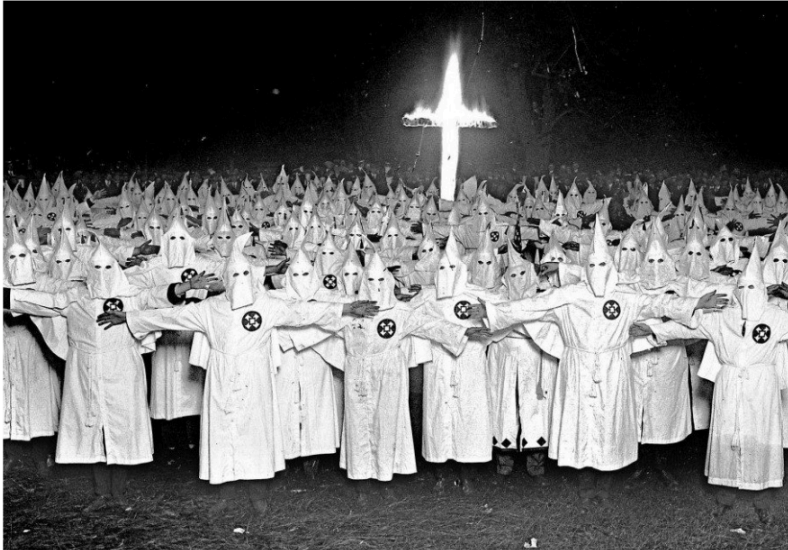


# ***Unholy Alliances?***

## ***Did The Nation of Islam Make A Pact With White Racists?***

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### ***I. The Truth of Malcolm's KKK Ambitions***

At around 2:30 A.M. on Sunday, February 14, 1965 Malcolm X's home in Queens, New York was firebombed in an FBI- and NYPD-involved operation. A justifiably angry Malcolm X immediately laid the blame on the Nation of Islam and any behind-the-scenes 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 15<sup>th</sup> Malcolm spoke to around 500 persons at the Audubon Ballroom. A furious Malcolm X voiced for the first time publicly the supposed details of a pact that the Nation of Islam allegedly entered into with the Ku Klux Klan, a "conspiracy between the NOI and the Ku Klux Klan that is not in the best interest of black people,"<sup>1</sup> Malcolm claimed. He said further

Don't you know? The way they threw that bomb in there they could have thrown it in a Ku Klux Klan house. Why do they want to bomb my house? Why don't they bomb the Klan? I'm going to tell you why.

In 1960, in December, in December of 1960, I was in the home of Jeremiah, the minister in Atlanta, Georgia. I'm ashamed to say it, but I'm going to tell you the truth. I sat at the table myself with the heads of the Ku Klux Klan. I sat there myself, with the heads of the Ku Klux Klan, who at that time were trying to negotiate with Elijah Muhammad so that they could make available to him a large area of land in Georgia or I think it was South Carolina. They had some very responsible persons in the government who were involved in it and who were willing to go along with it. They wanted to make this land available to him so that his program of separation would sound more feasible to

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<sup>1</sup> "Malcolm Accuses Muslims of Blaze; They Point To Him," *The New York Times* February 16, 1965.

Negroes and therefore lessen the pressure that the integrationists were putting upon the white man. I sat there. I negotiated it. I listened to their offer. And I was the one who went back to Chicago and told Elijah Muhammad what they had offered. Now, this was in December of 1960...

From that day onward the Klan never interfered with the Black Muslim movement in the South. Jeremiah attended Klan rallies, as you read on the front page of the ***New York Tribune***. They never bothered him, never touched him. He never touched a Muslim, and a Muslim never touched him. Elijah Muhammad would never let me go back down since January of 1961. I never went South, as long as I remained in the Black Muslim movement, again, from January of 1961, because most of the actions the Muslims got involved in was action that I was involved in myself. Wherever it happened in the country, where there was an action, it was action that I was involved in, because I believed in action. **I never have gone along with no Ku Klux Klan.**<sup>2</sup>



Malcolm said: “I’m ashamed to tell you these things but at the time, I was blinded by my faith in Elijah Muhammad, head of the Black Muslims.”<sup>3</sup>

