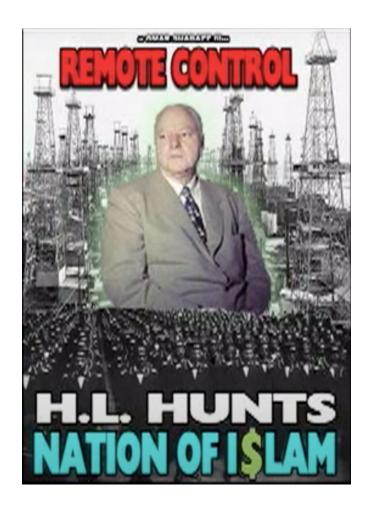
Excerpt

Did H.L. Hunt Bankroll The Nation of Islam?

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At around 2:30 A.M. on Sunday, February 14, 1965 Malcolm X's home in Queens, New York was firebomb in an FBI/NYPD-involved operation. A justifiably angry Malcolm X immediately laid the blame on the Nation of Islam and any behind-thescenes reconciliation negotiations that might have been engaged in at the time between Malcolm X and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad seemingly went up in flames with the house. On Monday February 15th Malcolm spoke to around 500 persons at the Audubon Ballroom where he voiced for the first time publicly a claim that will subsequently be a pillar of the "Woke" critique of the Nation of Islam. He said:

And I guess many of you have heard it said that [Elijah Muhammad's] financial support comes from a rich man in Texas. I heard that while I was in the movement. I've heard it more since I left the movement. A rich man in Texas. You can look up, any of you can look up his name. But the FBI knows that too. But they still don't touch him...and this rich man who lives in Texas, by the way,

lives in Dallas. His headquarters is in Dallas, his money is in Dallas, the same city where President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.¹

The "rich man in Texas" whom Malcolm "heard" is financing the Nation of Islam, but whose name Malcolm could not or would not say, is Haroldson Lafayette Hunt, Jr.² Thus originated an important aspect of the popular (but false) Malcolm X Narrative: Texas racist H.L. Hunt bankrolled the Nation of Islam and is Elijah Muhammad's puppet master.³ But Malcolm is, by his own admission, only repeating a *rumor*: "I *heard* that while I was in the movement. I've *heard* it more since I left the movement." This detail is totally dismissed in the popular narrative. Manning Marable recites the rumor as a fact,⁴ while Claude Andrew Clegg acknowledged that it *is* but a rumor, and then proceeded to use it as if it were a fact anyway.⁵ Most irresponsible is Karl Evanzz, who creatively embellished this pseudo-fact. He says:

Malcolm also mentioned that *in going through the financial records in Chicago a year earlier, he had uncovered evidence* that H.L. Hunt, the Texas billionaire oilman who was so thrifty that he took his lunch to work in a paper bag every day, "had been giving the messenger money for several years."

Malcolm could never have made such a claim. Neither as minister of Temple #7 in New York nor as National Spokesman did Malcolm have access to the Chicago financial records. Structurally those secrets were in the hands of the National Secretary of the Nation of Islam only (and, of course, the leader of the Nation: the Honorable Elijah Muhammad). Malcolm's source of this February 15, 1964 claim is therefore *not* official documentation, from Chicago or elsewhere, but *rumor*. Who generated this rumor? Zak Kondo reveals:

[The FBI] also sent Malcolm a pamphlet, written by [Communist Party -USA] Illinois leader Claude Lightfoot, in May 1963. In the pamphlet, Lightfoot charged, that the NOI was being financed by a Texas oil billionaire. The scheme apparently had two major objectives. The first was to convince Malcolm that Elijah was greedy and unprincipled. The second was, to create friction between the NOI and the CPUSA. The Bureau has to wait until Malcolm's last week before he publicly "exposed" this NOI "secret."

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¹ Malcolm X, "There's a worldwide revolution going on," 125.

² Malcolm X reportedly said to his cousin Hakim A Jamal: "There is a Texas millionaire who supports not only Elijah Muhammad but the Minutemen and the John Birch Society. His name is H.L. Hunt. I think he is in oil." Hakim A Jamal, *From the Dead Level: Malcolm X and Me* (New York: Random House, 1972), 247-248, *apub* Karl Evanzz, *The Judas Factor: The Plot To Kill Malcolm X* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992) 284-285.

³ Omar Shabazz, "Malcolm X, H.L. Hunt & Elijah Muhammad," @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43JDjoxbPBo&t=1s

⁴ Dr. Manning Marable, "No Compromise with Racism: Farrakhan, Chavis and Lyndon La Rouche – Part One," *The Columbus Free Press* January 17, 1997.

