

**MARYLAND STATE POLICE**  
**CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION**

**The Black Liberation Army**

**Understanding - Monitoring - Controlling**



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C O N F I D E N T I A L

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

THE BLACK LIBERATION ARMY

UNDERSTANDING - MONITORING - CONTROLLING

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MARYLAND STATE POLICE

CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

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- \* Passages in bold print were highlighted for emphasis.
- \* Recommendation numbers in the text refer to the Recommendations List at the end of the report.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Black Liberation Army (BLA) originated in 1971 on the East coast. The group had two primary goals: to kill "cops" (then seize control of their communities and liberate black people from repression) and to expropriate funds from the capitalists and imperialists (financing the revolution and taking back the wealth robbed from blacks through slave labor). They attempted to realize these two goals by murdering police officers and robbing armored cars and banks. As a result, many of the BLA leaders and members were incarcerated or killed.

From the late 1970's to the early 1980's, the group appeared to be dormant. However, recent events indicate a renewed enthusiasm for BLA goals. It is believed the group may be active again in the Maryland area. Reasons for this renewed interest might include the erosion of civil rights gains, a slumping economy, and overcrowded prisons.

Therefore, research in this area is intended to give readers both background and current information on the BLA organization, activities and significant leaders.

# THE BLACK LIBERATION ARMY

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## **I OVERVIEW**

The Black Liberation Army is an urban guerilla group closely patterned after the principles contained in the Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla by Carlos Marighella. The manual was written for "every man who, as a consequence of the inevitable battle against the bourgeoisie and imperialism, takes the road of armed rebellion." (21-p.1) The basic characteristic of the urban guerilla "is that he is a man who fights with arms." (21-p.6)

Marighella proposes that there are two essential objectives for the urban guerilla:

(1) the physical liquidation of the chiefs and assistants of the armed forces and of the police.

(2) the appropriation of government resources and those belonging to the big capitalists, latifundists, and imperialists, with small expropriations used for the maintenance of individual urban guerillas and large ones for the sustenance of the revolution itself. (21-p.6)

The urban guerilla is instructed that, "It is necessary for every urban guerrilla to keep in mind always that he can only maintain his existence if he is disposed to kill the police and those dedicated to repression, and if he is determined--truly determined--to expropriate the wealth of the big capitalists, the latifundists, and the imperialists." (21-p.6)

The revolutionary urban guerilla sees himself as the victim of injustice both past and present. He chooses "fight" over "flight" and uses violent means to reach his goals. Law enforcement officials, however, are charged with eliminating violence whatever



the reason. Thus, the two sides are sharply drawn, and both sides have suffered greatly from robberies and murders.

The impasse cannot be easily resolved. The answer may lie with a combination of efforts--law enforcement, political, economic, and social. However, the side that can gain the strategic advantage over the other will be able to control events and determine acceptable solutions.

The Black Liberation Army, a splinter group of the Black Panther Party, is only one of many radical revolutionary groups operating aboveground, underground, and in prisons within the United States today.

"The Black Liberation Army (BLA) is a small terrorist group with ties to the Weather Underground Organization. Its members have been implicated in a variety of violent crimes, including murder and armed robbery; many of them are currently in prison. The BLA developed out of a split in the early 1970's with the Black Panther Party. One faction, loyal to Party founders, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, retained the Panther name. Another group, centered in New York and supportive of Eldridge Cleaver...formed the core of the Black Liberation Army." (16-p.115)

Black Panthers - 1971	
Black Panthers (Huey Newton) (Bobby Seale)	Black Liberation Army (E.Coast) Afro Amer. Lib. Army (W.Coast) (Eldridge Cleaver)

In January, 1971, Eldridge Cleaver announced the formation of an "Afro-American Liberation Army" on the West Coast. East Coast supporters preferred the name, Black Liberation Army. Cleaver was a member of the Black Panther Party (BPP) and spelled out the Panther manifesto in his book Soul on Ice. The book was an indictment of white racism in America. (9)

The Black Panthers saw the police as enemies of social change

## **II        ORIGIN OF THE BLACK LIBERATION ARMY**

and wanted to prevent police brutality. They emphasized the importance of ghetto community control. "If the Panthers' goal was community control of the ghetto, then the surest way to attain it...was by assassinating police officers." (1-p.42) "As a result, Panther leaders fought several pitched gun battles with police officers." (9)

The BPP claimed 2,000 members with chapters in thirty cities. Their openly militant stance, however, resulted in the death or incarceration of many of their leadership and convinced them that what was needed were two separate organizations: one aboveground to organize the masses and the other underground to rob banks and free captured "prisoners of war." (1-p.43) The Black Liberation Army was formed to meet this second goal.

Black Liberation Army	
Aboveground organize the masses	Underground rob banks kill cops free "prisoners of war"

In 1972, the Panthers announced that the Party would renounce the "rhetoric of the gun" and try to improve conditions for blacks by working within the system. (9)

The underground Black Liberation Army disagreed with this tactic and began a systematic campaign of murder and terror to draw attention to itself and to finance their revolutionary politics. "It viewed its role as being an avenger of police brutality and the builder of an economic base for the black community through expropriations of white money." (16-p.115) They targeted U. S.

police officers for death in the early 1970's. (9)

"BLA members envisioned themselves as revolutionaries fighting for black rights. But the people they said they wanted to help ignored their violent rhetoric--government overthrow and redistribution of the wealth. A strategy gradually evolved: a guerilla war in the streets against cops. The cold-blooded attacks on police officers were funded by bank robberies. New members were recruited from jails." (19)

A strategy evolved: a guerilla war against cops, funded by bank robberies.

"They struck first on May 21, 1971, in Harlem where two police officers, one white, one black, were gunned down while answering a call for help. (Patrolmen Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones) Three months later, three black men walked into the Ingleside, California, police station and shotgunned the desk sergeant to death before fleeing. Thus, the BLA announced their program of death and defiance. Anthony Bottom, Albert Washington, and Herman Bell were arrested and convicted for both attacks.

In January, 1972, the BLA was back in New York. Near the corner of Avenue B and Eleventh Street, another black and white patrol team was shot in the streets. Officers Gregory Foster and Rocco Laurie were walking their beat when three men fired on them from behind. One of the BLA members performed a "war dance" over the dead policemen.