There is much disingenuousness in these statements by Malcolm X. The truth of the matter is, in this encounter with the Klan Malcolm was blinded less by faith in the Honorable Elijah Muhammad than by *his own personal ambitions*. First, the meeting with the Klan *was not* the Honorable Elijah Muhammad’s instruction to Malcolm which Malcolm begrudgingly carried out. Rather, Malcolm brought the idea **to** Muhammad and Malcom **lobbied** Muhammad for approval, according to Les and Tamara Payne’s new biography of Malcolm X, ***The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X***.<sup>4</sup>



Minister Jeremiah X

In the Fall of 1960 Malcolm X made a much-publicized visit to Atlanta to speak at Mosque #15 headed by Minister Jeremiah X. As Malcolm spoke, the W.S. Fellows of the Georgia Ku Klux Klan sent a telegram to the Atlanta mosque. The telegram requested a meeting between the two groups, implying that the two had much in common. Following protocol, Malcolm phoned the Honorable Elijah Muhammad in Chicago and shared the telegram with him. Muhammad offered nothing on the phone but summoned Minister Malcolm and Minister Jeremiah X to Chicago the next morning to discuss it. The KKK heads of several Klavern chapters from three states had assembled a plot of over 20,000 acres in Georgia which the Klan was willing to donate to the Black Muslims and our vision of the separation of the races.<sup>5</sup> According to what Payne reports from Minister

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<sup>2</sup> Malcolm X, “There’s a worldwide revolution going on (Audubon Ballroom-New York City February 15, 1965),” in ***Malcolm X: The Last Speeches***, ed. Bruce Perry (New York: Pathfinder, 1989) 122-124.

<sup>3</sup> “Malcom Links Klan, Muslims,” ***New York Post*** February 16, 1965.

<sup>4</sup> Les Payne and Tamara Payne, ***The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X*** (New York: Liverlight Publishing, 2020) 320ff.

<sup>5</sup> Major Robinson and Carl Nesfield, “Were Secret Muslim-KKK Talks Held in Atlanta?” ***New York Courier*** February 13, 1965.

Jeremiah, Malcolm *wanted* that meeting with the Klan: “Malcolm was exhilarated by the idea of heading to the South as a good soldier to meet with the knights of the Ku Klux Klan,” writes Payne.<sup>6</sup> But Malcolm had peculiar ideas for this meeting. Specifically, Malcolm dreamed of a public debate extravaganza before the world media featuring *him* and the Klan. To sale the idea Malcolm highlighted to Mr. Muhammad during the Chicago meeting his media savvy and book-learned knowledge of American race history. Malcolm hoped to land the assignment as the chief debater at this public spectacle.<sup>7</sup> He wanted to square-off “behind the Cotton Curtain” with the Klan, not in any physically confrontational way, but in a public battle of wits on a stage. The national headlines would be a powerful recruiting tool for the Nation, Malcolm reasoned.

While Malcolm lobbied Muhammad to allow him to accept the invitation from the Klan for the purposes of a highly publicized media-event, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had a very different idea: negotiate the land in George to begin securing a Black Nation and negotiate a noninterference pact with the Klan. During their discussion at the dinner table, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad reportedly concluded that the telegram was an olive branch from the KKK a year after Muhammad’s public correspondences with Klansmen/Nazi J.B. Stoner.<sup>8</sup> Muhammad told Malcolm and Jeremiah, “You can meet with them devils”<sup>9</sup> but he warned them to “Be careful with them devils.”<sup>10</sup> The meeting occurred in Minister Jeremiah X’s house.