⁵ Claude Andrew Clegg, *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997) 161-162.

⁶ Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001 [1999]) 303.

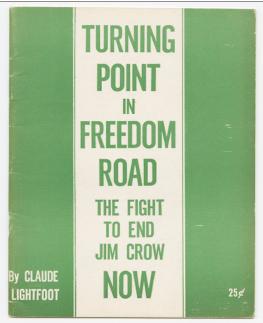
 $^{^7}$ Zak Akinwole Kondo, Conspiracys: Unravelling the Assassination of Malcolm X (Washington, D.C.: Nubia Press, 1993) 130.

The "H.L. Hunt Bankrolled The Nation" claim is a FBI-generated rumor as part of a COINTELPRO operation against both the Nation of Islam and the CPUSA. It is *disinformation*. One of the aims was to cause conflict between the two groups hated by J. Edgar Hoover, the Black Muslims and the Communists. As Kondo admits:

During Malcolm's last month, he used three stories to discredit and belittle Elijah and the NOI in the eyes of Afrikan Peoples...he noted that a rich white Dallas businessman was a major patron of the NOI. This information came to Malcolm's attention as part of a Bureau counterintelligence scheme.⁸

When we look even deeper, we see that the source underlying this FBI-generated rumor never even made the claim that the rumor alleges!





Claude Lightfoot was an officer of the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA), which disagreed with the racial politics of the Nation of Islam and Black Nationalism in general. In 1962 Lightfoot published *Turning Point in Freedom Road: The Fight To End Jim Crow Now*. On pages 15-16 Lightfoot *hypothesizes*:

The lack of appreciable changes in the jim crow system, coupled with the advance of former colonial peoples to freedom, has provided the base for the emergence of new trends in the Negro liberation movement. Frustrated, desperately seeking solutions, many Negroes are turning to nationalist organizations of a separatist nature. These organizations, which in the '40s were reduced to mere sects, are now in the process of revival. The Black Muslims undeniably become a tremendous mass

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⁸ Kondo, *Conspiracys*, 149.

movement. Their temples are growing all over the country. They claim over 200,000 members and have a paper which has a circulation of 300, 000 each edition. They have a parochial school system operating in several cities, and they are now reported to be purchasing their own radio station. The danger of this movement lies in its divisive nature. It divides Negroes, as well as Negroes from whites. Its chief whipping boy among Negroes is Dr. Martin Luther King. One could well suspect that it is financed by the reactionary Texas billionaire. financial angels, who finance all that reactionary in America, are stupid if they are not financing the Muslims because they preach the same doctrine - the separation of the races. Nonetheless, whatever the

New Trends in Negro Liberation Movement

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station. The danger of this movement lies in its divisive nature. It divides Negroes, as well as Negroes from whites. Its chief whipping boy among Negroes is Dr. Martin Luther King.

One could well suspect that it is financed by the reactionary Texas oil billionaires. These financial angels, who finance all that is reactionary in America, are stupid if they are not financing the Muslims because they preach the same doctrine — the separation of the races.

Nonetheless, whatever the motives of the leaders of the movement, the masses who follow them are sincere and dedicated people. Progressives and others should disassociate themselves from the dangerous separatist ideas spread by the Muslims. But at the same time, they should attempt to induce changes within the movement itself. Our approach to the rank and file should be friendly and efforts should be made to involve them in mass struggles.

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Lightfoot never claims here to have any *knowledge* much less *documentation* that a "reactionary Texas oil billionaire" was actually financing the Nation of Islam. He only gives voice to his *suspicion* which itself is based only on his own logical thinking (not facts): because Hunt (the presumed "Texas oil billionaire") finances the John Birch Society and other *white separatist groups*, he would be "stupid" to not also finance the separatist Black Muslims. But Lightfoot *gives no indication that he has actual knowledge of such*. So the source that is the bedrock of the claim never actually made the claim itself – certainly not as a fact or even a presumed fact.

In May 1963 the FBI anonymously sent this pamphlet from an ideologically hostile source with its non-fact-based *hypothesis* to a list of Muslims (and others) as part of a COINTELPRO operation involving disinformation. Malcolm was sent the pamphlet. Interestingly, the FBI attached a note to the pamphlet, clearly intended to be the writing of a Muslim or a sympathetic Black person. The note read: "In this book the man say the Muslims get money from billionaires from the South. Can you stop these people from lying because people are talking." ¹⁰ In their typical fashion, the FBI intended to plant a

⁹ Claude Lightfoot, *Turning Point in Freedom Road: The Fight To End Jim Crow Now* (New York: New Century Publishers, 1962) 15-16.