SEE Recommendation #2 (Recommendations List--end of report)

The next day a message arrived promising a new 'spring offensive'. The note was signed 'The George Jackson Squad of the BLA'." (9)

Membership in the early BLA movement never exceeded 200, and most of the young militants had long criminal records. (9) They continued their BLA affiliation and activities even after being incarcerated.

A former member of the Black Panther Party, the late George Jackson founded the Black Guerrilla Family (BGF) in San Quentin in 1966. This group is a politically motivated and extremely violent group that generally follows a Maoist philosophy. (11-p.64) The youth street gang known as the CRIPS, with an estimated membership of 60,000, is closely aligned with the BGF; and it is thought that many CRIPS become automatic BGF members once they enter the prison system (11-p.65) Additionally, the BGF is very closely aligned with the Black Liberation Army. Some sources believe the BGF might actually be the prison branch of the BLA. California prison authorities lend some credence to this because certain BLA members, who have been sent to prison, have immediately become high ranking officials of the BGF. (11-p.65) "The goal of the organization is the cultural unity and protection of black inmates." (11-p.65)

The BLA found new recruits in yet another way. In 1977 an audit of the Lincoln Hospital Detox Unit (NYC) lists Jeral (Wayne) Williams (aka Mutulu Shakur--no relation to Assata Shakur) as Assistant Addictions Counselor. Hospital employees described Shakur as a self-assured, arrogant man with a know-it-all attitude.

(2-p.59) "Each addict was required to attend political education classes and learn that society rather than the junkie himself was to blame for his plight. Once the substance of what was said at the political education classes sank in, the self-blame each junkie felt about his addiction was directed outward, where it turned into a rage which the radical therapists at Lincoln Detox could channel into protests against injustice and support for any cause. Detox staffers were accused of turning the program into a breeding ground for Black Liberation Army members." (2-p.56),

From 1970 to 1974 Lincoln Detox staffers had been searching for a better method (besides methadone) of getting junkies to give up drugs. "In 1974, they found it in acupuncture,, the ancient Chinese technique of using needles and massage to release energy blockages and correct imbalances of energy flow in the body." (2-p.57) Mutulu Shakur "was as devoted to acupuncture as he was committed to black nationalism. In 1977 Shakur was awarded Doctor of Acupuncture degree from the Acupuncture Association of Quebec (Montreal)." (2-p.59) After his clinical training, he began to both practice and teach acupuncture. He saw it as a way to establish alternative medical facilities and return ghetto health care to community control." (1-p.60) "It became an organizing tool as well as a medical technique and was used to build a following by Shakur." (1-p.135)

The Detox program was attacked in The New York Times in November, 1978. The charge of being associated with the BLA was never substantiated, but the unit was closed soon after.

As the BLA became organized, it adopted several key elements in its ideology. One key element was "that it is legitimate for revolutionaries to rob banks (when it is done) for the purpose of financing the revolution. Another key element of BLA ideology is that blacks can seize control of their communities by killing cops." (1-p.135)

"Assata Shakur became a supporter of the Black Panthers just as the Party was beginning to die. On April 2, 1969, the entire leadership of the New York Black Panther Party chapter--the Panther 21--was arrested. (1-p.134) The jailed Panther leadership was being replaced by a tiny group of blacks who had been part of the Panthers but were determined not to repeat their mistakes. Assata Shakur became part of this new group which called itself the Black Liberation Army." (1-p.134)

The purposes of the BLA are to retaliate for attacks on black people by the cops and take back some of the wealth robbed through slave labor (expropriations).

Assata Shakur describes the origin of the BLA in her book, Assata---An autobiography: " The idea of a Black Liberation Army emerged from conditions in Black communities: conditions of poverty, indecent housing, massive unemployment, poor medical care, and inferior education. The idea came about because Black people are not free or equal in this country. Because ninety percent of the men and women in this country's prisons are Black and Third World. Because ten-year-old children are shot down in our streets. Because dope has saturated our communities, preying on the



disillusionment and frustration of our children. The concept of the BLA arose because of the political, social, and economic oppression of Black people in this country. And where there is oppression, there will be resistance. The BLA is part of that resistance movement. The Black Liberation Army stands for freedom and justice for all people." (1-p.169)

### III THE BLACK LIBERATION ARMY TODAY

In the 1970's radical groups distrusted one another and tended to pursue their individual goals independently. Throughout the 1980's, however, a change took place in the organization and operation of revolutionary groups. They began to work together to accomplish their revolutionary goals. For example, law enforcement officials noted: "Also new was the involvement of the all-white Weather Underground with black radicals. The two factions had not trusted each other in the 1970's." (13)

This new "urge to merge" was inspired by dwindling membership and by the successful example of radical groups overseas. (13)

West Germany's Baader-Meinhof gang, Italy's Red Brigades, Japan's Red Army, and other terrorist groups united five years ago (approximately 1976), after they concluded that their individual strength was ebbing, a problem the American groups felt acutely." (13) Mention of a personnel shortage was cited by Marilyn Buck (white revolutionary) when she said that it caused "too few to end up doing too many things." (1-p.179)

The BLA exists today to carry on their revolutionary resistance to "oppression" with actions and not just words. One of the most notorious BLA crimes in the past decade occurred October 20, 1981, when there was an attempt to rob \$1.6 million from a Brinks truck outside the Nanuet Mall branch of the Nanuet National Bank of Nyack, NY. As the robbery was being planned, many of the original participants grew discouraged and dropped out. "The result was an acute manpower shortage, which Matulu Shakur attempted to end by obtaining replacements who had no idea what was

going on." (1-p.185)

The Nyack robbery left two Nyack policemen and a Brinks guard dead (the money was left behind). It involved members of the Weather Underground, the BLA, the Republic of New Africa (RNA) and the May 19 Coalition. "Law enforcement officials...found signs that the organizations may have joined forces to carry out a number of other robberies dating back to early 1980." (13)

The problem of low membership was "fixed" by combining personnel from several groups to accomplish revolutionary goals. Somehow, members of the Weather Underground and BLA had linked up. They had robbed an armored car, killed two cops, and compiled a hit list. (1-p.220)