The claim that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad entered into secret, nefarious negotiations with the Ku Klux Klan and made Malcolm participate, which he did only against his moral conscience, is thus **a false narrative**. Malcolm X *wanted* to engage the Ku Klux Klan in a secret meeting and he lobbied the Honorable Elijah Muhammad to allow him to do so. Malcolm’s idea was not to physically confront the Klan, the historic abusers of Black People in the South; nor was Malcolm’s idea to negotiate with the Klan a “stand down” on behalf of Black people in the South. Rather, Malcolm’s ambition for such a meeting with the Klan, according to Les Payne’s interview with Minister Jeremiah, was to participate with them in a public battle of wits and spectacular media event which would allow Malcolm to go back to New York and tell the ***Amsterdam News*** that he went behind “the Cotton Curtain” and defeated the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>11</sup> Such a showing would serve Malcolm’s personal ambition more than it would benefit the lives of Black folk in the South.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad listened to Malcolm’s reasoning but made a decision that could benefit Black People rather than just one man. Malcolm X wanted a show. The Honorable Elijah was more interested in the land. The acquisition of land owned by white people is a necessary step in building a Black Nation within the continental U.S. Such an opportunity presented itself, and the fact that it came from the

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<sup>6</sup> Payne and Payne, ***Dead Are Arising***, 341.

<sup>7</sup> Payne and Payne, ***Dead Are Arising***, 336.

<sup>8</sup> Per Jeremiah Shabazz according to Payne and Payne, ***Dead Are Arising***, 323.

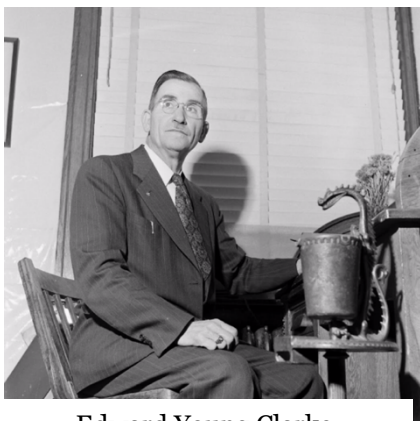
<sup>9</sup> Payne and Payne, ***Dead Are Arising***, 339.

<sup>10</sup> Payne and Payne, ***Dead Are Arising***, 342.

<sup>11</sup> Video, “Minister Jeremiah Shabazz Speaks on His Early History and Malcolm X,” @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsrnKEDjrfU>; Video, “Jeremiah Shabazz The True History of Malcolm X pt II,” @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VonifslosCQ>; Payne and Payne, ***Dead Are Arising***, Chapter 13.

Ku Klux Klan did not make it any less of an opportunity. So Muhammad agreed to *Malcolm's request* for such a meeting but only in the service of the 'bigger picture.'

Malcolm's February 15, 1965 tirade against the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was not only disingenuous, but in it Malcolm radically betrayed his strong Garveyite heritage.<sup>12</sup> The meeting approved by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was certainly "a throwback to Marcus Garvey's 1922 Klan summit."<sup>13</sup> Only blocks away from where Malcolm and Jeremih met with the Klan, the Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey himself met with a Georgia Klan official 38 years prior. In June 1922 Garvey met at the Klan's Atlanta office with Edward Young Clarke, the Imperial Wizard pro tempore of the Ku Klux Klan. According to Garvey, "The Ku Klux Klan is going to make this a white man's country. They are perfectly honest and frank about it. Fighting them is not going to get you anywhere."<sup>14</sup> Strange Bedfellows? Garvey not only met with the Klan, he also allied with other White Supremacists, particularly the Virginia eugenicists such as Earnest Sevier Cox who were responsible for passage of the 1923-1924 racist Racial Integrity Act and sterilization laws.<sup>15</sup> The common ground between Garvey and these White Supremacists was race purity and the condemnation of miscegenation.<sup>16</sup> Due to his anti-integrationist and anti-miscegenation stance, Marcus Garvey declared friendship with both the Klan and the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America (ASCOA), the latter called "an elitist version of the Ku Klux Klan." According to Tony Martin, Garvey's was not just a pragmatic but a "symbiotic relationship" with white supremacists.<sup>17</sup>



Edward Young Clarke



The Honorable Marcus  
Mosiah Garvey



Earnest Sevier Cox

<sup>12</sup> Both of Malcolm's parents, Earl Little and Louise Little, were in the movement: Earl was president of the local UNIA branch and Louise was branch reporter. Ted Vincent, "The Garveyite Parents of Malcolm X," *The Black Scholar* 20 (March/April 1989): 10-13.

<sup>13</sup> Sam McPheeters, "When Malcolm X Met the Nazis," *Vice* April 15, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> E. David Cronin, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960) 189.