¹⁰ FBI memo From SAC, New York to Director, FBI May 9, 1963 Re: CPUSA; Kondo, *Conspiracys*, 299 n. 925.

seed in the mind of Malcolm X and other Muslims and then progressively water that seed.

The FBI sent the pamphlet to Malcolm X in May of 1963 but it failed to elicit any notable response. Like the "KKK Meeting" material, the Bureau kept this "H.L. Hunt" material on the shelf until the opportunity to operationalize it again presented itself. And like the "KKK Meeting" material, the opportunity was right around the corner. That opportunity was the New York riots of July 1964. It was during this time that the FBI spread the fabricated rumor publicly through the New York newspapers on behalf of President Lyndon B. Johnson, who intended to damage not just the Black Muslims but also his longtime ally H.L. Hunt, with whom Johnson was angry for betraying him.

Johnson as he hoped to be elected in November. Johnson's opponent in the 1964 presidential campaign, the far-right Arizona Senator "Mr. Conservative" Barry Goldwater, strategically exploited the fear of blackness and of urban crime, lumping both urban rebellions (riots) as well as "Negro civil rights disturbances" together as "crime-in-the-streets," which was a central theme in Goldwater's "get tough on crime" campaign. In the hands of the Senator's campaign spin machine, the riots were an immediate political threat to the President. Goldwater and the conservative Republicans accused Johnson and his liberal allies of being "soft" on crime – particularly black urban crime – and argued that Johnson's "Great Society" politics and programs with its lax law enforcement and a social permissiveness encouraged civil disobedience and lawlessness – and thus riots. Goldwater said in a campaign speech: "Choose the way of [the Johnson] Administration and you have the way of mobs in the street." Johnson in the street.

This Goldwater-Republican strategy was effective. ¹⁴ The riots, and the Goldwater-Republican spin on them, became the Johnson Administration's political "Achilles' heel" and threatened to cost him votes in the November 1964 elections. ¹⁵ Johnson was told by one of his analysts that each riot cost him 90,000 (potential) votes. ¹⁶ Johnson wanted – and needed - to recapture those lost votes. Johnson turned to his *other* longtime friend and neighbor J. Edgar Hoover for assistance in managing the politics of the riots. ¹⁷ The two of them came up with a counter-strategy.

The Johnson-Hoover strategy was to turn Goldwater's charge on its head by placing the blame of the riots *on Goldwater*. Johnson floated a "Conservative Conspiracy Theory": Goldwater and right-wing Conservatives aim to provoke violence in the cities to make Johnson look weak and so they covertly financed the urban uprisings. Negros,

¹¹ Charles Mohr, "Goldwater Links The Welfare State To Rise in Crime," *The New York Times* September 11, 1964.

¹² Kenneth O'Reilly, *Racial Matters: The FBI's Secret File on Black America*, **1960-1972** (New York: Free Press, 1989) 231.

¹³ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (Prince Frederick, Md.: Recorded Books, 2020)

¹⁴ Johnson was said to "be acutely sensitive to the possible political effects of the Negro violence and of charges by Mr. Goldwater that he is not taking vigorous action to provide 'security from domestic violence." E.W. Kenworthy, "Johnson Orders Full F.B.I. Inquiry in Harlem Riots," *The New York Times* July 22, 1964.

¹⁵ Kenneth O'Reilly, "The FBI and the Politics of the Riots, 1964-1968," *The Journal of American History* 75 (1988): 91-114 (93); O'Reilly, "*Racial Matters*", 232.

¹⁶ Michael Flamm, "The Original Long, Hot Summer," *The New York Times* July 15, 2014.

¹⁷ O'Reilly, "Racial Matters", 232.

so the theory went, are not just under the influence of the Red "Commies," Hoover's favorite Public Enemy No. 1 whose disdain was shared by both Johnson and Goldwater; rather, to trump his opponent on this matter Johnson wanted Hoover to show rioting Negroes as "the tools of [Goldwater and] these right-wing cranks." Johnson urged Hoover to "find" (read: fabricate) any support of his "Conservative Conspiracy Theory" and Johnson urged New York Mayor Robert Wagner to make this "evidence" public. Here is where H.L. Hunt, Malcolm X, and the (redefined) "Black Muslims" come in.

