

This pamphlet was produced by the Claustrophobia collective (collaboratively with Shaka) as a fundraiser for Shaka's legal work. The coming months will be a crucial point in his appeals process, and we hope that comrades can support his struggle in whatever way is possible.

THE ANARCHIST TRAIN

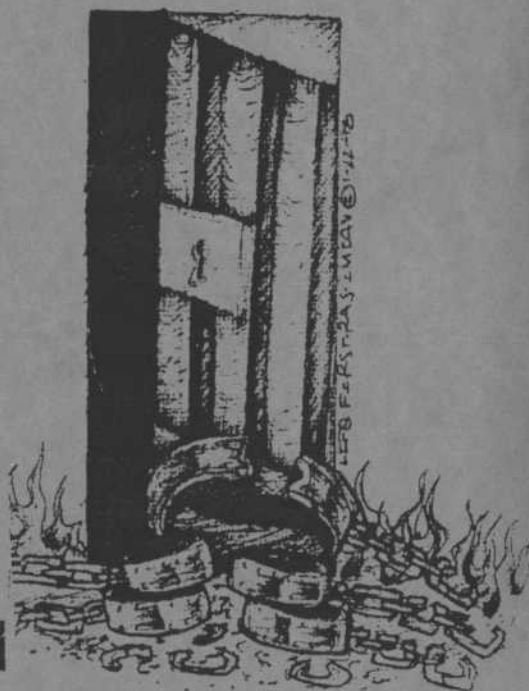
DISTRIBUTED BY

FIRESTARTER PRESS

PO BOX 50217

BALTIMORE, MD 21211

USA



CLAUSTRO PHOBIA

P.O. Box 1721 • Baltimore, MD 21203
<http://www.charm.net/~claustro>
email: claustro@charm.net

an interview and collection of writings from prison by
SHAKA N'ZINGA

DISTRICT COURT OF MARYLAND FOR BALTIMORE CITY
 Located at 1400 E. North Ave. pt. 1 Case No. 87-07-661319B

STATE OF MARYLAND vs. Arthur Hargrave
 2614 E. Lafayette Street
 Baltimore, Md.
 Telephone: 2116824
 CCA

DESCRIPTION: Driver's License No. 147
 Sex M Race B Hgt 5-7
 Hair Black Eyes Blue Complexion DCA 7-5-72
 Other nickname - Jerry

APPLICATION FOR STATEMENT OF CHARGES

I, the undersigned, apply for a Statement of Charges and a Summons or Warrant which may lead to the arrest of the above named Defendant because on or about 30 Jan 88

at 104 N. Luzerne Ave., the above named Defendant

On the 8 Sep 88 at about 1333hrs., Det. Sydney of the Harford Unit was dispatched to the rear yard of 2518 E. Fairmount Ave. for a dead body. Upon the detective's arrival, he was met by Medic #10 and together they discovered the skeletal remains of a human body. The victim was pronounced dead at 1333hrs. by the medic unit. An investigation was initiated and on the 17 Sep 88, a witness was located. This witness was in the company of three individuals when he observed the defendant forcibly rape the victim. The victim was then strangled by the defendant and killed. The victim's naked corpse was dressed.

I have read or had read to me and I understand the notice on the back of this form subscribed and sworn to before me this 8:50 P.M. 1201 day of Sept 88

I solemnly affirm under the penalties of perjury that the contents of the foregoing application are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

MARY S. YOUNG
 3912 2100
 601 E. Fayette ST.

I understand that a charging document has been issued and that I must appear for trial on 30 Jan 88. I have been notified by the Clerk, at the court location shown at the top of this form.

I declined to sign a charging document because of lack of probable cause.

DCA 1 (Rev. 7-80)
 DCA 1 (Rev. 7-80)
 (See Reverse Side)



firestarter



1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q And, in fact, you were advised by the detectives
3 of the Police Department of certain rights. Do you remember
4 that?

5 A Yes, sir.

6 Q In fact, you have an absolute right to remain
7 silent and not tell us anything about this if it would incriminate
8 you. Do you understand that?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q Now, I know you're only thirteen, but do you have
11 any questions about testifying in front of this Grand Jury?

12 A No, sir.

13 Q Now, I've explained to you that if you cooperate
14 and tell us the truth - that is tell us what you told the
15 police in your second statement to the police - that we do not
16 intend to prosecute you in this case. Do you understand that,
17 sir? *on original with 12/11/71 - 12/11/71, 12/11/71 37
right to file 101-530-71*

18 A Yes, sir.

19 Q However, if we find out that you lied to us, and
20 you tell the Grand Jury here today turns out to be a lie...

21 A Yes, sir.

22 Q ...you could, first of all, be charged with a crime
23 called perjury. Do you understand that?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q And perjury is lying under oath about something



How you can help

We are presently searching for a committed lawyer to present the new evidence in his case to the courts. You can help with donations, fundraisers, or legal assistance; all of which are desperately needed at this point. Contact Claustrophobia for more information.

THE SPIRIT, a newsletter of radical prisoners' voices which Shaka edits, is available for \$1.00 from Claustrophobia. Contact us for distribution information, as a way to break the isolation between prisoners and the outside world.

The United Prisoners Action Coalition is working on hooking up with individuals, organizations, and networks of people in "free-world" communities that are concerned with human rights in prison. Contact Idris Alaoma at the Maryland House of Corrections to learn more about UPAC's current projects.

As Shaka's case goes back into the courts (hopefully this coming spring) we will need organizers to mobilize support and keep pressure on the courts to rule based on the evidence for an overturning of his conviction. An informal Support Committee will be forming towards this end. Contact Claustrophobia or Shaka if you can be a part of this effort.

GETTING INVOLVED

Contact info (supporters and others involved in prison struggles)

Shaka N'Zinga
s/n Arthur Wiggins
#196-612 **534 (MHC)**
P.O. Box **549 (MHC)** Jessup
Jessup, MD 20794

United Prisoners Action Coalition
c/o Idris Alaoma
#125-153
P.O. Box 534 (MHC)
Jessup, MD 20794

Marshall Eddie Conway Support Cmte.
P.O. Box 41144
Baltimore, MD 21203-6144
(410) 276-7221

Baltimore ABC
c/o S. Murray
P.O. Box 22203
Baltimore, MD 21203

Claustrophobia
P.O. Box 1721
Baltimore, MD 21203
(410) 243-2925

Marshall "Eddie" Conway
#116-469
P.O. Box 534 (MHC)
Jessup, MD 20794

BlackWatch Grassroots Network
3802 14th St., Nw #511
Washington, DC 20011

Prisoner Publishing Network
c/o Sojourner Truth Farm School
P.O. Box 311
Poolesville, MD 20837

CONTENTS

7	Introduction
13	Preface
17	Writings, I
17	<i>As a Child</i>
21	<i>Me, remembered</i>
23	Interview
39	Writings, II
39	<i>To Love Again</i>
40	<i>The Anarchist Rain</i>
47	<i>I Don't Know What It's Like!!!</i>
48	Getting involved
48	<i>Contact info (supporters and others involved in prison struggles)</i>
49	<i>How you can help</i>

I Don't Know What It's Like!!!

I wouldn't know what it is like to be a rapist, a murderer, or a president of the United States... Just like I don't know what it is like to actually be free in the United States of White Amerikkka... to be treated like a human being with a right to life.

I wouldn't know what it is like to be a rapist of women, a murderer of humanity, or a president of such a country that intentionally produce and maintain such warped and deformed mentalities.

I wouldn't know what it is like to be a rapist, despite the fact that the very system that produce such sicknesses has branded me as such. I have not this savage sickness, which is a throw back to insanity that was once the accepted norm on the planet, that the mass media, educational system, the church and the family unite attempts to socialize all male human beings into becoming — rapist, murderers, and presidents of the fascist nation of amerikkka; however, I was born Black thus the title of scapegoat and foot stool of the white settlers class.

I do know what it is like to be a slave, a child, and a victim of racial injustice.

I do know and understand that my life from the cradle to the tomb of the living dead called prison, I have been made the slave as a child victim of capitalistic amerikkka's built in system of racial injustice, the product of the overall institutions of White Supremacy that is fundamentally amerikkka.

I ain't no rapist, nor murderer, and have no desire to be the president of this nation of dehumanized functioning and design — besides my skin be too dark and the only place for my kind is the tombs as slave, as child, as victim.

The rapist and murderer is the ruling classes, president and all other destroyers of humanity via this capitalistic system of racist oppression and exploitation, carried out right here in this not so great nation of fascist amerikkka. But never, no never, me the not Black at all New Afrikan Anarchist.

Dedicated to the ideal of anarchism, the idea that will bring liberation to humanity. And to Marshall Eddie Conway, for keeping the spirit of resistance alive, in himself and those who know him.

Published 1998 by Claustrophobia. Permission to reprint freely given, however please keep in mind that this is intended as a fundraiser.

Original artwork on front and back covers courtesy of Ras I-mian, © 1998 Life First Graphics. Thanks, it is greatly appreciated.

moment of my life, a repression so formidable that any movement on my part can only bring relief, the respite of a small victory or release of death. In every sense of the term, in every sense that's real, I'm a slave to, and of, property.

Before being shoved back inside the door that will take me back into the bowels of the beast defined as prison (an inanimate object that feeds off the souls of the oppressed and dehumanized, souls made insane by its inhumanity), I looked up and from behind the lovely dark rain filled clouds appeared a silver lining - looking very much like freedom's motif to me - and in this silver lining that lined the clouds appeared the revolutionary and love inspiring image of a true Anarchist, the beautiful spectacled face of Emma Goldman spoke these words, word likened unto a warm breeze of a splendid spring evening: "Only in freedom can man grow to his full stature. Only in freedom will he learn to think and move, and give the very best of him. Only in freedom will he realize the true force of the social bonds which knit men together, and which are the true foundation of normal social life."