<sup>15</sup> Sarah L. Trembanis, "Strange Bedfellows: Eugenicists, White Supremacists, and Marcus Garvey in Virginia, 1922-1927," Master's Thesis, College of William & Mary, 2001; Michael W. Fitzgerald, "We Have Found Moses': Theodore Bilbo, Black Nationalism, and the Greater Liberia Bill of 1939," *The Journal of Southern History* 63 (1997): 293-320.

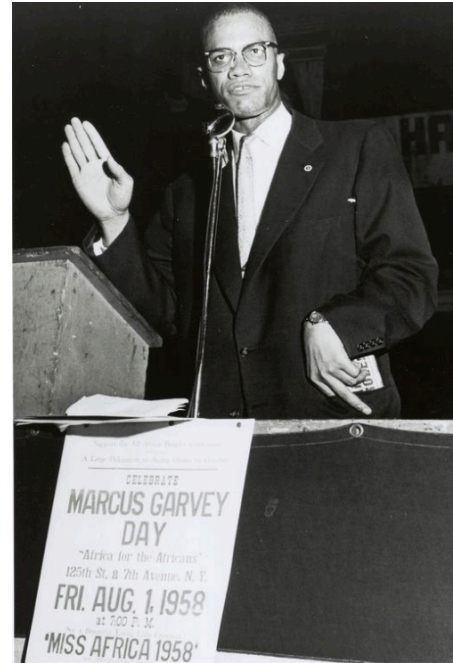
<sup>16</sup> Paul A. Lombardo, "Eugenic Laws Against Race Mixing," *Image Archive, American Eugenics Movement* (Feb. 2000), available at <http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/list3.pl>.

<sup>17</sup> Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggle of Marcus Garvey and the United Negro Improvement Association* (Westport, CT: Greenwood press, 1976) 344.

Garvey declared:

I regard the Klan, the Anglo-Saxon clubs and White American societies, as far as the Negro is concerned, as better friends of the race than all other groups of hypocritical whites put together. I like honest and fair play. You may call me a Klansman if you will, but, potentially, every white man is a Klansman as far as the Negro in competition with whites socially, economically and politically is concerned, and there is no use lying.<sup>18</sup>

[M]embers of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs...are honest and honorable in their desire to purify and preserve the white race even as we are determined to purify and standardize our race...[W]e, the two organizations, should work together for the purpose of bringing about the ideal sought—the purification of the races, their autonomous separation and the unbridled freedom of self-development and self-expression. Those who are against this are enemies of both races and rebels against morality, nature and God...I unhesitatingly endorse the race purity idea of Mr. [John] Powell (of the ASCOA) and his organization, and I have pledged my moral support to their program in that direction, expecting of the honorable and honest of his race the same regard and support for ours.<sup>19</sup>



The compromised Negro leadership at the time attacked the Black Nationalist Marcus Garvey viciously in terms that anticipated Malcolm’s later attacks against his teacher, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. For example, A. Phillip Randolph and Chandler Owen named Garvey a “race baiter and race traitor,”<sup>20</sup> mocking him as the “messenger boy of Clarke, Ku Klux White Kleagle.”<sup>21</sup> W.E.B. DuBois declared Garvey “without doubt, the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in America and in the world. He is either a lunatic or a traitor.”<sup>22</sup> DuBois said further

Not even Tom Dixon or Ben Tillman or the hatefulest enemies of the Negro have ever stooped to a more vicious campaign than [what] Marcus Garvey, sane or insane, is carrying on. He is not attacking white prejudice, he is groveling before it and applauding it; his only attack is on men of his own race who are striking for freedom; his only contempt is for Negroes; his only threats are for black blood...[Garvey] has not dared print a single word against white folk. All his vituperation has been heaped on his own race...As for Garvey himself, this open ally of the Ku Klux Klan should be locked up or sent home.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Marcus Garvey, “The Negro, Communism, Trade Unionism and His(?) Friend: Beware of Greeks Bearing Gifts,” reprinted in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers: Volume VI: September 1924-December 1927*, ed. Abraham Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) 216.

<sup>19</sup> Marcus Garvey, “Letter of Introduction for John Powell,” Atlanta Ga., October 28, 1925, originally published in *Negro World* November 7, 1925, reprinted in *Papers: Volume VI*, 251-252.