During this period leading up to the November elections Johnson had two additional foes besides Senator Goldwater: 1.) his longtime nemesis Malcolm X but also 2.) his longtime friend-turned-foe H.L. Hunt. As we saw earlier. Hunt and Johnson were so close that Hunt reportedly put up money for the assassination of John Kennedy which elevated Vice President Johnson to the presidency. But that was then. Now a year later, it was different. While Hunt was for a long time a Democrat, he also had strong philosophic ties to Goldwater: staunch right-wing conservative, militant anti-Communist, racist.19 Thus, Hunt abandoned Johnson and supported Goldwater's campaign rather than that of his old Dallas friend.²⁰ To add insult to



DALLAS, Oct. 31 - H. L. Hunt, the right-wing Texas oil millionaire, will cast his Presidential ballot for Senator Barry Goldwater.

Mr. Hunt disclosed this in telephone interview yesterday. He said he had decided to vote for Republican candidates "so long as they have good character and are constructive."

He said Mr. Goldwater and Representative William E. Miler, his Vice-Presidential runningmate, fitted that description. le e mediatament Di



FOR GOLDWATER: H. L.

injury, the press was reporting that Malcolm X "Favors Goldwater"²¹ because Negros would fare better under Goldwater, "the wolf" than under Johnson "the fox." "If Senator Goldwater became President, according to Malcolm, the Negro would know he had to fight harder and would be 'more positive in his demands, more aggressive in his protests'."22

Apparently scorned by former friend H.L. Hunt for abandoning him for Senator Goldwater, Johnson thus wanted to "pin it on him," i.e., pin the riots on Hunt. Johnson therefore went to Hoover about Hunt.²³ Johnson wanted his peculiar "Conservative Conspiracy Theory" to center on H.L. Hunt, Malcolm X, and indirectly the Nation of Islam. In reality, therefore, it was a "Right Wing-Black Muslim Conspiracy Theory" of the riots, but with "Black Muslim" signifying not primarily the Nation of Islam but Malcolm X's Muslim followers. Johnson wanted evidence suggesting that it was Goldwater's right-wing extremism that was "almost like advocating rioting."²⁴ Some

¹⁸ Michael W. Flamm, "'Outside Agitators': Conspiracy Theory And The Harlem And Bedford- Stuyvesant Riots Of 1964," The Gotham Center For New York City History September 6, 2016.

¹⁹ David R. Jones, "H.L. Hunt: Magnate with Mission," **The New York Times** August 17, 1964

²⁰ "Goldwater Gets H.L. Hunt Backing," *The New York Times* November 1, 1964. ²¹ "Malcolm X Article Favors Goldwater," *The New York Times* September 8, 1964.

²² "Malcolm X Article Favors Goldwater."

²³ Flamm, "'Outside Agitators'." ²⁴ Flamm, "'Outside Agitators'."

Democrats began calling the riots "Goldwater rallies".²⁵ The press claimed that Malcolm X's "tacit preference for Goldwater" "provided a political rationalization for the racial riots and looting which have swept the Negro ghettos. Those outbreaks have played into the hands of Barry Goldwater" and that Malcolm's "pro-Goldwater 'neutralism'" "provides those involved (in the outbreaks) with a lofty excuse for hoodlumism."²⁶ This of course is all Johnson Democratic counter-spin to Goldwater's own Republican spin. Malcolm did, however, forecast "more and worse riots" because the "black man has seen the white man's underbelly of guilty fear."²⁷ Thus, when the FBI issued its "Riots Report" in September 1964 it mentioned no names, but by detailed description and accurate quotation it identified Malcolm X as one of four "troublemakers" of the riots (along with Communists/Socialists Milton Rosen, William Epton, and Jesse Gray).²⁸

The first fruits of this Johnson-Hoover strategy to win back those potential votes lost to Goldwater due to the riots appear in July. The fabricated "Right Wing-Red Commie-Black Muslim Conspiracy Theory" appeared in a story in the July 22, 1964 edition of *The New York Daily News*: "Reds, White Racists Ignite Harlem." This FBI-informed article claimed that at the root of the New York riots was an "unholy alliance" between Communists on the one hand and wealthy right-wing White racists on the other: "Professional, well-financed agitators by the hundreds, representing both the extreme left and the extreme right, are whipping up the violence in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant-and the legitimate responsible civil rights organizations have lost control, THE NEWS established last night." ²⁹ So the story opened.



²⁵ O'Rielly, "Racial Matters", 231.

²⁶ "The Confession of Malcolm X," New York Post September 9, 1964.

²⁷ "Malcolm Sees Evil Choice at Polls," New York Post September 8, 1964.

²⁸ John D. Morris, "F.B.I. Says Riots Had No Pattern or Single Leader," *The New York Times* September 27, 1964.

²⁹ Jack Mallon, William Federici and Henry Lee, "Reds, White Racists Ignite Harlem," *The New York Daily News* July 22, 1964.