Today it appears that the BLA is not dormant, but actively committing crimes to support themselves as they pursue their revolutionary ideals. In August 1983, one of the BLA members, Sekou Odinga (aka Nathanael Burns) described the group as "one of a number of military formations fighting for the liberation and self-determination of black people in this country. He identified himself...(as a BLA member) and said one of the purposes of the clandestine group was to retaliate for attacks on black people by the cops. Odinga said the BLA also engages in 'expropriations', which he defined as efforts by black freedom fighters to take back some of the wealth that was robbed through the slave labor that was forced on them and their ancestors." (1-p.283)

Do drugs play a role in the BLA today? Mutulu Shakur, a black BLA revolutionary, was a heavy cocaine user. "With an immense cash

flow at their disposal, he and his cohorts lost self-control. They helped themselves to the robbery proceeds and income from the acupuncture clinic to buy increasingly large quantities of drugs." (1-p.187) "To stanch the flow of Family funds being squandered on it (drugs), Shakur and his followers ripped off small-time dealers for cocaine and cash." (1-p.187)

Indeed, Shakur continued to plan robberies "because he needed money to buy drugs and keep the Black Acupuncture Advisory Association of North America (BAANA) in business." (1-p.186) However, "the more money Shakur spent on cocaine, the weaker his position became in the Family." (1-p.187) "By 1981, cocaine consumption had gotten so out of hand (that) a list of rules on drug use was drawn up, but they failed to curtail the use of drugs. (1-p.189) By 1981 cocaine consumption was "out of control." (1-p.190) The motive behind armed robberies for some revolutionaries was not the pursuit of financing for revolutionary causes, but to get money to support their drug habits.

The birth of a child can change a revolutionary's attachment to the cause.

On a personal level, family traditions appear to be important to BLA members today. They take time out to visit friends, take vacations, and raise families. The birth of a child sometimes changes a revolutionary's attachment to the cause. For some revolutionary parents, a baby will weaken the parent's involvement in the group, probably due to the danger and time commitment required. On the other hand, a revolutionary parent may feel it is

entirely appropriate for the revolutionary group to raise the child.

SEE Recommendations #6 and #13

"Chesa Jackson Gilbert Boudin (son of Kathy Boudin--Weather Underground) was born in Sloane Hospital for Women at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center at 6:00 a.m. on August 20, 1980." (1-p.178) "What really shocked her (Boudin) was the degree to which she became attached to him...As the attachment grew, Boudin withdrew even further from the tiny radical group which had been her mainstay. She became less of a group member and more of an individual moving away and out of the group." (1-p.179)

Another revolutionary was affected differently: "So, while (Judy) Clark (Weather Underground, M19) took comfort in the thought that her one-year-old daughter, Harriet, was being cared for by 'comrades,' Boudin fretted constantly about being separated from her baby." (1-p.254)

During robbery of a Metter, Georgia, bank in December, 1981, "Yvonne (Thomas) acted as a getaway car driver, taking along Ife, her two-year old daughter, to divert suspicion." (1-p.264)

NOTE: Ife is the capital city of Yoruba

Fathers, too, are affected by the presence of children: "He (Tyrone Q. Rison--Weather Underground) phoned his mother-in-law in Statesboro, Georgia, where his children had been staying since he and his wife were arrested. "While talking to his oldest son, the FBI agents wrote, "he became emotional and told him he thought he had gotten them out of all this mess by moving from New York and

was sorry." (1-p.265)

A baby may also attract visits from other revolutionaries. "In February, 1980...Margo (Sondra Margo Mitchell) was visited by the Shakurs (Matulu and Makini) after the birth of Kira, her first child." (1-p.201)

NOTE: Revolutionaries who make "new baby" visits could be intercepted or followed.

Today, help from the white population is encouraged. In The Big Dance, John Castellucci writes, "The May 19th Communist Organization consisted almost exclusively of white women...Their goal was to form an alliance with the Black Liberation Army and FALN (Spanish for Armed Forces for Puerto Rican National Liberation --a Puerto Rican terrorist group). Their objective, once this alliance was established, was to fight a people's war." (1-p.133) A BLA member (Nathanael Burns) welcomes help from the white population. "I think the responsibility of the white population is to help right some of the wrongs that have been perpetuated by the white colonizing capitalists in every way they can. I think that one of the highest forms of aid and solidarity would be to fight side by side with freedom fighters..." (1-p.284)

Today, there are signs that the BLA is back. They have reopened communication lines to their members. A decade after its last regular issue, The Black Panther newspaper has resumed publication as a quarterly, Black Panther Newspaper Committee (BPNC), P. O. Box 519, Berkeley, CA 94701, beginning with a spring, 1991 issue. Contributors to the first issue include

several BPP veterans who joined the Black Liberation Army including Albert "Nuh" Washington, Anthony "Jalil" Bottom, Herman Bell, Nathanael Burns (aka Sekou Mgobogi Abdullah Odinga), and Clark Edward Squire (aka Sundiata Acoli). These jailed men are on the BPNC's list of "prisoners of war." There is also favorable coverage of the fugitive BLA leader Joanne Chesimard (aka Assata Shakur), now living in Cuba. "The hero worship accorded those jailed for criminal violence is extreme. There is little rhetorical difference between the revived BPP paper and the BPP of 1966-71." (22)

Assata Shakur described the future of the BLA in her book, Assata--An Autobiography: "There is, and always will be, until every Black man, woman, and child is free, a Black Liberation Army. The main function of the Black Liberation Army, at this time, is to create good examples, to struggle for Black freedom, and to prepare for the future." (4-p.52)



IV STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT:

ASSATA SHAKUR - THE "SOUL"\* OF THE BLACK LIBERATION ARMY

\* Target Blue, Robert Daley

(a) Assata - Life History

JoAnne Deborah Byron was born (approx.) July 16, 1947. Her sister, Beverly, was born five years later. Her father, Carl Byron, was an accountant. Her mother, Doris E. Johnson, was a school teacher. Her mother was divorced shortly after JoAnne was born. She lived with her mother, her aunt (later Evelyn A. Williams, a lawyer), her grandmother Lulu Hill, and her grandfather, Frank Hill. They lived in a house in the Bricktown section of Jamaica, New York. (4-p.18)

When she was three years old (1950), she moved with her grandparents to Seventh Street in Wilmington, NC. The house was formerly lived in by her great-grandparents, Pappa Lincoln and Momma Jessie. Aunt Lou (Momma Jessie's sister) lived across town. Her grandmother had relatives in Seabreeze outside Wilmington near Carolina Beach. Their last name was Freeman. They worked as farmers and fishermen, and they owned small stores. Her grandmother's father was a Cherokee Indian who had somehow acquired a great deal of land and left it to his children. The land bordered on the river or on the ocean, and it was because of this land that her grandparents had moved down South. (4-p.18-23)

At that time, the South was completely segregated, so they decided to open a beach for blacks. Freeman's Beach, popularly known as Bop City, consisted of a restaurant, clothes lockers, and

an area for dancing.