<sup>20</sup> “Time to Go,” *The Messenger* 3:8 (August 1922): 457.

<sup>21</sup> A Philip Randolph, “Garvey, Black Eagle, Becomes Messenger Boy of Clarke, Ku Klux Kleagle,” *The Messenger* July 1922.

<sup>22</sup> “W.E.B. DuBoise, “Lunatic or Traitor,” *The Crisis* 28 (1924): 8-9.

<sup>23</sup> DuBoise, “Lunatic or Traitor,” 9.

These 1924 charges of DuBois against the Honorable Marcus Garvey are eerily like the 1965 charges of Malcolm X against the Honorable Elijah Muhammad:

The concepts and ideals of the Muslims under Elijah Muhammad have changed. They are a violent group and all of their violence is against other black brothers. They do not go to Mississippi and shoot at the Klan.<sup>24</sup>

[Elijah Muhammad] doesn't love Black people. He doesn't even want to go forward. Proof of which, they're killing each other. They shot another one in the Bronx. They tried to get six of us Sunday morning. And the pattern has developed across the country. The man has gone insane, absolutely out of his mind.<sup>25</sup>

Garvey's alliances caused the Negro leadership to intensify their "Garvey Must Go" campaign, aiming to "drive the menace of Garveyism out of this country."<sup>26</sup>

On January 15, 1923, a group of eight prominent African Americans petitioned Attorney General Harry M. Daugherty asking the U.S. government to continue its prosecution of Garvey on charges of mail fraud, and to investigate acts of violence attributed to Garvey's followers -- among them, the assassination in early January 1923 in New Orleans of J. W. H. Eason, Garvey's former deputy, who had been expelled from the movement at the August 1922 Convention on charges of personal misconduct. The letter of petition ended by urging the Attorney General to "use his full influence completely to disband and extirpate this vicious movement," and imploring him to "vigorously and speedily push the government's case against Marcus Garvey for using the mails to defraud."<sup>27</sup>

The parallels between this attack against Marcus Garvey for his pragmatic alliance with White Supremacist groups of his day and Malcolm's disingenuous attack against the Honorable Elijah Muhammad for negotiating a land deal with the Ku Klux Klan is unmistakable. Incidentally the FBI, who had been doing surveillance on the Ku Klux Klan at the time and had many informants inside the group, monitored the meetings between the Nation of Islam and the Klan. The FBI even had an informant planted at the 1961 meeting hosted by Minister Jeremiah X and Minister Malcolm X.<sup>28</sup> And as Les and Tamara Payne note, "As with other divisive counterintelligence moves by Director Hoover, the FBI had held word of the secret meeting in reserve as a possible item of blackmail, or embarrassment for the Nation of Islam."<sup>29</sup> The government waited for the right time and opportunity to release the story and spin it to have a damaging effect.

That opportunity presented itself at the beginning of 1965. On February 2, 1965 the FBI New York Special Agent-in-Charge reported to Director Hoover that reliable FBI informants within Malcolm's OAAU informed the SAC that, during Malcolm's January 31, 1965 "Ballot or Bullet" lecture at the Audubon Ballroom, Malcolm stated that he

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<sup>24</sup> Major Robinson and Carl Nesfield, "Were Secret Muslim-KKK Talks Held in Atlanta?" *New York Courier* February 13, 1965.

<sup>25</sup> Malcolm X, "There's a worldwide revolution going on," 131.

<sup>26</sup> A Philip Randolph, "Garvey, Black Eagle, Becomes Messenger Boy of Clarke, Ku Klux Kleagle," *The Messenger* July 1922.