Now, here in the cage, I have discovered a level of freedom that has long ago informed me of my need to be physically liberated from this dehumanizing design called correction. In spite of the fact that I am still here, I am still fighting, thanks to that rebellious walk in the rain - free indeed, if only for a moment... Given strength to continue my struggle to one day be free of this slave ship that doesn't ever, never, moves - this insane antisocial arraignment called prison, designed in the 1790s by god-fearing capitalistic church goers. The Anarchist Rain will erode and then raze it... in a dream, in my imagination, or in reality?

Smashing the chains in my dreams, as I sleep, dreaming of struggling on the other side of these bars, walls, and razor wire. Coming awake with the words of Bakunin on my lips: "History consists in the progressive negation the primitive animality of Man by the development of his humanity. I am truly free only when all human beings... are equally free. The freedom of other men, far from negating or limiting my freedom, is, on the contrary, its necessary condition and confirmation." And the war, for my liberty and innocence, continued.

INTRODUCTION

by Marc Salotte

In everyday life in America, we go through our lives in a kind of alienated day-dream. It's not that often that any two people will ever connect—especially if they come from radically different backgrounds. Most of the time, most people bring all kinds of hang-ups with them into any kind of interaction they get into. Sometimes, though, a shared point of view can be enough to bring two people out of completely different realities into communication with one another. It can be that simple.

That's how I first came into contact with Shaka. He was an anarchist, so was I. He had come into consciousness of anarchism in prison, reading and studying all kinds of histories and philosophies trying to find something that would explain why his life was playing itself out in the twisted way it was. He had gone through Islam and more mainstream nationalist worldviews before he started checking into anti-authoritarian ideas. Out here on the street where I was living, dissatisfaction and oppression just kind of simmers in your life, occasionally threatening to boil over; not like in prison where it pours out all over you, scalding you, constantly. It had been a slow path to consciousness for me, not the urgent search it was for Shaka. My path to where I am today shared a lot of the same rebellions and points of understanding as Shaka's, though of course it was also different in many ways. So here we are, speaking as two comrades—a European (so-called "white") man who'd never been locked up for any serious time, and a New Afrikan man who came of age in prison. Comrades in the here and now; it's amazing how much it means that we look at the world in the same way.

Shaka was arrested in 1989 for the gang-rape and murder—which he did not commit—of a girl at her home near Patterson Park. As a young thug spending his days getting high, looking for a way to make one day flow into the next, he was hanging out with whoever he might run into from day to day, looking for an

escape from the constant judgements of society (while at the same time hoping to be alive the next day). On the day of the incident in question he was over at this 21 year-old's house he had met a couple days earlier around the neighborhood. The man turned out to be a wanna-be pimp with a history of rape, but then that's not the first thing you learn about someone you just met. He had drugs and he was willing to get people high, so Shaka and two others, a nineteen-year-old man and a thirteen-year-old boy, were hanging out for the day. Sometime during the course of the afternoon, this man came up with the idea of raping his wife's daughter, who lived downstairs from him in the basement. Shaka and Jeff, the younger boy, weren't really sure if he was serious, but didn't want to stay around and find out. They walked down the block to the corner store, and when they returned and looked in the window, Jean Rae Wantland had already been suffocated to death.

Three months later, the body was found and within a week, Shaka and two others were arrested in connection. Although Jeff's first statement to the police cleared Shaka, he was arrested nonetheless; arrested as a fifteen-year-old New Afrikan man-child on the streets of Baltimore, as a boy who the system had given up on, or rather, never even really intended to allow into itself. He was arrested as a "problem child", who had always had trouble conforming to the disciplines of a Eurocentric school system that dulls your mind and senses, a broken family system that constantly stresses your emotions, and a material poverty where day to day survival is up in the air. And just as much as any of these other reasons, he was arrested as a New Afrikan youth in a crime where the victim was white, and the two perpetrators were grown white men (one of whom was even the victim's stepfather) who 'couldn't have done such a thing on their own'. Shaka was a perfect scapegoat.

Now the first thing that white "justice" does to its victims is to strip them of any responsibility, any accountability—in the sense of power to be able to define, to explain the circumstances, to accept or refuse blame—for their own actual actions. Instead of being directly confronted by the consequences of the conflict you were involved in, you 'get your day in court'—a chance to follow the state's script and give it legitimacy in its control over all of us. And at the end of the day, you're not a 'criminal' cause of what you do, you're a criminal cause of who you are, and where you happen to be. And we internalize this to the point where we forget the distinction. That's what I'm trying to get at here. Society as a whole (if it can be said that there exists such a thing) needs to look at how it deals with anti-social behavior and the people it assumes are committing it. People whose loved ones and friends have gotten caught up in the court/prison system need to learn to see them for who they are, human beings in essence and mind whose bodies have gotten trapped in a negative and self-perpetuating cycle they had no part in creating. And those of us who are supporting prisoners need to examine our preconceptions and stereotypes of "innocence" and "guilt", even when we think we've gotten over the system's voice repeating in our heads.

At least I am thinking clear and revolutionary as an Anarchist. A man of Afrikan descent. A New Afrikan born in the slave nation of Amerikkka - "the land of the slave controlled, owned and operated by the ruling class."

PART III: Revolutionaries cannot remain sane inside the dehumanized design called prison!

And I know that I must be free of this insanity called corrections... Oh, damn, I had spoken too fast and enjoyed too much - I had almost forgotten that the enemy still had control - the cow bell was ringing which signaled the end of the yard period - thus like cows, my brothers, in single file line, allowed themselves to be herded back into the prison/pen by our warders. I of course made them do their sadistic job. They had to call me to come to get the routine pat downs or the humiliating prospect of receiving a body/strip search. And thus, once again, I had my peace shattered and the insanity of being in a situation of captivity shoved down my already stripped and lynched libertarian consciousness... for my freedom I am willing to depart from this insanity... but I just gotta hold on... death on this side of the bars, walls, and razor wire would be another wasted consciousness of revolutionary import... not like George Jackson, my spiritual father, will I die a premature death... The revolution cannot be fought and won from this side.

Yet, in complete rebellion, but for a moment, I was free in spite of the bars, walls, and razor wire. I rebelled, as I walked in a circle around the prison's court yard, in a mental state of loving euphoria and complete bliss. This moment of sanity was enough contact with my humanity to strengthen me with the power to resist the insufferable pain of being a captive in a so-called free land... just a little bit longer. This is the price of resistance we must pay for our continued psychological, emotional and intellectual existence. As Comrade George Jackson wrote in his second and final book "Blood in My Eye", over twenty six years ago, about this price of respite to be paid by we slaves:

As a slave, the social phenomenon that engages my whole consciousness is, of course, revolution.

The slave - and revolution.

Born to a premature death, a menial, subsistence-wage worker, odd-job man, the cleaner, the caught, the man under hatches, without bail - that's me, the colonial victim. Anyone who can pass the civil service examination today can kill me tomorrow. Anyone who passed the civil service examination yesterday can kill me today with complete immunity. I've lived with repression every

a smile I continued where I left off at, dialoguing with myself - contemplating the beauty of anarchism and the courage and wonder of my own humanity:

“That all governments have been instituted to profit the interest of the few, the ruling classes, is a historical fact and present day reality that can never be stressed enough. The whole idea of government is rooted in the repression of the human/the individual’s right to be truly free. The laws of the government are the restrictive laws handed down by the ruling capitalist class; restrictive laws that serves to prevent the individual from ever discovering their human potentials to be more than just a well fed slave in the capitalist machine of world domination.

The subjective reality of the individual human experiences and creative potentials are constantly negated by the system that push this purist and absolute idea of complete objectivity, must be razed from the minds of those of us who are attempting to commune and build with the people - agitate, educate and organize with and through the people to build the revolutionary anarchist commune... and ultimately an anarchist society. As anarchists we do not believe in compelling anyone to think or view the world as we do, so it can and never will be a situation where we will be directing people’s lives, against their own will, minus them being intellectually, socially, vocationally aware of what’s taking place. We will not employ the oppressive and repressive means of the enemy - government and its laws. The individual’s liberty and autonomous self-management of social and economic life are some of the highest virtues of the anarchist. Bakunin asserted that, “The State... is the most flagrant, the most cynical, and the most complete negation of humanity,” a standpoint held to be the State’s “supreme duty and its greatest virtue...” It is a social revolution that we aspire to actualize via our anarchist ideals and humanistic outlooks in practice, protracted struggle - a stateless, classless, voluntary, cooperative federation of decentralized communes will be the ideals given birth once we raze the State and it’s capitalistic masters, the ruling classes... This is our alternative to the death and destruction that is the product of the present unjust organization of society.

Since slavery days, the public presentation of New Afrikan men has always been based in a large part on a carefully crafted fear of New Afrikan male sexuality, whether as ‘rapists’ who needed strict policing and punishment or as ‘tempters’ who needed to be strictly segregated so as not to corrupt white women and men. This dialectic has been seething beneath the surface all this time, and its impossible to even talk about the insane numbers of New Afrikan men in prison without wondering how many of them were victims of this very stereotype before they were declared ‘guilty’ by a white legal system that as a whole is guilty of rape and murder on a scale out of all proportion to the worst man in prison. The myth of the Black rapist has been one tool by which ‘white power’ - whether the State or the Klan - has been able to terrorize, attack and disable New Afrikan communities with the fervent support of white communities. This is why Shaka was arrested.