When she was four years old, JoAnne attended Mrs. Perkin's school in Wilmington, a two-room school on Red Cross Street. She spent most of the first grade in New York with her mother, then moved back with her grandparents and attended Gregory Elementary School in Wilmington for second grade. She attended third grade in P.S. 154 in Queens, NY. She attended the same school in fourth grade and suffered a broken leg when she fell off a swing. She spent her summers at Freeman's Beach with her grandparents. Her Aunt Evelyn was the heroine of her childhood. She exposed her to cultural things--museums, art galleries, movies and plays. She was confirmed in the Catholic church. Her early school years were a bit rocky--a few teachers caused her to..."catch an instant attitude." (4-p.23-42)

She attended Parsons Junior High School in Queens. By then her mother had remarried and was not getting along with JoAnne's step-father. He worked in a post office and was not a college graduate like her mother was. "When my mother and stepfather were at each other's throats, it drove me wild. I would simply get my coat and walk out. Some days i just didn't come back." (4-p.75) She ran away several times.

NOTE: Assata uses the lower case i throughout her book to "take away from the egotistical connotation of the word".

Her mother and stepfather broke up. JoAnne, her mother, and her sister moved into the Parsons Gardens apartments in South

Jamaica.

"A grave injustice had been done to me."

"I loved Jamaica, and i was just starting to get into the beat of it and to know my way around when my mother and i had one of our terrible arguments. I don't even remember what the argument was about, but i was hardheaded, stubborn, and under the impression that a grave injustice had been done to me. The next day i got up, packed my clothes, and headed straight for (Greenwich) Village." (4-p.99) She was thirteen.

She lived on her own in the Village for a while, supporting herself with a bar job (encouraging customers to buy drinks) until a family friend spotted her and called her Aunt Evelyn.

She then moved in with Evelyn on 80th Street in a garden apartment in a brownstone. Evelyn required her to come home after school (Junior High School 44) by four o'clock and encouraged homework. She describes her fellow black students in Junior High: "And when i think back to some of those kids who were labeled 'troublemakers' and 'problem students,' i realize that many of them were unsung heroes who fought to maintain some sense of dignity and self-worth." (4-p.136) She spent her weekends with her girlfriends or her mother, and her summers with her grandparents at the beach. "Because i was spending weekends with my mother, we became closer." (4-p.148)

She attended Cathedral High "which is attached to St. Patrick's Cathedral. She stayed on about six months before transferring to public school. She eventually became disenchanted with the Catholic Church and renounced it." (20)

When she was 17, she decided to quit school and get a job. "I was one of those slaves where you pay a fifth of your salary for taxes, some more for social security, another \$5 a month for union dues, and the rest was not even enough to die on." (4-p.148) During this time she was also going to night school to get her high school diploma. "After i paid the rent on my furnished room, spent carfare and bought food, i had just enough money to buy an air sandwich." (4-p.148)

During this time, she met some African college students. "I loved to listen to the Africans. They were intense, and had so much dignity. I was introduced to African customs, and they spent hours explaining the various aspects of their culture." (4-p.150)

SEE Recommendation #2

She went to work as a typist for a black employment agency. She told her fellow workers how strongly she felt about the mid-sixties riots and was fired. She made up a resume describing herself as a college graduate and was hired first as a marketing assistant and then as a bookkeeper, but was soon fired from both these jobs. (4-p.157) She said: "But my patience was getting shorter and my temper was terrible. I was quick to tell people what i thought of them." (4-p.158)

SEE Recommendation # 15

So she decided to get organized and go back to school. She went back home to live with her mother in a new apartment in Flushing, Queens. (4-p.159) She was convinced of the importance of both studying and action. "I knew i didn't want to be an intellectual, spending my life in books and libraries without knowing what the hell was going on in the street. Theory without practice is just as incomplete as practice without theory. The two have to go together. I was determined to do both." (4-p.180)

She entered Manhattan Community College. She planned to major in business administration and get a job in marketing or advertising. "Instead, i took only one business course. History, psychology, and sociology interested me more." (4-p.173)

While in college, she attended various demonstrations and enjoyed "that sisterly, brotherly kinship i loved." (4-p.182) She explained, "There aren't too many experiences that give you that good, satisfying feeling, that make you feel so clean and refreshed, as when you are fighting for your freedom." (4-p,182) She was no longer interested in reform, but did think revolution would work--she just wasn't sure how. (4-p.183) She participated in marches with welfare mothers, demonstrations with construction workers, rent strikers, sit-ins, etc. "The more active i became the more i liked it. It was like medicine, making me well, making me whole. I was home. For the first time, my life felt like it had some real meaning." (4-p.189)

SEE Recommendation #15

She heard about the Republic of New Afrika, and the idea of a

black nation appealed to her (group desired a black nation carved out of five southern states). "The first-time i attended a Republic of New Afrika event (members) were pounding out Watusi, Zulu, and Yoruba messages on the drums." (4-p.183) She joined the group and took the African name Ybumi Oladele.

She graduated from Manhattan Community College and started attending CCNY (City College of New York in Flushing--Political Science and Sociology major). "She joined the National Committee to Combat Fascism, a Black Panther offshoot...and she became a Black Muslim." (1-p.134)

She married Louis Chesimard on April 2, 1969. Her husband expected his wife to be a domestic homemaker. "I spent most of my time at school, meetings, or demonstrations and whenever i was at home my head was usually stuck in a book. It was unthinkable to allow more than 5 minutes on mundane things like keeping house or washing dishes." (4-p.196) A year later, Louis Chesimard had the Roman Catholic marriage annulled. (1-p.196)

Assata then went to Berkeley, California and expanded her struggle from student issues to the black community as a whole. "At that time California, especially the Bay area, was where everything was happening." (4-p.196)

She changed her name to Assada Olugbala Shakur. "I didn't feel like no JoAnne, or no Negro, or no amerikan. I felt like an African woman...My life became an African life, my surroundings took on an African flavor, my spirit took on an African glow." (4-p.185) She became convinced that a black revolutionary party was

needed to gain black liberation.