<sup>27</sup> "The Garvey Must God Campaign," *PBS* @<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/garvey-must-go-campaign/>

<sup>28</sup> FBI memo Malcolm X. Little File No. 105-899 New York May 17, 1961 *apud* Clayborne Carson, *Malcolm X: The FBI File* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1991) 203-204

<sup>29</sup> Payne and Payne, *Dead Are Arising*, 374.

plans to expose the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the NOI's affiliation with the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>30</sup> This was noted by the FBI with clear approval. The New York SAC remarked that,

in view of MALCOLM X's implication that ELIJAH MUHAMMAD is in some way affiliated with the KKK, this remark by MALCOLM X may be indicative of his next line of attack on Muhammad and the NOI.<sup>31</sup>

This suggestion inspired the FBI to aid Malcolm in trying to discredit the Honorable Elijah Muhammad but also discredit Malcolm at the same time. The FBI thus leaked information of the 1961 Atlanta meeting to the *New York Courier*, which published the story on February 13<sup>th</sup> under the title: "Were Secret Muslim-KKK Talks Held in Atlanta?"<sup>32</sup>

New York City - Did Malcolm X, when he was in good standing as Black Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad's top aide, sit in on a secret conference in Atlanta, Ga., with top leaders of the Ku Klux Klan who offered to donate land to the extremist organization? The Courier learned from confidential sources that such a meeting allegedly took place several years ago in the home of Jeremiah X, the Atlanta minister of the Muslim mosque. The purpose of the confidential talks that took place was that the KKK was interested in helping Mr. Muhammad carry out his 'give us a separate piece of land to settle on' theory which he preaches. The KKK heads of several Klavern chapters from three states had already assembled a plot said to exceed over 20,000 acres in Georgia which they had expressed a desire to donate to the Muslims for their followers...After this one meeting, Malcolm X, who was said to represent his leader, didn't take part in any more discussions between the two organizations, both a contrast in extremes, one preaching segregation by violence and the other preaching segregation by choice.<sup>33</sup>

On February 14<sup>th</sup> Malcom's home was firebomb in a NYPD-involved operation. On the evening of February 15<sup>th</sup> Malcom mounted the rostrum at the Audubon Ballroom and made the above discussed disingenuous comments about the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam entering into an anti-Black "conspiracy" with the Ku Klux Klan.

The covert operation was successful.

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<sup>30</sup> "Organization of Afro-American Unity," FBI Memo From SAC, New York to Director, FBI, February 2, 1965.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Major Robinson and Carl Nesfield, "Were Secret Muslim-KKK Talks Held in Atlanta?" *New York Courier* February 13, 1965.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

## II. *Did H.L. Hunt Bankroll the Nation of Islam?*



Later in that same February 15<sup>th</sup> speech Malcolm X goes on to claim:

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.<sup>34</sup>

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.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> 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,<sup>37</sup> while Claude Andrew Clegg acknowledged that it **is** but a rumor,

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<sup>34</sup> Malcolm X, "There's a worldwide revolution going on," 125.

<sup>35</sup> 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, apud Karl Evanzz, *The Judas Factor: The Plot To Kill Malcolm X* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992) 284-285.

<sup>36</sup> Omar Shabazz, "Malcolm X, H.L. Hunt & Elijah Muhammad," @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43JDjoxbPBO&t=1s>

<sup>37</sup> Dr. Manning Marable, "No Compromise with Racism: Farrakhan, Chavis and Lyndon La Rouche – Part One," *The Columbus Free Press* January 17, 1997.



and then proceeded to use it as if it were a fact anyway.<sup>38</sup> 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.”<sup>39</sup>

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). Sure enough, the source upon which Evanzz relies *never makes the claim that Evanzz imputes to it*. It says only that: “He (Malcolm) also told her [Evelyn or Lucille] that Elijah had been putting money in Switzerland lately, and Clara had been putting hers in Beirut and Cairo. Malcolm also told her ‘that that fellow in Texas has been giving Elijah money for several years’.”<sup>40</sup> There is thus *no mention of Malcolm going through any Chicago files* and it is clear that Malcolm is only repeating the rumor as he heard it. Evanzz consistently abuses his sources.

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.”<sup>41</sup>

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

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<sup>38</sup> Claude Andrew Clegg, *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997) 161-162.