Then there is the horrific act itself. The type of twisted mentality where people can have so little respect for each other that an eighteen-year-old woman can be attacked, raped, and murdered, and in such a casual way. Shaka and Jean are in the same boat, really, allies against a way of life that served them both death sentences. Jean Wantland was raped and killed ultimately because of the ideological construction of women’s sexuality as submissive and the construction of a male sexuality that rapes 1 in 3 women at some point in their life. Shaka has sat in prison for nine years on a 40 year sentence because as a New Afrikan male, ‘society’ insisted his sexuality was predatory and bestial. Just as society and the court was prepared to see Shaka as a rapist and murderer, Jean was to be seen as sexual object, weak and without will. These are the fantasies of generations of white men who have ruled. These fantasies have ruled for generations. They are ideological cover for a strategy of divide and rule.

During Shaka’s first few days in jail (feeling sick, having just been beaten up, still barely able to read at all, let alone make sense of the charges against him), he got a visit from a lawyer, a blond-haired blue-eyed con job in a suit and tie. The man never identified himself—to this day Shaka isn’t sure whether he was an assistant to the public defender who represented him or to the state’s attorney—and the only advice he gave, without even having looked over the case, was to plead guilty. “It doesn’t matter whether you did it or not. You’re black, the victim was white, and they’re not gonna want to hear your side.”

This is one further step in the process of enforcing the master/slave consciousness. When the system depends on the public perception of New Afrikan men as a ‘dangerous class’—and particularly so in relation to white women—it needs to not only constantly reinforce that image in the minds of “white” people, but it needs to continually devote itself to convincing New Afrikans to accept and play along with that image. From that day onward, that was basically how Shaka thought of himself. Although he knew he hadn’t taken part in the rape and mur-

der of the young woman, he felt as though the conviction, the brand of being seen as a rapist and killer, was just another unfairness of the system that was out of his control; that he had to accept that. He felt, and actually believed, that he was "just a criminal" because of who he was, that there was no use debating that and claiming his innocence. And in addition, that's how I always felt unconsciously at first while supporting him. To me, his complicity—at least—in the crime he had been convicted of was always a given, something out of anyone's control; something that was a fait accompli in the system, whatever the truth might have been. I saw myself as supporting a Black man who had been driven to crime by a white social system, and who was given an excessive punishment by a criminal justice system that is more interested in keeping New Afrikan people under its control than in solving the social problems that cause "crime". All this is true, but the truth is a lot deeper than any of this.

Read the poem '*I don't know what it's like!*' with this in mind. This to me is a clear concept that as anarchists, we all need to take to heart. Its essential that we hold ourselves to a revolutionary morality and criticize ourselves for any of our actions that victimize our own people, people who are suffering under capitalism as we are, searching as we are for escape and control over our destinies. This criticism has to come from looking first of all at the crimes the system itself perpetuates—sexism, murderous hierarchy, and objectification, to name a few—and refusing to accept guilt for those crimes. At that point, we can begin to reappropriate our own actions, to be accountable to each other, without the judgment or mediation of a political structure that wishfully dreams of one day being able to judge us all as 'guilty' for the very same crimes it inflicts on us all.

While in prison, Shaka came into all kinds of new consciousness. In this pamphlet he speaks of how he began to see that he was much more than just a criminal, a thug, a "nigga"—that he was an African, a New Afrikan, and that there was plenty to be proud of in that identity and heritage. In particular, he talks about the role that older conscious prisoners—among others, Black Panther veteran Marshall "Eddie" Conway, who has been locked up for over 25 years on a political frame-up — played in helping him come to that understanding. He learned to read and write, studied history, politics, and culture, began to write poetry and fiction, explored a number of philosophies, and started to take on the immense responsibilities of educating and organizing the younger brothers who were getting locked up to see themselves as, and be, human beings with pride and dignity.

In the process of his studies, he began to learn little bits of the oppressor's law, and started to review the legal proceedings that landed him in his dark cell in the first place. Out of documents he was able to obtain from the police and the courts, he found all kinds of blatant inconsistencies in his trial that proved the truth of what the man had told him his first days in the lock-up. It really didn't matter to

any sort of self-determination or self-management - enjoying a thing which is determined by my will and not dependent on their's. So, they, the pigs (correctional officers), of course, paid me a little more attention than customary. For them, much to their disgruntlement, I looked as if I was enjoying an entity that they had been conditioned to view as bad, an entity which they had no control over - that entity coming from nature so beautifully named rain. Those of us captives in chains aren't supposed to be able to have any sort of enjoyment outside of the control of our overseers.

This consideration brought a smile to my rain soothed face; just the thought of finding in such a simple human practice a way to rebel against their sadism, made my walk in that gentle rain that much more pleasant... During this walk, I drifted of into some sort of revolutionary day dream of how things should be. I wasn't completely conscious of this shift in my psychological state. The thoughts that I, the so-called slave whose not capable of such achievements, was formulating in my mind moved along these lines of reflective deliberation - I was talking to myself in a tone just above a whisper:

The revolution, the rebellion against all that harms society's humanity, must be fought daily through our interactions and interrelationships with our own first and foremost. I cannot see us being any sort of example of what ought to be if we haven't, through action and reflection, developed those revolutionary and liberated relations amongst ourselves that reflects the alternative of our Anarchist Ideals."

At this point of my internal discourse, I almost ran head long into a pig, whose look of hatred only added strength to my courage and resolve... plus my internal smile and glow grew that much wider. I apologized, excused myself and proceeded to walk and to continue my Anarchist discourse in the rain with myself and Alexander Berkman, who from out of thin air appears to me declaring to me the incorruptible idea about the innate oppressive character and function of all governmental authority and law - in these words:

"What is the thing we call government? Is it anything but organized violence? the law orders you to obey, it will compel by force - all government, all law and authority finally rest on force and violence, on punishment or fear of punishment..."

When he completed sharing his thoughts with me, he said good day, however, before he turned to leave, I quickly asked him to tell Emma that I love her and that she is and will always be alive, wild and free in the liberated zone of my heart, mind and soul. With that comrade Alexander turned, took a step or two, and was gone as quickly as he had appeared, back to the fabled autonomous, communal, and directly democratic anarchist society in the sky... And with

depends, for its functioning, on exploitation and guilt. The opposition cannot change this state of affairs by the very means which protect and sustains the state of affairs. Beyond it, there are only the ideal and the offense, and those who claim, for their offending action, a right have to answer for their action before the tribunal of the existing society. For neither conscience nor commitment to an ideal can legalize the subversion of an established order which defines order, or even legalize disturbance of the peace which is the peace of the established order. To the latter alone belongs the lawful right to abrogate peace and to organize the killing and beating. In the established vocabulary, "violence" is a term which one does not apply to the action of the police, the National Guard, the Marshals, the Marines, the bombers. The 'bad' words are a priori reserved for the Enemy, and their meaning is defined and validated by the actions of the Enemy regardless of their motivation and goal. No matter how "good" the end, it does not justify the illegal means. [Herbert Marcuse, An Essay on Liberation pg. 71, 72]

The conscious slave in chains must define and redefine his own humanity... but... where is he to find relief from the insanity of being among the living dead, in prison, a place of capitalistic neo-slavery, and neo-hitlerism, is he to find some description of psychological liberty, while he is in those chains of dehumanization?

PART II: relief found through nature's rain drops

It has been raining all day today. All I have been hearing this day is how nasty and bad the rainy weather is - I am, of course, in disagreement with such shallow views of nature's beauty. An untamed beauty that can be found in a carefree and soft drizzle or a savage and heavy down pour - this natural and necessary process is loved, enjoyed and cherished by me.

Considerately, today, to show my marrow-deep reverence for nature - in spite of being in an unnatural and dehumanizing situation such as prison - in practice, I went out to have a walk in the rain during the yard period. The rain was coming down ever so tenderly, with droplets which felt very much like a sensuous and warm kiss of the long desired Sugar of a lover's sweet and soft lips, with their life giving and reinvigorating powers of transformation, which are just like spring showers.

The states hired guns don't like seeing we captives, the slaves, having

the cops and the courts whether or not he was guilty, as a matter of procedure he would be run through the system and 'found' guilty. The state's 'star witness', a thirteen-year-old boy who had been with Shaka and the two grown men who actually committed the crimes in question, under initial questioning gave a statement saying that he and Shaka hadn't wanted to take part, and hadn't even entered the room during the assault. The next day, an arrest warrant was put out for Shaka—allegedly on the 'evidence' of this youth's testimony. *The day after that*, under further questioning (and no doubt a good deal of pressure,) this boy changed his story, this time naming Shaka as the main perpetrator, and the one who pushed all the others into committing this crime. In the grand jury transcripts (the hearings were two days later) two and a half pages of text are taken up by threats like these:

"if you cooperate and tell us the truth - that is tell us what you told the police in your second statement to the police..."

"Yes, sir."

"However, if we find out that you lied to us... you could, first of all, be charged with a crime called perjury..."

"...you could be waived to the adult court and charged and tried as an adult where you could face up to a ten year sentence for perjury. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, sir."

"...you tell us a different story today and... we can not only charge you with perjury, we can charge you with murder. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, sir."

This kind of trial makes it pretty obvious that the state would act exactly like the mysterious lawyer had warned Shaka: there is nothing easier for them than to frame-up and send away a New Afrikan street youth and petty hustler. **Not only is it easy, the state makes a policy of it.** In fact, just days ago Mayor Schmoke, in support of a new policy using federal laws to send Baltimore youth away on life sentences, was reported saying, "Put these kids in federal prison and we don't have to worry about them coming back." This was the same type of 'death sentence' Shaka recieved in 1988. He was not framed out of any particular beef the court had with *him*, but as a matter of policy for troublesome working class youth

who needed to be dealt with, *as a class*.

Read this pamphlet with this in mind, but at the same time, read it with an understanding that Shaka is so much more than his involvement in a situation that now defines his life as a 'convict'...

Never let yourself become so deadened by the madness of society that you can say that "its nothing" that a woman is brutally raped and killed or that any kind of anti-human crime is perpetrated in our communities. But at the same time, never let yourself be fooled by the search for scapegoats the system promotes to cover up its own failings. In the puppet show, where one fragment of humanity is set against another in an endless series of feuds, we are all cut and degraded while the puppet master looks on and laughs.