While in Berkeley, she checked out several groups. She visited Alcatraz as a volunteer medical assistant and met Native Americans who were protesting broken treaties and racist exploitation. "They had many of the same problems we had: consciousness. They damn sure had the same enemy; and they were doing as bad as we were, if not worse. I will always be grateful for having had the opportunity to visit Alcatraz." (4-p.199)

She also checked out the Red Guard in San Francisco and the Black Panther Party. She said, "One of the most important things the Party did was to make it really clear who the enemy was: not the white people, but the capitalistic, imperialistic oppressors." (4-p.203) She admired the way the BPP "took the Black liberation struggle out of a national context and put it in an international context. The Party supported revolutionary struggles and governments all over the world and insisted the u.s. [sic] get out of Africa, out of Asia, out of Latin America, and out of the ghetto too." (4-p.203)

Assata joined the BPP. She thought that BPP members underestimated the need to unite with other Black organizations.

SEE Recommendation #3

She eventually became disenchanted with the BPP and left the group.

She singled out the police as a common enemy: "As far as i was concerned, the police in the Black communities were nothing but a foreign occupying army, beating, torturing, and murdering people at whim and without restraint." (4-p.235)



As a result of disunity between East and West Coast in the BPP, Assata left the Party and associated herself with the Black Liberation Army, a loosely knit group with no common leadership or chain of command. "Instead, there were various organizations and collectives working out of different cities, and in some of the larger cities there were often several groups working independently of each other." (4-p.241) They had members "willing to fight to the death against their oppressors." (4-p.242) But they found that courage and dedication were not enough. "They were a tiny group of blacks who had been part of the Panthers but were determined not to repeat their mistakes. Assata Shakur became part of this new group, which called itself the Black Liberation Army." (4-p.134)

When she learned the cops wanted her for questioning, following the shooting of Patrolmen Foster and Laurie, she went underground. (1-p.135) Over the next few years, "home became a lot of places. I traveled quite a bit and met up with some really beautiful people. Many members of the various (revolutionary) groups had been forced into hiding as a result of the extreme police repression that took place during the late sixties and early seventies." (4-p.241)

"Assata Shakur was arrested after a shoot-out on the New Jersey Turnpike on May 2, 1973. State Trooper Werner Foerster, thirty-four, was shot to death, and State Trooper James Harper, twenty-nine, was wounded during the shoot-out, while thirty-six-year-old Sundiata Acoli (aka Clark Edward Squire) - a black

militant who was acting as a bodyguard to Sister Assata - was injured, and Zayd Malik Shakur, her brother-in-law, was killed." (4-p.136)

Assata was accused of assisting Acoli while he was grappling with Foerster. She maintained she was hit in the forearm and shoulder even though she had raised her arms to surrender. (1-p.138) She was set to stand trial for the shoot-out February 1, 1974. She won a mistrial "when it was found that she was four to six weeks pregnant and forcing her to continue would endanger her unborn child." (1-p.136)

Assata was transformed into a martyr for the Black revolutionary cause.

"To blacks she became a victim of the COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) - a secret FBI program targeting black nationalist hate groups). To radical feminists she was a victim of white male supremacy, which singles out black women for particularly harsh treatment." (4-p.136) Assata was transformed into a representative of embattled black womanhood. (1-p.136)

After Assata gave birth to her daughter, her trial for the murder of Foerster and the injury of Harper during the New Jersey Turnpike shoot-out resumed. She was convicted on March 25, 1977. "Judge Appleby subsequently gave her life plus twenty-six to thirty-three years, the maximum possible sentence." (1-p.138)

On November 2, 1979, "members of the Brinks robbery gang and others orchestrated Chesimard's escape from the Clinton Correctional Institute for Women (NJ), according to authorities."

(14) After her prison break, Assata was taken to a safe house in East Orange. She later went to Pittsburgh where she used the name Mary Davis and lived in a safe house at 350 Omega Street. She arrived in Cuba sometime between 1981-84.

Once in Cuba, she declared herself a supporter of the Republic of New Afrika, which still advocated partitioning the United States into two separate countries, one for whites and one for blacks." (1-p.144-45 (The black nation would be carved out of five southern states: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Mississippi. 1-p.64) She was granted political asylum by the Cuban government.

She had some visitors from the United States. "According to the FBI report, Cheri Dalton (aka Nahanda Obefemi) visited Chesimard in Cuba in 1981--Chesimard gave Nahanda a taped 'message to her people.' " (18-p.1)

A 1987 videotape by Black Entertainment Television (BET) consists of a five minute interview with Assata in Cuba and shows her in a relaxed scene playing checkers in a park with her daughter, Kakuya. She reveals that she is employed by an art gallery and is also a student studying for her master's degree in Social Sciences. ((20) The master's program is sponsored by the Cuban Communist Party (Escuela Superior del Partido). She lives in a book-cluttered, modestly furnished one-bedroom apartment. She receives rent and living expenses from the Cuban government. (20)

Assata, the "soul" of the Black Liberation Army, is an intelligent woman who has found a safe haven in Cuba where she

takes pleasure in raising her daughter, Kakuya. Her recent involvement with revolutionary activities, if any, is not documented in public sources available to this researcher.

She said in an October 11, 1987 interview with Newsday, "If i owe allegiance to anything, it is my ancestors, especially the ones who came over (on) the slave ship. I feel i am answerable to them. I want to be able to say i tried, and that i tried to stand on this earth proud."

SEE Recommendation #2

"...revolutionaries need to be internationalists."