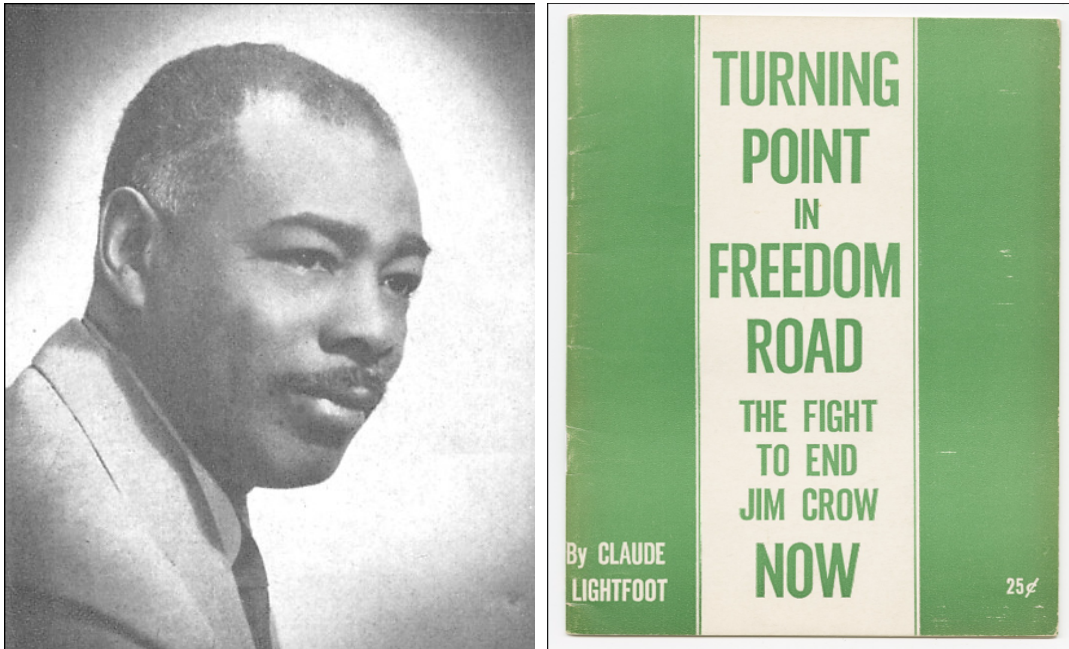
<sup>39</sup> Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001 [1999]) 303.

<sup>40</sup> FBI File on Clara Muhammad From SAC, New York To Director, FBI July 7, 1964 Subject: Malcolm X. Little aka IS-MMI; Evanzz, *The Messenger*, 506. In Evanzz retyping of this document he inserts [named H.L. Hunt].

<sup>41</sup> Zak Akinwole Kondo, *Conspiracys: Unravelling the Assassination of Malcolm X* (Washington, D.C.: Nubia Press, 1993) 130.

the NOI. This information came to Malcolm's attention as part of a Bureau counterintelligence scheme.<sup>42</sup>

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 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

**New Trends in Negro Liberation Movement**

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<sup>42</sup> Kondo, *Conspiracys*, 149.

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 billionaire. 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.<sup>43</sup>

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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.

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.”<sup>44</sup> In their typical fashion, the FBI intended to plant a 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.

<sup>43</sup> Claude Lightfoot, *Turning Point in Freedom Road: The Fight To End Jim Crow Now* (New York: New Century Publishers, 1962) 15-16.

<sup>44</sup> FBI memo From SAC, New York to Director, FBI May 9, 1963 Re: CPUSA; Kondo, *Conspiracys*, 299 n. 925.

1964 was an election year and the riots proved politically damaging to President 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.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> Goldwater said in a campaign speech: "Choose the way of [the Johnson] Administration and you have the way of mobs in the street."<sup>47</sup>

This Goldwater-Republican strategy was effective.<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup> Johnson was told by one of his analysts that each riot cost him 90,000 (potential) votes.<sup>50</sup> 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.<sup>51</sup> 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. Negroes, 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."<sup>52</sup> 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.

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<sup>45</sup> Charles Mohr, "Goldwater Links The Welfare State To Rise in Crime," *The New York Times* September 11, 1964.

<sup>46</sup> Kenneth O'Reilly, *Racial Matters: The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960-1972* (New York: Free Press, 1989) 231.

<sup>47</sup> Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (Prince Frederick, Md.: Recorded Books, 2020)

<sup>48</sup> 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.

<sup>49</sup> 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.