Help us in assisting Shaka as he attempts to prove his legal innocence in a crime which he did not participate in, but was implicated in by circumstances of a whirlwind so much bigger than him, or any one of us. But just as importantly, read his words as those of a comrade who is struggling to rise above the conditions life has forced on him, and point others in a direction to do the same.

The world is ours, when we wake up!
January, 1998

in amerikkka's concentration camps, that were built for profit, pain, and passing (death) - under the disguise of law and order, crime and punishment,. But for we who find ourselves deep down, way down deep, in and behind enemy lines we have to find some sort of way to remain sane, whole and alive. Never allowing our enemies to see us in a state of weakness or submission., We have not time for such repose - which is the same as losing face. There are just too many deadly forces that we have to do battle with inside and outside of ourselves. We must remember that the times are very serious.

Where are we to find human activity that will be for us a sanity inducing liberty in such a deadly, insane environment? In an environment where one sociopolitical class of human beings are given pay checks, a uniform, and a mentality, via an indoctrination of cretinism and sadistic taskmastership for the sole purpose of reducing the captive human beings (called genetic criminals in some racist pseudo-scientific circles) they are charged with the duty of protecting society from. This captive class is in reality slaves under the 13th amendment of the constitution of the United States of Amerikkka — before 1865 this nation didn't even bother with such formalities or justifications - slaves didn't have to commit any crime to be placed in chains - it was always assumed that a Negro's place was at the foot of the white man, in chains - to a broken man who accepts the brutal repression of his warders as normal and/or god ordained... it just wasn't natural or god ordained for a slave to think like a man; "We have to spill the blood of those who have spilled oceans of our blood before we can ever truly be free like all human beings are supposed to be!" We know free thinking slaves always seemed to end up hanging from some tree, by their neck, 'til dead.

The Slave is afraid of being free, to talk of being free, 'cause they fear the whip, the mace, the blackjack, the jail and prison cells, the lynch mob - be they in white hoods, black robes, police uniform, or three piece suits, we knows they all be the same in thought, though their methods of lynching vary, it all smells like the dead black slave Willie Lynch smelled while sailing up the infamous James River (found in Virginia) - on his way to sell his fool proof plan of breaking and making slaves to other slave owners like himself. In a court room, in a prison cell, in a small or large city, in a corporate board room, a dead Afrikan smells all the same. We's all have a bit of fear... we's all need some relief from this white man's world called hell for slaves.. the belly of the beast:

The old story: right against right — the positive, codified, enforceable right of the existing society against the negative, unwritten, unenforceable right of transcendence which is part of the very existence of man in history: the right to insist on a less compromised, less guilty, less exploited society. The two rights must come into violent conflict as long as the established society

The Anarchist Rain

Part 1: SEEKING RELIEF FROM THE INSANITY OF PRISON EXISTENCE!

"Liberty or death," is the cry of the human being who is conscious of the situation of oppression imposed on her/his Humanity...a situation designed to destroy said humanity. It is said that a New Afrikan man is not capable of formulating any true independent libertarian thought or detailed remediation of the situations and institutions that would prefer to give him death as opposed to his Human Right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But this, like all of the U.S.A., is a racist constructed lie that is designed to do to my humanity what nature didn't intend to be done - to make my kind of human being inferior to another group of people, who has no humanity.

"The Slave was created by god and the state to be the beast of burden for the white man's world", is the commonly felt, thought and spoken belief of the average so-called white supremacist of the amerikkkan ruling classes and all those who benefit from their unjust order, which was and is built on the super-exploitation of Afrikan people - even the systematized, flag waving Negroes agree with such racist/fascist theories, beliefs and practices of amerikkkan white supremacist institutions. The Slave ain't supposed to have any self-determined community interest, revolutionary directed thoughts of a better tomorrow. For the few of us who discover the true nature of our existential state of oppression, poverty, exploitation and genocide, we are compelled to live and struggle in a purposeful and directed drive to educate, agitate, and organize the masses of people, or rather, those of our kind who are willing and able to accept the painful reality of the cause of their misery filled existence. Consequently we must live life being seen as "trouble makers", criminals, outlaws, etc. Yet, never seen as we are, true social revolutionaries.

Additionally, in prison, behind bars, in the belly of the beast, in a situation of extreme and traumatic repression, this conscious human being must daily do battle with an insanity filled environment built to promote the derangement and alienation, through the sensory deprivation and the negation of very fundamental human freedoms, of his kind - oppressed and exploited all their lives, forced to live out the absurd and racist theories and justifications of social Darwinism: to live an inhuman nonexistence in a capitalistic created situation of the so called struggle for existence... forced to survive by any means necessary... like a dog from a Jack London novel: never trusting, loving or caring, always on the alert, on the defense, never feeling or being secure in one's person: self-hating.

However, still, liberty or death is the battle cry of we New Afrikan slaves,

PREFACE

by Shaka N'Zinga

"The human heart cries out for help; the human soul implores us for deliverance, but we do not heed their's, for we neither hear nor understand. But the man who hears and understands we call mad, and flee from."

— Kahlil Gibran,
"Thoughts and Meditations"

Ten years ago, at the age of 15, I would have never thought that I would be the human being, the New Afrikan man, I am today. Needless to say I wasn't expecting to even see the age of twenty years old - being that my homies and myself had gotten into the habit of prophesying about our early deaths, and how we would be pushed out of existence; a favorite conversation that we each engaged in with much motivation. Yes, such was the actual extent of our hopes and dreams as children. Already we had on some level realized that amerikkka, society, the system wasn't promising our kind of human beings anything except drug dealing, drug addiction, hopelessness, powerlessness, humiliation, poverty, and certain death.

So when I was arrested, accused and sentenced to serve 40 years in Maryland's infamous D.O.C., no one in my family or community was surprised "I knew that boy was going to end up in jail..." was their common response to my imprisonment "He ain't no different from his daddy..." Being that it is through environment (family, school, church, etc.) that we all develop our self-images from, it isn't hard to figure out why I became such an apathetic child. However, the charge that the police and State's Attorney had unjustly placed over my head, had raised the eyebrows of many in my family and community. My Grand-

mother, could never accept just the accusation let alone the charge. RAPE AND MURDER!

For almost ten years of my 25 years on this earth, I have been compelled to address the true reality and meaning of human existence in this country called the united states of amerikkka. I had been compelled by threat of being made the companion of insanity to ask myself such questions because of me being placed in chains for crimes that I didn't at all understand, and shoved in this hell on earth called correction. Had I not asked myself those first questions, (9) nine years ago concerning my own existence, my own value as a human being, and my own creative potential to become more than just another "young nigga/black male sentence to ike out an existence in a amerikkkan concentration camp", I would not today be writing this preface for this pamphlet that is to be a part of the voice of the voiceless sixteen year child with me, who was never given a chance to say "that I am not a rapist or a murderer", nine years ago, today. Because of my relentless struggle to learn and understand the true nature of amerikkka, capitalism, white supremacy, am I able today to say I am not the beast that this judicial system of injustice has placed on my humanity. I am a human being whose humanity has blossomed and bloomed in spite of being forced to cultivate and take root on desert ground.

This is what the pamphlet is about, this what I am about, a representation of the voiceless victim of the travesty of justice, raising up in discovery and humanity to confront an arm of the system that oppresses, exploits, and murders in the name of god and ruling class/white supremacist democracy. This pamphlet is but a reflection of the true nature of this judicial, federal or state, that grinds on, rolls on, and can only continue on the broken dreams and hopes of the tens of thousands of human beings who have been deferred unjustly imprisoned.

I hope that this pamphlet will give you folk a view close to the reality of an insufferable situation of repression that has been unjustly shoved into my life... child of Afrikan descent at the wrong place at the wrong time, crimes were committed, but not by this Afrikan child, but all it took was an accusation to convict such a child who was born with a dark complexion, wooly hair, and the X and Y chromosome. I was never allowed the liberty to fight for my innocence, so today I am taking the liberty we all were born with to fight for my stolen freedom. Being that I am now a full grown Lion, I will now fight for the name that was taken from me when I was but a cub (child). So, please remember that racism is still a reality in this country, and that old myths and stereotypes began by the southern slave master and northern capitalist are still with us today. These disgusting and irrational concepts of Afrikan people — myths and stereotypes that are kept alive by a white supremacist and capitalist system which profits from such dehumanizing ideas such as racism, sexism, and homophobia by socializing such insanity into the collective consciousness of the people — must be smashed by those of us who have broken free of the psychological chains of the capitalist system of

WRITINGS, III

To Love Again

I be a hurt and wounded
revolutionary anarchist, a man,
who understands that as a
social revolutionary,

the personal and political are
one and the same, neither
can be seperated from the other:

so my love for the one,
who trampled my delicate heart
must endure the cruel foot falls,

and continue to strive and struggle,
for the cause, never ceasing or fearing
to trust and to love again.

January 5, 1998

neototalitarianism and neofascism.

Before closing, I would like to share a quote with you who have courage enough for such truth as is contained within this pamphlet:

"I treated the idea of a right as residing in the injury... When we call anything a person's right we mean that s/he has a valid claim on society to protect her in the possession of it, 'either by force, or by that of education and opinion' ... To have a right, then, is, I conceive, to have something which society ought to defend me in the possession of..."

- *John Stuart Mill*





Shaka (right) with his cellmate, David Battle (grateful to be drug-free and feeling blessed to have met a young Black man carrying on the struggle).

what they made us to be and the tragedy is that before they kidnapped me shoved me in here, I was on the road, I was just that, in my mind that's all I was, that's all I could be, but what done happened I done turned a situation that was never meant to be a benefit to me, to serve as a benefit; i've come to discover my humanity, through anarchism. I haven't really got into too many particulars, I got a head to sit here and theorize but I don't want to do that, but for me that's what it has done it just has been developing a libertarian consciousness, where I have become more than what people thought I was gonna be. How this system as a whole has condemned an entire class/race to this existence, never having lived, never having truly loved, developed their true creative potentials, to be more than beasts of burden.