She recognizes the important international aspects of the black struggle: "The struggle in South Africa is the most important battle of the century for Black people. The defeat of apartheid in South Africa will bring Africans all over the planet closer to liberation. Imperialism is an international system of exploitation, and, we, as revolutionaries need to be internationalists to defeat it." (4-p.267)

SEE Recommendation #3

And she understands the necessity of popular support: "No people's war can be won without the support of the masses of the people. Armed struggle can never be successful by itself; it must be part of an overall strategy for winning, and the strategy must be political as well as military." (4-p.242) She points out that both action and words are needed to find success in the struggle for liberation. "To win any struggle for liberation, you have to

have the way as well as the will and an overall ideology and strategy that stem from a scientific analysis of history and present conditions." (4-p.242)

Talking with friends, she said, "The one thing i do know is that the Black liberation movement has done more for me than i will ever be able to do for it." (4-p.223) It has given her a reason to feel proud, dear friends with whom she feels a deep kinship, and a pure and righteous cause for which to fight. Within the black liberation movement, she is an important leader with dignity and a caring heart for her people who have been unfairly oppressed.

(b) Assata - A Personality Profile

In her book, Assata---An Autobiography, Assata relates numerous incidents from her childhood when she chose to fight to solve her problems. Given the choice of "fight or flight", she would choose "fight" every time. She followed the classic delinquent behavior pattern throughout her formative years. When problems arose, instead of brooding, she would explode. (12)

She describes her childhood as a constant struggle to be "as good as" everybody else. "All my family tried to instill in me a sense of personal dignity, but my grandmother and my grandfather were really fanatic about it. Over and over they would tell me, 'You're as good as anyone else. Don't let anybody tell you that they're better than you.' " (4-p.19)

Assata internalized her grandparent's message and translated it into a strong sense of injustice. She was always quick to sense when she'd been "wronged" and was ready to fight for her rights. Her sense of injustice goes back to early Yoruban ancestors: "They say we steal. But it was not we who stole millions of Black people from the continent of Africa. We were robbed of our language, of our Gods, of our culture, of our human dignity." (4-p.51)

She became hostile over the injustices she experienced personally and those inflicted on black people both past and present.

She writes that she grew up "exposed to the degrading, dehumanizing side of segregation." (4-p.137) "I can remember clearly squatting in the bushes with mosquitoes biting my bare buttocks, and my grandmother handing me toilet paper, because we could not find a place with a 'colored' bathroom. Sometimes we were hungry, but there was no place to eat. Other times we were sleepy, and there was no hotel or motel that would admit us. If i sit and add up all the 'colored' toilets and drinking fountains in my life and all the back-of-the-buses or the Jim Crow railway cars or the places i couldn't go, it adds up to one great ball of anger." (4-p.138)

Assata lived in a broken home (she bounced back and forth between her grandparents' and her mother's home--her parents were divorced). Emotional support was lacking during her early years (she was a runaway at thirteen). Her troubled home life and the vivid experiences of racial discrimination she experienced combined to result in the development of a delinquent personality.

Comprehensive research into delinquency concludes that "emotional factors in the biography of the growing child were the most important differentiation influences between delinquent and non-delinquent (behavior)." (12) Feelings of being unhappy and unloved are verifiable indicators of antisocial behavior. "At the core of the sick personality there is usually a feeling of insecurity and unacceptability." (12)

"The individual's delinquent behavior serves his own needs for personality integration. Techniques which neurotics and

delinquents use to make up for inner inadequacies are a very personal reaction to an individually perceived situation. In the language of behavior, both neurotics and delinquents are saying that something is wrong with the personality structure--delinquency is the particular way in which the individual tries to maintain selfhood." (12)

"People who are hurt need to lash back at the pressures which hurt them."

SEE Recommendation #15

The individual who has not found his home or community comfortable needs to "lash back at the pressures which have hurt him." (12)

The individual (Assata) exhibits antisocial behavior to bring his psychic back into balance, and it is this criminal behavior that "becomes the concern of the law-enforcing agencies of that society." (12) Generally speaking, delinquency is behavior which stands in opposition to the codes of society." (12)

As she grew into adulthood, her sense of injustice caused her to oppose commonly accepted codes of behavior "Opposition to social codes may be generalized or specialized. It may appear as resistance to all forms of authority--both laws and cultural traditions. Or it may be limited to one of the traditional areas and appear as assault, rape, theft, drug or alcohol addiction or vandalism." (12)

As an adult, Assata adopted a revolutionary life style. But she did not act alone. She joined other revolutionaries to



work toward accomplishing BLA goals. It is known that "failure to accept cultural patterns either in whole or in part has been shown to be characteristic of some individuals in all societies." (12)

Assata closely identified with BLA ideologies and felt a strong sense of injustice. "I am a Black revolutionary, and, by definition, that makes me a part of the Black Liberation Army. The pigs have used their newspapers and TVs to paint the Black Liberation Army as vicious, brutal, mad-dog criminals...It should be clear to anyone who can think, see, or hear, that we are the victims." (4-p.50)

Assata's equilibrium was upset by physical as well as emotional problems. "Describing the death of Martin Luther King she says, "Electric shocks are zooming down my back the way they do when i am about to go temporarily insane...i think i have my period...I go home. My mother is glad to see me. She knows that i am half crazy." (4-p.195-96

Assata's personality reflects the effects of her family, her education, her church, and her society. She has made her own unique adjustment to all these forces upon her life and emerged a leader among her chosen group: the radical Black Liberation Army.

(c) Kakuya

Kakuya, Assata's daughter, was "conceived while [Assata was] being kept in a holding cell with Fred Hilton (aka Kamau), a codefendant in a federal bank robbery case (1973 Bronx bank robbery charge)." (1-p.136) She often thought about a conversation she'd had with a pregnant friend (Simba) when they were both in jail. " 'Don't worry,' she told me, 'These people can lock us up, but they can't stop life, just like they can't stop freedom. This baby was meant to be born, to carry on. They murdered Homey (baby's father, Kakuyan Olugbala), and so this baby, like all our children, is going to be our hope for the future.' I would think about her words many times later." (4-p.88)

Assata decided she wasn't going to tell the FBI how she got pregnant. "I'll tell them that this baby was sent by the Black creator to liberate Black people. I'll tell 'em that this baby is the new Black messiah, conceived in a holy way, come to lead our people to freedom and justice and to create a new Black nation." (4-p.123) She later said "this baby was our hope. Our hope for the future." (4-p.127)

SEE Recommendation #1

Kakuya was born amid tight security in the prison ward at Elmhurst Hospital Center in Queens. (1-p.136) She was born at 4:00 a.m. on September 11, 1974, and named Kakuya Amala Olugbala Shakur. When doctors tried to examine Assata after she gave birth to her

daughter, she "came close to physically brawling with a couple of them because i refused their examination." (4-p.144)