<sup>50</sup> Michael Flamm, "The Original Long, Hot Summer," *The New York Times* July 15, 2014.

<sup>51</sup> O'Reilly, "*Racial Matters*", 232.

<sup>52</sup> 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.

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.<sup>53</sup> Thus, Hunt abandoned Johnson and supported Goldwater's campaign rather than that of his old Dallas friend.<sup>54</sup> To add insult to

injury, the press was reporting that Malcolm X "Favors Goldwater"<sup>55</sup> because Negroes 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'."<sup>56</sup>

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.<sup>57</sup> 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."<sup>58</sup> Some Democrats began calling the riots "Goldwater rallies".<sup>59</sup> 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 'neutrality'" "provides those involved (in the outbreaks) with a lofty excuse for hoodlumism."<sup>60</sup> 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

## GOLDWATER GETS H.L. HUNT BACKING

But Texas Rightist Won't  
Criticize the President

Special to The New York Times

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 a 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. Miller, his Vice-Presidential runningmate, fitted that description.



The New York Times  
**FOR GOLDWATER: H. L. Hunt, the oil millionaire.**

<sup>53</sup> David R. Jones, "H.L. Hunt: Magnate with Mission," *The New York Times* August 17, 1964

<sup>54</sup> "Goldwater Gets H.L. Hunt Backing," *The New York Times* November 1, 1964.

<sup>55</sup> "Malcolm X Article Favors Goldwater," *The New York Times* September 8, 1964.

<sup>56</sup> "Malcolm X Article Favors Goldwater."

<sup>57</sup> Flamm, "'Outside Agitators'."

<sup>58</sup> Flamm, "'Outside Agitators'."

<sup>59</sup> O'Rielly, "*Racial Matters*", 231.

<sup>60</sup> "The Confession of Malcolm X," *New York Post* September 9, 1964.

the white man's underbelly of guilty fear."<sup>61</sup> 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).<sup>62</sup>

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."<sup>63</sup> So the story opened.

DAILY NEWS, WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 1964 \* C3

# Reds, White Racists Ignite Harlem

By JACK MALLON, WILLIAM FEDERICI and HENRY LEE

Professional, well-financed agitators by the hundreds, representing both the extreme left and 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.

A five-month investigation by dozens of top detectives, working in close cooperation with the FBI, has disclosed widespread Communist infiltration—so much so that they command 1,000 young fanatics dedicated to violence. Their instructions are: "Deploy! Incite!" One high source described them as "beatniks, crumbums, addicts and thieves," some of whom are paid in narcotics as well as cash.

**White Hate Groups in on It**

The investigation, launched at the order of Commissioner Murphy, was conducted by the entire Central Office Bureau and Squads, including the Bureau of Special Services (BOSS) and the Criminal Investigation Bureau. Meeting places and the identity of leaders—none of whom had previously come to public attention—were established.

Significantly, through the FBI, the police also established that funds from white racist groups—who want



(NEWS photo by Dan Farrell)

Robert G. Thompson (in the suit jacket) former state chairman of the Communist Party, sits beside William Patterson, chairman of the party's state district committee and Daily Worker editor, during rally at the Mount Morris Presbyterian Church.

(Continued on page 9, col. 1)

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.

<sup>61</sup> "Malcolm Sees Evil Choice at Polls," *New York Post* September 8, 1964.

<sup>62</sup> John D. Morris, "F.B.I. Says Riots Had No Pattern or Single Leader," *The New York Times* September 27, 1964.

<sup>63</sup> Jack Mallon, William Federici and Henry Lee, "Reds, White Racists Ignite Harlem," *The New York Daily News* July 22, 1964.

This “Texas millionaire” was identified as H.L. Hunt Jr.<sup>64</sup> 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”.



“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.”

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.”<sup>65</sup>

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

<sup>64</sup> Flamm, “Outside Agitators’.”

<sup>65</sup> David R. Jones, “H.L. Hunt: Magnate with Mission,” *The New York Times* August 17, 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."<sup>66</sup> 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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<sup>66</sup> Omar Shabazz, "Malcolm X, H.L. Hunt & Elijah Muhammad," @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43JDjoxbPBO&t=1s>