What that means is that there is a whole lot of intellectually, psychologically, morally, sexually, totally warped and uncompleted human beings being turned out. I consider myself to be an exception to the rule, not to place myself on any kind of pedestal, but the situation does not contribute to the development of anyone's humanity, anybody - child or adult in this situation.

You were involved in the Writer's Club over at the cut for a while, as well as the United Prisoners' Action Coalition which is getting off the ground now. Do you want to talk about your organizing experience in those groups, and what potential you feel they represent?

UPAC most definitely realized that people of Afrikan descent have to become self-determined in the things that we work for and what we demand. If we don't do it it won't get done and I'm speaking mainly of all the young adults being shoved in this situation. Of course, these are New Afrikans - they not going to college, getting jobs getting married - this is made to be their lives. that's what UPAC is about - to address the racism, injustices that's being perpetuated by this criminal justice system against people of Afrikan descent. UPAC is most definitely a progressive idea. Its saying we as prisoners know what we in prison really need, I'm saying educational programs, social programs, vocational programs, and what we're doing is trying to network with people in the community give voice to our needs and express it to them, let them see the human face of who we are and not what's in the media. That we are human beings, we have feelings, we have hopes, we have dreams, and this is what we are doing in an effort to realize our dreams; to be actually afforded the opportunity to correct the damage that has been done to us by the system of white supremacy through our education and every contact we had with most any institution in society. Then we come here and we realize this is why we are fucked up. We understand why we didn't care about selling drugs, drugs that most definitely has been sold to our community by the United States Gov't for the purpose of committing genocide. So this is what UPAC is, to be our own voice to counteract the myths and stereotypes that's pushed out there. And to expose the corporations and how crime has become a major boost to the economy, through the prison industrial complex. More police are being hired, more guns and weaponry is being purchased, and you get to the court system and its just capitalism. if you're product are criminals, then you create conditions that's gonna give life to more crime, cut the welfare, close the rec centers, attack affirmative action...

I remember something George Jackson said, 'if people fail to act now, a whole generation will be condemned to live half butchered lives.' Again when we look at the nature of class-based society - the class or caste that I come from that has been condemned from before we were born into the world to suffer as I have suffered, as many many more of my kind have suffered or just simply been eradicated, just died, because this system never intended for us to be more than

WRITINGS, II

As a Child

As a child of but three or four years old, I had become conscious of the dehumanizing situation of abuse and brutality that existed in my home—a situation of abuse and brutality that, I would come to learn because I seen with my own very young eyes, was reflective of the innate repressive and oppressive reality to be found within the larger society, the product of the capitalistic arrangement; a capitalistic arrangement that profits from the production of such dehumanizing psychological and environmental conditions that would necessarily condition and give life to the systems' future army of slaves. My stepfather was a man of Afrikan descent, a human being who had suffered the negation of his humanity by this capitalistic arrangement that assigned him to the caste of the untouchables, which cursed his best efforts to become and to belong, to a society founded on the absurd doctrine of White Supremacy, to be rejected indiscriminately by that very same system... He strove all his life to be a so-called good amerikkkan citizen, a born again Christian under such an unjust social setup. Which, of course, resulted in him fulfilling the historical predetermined rule of the oppressed and exploited. Sadly, he failed to realize that the system he was struggling so hard to be accepted by was founded and sustained on the backs of his kind: Afrikan people brought to amerikkka in chains... his back and mind were no exception to that rule.

The fact that he had suffered psychologically and vocationally as a result of an economic arrangement that he had no understanding of its function, let alone any determination of what sort of functioning in his life it would have or play. All he had time to understand on a truly conscious level was the pressing reality that he had a family that half the year he couldn't find employment to feed and

the other half he worked but was being paid slave wages that hardly covered the basic needs of the household. As a Vietnam Veteran—fresh from the jungles killing the yellow man that was doing what he and his fellow Black soldiers should have been doing in the urban jungles of amerikkka, instead of fighting and dying for an interest and a cause that wasn't their own—he was seen as a crazy nigga that used to kill babies in bamboo huts in villages across the water. So he was cursed once again, unable to find work because he was seen as an unemployable baby killer.

Relentlessly he tried to do the best he could for his family. This man of Afrikan descent endured a great deal of abuse and brutality and humiliation from social and economic institutions that excluded his kind from birth until death, however he wasn't cognizant of these existential materialities. For he too, much like the majority of his generation, was the product of an educational system that indoctrinated its colonial victims into acceptance of their enslavement. He was exposed to the revolutionary current that was raging across the "Black Colonies".

Furthermore, he didn't know that white supremacy was a system designed to destroy the hopes and dreams and lives of the so-called black man, the ex-slave, the seed of slaves. He was always being told that he had a fair chance at life, at making a living in amerikkka, that the amerikkkan dream was obtainable by him. He believed in the amerikkkan way, he had faith in the illusory fairness of the amerikkkan economic arrangement. In spite of the realities he was confronted with each and every day, realities that negated the lies of his supposed acceptance by the system, he still couldn't break the psychological chains that bound him in mental slavery.

When he couldn't find a job to feed his three children, when he couldn't pay the rent on time, when he had to pay the water and gas and electric bills with the money he had saved to purchase a new stove and refrigerator for his young and pregnant wife, the pressure became insufferable. The psychological chains that restrained the natural processes of his brain were now placing a strain on his sanity, his resolve, his courage. No matter how much he tried to explain away his feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness the depression always came. He just wasn't able to transcend the socialization process that held him enslaved. So he began to blame himself for his inability to find a job. The system that remits the dreams of millions of people that it has trained to believe and have faith in its functions had trained him what to think, as opposed to how to think, which ensued in him not being able to question critically the institutions that profited from his ignorance and poverty.

As a child of three, how was I to know that these sorts of sanity-trying problems were being confronted by my stepfather daily. The institutions of racist oppression and repression and exploitation were far from being within the very limited range of my own mental capacities. What I did understand was the pain and

forced to be for the sake of survival. People got to look at these things, and stop letting these politicians formulate their ideas for them. I don't think people recognize the power they hold, and how they negate themselves and that power and that potential by accepting some person who does not have their interest at heart, accept their opinion over their own, as it relates to this prison situation. People talk about slavery and they talk about it in the past sense they speak about it as a thing that happened and is done with and over, but history and the realities of the day will bear witness that these things were never ended. There's been created a prison industrial complex that's the replacement of the plantation and the slave master has become the united states government and the respective state government and now of course the privatization thing is going in to effect so now you have the corporations.

They're trying to justify these things as part of capitalism. Yes, it is and one of the things on the capitalist agenda is genocide and if they can make a profit off of genocide then that's what they're doing. The way this is presented to us by the media in a nonchalant way and in passing, 'oh 50 percent of people incarcerated in the american penal system are of Afrikan descent'... what can people do to effectively combat this? People got to start being independent self-determined human beings, they can't let these people decide for them what is right or what is wrong or what is good for them, and prison is most definitely not in the best interest of society as a whole and it has no true social redeeming qualities, because what it does is take human beings that are social beings by nature and makes them anti-social and whatever problems that they develop as a result of the dehumanized and alienated situation that they just left, they come here and it increases ten-fold. So what happens, they put em in a small cell probably no bigger than the average persons bathroom and that's it, that's it, there's nothing else happening, just shoved in a cell, took away from your loved ones, told you did wrong, but even a greater wrong is being perpetrated against you and your family and society. Its designed to warehouse people for a dollar, a profit, without actually addressing the problems that these brothers and sisters may have.

It's becoming easier and easier for them, just as a matter of procedure to send off fifteen and sixteen year old kids to the adult system, and only a little while ago they had to explain that, try to rationalize that. Now its procedure.

People in the community are accepting that these people are snatching their children up. They writing their own children off, saying its impossible for them to make positive social change. And that the answer to the problem is to lock them away for the rest of their lives. So its not just something we can blame on the enemy, on this white supremacist system. No, cause we most definitely got to accept some kind of responsibility for what we allow them to do. It ain't no thing now to look up and see a fourteen year old kid running through here.

And what does that mean for someone who comes of age in there behind bars?

So now almost ten years after all this happened you find out a lot of what happened. Its like what position are you and people working with you in to turn it over. We have to struggle to raise enough money to buy a lawyer.

Its the nature of this thing, the true nature is that there is no justice. The system is designed to turn out profit and there is no concern for the individual mixed up in it, innocent or guilty. There's many folk in here, not just myself, who are actually innocent. But because of the color of their skin in the minds of the general public it doesn't matter. But this is gonna have to stop, cause what's happening is there's a lot of lives getting destroyed, mainly lives of people like me.

But at the time that they did it, it wasn't even a thing that entered there mind that this functionally illiterate, psychologically challenged 16 year old child is gonna actually find this out, that he had been railroaded and shoved into prison because of who he was and not what he had done.

You read the newspaper or look at the tv and you hear that prisoners have it so easy that its a getaway camp and you get all your free meals and free housing and all that bullshit.

Fact is we have nothing. They tell us we aren't even to have our self respect. Then you have people worrying about a television. You take self-respect away from a human being what do you think you're gonna create? The television and these things don't compensate for that.

And they use these stories about kingpins inside the prisons running big drug rings to cover while they take everything away. At the same time they take the weights out, take the school and other self-help programs.

And they're chipping away at the already dysfunctional medical facilities they have in here.

Do you have to pay for each visit?