A five-month investigation led by the FBI is the source of these claims. The story continues:

Significantly, through the FBI, the police also established that funds from white racists groups - who want New York to get a taste of Negro violence - have been pouring into Harlem. In an unholy alliance, one high source disclosed, both the Commies and the extreme Southern right wingers have been supporting the Black Muslims because they are the most violent muscle unit. In fact, the Muslims have bragged of receiving money from a Texas millionaire whom they don't hesitate to identify.

This "Texas millionaire" was identified as H.L. Hunt Jr.³⁰ It must be pointed out that the "Hunt-Black Muslim" fiction is subtly *repurposed* here: originally (i.e., in May 1963) the "Black Muslim" part of this equation meant Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. Now in July 1964 "Black Muslim" also encompasses Malcolm X and his Muslim Mosque Incorporated followers, including his Muslim followers who were a part of the infamous "Blood Brothers" (*sic*) and also the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). These well-armed groups are the "Black Muslims [who] are the most violent muscle unit." It is *them* – not the Nation of Islam – who are here said to "have bragged of receiving money from a Texas millionaire". Of course, this White Racist-Red Communist-Black Muslim "unholy alliance" was spin, made-to-order for President Johnson to serve his campaign needs. Interestingly, the following month (viz. in August) Hunt directly addressed this FBI-planted rumor. He explicitly denied financing the "Black Muslims".

H.L.Hunt: Magnate with Mission

One of Richest Men in Nation, Oilman Aids Right Wing

By DAVID R. JONES
Special to The New York Times
DALLAS

A septuagenarian with a crown of wispy white hair spread a copy of The Wall Street Journal over the coffee table in his drab office and dumped out the contents of a brown paper bag.

brown paper bag.

He selected a yellow apple from the brown bread, cheese, raisins and orange drink arrayed before him, and began to peel it. "White sugar is the No. 1 poison, white flour the No. 2 poison, and saturated fats the No. 3 poison," he stated.

The author of this pronouncement was Haroldson Lafayette Was Haroldson Lafayette House the Towns colling A 4.75

The author of this pronouncement was Haroldson Lafayette Hunt, the Texas oilman. At 75 Mr. Hunt is one of the richest men in the United States. He has also begun to assume an imposing and controversial role on the American political scene. Will Mr. Hunt pour large



H. L. Hunt, the Texas oil millionaire, at his Dallas office

"You haven't asked me yet if I'm financing the Black Muslims," Mr. Hunt says wryly. "All over the country they're saying I am. So I want to be asked that."

His answer: "No, it's not true. I don't know anything about them, except that they're a bad Negro group."

³⁰ Flamm, "Outside Agitators'."

Hunt told David R. Jones of The New York Times:

"You haven't asked me yet if I'm financing the Black Muslims," Mr. Hunt says wryly. "All over the country they're saying I am. So I want to be asked that." He answered: "No, It's not true. I don't know anything about them, except they're a bad Negro group.³¹

The "Hunt Bankrolled The Black Muslims" claim is a fiction fabricated by the FBI. In the two instances in which we know the FBI operationalized this fiction, "Black Muslims" have two different meanings according to the needs of the operation. In May of 1963 the FBI was targeting the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and thus the "Black Muslims" in this fiction meant exclusively the Nation of Islam. However, in July of 1964 the target was President Johnson's political foes and thus the meaning of "Black Muslim" in this fiction is expanded to include Malcom X and his Muslim revolutionary followers.

Malcolm X's February 15, 1964 claim that "[Elijah Muhammad's] financial support comes from a rich man in Texas" was *never* a fact-based assertion; nor did he present it as such. It was a rumor that he "heard" and which "the FBI knows" because the FBI fabricated the rumor and planted the seed in Malcolm's consciousness and watered it later. This is why we cannot share film maker Omar Shabazz's confidence and we must reject his postulate when he says, speaking of this particular matter: "If Malcolm said it, then damnit, it's true! Why? Because the man was constitutionally built to tell the truth." Whatever Malcolm's constitution was, he was in no position to pronounce the "truth" of this matter because he only had rumor, not fact. And that rumor which he so freely shared with a room full of Black people during an angry outburst against the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was fabricated by the FBI and sent to Malcolm by the FBI in an operation that itself targeted the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. No, "Malcolm saying it" in no way makes it true.

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³¹ David R. Jones, "H.L. Hunt: Magnate with Mission," *The New York Times* August 17, 1964
32 Omar Shabazz, "Malcolm X, H.L. Hunt & Elijah Muhammad," @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43JDjoxbPBo&t=1s