"She (Kakuya) was two-and-one-half years old by the time Assata stood trial for the (NJ Turnpike) shoot-out." (1-p.136) As Assata testified, she "held on to a small picture of my child." (4-p.252)

Kakuya visited Assata in jail after her conviction (March, 1977) for murder:

## Chapter 20

**M**y mother brings my daughter to see me at the clinton correctional facility for women in new jersey, where i had been sent from alderson. I am delirious. She looks so tall. I run up to kiss her. She barely responds. She is distant and standoffish. Pangs of guilt and sorrow fill my chest. I can see that my child is suffering. It is stupid to ask what is wrong. She is four years old, and except for these pitiful little visits—although my mother has brought her to see me every week, wherever i am, with the exception of the time i was in alderson—she has never been with her mother. I can feel something welling up in my baby. I look at my mother, my face a question mark. My mother is suffering too. I try to play. I make my arms into an elephant's trunk stalking around the visiting room jungle. It does not work. My daughter refuses to play baby elephant, or tiger, or anything. She looks at me like i am the buffoon i must look like. I try the choo-choo train routine and the la, la, la song, but she is not amused. I try talking to her, but she is puffed up and sullen.

I go over and try to hug her. In a hot second she is all over me. All i can feel are these little four-year-old fists banging away at me. Every bit of her force is in those punches, they really hurt. I let her hit me until she is tired. "It's all right," i tell her. "Let it all out." She is standing in front of me, her face contorted with anger, looking spent. She backs away and leans against the wall. "It's okay," i tell her. "Mommy understands." "You're not my mother," she screams, the tears rolling down her face. "You're not my mother and I hate you." I feel like crying too. I know she is

ASSATA 258 confused about who i am. She calls me Mommy Assata and she calls my mother Mommy.

I try to pick her up. She knocks my hand away. "You can get out of here, if you want to," she screams. "You just don't want to." "No, i can't," i say, weakly. "Yes you can." she accuses. "You just don't want to."

I look helplessly at my mother. Her face is choked with pain. "Tell her to try to open the bars," she says in a whisper.

"I can't open the door," i tell my daughter. "I can't get through the bars. You try and open the bars."

My daughter goes over to the barred door that leads to the visiting room. She pulls and she pushes. She yanks and she hits and she kicks the bars until she falls on the floor, a heap of exhaustion. I go over and pick her up. I hold and rock and kiss her. There is a look of resignation on her face that i can't stand. We spend the rest of the visit talking and playing quietly on the floor. When the guard says the visit is over, i cling to her for dear life. She holds her head high, and her back straight as she walks out of the prison. She waves good-bye to me, her face clouded and worried, looking like a little adult. I go back to my cage and cry until i vomit. I decide that it is time to leave.

See Recommendation #1

When Assata broke out of prison November 2, 1979, and eventually went to Cuba, Kakuya didn't join her mother right away. She was living with her grandmother, Doris Johnson, and it was not until the spring of 1985 that she was legally able to leave the country. "In order for Kakuya to get her passport, she needed a birth certificate...for ten years Elmhurst Hospital had refused to issue Kakuya a birth certificate." (4-p.273)

Assata "dotes" on her daughter, Kakuya. In an October 11, 1987, interview printed in Newsday she talks about her. She is sad that for 10 years she was not able to give her daughter, a large-eyed, shy girl, the attention she craved. To help Kakuya's adjustment in Cuba, Shakur has taken her to a family psychologist. Assata's mother, Doris E. Johnson, travels once a year to Cuba to visit Assata and Kakuya. (15)

When Assata's father died in 1991 (Carl Byron), it was speculated that she might return to the U. S. to protest her father's will which left \$125,000 worth of property to his live-in lover, Lillie Straughn. Most agreed, however, that she would remain in Cuba to avoid apprehension. (5)

TO MY DAUGHTER KAKUYA

ASSATA

259

i have shabby dreams for you  
of some vague freedom  
i have never known.

Baby,  
i don't want you hungry or thirsty  
or out in the cold.  
And i don't want the frost  
to kill your fruit  
before it ripens.

i can see a sunny place—  
Life exploding green.  
i can see your bright, bronze skin  
at ease with all the flowers  
and the centipedes.

i can hear laughter,  
not grown from ridicule.  
And words, not prompted  
by ego or greed or jealousy.

i see a world where harred  
has been replaced by love.  
and ME replaced by WE.

And i can see a world  
where you,  
building and exploring,  
strong and fulfilled,  
will understand.

And go beyond  
my little shabby dreams.