Yeah, like \$2.50. A picture is being drawn where the human beings in here are being villified just so the state can continue to make a profit out of this neo-slave colony. There's no room for transformation that's being afforded by our warders. These so-called people that are concerned about society. These people don't give a crap about society. The programs that were once a benefit, that got results and assisted those brothers and sisters in making those transformations, they're taking them away, while they screaming 'punishment! punishment!'

What people got to first see is who the true monsters are, and to see that the majority of the people here are here for economic reasons, I don't care what the crime may be, because of their socio-economic status, their lack of education, mis-education, people come from backgrounds and circumstances where they weren't afforded the opportunity to develop their human potentials to actually become more than what their environment made them to be, what they been

suffering that this sometimes very gentle man was inflicting on my mother, myself, and the rest of the family. I wasn't able to defend myself nor my mother or younger brothers, but I could and did wish him dead.

I really didn't have the knowledge to understand why he was so abusive to my mother... he would beat and beat her, on and on, without seeming to tire. Me and my brothers would huddle together in whatever room we found ourselves in when the beatings began. While I was mouthing a prayer to a god that didn't never seem to be listening to me: "dear god could you please kill my daddy... please stop him from hurting my momma." Needless to say, he never died while he was in the process of beating my mother senseless. So praying fast became a senseless endeavor, thus hoping that I could quickly grow bigger, big enough to be able to do away with the first oppressor I came to know, was the only practical way in which I could see me smashing the state of my family's repression.

I remember one instant when the vic*tim of the unjust order that had existed in our home, coming into the house yelling about a watch of his being missing. Directly to my mother, the first to catch his unprovoked abuse, was where he went: "Bitch! Where is my muthafuckin' watch?" screamed my stepfather, the oppressed victim turned oppressor. "Woman, I know you hear me talking to you." Before she even fully knew what sick reasoning was behind this latest road of insanity, my mother frantically began searching the second floor for the supposedly missing watch of her disturbed husband.

Hiding away in the little world of my room, alone without the comforting presence of my younger brothers, I cried heart wrenching silent tears of fear and rage as I listened to the madness of a madman unfold outside of my imaginary world's safety.

"Baby..." my mother whined, "I'm looking for it now." I then heard my mother suddenly stop her plea, when the sudden silence of the madman indicated a new phase in his slip from rationality: a silence which generally signified, on a subtle level, the shift from the verbal assault to the physical onslaught of barbarity. In the next moment, without verbal warning, the adversary began his advance up the stairs, in his traditional three steps at a time, yelling his deranged belief that my mother had actually given his supposedly lost watch away to one of her nonexistent male lovers—my stepfather actually believes it to be one of the deacons at the church who is my mother's secret lover. As he reached the top of the stairs, a second before he reached my door—which is at the top of the stairs, just before he got to their room—I found courage from somewhere to come out of my little world of safety, daring myself to walk slam into the advancing madman's right knee in an attempt to defend my mother. My face was the first to bear the entire shock of the impact, knocked flat on my back at contact, stepped on ... Despite my agony-filled screams and subsequent moans of distress, without so much as a backward glance of concern, he advanced down the hall to dispatch

his intended victim.

Attempting to regain my breath whilst trying to clear my disordered and bewildered cerebral and bodily equilibrium, I crawled and pulled myself painfully to the doorway of the bedroom in which the madman was beating my mother... I could do nothing but look on in helplessness and powerlessness, with tears in my eyes, snot running from my nose, and shit slipping through my day-old diaper. Not knowing what else to do I made my way to my mother's side, as she lay on the floor, in spite of my stepfather standing over, hovering over, her prone and motionless body. I latched myself onto her bruised leg, crying and peering up into the eyes of the mindless cretin, still helpless but no longer afraid, for I knew that one day he would reap what he had sowed. Hating him and his brutality and environmentally induced insanity, I cursed his very existence... not knowing that this sort of domestic tragedy would be a recurring circumstance and tendency in my young life... too young to understand the rage that permeated throughout my three-year-old mind, a rage backed my hate and love. A hate for all that was brutal and oppressive, and a love for all that was liberating and gentle.

The pain of having my humanity blighted by the deadly violence of amerikkkan neo-colonialism cuts this New Afrikan way down to the very marrow—faraway and deep down in my soul! The pain has compelled me to search and look, while wandering lost through this land full of racist prosecution and fascist injustice, for that place and identity and purpose that will give ultimate meaning and direction to my slave existence... Anarchism was that something I longed for, searched for, and finally discovered in my quest for purpose, meaning, and direction: a reason to live, to continue living other than to struggle for some unobtainable freedom under the enslaving mentality and banner of capitalist morality.

However, struggle is necessary and unavoidable for a New Afrikan manchild raised in an environment full of oppression and exploitation...

(TO BE CONTINUED!)

repelled by, so when I came across the idea of anarchism it fit me and I began to act upon the precepts of this idea, and from there I moved out, it just became a part of me...

How do you see it on the level of a neighborhood that's got to deal with the police or landlords, or whatever other problems it might happen to be facing?

If we can get people thinking in a libertarian manner they'll stop having to fear freedom, and when you fear freedom you become accepting of the brutality that's perpetuated by police, the irresponsibility and total neglect that's perpetuated by landlords. People don't feel as though they are capable of challenging these people so they don't feel that they can do it individually, feeling unable and incapable of combatting the situation of oppression and exploitation. And then when you begin to talk on a collective basis that's something they can't even comprehend. Again, I'm a believer that it begins with the individual. The anarchist way of organizing our people, organizing groups that are designed to combat particular problems, not just what they are combatting, but also how they are organized internally...

What about your imprisonment and all the issues that brings up?

As a matter of fact that's what I'm sitting here thinking about: the whole unjust process that was used to shove me in here, it's a very fundamental, basic feature, an inherent feature, that's played itself not in just my case, but many brothers and sisters cases. But the particulars, we're talking about from the very beginning - the police, the homicide detectives, the state's attorney, my public defender - with this 16 year old child, it wasn't a question of guilt or innocence, just a question of 'was the nigger on the scene? - he must have had something to do with it.' This is assuming that my public defender didn't know that the state fabricated their case. Had he cared anything about justice, the law, the constitution and all these things, he would not have totally neglected to defend the liberty interest of this child—who was me.

You only saw him one time before the trial, right?

No, I didn't see him at all. I only saw him the day of the trial. And the only thing he had to say to me was to advise me to plead guilty. Whoever he sent out to me, told me that I didn't have anything coming cause the victim was white and I was black and the jury was gonna be biased. This was in my mind. What else was I to do? I had no idea what rights I had, what defenses I could possibly bring up. Like the questions of my age, my history, any child with the problems, psychological and emotional problems I was having. This man didn't even try to raise a defense for me.

to examine that. You follow what I'm saying?

Yeah. Well, there are a lot of 'purist' thinkers in the anarchist movement like any other movement, who don't want to really deal with the effects of racism or look at what their history looks like from a different perspective, from the perspective of someone who was colonized by it. Its like a lot of people are still stuck in 1880 or something and want to think that actually learning that would damage their pure idea of anarchism, when actually its a strength that we need, a deeper understanding of why this system is evil and how it works.

No question. And just on the other side of that, if I would have stuck with what could be named 'purist' Black nationalism, there would be no way that you and I would be interacting on this phone, communing in the way that we have done, being able to connect like this. It would be impossible, because my ideals would be just the opposite complexion of the white supremacist idea; you would be the devil, my eternal enemy, just by virtue of you being born in the world of the European.

But again, in understanding the history, I understand the history of certain segments of the so-called white community that questioned the white supremacist ideology. Actually, white supremacy is a recent phenomenon, if you read what people like Sheikh Anti Diop and other various historians and anthropologists have wrote. That's most definitely something that has to be looked at. And its most definitely a painful thing to deal with, because when we do, all these things that we believe we've come to terms with or gained an understanding of, we really see and find that we haven't. Reconciliation, atonement, all these things that have to take place... it all depends on what the outcome of the struggle will be. Are we really eternal enemies, like as some brotha put it, a war between the males of the various races, the darker and the lighter. That's a conclusion that I just don't accept; but again, I don't ignore because that's what we see today in the quote-unquote third world between darker peoples and all the institutions they give life to. Its a struggle that I don't believe will be settled in our lifetime, but the beauty is that success will come in the interactions that take place, dialog and just living, just becoming a part of one another's lives in the manner that we have become. And I think that process will answer the questions that arise on both sides of the problem of white supremacy...

You talked about anarchism being an ideal that was a total opposite of the way people are forced to live today, but what I wanted to bring up was how anarchism is also a practical form of struggle and in what ways people could use it to start transforming things today.

How is it practical? For me, what I saw in it was what I saw in myself... was a thing that I longed for, the way I envisioned the world could be, the way I envisioned people interacting with each other in a non-authoritarian, non-oppressive manner. My own experience was every thing that I saw in life I was

Me, remembered

I want to be remembered as
The New Afrikan who dared to lash
Out against that which victimizes
The innocent for a profit, for an interest,
And for no damn sane, rational, logical reason.

I the Anarchist, who dared to rebel
Would like to be remembered as
The joy in being victorious in the
Face of seemingly insurmountable
Odds.

A social revolutionary, New Afrikan, man,
Proud and free... the
Human being who will be remembered as
One of the few who dared... and Won!



challenge the status quo, the capitalist ideology of how exploitation happens. No question.

