's organization was weak; his frequent travels abroad reduced his proselytizing efforts at home and created serious administrative problems for his group. Few Muslims had flocked to Malcolm's banner since his original defection.

Elijah Muhammad is as much a cost accountant as a prophet. It is hard to believe that in his icy analytical brain the debits of killing Malcolm would not have outweighed the plusses. Elijah's religious and commercial empire insured the serenity of his fading years; he was not likely to risk it just to swat what he would see as

a troublesome gnat buzzing at his ear.

Only one other force had the motive and the means to assassinate Malcolm: the intelligence apparatus of the United States government.

Malcolm was a serious threat to American foreign policy objectives; his successes in Africa had severely damaged U.S. prestige, and if his plan to bring the American racial problem into the UN came to fruition, Washington would become the whipping boy of world public opinion. The whole *raison d'etre* of such agencies as the CIA is to protect America against those countries and individuals which are viewed, rightly or wrongly, as enemies.

Malcolm was an enemy.

It would be a relatively simple matter for the CIA to contact the intelligence apparatus of the New York Police Force (which for reasons of its own, unrelated to foreign policy, viewed Malcolm as a threat) and enlist its cooperation in a hands-off policy *vis-a-vis* his assassination.

When the murder attempt backfired slightly and one of the assassins had to be brought to trial, the District Attorney's office would readily cooperate with the police in covering up all traces that led to the actual organizers and perpetrators of the crime.

On the basis of all the evidence it appears that Malcolm X was murdered by a conspiracy including the CIA and elements of the New York police force. The actual assassins, such as Hayer, criminals who would murder for far less than \$3,000, probably never suspected the identity of the assassination's masterminds.

The hands that pulled the trigger were black, but the impulses to kill were transmitted, through the long arm of the "law," all the way from Washington.

Malcolm X was one of that rare breed of men who are truly irreplaceable. A black—or white—leader of his genius may not arise again for generations, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that his assassination has radically altered the course of American history.

But as one door closed on Malcolm's life, another, for which he died searching out the key, may have

Diary of a Schizophrenic

A Napoleon who is in the mental institution IS Napoleon. Better still—he possesses all the benefits of being Napoleon without the inconveniences.

We hear in the news report that 200 troops were sent to a given area. This means that 200 men were sent there. So would we call one soldier a troop?

Too many persons speak about an ugly girl as if the homeliness were of her own making.

When someone sees a beautiful sunset, he says: "It's as pretty as a picture." When he sees a picture of a beautiful sunset, he says: "It looks so real."

The ambition of a cat is to stop things that are moving and to move things that are still.

When school opens, posters read: "SCHOOL IS OPEN—DRIVE CAREFULLY." When school closes, posters read: "SCHOOL IS CLOSED—DRIVE CAREFULLY."

Affluence is depositing money in the bank before you make out the check.

If I did not have to ruin my body with overwork, I probably would destroy it with my pleasures.

An ascetic is hedonistic about self-denial.

—JEAN RAYMOND MALJEAN

silently opened. On its threshold today stand 22 million black people.

In his closing speech for the prosecution at the trial of Malcolm's three alleged assassins, Assistant DA Vincent J. Dermody declared that Malcolm was assassinated as "an object lesson" to his followers. Dermody meant that the Muslims had killed him to preserve their monopoly on "Black Nationalism."

But there is no doubt that those within the CIA and the New York Police Department who arranged Malcolm's assassination *did* intend it, at least in part, as "an object lesson" to his followers—a lesson that American black men must never again seek for sources of power, alliance and inspiration outside this country, must never look to socialism as a solution to their economic exploitation, must never attack the disease of the soul endemic in the American system that perpetuates the oppression and degradation of the Negro.

This was the lesson the men behind Malcolm's assassination wanted his followers to learn. But there are signs that more and more American Negroes are learning just the opposite lesson—the lesson that Malcolm taught in life and proved in death.

Malcolm's legacy to American Negroes is a complex and multi-faceted one. Its most dramatic expression is the skyrocketing influence of the "Black Power" concept, the most significant ideological development in the Negro community since Marcus Garvey first articulated black nationalism. If Black Power is SNCC Chairman Stokely Carmichael's "baby," Malcolm is its godfather.

In a survey of growing black power sentiment, the *Times* reported recently that "Mr. Carmichael is frequently described as 'the new Malcolm X'—a description that Mr. Carmichael would take as a compliment . . . Carmichael was impressed with Malcolm's reasoning during the year before his assassination . . . Malcolm's final teachings appear to have had great influence over the student committee and CORE."

The *Times* article reports that "Black Power leaders conceded that their new mood was in a large part the result of Malcolm X's influence. . . ."

From Harlem to Watts, a new generation of militant Negroes looks to Malcolm's memory for inspiration and guidance. In a perceptive article on the post-riot "new mood" of Negroes in the Watts ghetto of Los Angeles, Pete Hamill reported in the *Post*:

"Everywhere in Watts there is an almost exaggerated pride in blackness, or what Senghor of Senegal called 'negritude.' The Southern Christianity of Martin Luther King, with its emphasis on humility and love, seems to have been shunted aside permanently and replaced with something that is closer to the tradition of Malcolm X. . . ."

"In the Watts Happening coffee shop . . . the young people of Watts talk constantly about Malcolm. If they hear you are a reporter, they ask whether you ever interviewed him. They want to know how he is thought about in New York or Chicago. . . . In the streets in the afternoons, you see a lot of young kids wearing Malcolm T-shirts or sweat-shirts. In death, 'Big Red' from Detroit is more important than ever. 'There's a Malcolm hang-up,' one social worker said. 'Everything you propose to these kids is measured and thought about. They try to figure out whether Malcolm would approve or not. It's like censorship by a ghost.'"

The assassins struck too late. Once a book has been read, burning it will never destroy its message.

The Realist