I think I was talking earlier about how the system socializes us and programs us into acceptance of the capitalist idea and way of life, the struggle for existence that it creates, the one against all mentality that's inherent in the competitive system we're living in. And there is an alternative to all this, but again, examples are needed, and folks need to see that it is possible. And again, something that I was reading somewhere, I can't recall where, but it was talking about how the most effective way that we can show that there's an alternative, that there's a better way to be, where human beings wouldn't have to suffer on the scale that they're suffering now for the sole purpose of a very few people profiting off their suffering, the best way to demonstrate that alternative is through our example, to establish our own communities, our own relationships. Talk about parasitism to people by showing them a nonparasitic way. I'm just talking about explaining things like the major contradictions that people live through without going through the "socialist" shortcuts like a powerful government. Because that's a way of being betrayed by the government and its mass media that's totally a negation of how it really is, and the improvements that people think they will actually gain. And there is an alternative, but of course the capitalist society, the imperialist United States of America, won't allow for this to exist. Be it Cuba: they won't allow for these people to be there, 90 miles off the coast of Florida, saying in their face, look here, look how beautiful folks over here are living without the competitive market, the racism, the sexism, the sickness that was left behind by the American imperialists when they kicked them out back in '59. Of course that's not a perfect example; you have to make an analysis of the state situation, of the prison camps. We need to build our own examples to show people that alternatives do exist. Don't just rely on theory or arguments to get things across to people.

It's important for anybody, New Afrikan or otherwise, to look at their situation and go through the whole process of retraining themselves, actually looking at their behavior and rooting out the evil of capitalist thought, unlearning these things like the idea that you got to be number one, if you can't do this or that you ain't shit. But most importantly, one of the things that the movement needs to realize is that when I read anarchist literature, I'm not written into it. Just by virtue of me being a New Afrikan, I'm not being considered because back in the day when the anarchists was theorizing I was in chains, and even in their minds I was less than them. Now today, we have to really look at these things and in our life we have to point these things out. It's all our duty to get a true understanding of the history of societies other than Europe. In doing that, we get a deeper appreciation of other culture, other peoples, and we won't just refer to their cultures as "primitive". In saying that, we're saying that because the white man came, because he brought the capitalist system to their shores, that in spite of the genocide, it was to their benefit that he came. These sorts of attitudes don't have to be constantly thought or stated, but they infect our thinking and we need

negative, all the dehumanizing qualities, that it created and gave life to: the jealousy, the envy, the materialistic drive just to have just for the sake of having, the consumeristic attitudes where people place their identities and their self-worth on the materialistic things that they have. Not on the relationships they build, not on the support that they provide to their society, their communities, their families, or whatever.

Like this idea of sexism, its definitely a completely dehumanizing idea that they push about sex. It seems like now they're celebrating the "liberation" of the homosexual community, when in fact it's just cheapening the beauty of the whole thing. And it is, this whole thing with "Ellen", I don't see it as being something that's being done in the interest of the lesbian community. I see it as a ploy that's being used to make money and to promote a TV show. And if anything, its created more of a justification for the homophobic type individuals that go around bashing and shit. I just don't trust Hollywood, really; anything that they intend to promote that is positive, it always comes out that their intentions are just the opposite.

Well, that's no different than any other form of oppression today. You can slide a certain distance, so long as you don't leave the middle class or the capitalist ideology. You can be a proud gay man as long as you're middle-class, and not threatening to the system, and have money and buy the capitalist ideology. Same way with anyone who's middle class. You can be black and proud and be accepted into the system, long as you have money and class.

Exactly. Its their ability to accomodate or assimilate any identity that makes this system so dangerous. Like you were saying, you can be proud, so long as you're in the capitalist mindset. Long as you're not threatening to the system, you're alright. You can be what you want to be, just don't challenge the system that's the true cause of everyone's pain. No doubt. And that's why history is so important, cause the same thing was happening in the late 60's in the Black Liberation movement. When you see how the system so easily co-opted the whole struggle, being flexible enough to absorb certain seemingly revolutionary ideas into its culture. Particularly the cultural aspect. Like on the West Coast, you had US, United Slaves, versus the Black Panthers. But the system most definitely had Ron Karenga and his boys, they were the system's front. And they helped dismantle some of the beautiful things the Black Panthers were doing in the community; the food programs, everything. Just by virtue of the fact that the system was able to absorb these people. And by virtue of the fact that people in the movement had the attitude of like yeah, I'm Black, I'm proud, but I'd like to have a Mercedes Benz too... we don't want no revolution, just so long as you allow the Black capitalists, the Black middle class, to be the parasites on the Black community. Just leave that market alone. Just give us a fair share in exploiting our own people. So yeah, we wear this kente cloth and everything, but we got a real deep lining in our pockets. Exactly. Then we look at Ellen and we see the same thing, no question. Now its ok to be a lesbian, just as long as you don't

INTERVIEW

conducted November-December 1997

So first I want to ask: could you give a brief history of your life - how you grew up, how you grew into what you did, what effect that all had on you?

Basically, how did I grow up... Well, I grew up rough... I grew up in poverty... I grew up not having much. I'm from Baltimore city, fifteen years, been born and raised there. My first memories, my most vivid memories, come from when I was living out in Cherry Hill. When I was living out there, that's when I started forming my ideas about people and their relationships or whatever. The dominant thing in my community, in my household, was always the dominant/submissive, oppressor/oppressed... somebody's got to be the stronger and somebody's got to be the weaker. Somebody's got to be abused and somebody's got to be the abuser. I've seen these types of things played out in my home by my stepfather and my mother, of course my stepfather was the dominant and my mother, as a woman, was the submissive. So in my mind, I guess it was just something that I rebelled against. Not wanting to be submissive, but at the same time I didn't want to be the dominant. Cause what I saw in the behavior of my father, it wasn't just something he perpetrated against my mother, it was something that he played out against the whole family.

So anyways, from the home out into the streets its the same thing, you know? The same roles get played, but in a more complex manner. In street life its the same thing. And I most definitely had an identity crisis as a New Afrikan, not never knowing or really understanding what I was, or who I was, or the history behind that, or whatever. And the first thing that I ever identified myself as being, as a human being, was a nigga. Cause I had a friend, in school, who one time I seen him in the bathroom and the brotha wrote the word nigga on the wall. He wrote it in a sentence, and the sentence went, I'm that nigga.

At what point did you come into consciousness of the difference between that identity and the identity of a New Afrikan?

The consciousness of a New Afrikan? First it was the consciousness that I was more than just a nigga... When I came to prison, when I stepped into this situation, when I first came into contact with brothas that was an exception to the rules that I had established in my mind, about what black men were and weren't capable of being. These brothas were totally the opposite of what I saw on the streets, so what they gave to me was like a beginning, a chance to develop my consciousness as a New Afrikan. I say it again, it most definitely happened in prison. Being involved with the various groups they have in here, like the Moorish Science Temple, the Nation of Islam, and one or two brothas from the anarchist community.

The idea and concept of the New Afrikan movement, and what that revolves around, I became aware of that through reading anarchist literature. Actually, the New Afrikan struggle that was going on down south in the late 60's and early 70's, the struggle for independence and the struggle to form an independant New Afrikan state in the five states down there was something, basically how it go. But to go back to what I was saying earlier, about running into these brothas, what these brothas showed me is that they had a pride in what they was as men of Afrikan descent. And the strangest thing to me was that they was offended when you called these brothas terms like "nigga". And their whole ideas about being quote-unquote black were ideas that affirmed their humanity. It was about being a human being, it wasn't anything that put them down on the level of being the type of object that I was used to, that I actually had thought of myself as being prior to coming into contact with these people.

Now at this point in your life, what are your views on anarchy? How do you see it working in society, and in the New Afrikan community in particular?

I see it as something, as an ideal, that is the alternative to what exists in society today; the ideas that there should be hierarchy, that there should be exploitation. As far as how I see it working in the New Afrikan community, I think its an ideal that hasn't had a chance, that hasn't been given a chance. Because of course it hasn't been truly introduced into our community. Because of course it goes against our basic ideas of human relationships, of government, of what is a human being's natural vocation or natural function. And the ideas go that by nature we are competitive, and what stems from that, the ideas about how organization or government should be ran of course are going to think in hierarchical terms. You know, going to think in terms of 'we need leaders,' 'we need to lock people up,' and so on. And so when brothas hear this idea, its most definitely something they're gonna reject at first, cause again they've been taught that you need government, you need blah-de-blah, in a hierarchical form...

How do you think anarchism could work to fight some of the specific forms of dehumanization that happen to New Afrikan people under this system?

When people have reached that victory, what next? What is it that conscious people should be doing in the world today?

What is it that we should be doing? I mean, that question is big. And when I look at it and I break it down and ask what am I doing in fighting the situation, I think to be quite frank, what I'm doing is trying to get out. When I first got in here, someone, I think it was Eddie Conway who actually explained to me that a revolution cannot be fought, or won, in prison. That was one of the fundamentals that he gave me. Because at that time I was, as he said, "mau-mauing it"; trying to cut the heads of the pigs off. And he told me to focus on developing my organizational skills, my ability to be a force in mobilizing people to be organized. In spite of the fact that he wasn't an anarchist, I got that from him. That's what I'm most set on. We spend a lot of time in the movement - too much time - you know, pointing the finger, like saying how fucked up Lenin or whoever was — I mean, we know these things, right? But when it comes time to get down to the nitty gritty and actually work on the grassroots level interacting with folks, then everything else comes up, things that we ignore. The white supremacy, the racist attitudes, the sexist attitudes, the elitist shit, and all the counter-productive, counter-revolutionary things — these are the things that people see when you say "anarchist", and these are the very things you're trying to elevate yourself above. I'm not gonna say nobody's name, or nothing like that, but anyone who's claiming the anarchist ideal should hear what I'm saying, understand what I'm saying. And on the other side there's a lot of people in the movement who are doing things, no question. But again, if we a whole, then that means that as a whole, that's how we got to move, so if one part's lacking, then that's gonna affect the whole.

What's lacking? Is it the grassroots organizing?

Being real with ourselves, for one. I mean, these contradictions in the movement can be addressed; the sexism, the racism, the elitism, the homophobic thing some people got. Not until we actually begin to interact with one another do I believe these things will be conquered. But in the process things will be getting done. Things that don't just happen because we sit around and talk about it all day, they get done in practice, while we get our hands and elbows dirty, get down doing whatever is necessary inside the community to help enlighten folks to this thing, to the beauty of this idea. Through our actions, most importantly, not just through our literature or our newspapers, but through our actions. That's the best educational tool there is, action; not just with "them" but among ourselves.

Yeah, there are a lot of programs that need to be done, and a lot of work that needs to be done in ourselves, to get over all the negative elements we've internalized. But its all part of a process.

So we actually look at the enemy, we look at it and we see what makes this system so successful. As my Rastafarian brothas call it, 'Babylon'. It appeals to all the

you.

It's a victory, most definitely a victory to me. And it's also a testimony of what people will call the durability of the human spirit — the incredible potential that we all have to transcend any given situation, no matter how oppressive. And that is victory enough for me, in spite of my situation, in spite of the fact that my freedom has been taken away from me. In spite of the fact that from the very beginning I was written off; I was never given a chance by the system or people in my family or schools, and so this was the most logical outcome for me.

So it's most definitely a victory for me just being a conscious revolutionary. And just by virtue of my consciousness, that makes me a revolutionary. Because even if my rebellion or my revolutionary action were just fronts, just thoughts, and how I conduct myself daily, in my interactions, as an anarchist — and that is what it is, as a New Afrikan anarchist — how I interact and how I try to establish relationships with brothas and sistas. It's a victory that I have the ability to try and fight for my freedom, constantly understanding really what's at stake, what I'm fighting against.

The downside is that being in a situation like this and being conscious, it's painful, it's like a great insufferable agony that I have to deal with psychologically and emotionally in seeing how my people — people that come from the same situation that I came from, people that have the same potential that I do — can't rise above what the system has destined them to be. It's painful for me, I mean the majority of my time these days is spent trying to keep my calm. While at the same time trying to raise my consciousness in spite of this situation. That's how I feel in a nutshell. How am I going to detail that pain and suffering to someone who hasn't experienced the humiliation of having someone lock them in a cell? Understanding the true meaning of that, that in my mind it's not a punishment that's justifiable, it's not even just an unjustifiable punishment, it's not legitimate in any way. This situation is just a continuation of the same evil that this system — capitalist, white supremacist, imperialist — has always attached to the back of it. I see myself most definitely as just one victim; this isn't just about what's happening to me. And I believe that the only reason I have managed to become conscious is that I've learned to see beyond my particular pain and suffering. To see that each individual human being, be they in here or out on the streets, be they New Afrikan or European or whatever, has been alienated from themselves and from their communities and from their true potential to become human beings — their creative abilities, their abilities to be beautiful people, man. That's what the system does: it robs each of us of that. And because of that, this ability I was talking about, being sensitive and being able to see, hear, feel, and just understand what I see. I translate that into not just Shaka's pain, but the pain that everyone is suffering as a result of this thing called America. It's terrible, but at the same time, it's beautiful. I'm always struggling to just maintain that, while at the same time struggling to develop and grow more intellectually, more spiritually, in that direction.

Specific forms of dehumanization? This system dehumanizes us... from the top levels of the government on down...

Alright, well, talk about the prison system, as an example that affects a lot of people. The idea that you're gonna take someone and lock them up, because of some 'crime' they committed...

The prison system, well, it just doesn't work... it's as simple as that. Out of all the ways this system is dehumanizing, let me pick one? Hmm... I think one of the biggest things is, for any human being that comes in here, particularly in the context we talking about here in Maryland, is understanding that over seventy percent of the people who are incarcerated in here are New Afrikan, or people of African descent. What this does is that these various people come from the socioeconomic backgrounds that give life to disturbed mentalities, and these mentalities in and of themselves is dehumanizing, and keeps these brothas and sistas from developing a concept of themselves and their communities that is actually healthy or progressive in any way. And when they come to prison, it's like putting the nails in the coffin. When brothas step ahead, through the educational system or whatever means they choose to try and get by, the system only reinforces the damage that was done to them coming up in the so-called free world out there. I mean, from the time they were born, to the time they entered the church, to the time they entered the drug game, or whatever, all these things were just parts of a process of dehumanizing them. Because you know, you cannot be a responsible man, you can't get a job, if you get a job you're a sucker, all that... And when you get to prison, any possibility of actually being rehabilitated is basically nonexistent, because truly, the only reason the system exists is to warehouse, and to capitalize off of those they got warehoused.

How are people working to take back their humanity that's been stolen from them?

Sad to say... it's not a thing that's actually happening the way it should be on a large scale. Really there is no movement inside the prison system, there's no progressive or revolutionary movements that are in any kind of position to actually elevate the consciousness of the brothas that are living this life. We have organizations such as NOI, the Christian community, the Moorish Science Temple community, and many brothas find some kind of change through these organizations. But strictly speaking, the average brotha that goes through one of these organizations and gets out to the streets, having left that organization, turns back to their criminal activity. What's criminal isn't that they might break these laws that the government has made to oppress us, what's criminal is that they return back to the streets and become a destructive force in their community. They go straight back to the drug game or whatever it was that they were doing that contributed to the destruction in their community.

What's being done? You mean what am I doing, as an individual?

Actually its a really scary situation because when you see how unconscious the average brotha in this situation is, its scary. I mean, their attitude and their mentality is one of acceptance. They don't see a contradiction in their situation; they don't see dehumanization. To them, again, all our lives we basically been dehumanized, I mean, everything that we see in the institutions, that we learn in our school, or whatever, home, church, whatever, were things that negated our humanity. That only placed a question mark next to our humanity. We were suckers or niggas or thugs or drug dealers, but never human beings with feelings and emotions that we were free to express. So when the average brotha comes in here to the penitentiary, what they find is a situation that only reaffirms the negation of their humanity, of their heritage as people of African descent that they should be able to take pride in...

A lot of times I feel isolated, I really do. I try and break certain things down to people, try and point out certain contradictions. But the message being pushed out there in society is that all is well, that the condition you find yourself in is a condition that you created. And in accepting that, in the mind of the average brotha, history means nothing. They don't see that their situation is out of their control, that its a result of what occurred four hundred years ago. And so the pigs have free reign. What happens in here, which is really the same thing that happens on the streets, or anywhere where people don't know their history, is that solidarity among the captives just doesn't exist any more. Because at any point in time, any one of the captives in this situation could become an ally of the overseers — against another captive. Case in point, a brotha tried to escape about a month and a half ago, and the overseers - the pigs - they didn't know this man was over the fence on his way out of here. He had almost escaped, almost gained his freedom. But there was another captive, another inmate, who casually pointed out to the police, "Hey, where's that dude going? Isn't that dude going over the fence?" He had no true comprehension of what he actually just did. I only give that example to explain the mentality: there is no oppression, this is not slavery, this is not a dehumanizing situation... And to many, this is a situation that God sent, quote-unquote God sent.

Well, even people who aren't religious get a lot of mental blocks that keep them from questioning the system. We have to think about at what point people decide that dignity and freedom are more important than the meaningless priveleges they can get out of amerikka.

That's the truth. But to approach someone who's never had dignity and who don't understand what it is to have dignity and to have principles, that's a thought that probably never entered their mind. Its something that's not really important. Everything revolves around the idea that the only way he or she can make it is if he or she gets money, you know, gets paid in some sort of way. And if its not about trying to get paid, to get money, they wanna be getting high, to escape. It seems like I'm painting a real scary picture, like there's no hope or ain't no use in struggling... nah, I'm not saying that at all. But the conditions that exist now

won't change, the brothas and sistas in these places won't change until they realize that this ain't no joke, that this ain't no funcamp. That these people actually want to take their lives from them, and that its all being done for a profit. Till they really realize that the conditions out there, where drugs are being pushed into markets in their communities, and until they really understand the role the government plays, and the role that racism plays in creating this situation that they were a part of (and that they want to return back to society and be a part of). And how it is they realize by these people taking parole away that most of the brothas don't have a chance of going back to court, and now there's limits on how many post-conviction appeals you can have. Its all just making it more complicated on the population and 80% of the people here don't even have a high school diploma — a lot of people can barely read or write — so for them to actually sit down and get into their cases is highly unlikely.

But I think it was Mao Tse-Tung who said repression breeds resistance. (The repressive factor most definitely being reinforced around here.) You hear brothas and sistas — well, you hear them, I just hear brothas, and then some of the sistas I write at the women's Cut [MCIW-Jessup] — they are becoming dissatisfied at never actually having a chance at life. Once they realize the fact that the system has actually been against them from the very beginning, once they're conscious and aware of their history, not just their individual history but the history of this society and of capitalism, they're beginning through their letters and through their interactions to show that repression does breed resistance. Up until that dissatisfaction reaches a certain level, brothas will still try and reach for what they can and formulate little cells, little bookclubs like what Eddie Conway is doing over in the cut [MHC]. And I could do that here, but the looks that I got and the responses that I got is very discouraging because again, the brightest minds that are in these institutions, the administration has effectively co-opted them by offering them petty positions and giving them little priveleges, and these brothas bite. The majority of them are either lifers or people who got some kind of drug habit, or else they want to be drug dealers. And the system - the administration will allow them to be that so long as they beat their rap, of course, and help them out in any kind of potentially violent situation. Like if a brotha comes on the scene and he's rallying the brothas around him, trying to get them to sit down or rebel against some inhuman condition that exists (which are many right now, you know?) then they will be ratted on and they'll be shipped out. They informants, man, ain't no telling who's an informant. Everybody's a potential informant.

Like this: I try and talk to brothas about why I call pigs pigs, and the kind of looks that I get and the kind of responses I get are typically that "they're just doing their jobs." And so then I go into this whole thing of explaining it to them. So anyways...

I did want to ask about what it means to be conscious as a revolutionary in a situation like that, what consequences it brings on you, and what it means for