\*

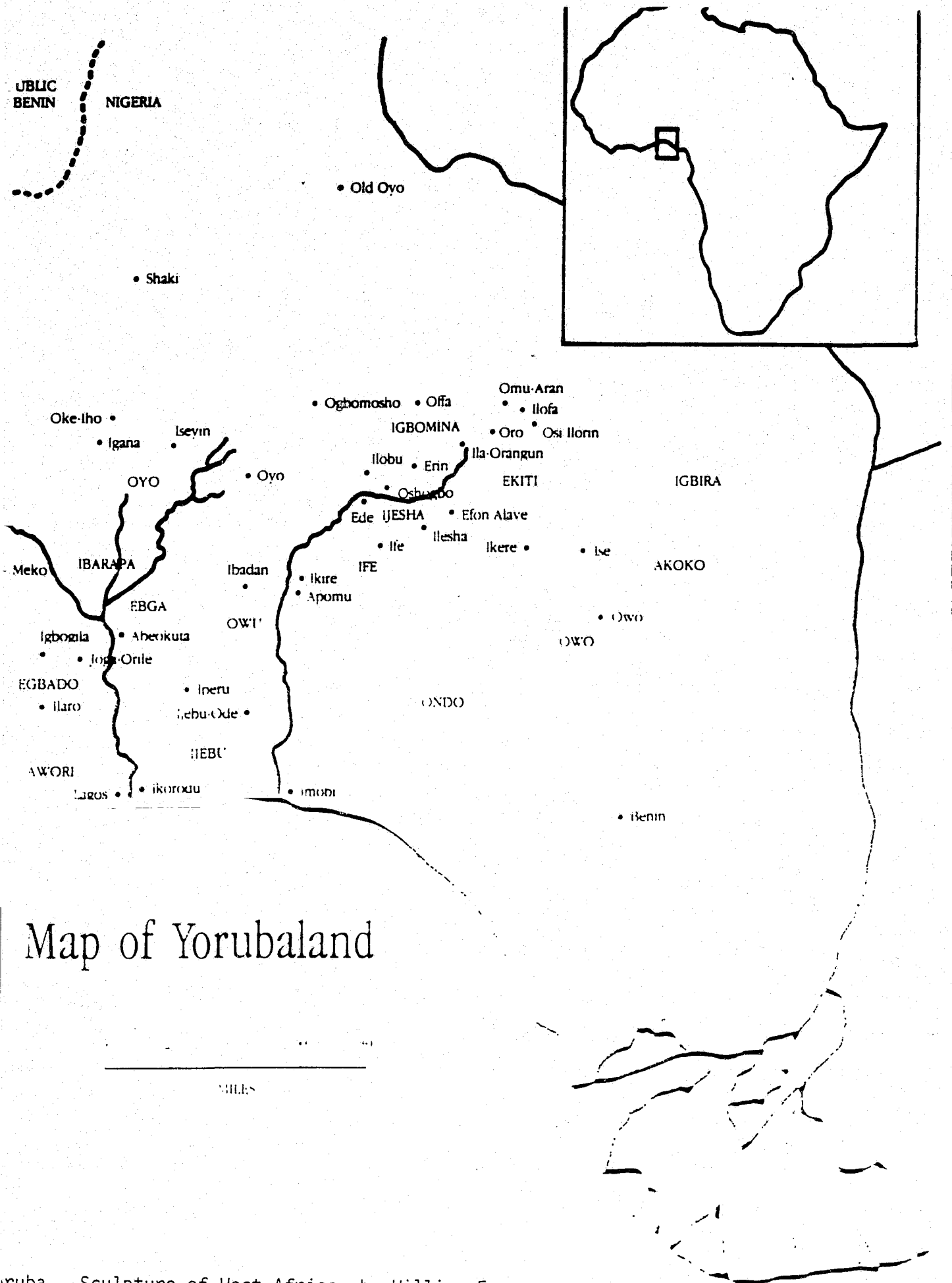
**V STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT:**  
**THE YORUBA INFLUENCE**



Members of radical groups will sometimes reject what they consider their "slave name" (legal name) and adopt a name of African origin. Some of these individuals legally change their name to their new African name. For example, in 1968, Jeral Wayne Williams, born and raised in Baltimore (DOB 8/8/50), joined the newly founded Republic of New Afrika (RNA), a black nationalist group and sought a legal name change. "On March 20, 1975, after hiring a lawyer and filing a petition in Bronx Civil Court, he had his name changed to Mutulu Shakur, which he had been using since he became a Black Muslim." (2-p.54)

SEE Recommendation #10

It is believed that the origin of these African names is the Yoruba tribe located in Nigeria, West Africa. A number of slaves brought to America were of Yoruban origin. In spite of the fact that the Yoruba were uprooted and scattered during the slavery period of 1619-1808 (12 million were forced to emigrate), their traditions endure. "During the period of slavery many of them were taken by force to the new world. Some people of African descent still practice at least some aspects of Yoruban tradition in Cuba, Brazil, and even the United States. There are residents of New York City who still perform rituals in honor of the Yoruba divinity, Sango." (2-p.51) "So vital and adaptable is the Yoruban lifeway that it has survived war, colonialism, slavery and emigration, and now also flourishes in Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, Trinidad, and the United States." (7)



SEE Recommendation #3

Black radicals with African names may very well have adopted some aspects of a Yoruban lifestyle. A look at Yoruba culture can give law enforcement personnel some ideas about the life style of these revolutionaries.

The Yoruba culture is very old. "The same regal dynasty has been ruling in Yorubaland for the past 900 years." (6) "Thousand-year-old masks of stone are still worn today by young Yoruba dancers." (6)

Every tree, every stream, every stick, every pebble is alive. This oneness with the earth and the past and the future may account for the timelessness and endurance of Yoruban culture. (7) "What is clear for the Yoruba is that there is a continuity to their culture that stretches into the very distant past. Many contemporary Yoruba have spent a great deal of time dealing with the question of their origins." (2)

The center or "capital" of Yorubaland is Ife. "We do know that a city such as Ife was founded nearly a thousand years ago and has continuously been a center of Yoruba religion ever since." (92-p.50) Ife today "lies beneath modern towns and cities." (7)

Ife is seen as the center of religious power, because it was there that the god Orisa-nla commenced with the very first acts of creation. (2-p.54)

The Yoruba are not a single, unified group. "Though all Yoruba speak a common language (English is the official language of Nigeria and is spoken by 5% of the people; 250 dialects are spoken

by the rest of the people, the most widely used are the Hausa, Yoruba, and the Ibo) and subscribe to the same world view, they actually consist of a number of social and political groups. Each of these groups has an oba (chief) as the symbol of supreme authority." (2-p.51)

In each town there is a town oba (chief, leader) who is invested with religious power. His position places him just below the gods in both power and status and, therefore, is worthy of great respect. There are annual festivals at which his presence is required. (2-p.55)

NOTE: An individual who is referred to as Oba or whose name contains "Oba", may be a high-status individual

SEE Recommendation #4

In each Yoruba household is a family shrine. The head of the family, known as the olori ebi, assumes the ritual duty of communicating with the ancestors and the gods. The ancestors are regarded as being important sources of power. No important event (birth, marriage, funeral) in the household can occur without involving the olori-ebi. These events require his guidance and ritual action. Disciplinary problems are also brought to his attention, and it is his obligation to mete out the appropriate punishment and perform the correct rites to the ancestors who have been offended by such infractions. (2-p.54)

NOTE: Dwellings which contain a shrine for deceased ancestors may indicate Yoruba influence.

Besides the ancestors, there are many gods the Yoruba must

recognize. Each of these divine beings is attended by a priesthood. One kind of priest (aworo) is the babalawo, or diviner. (2-p.55)

The babalawo communicates with Orunmila (the god most closely associated with Ife) through divination. He is most frequently consulted by the Yoruba for advice about all matters of importance. Becoming a balalawo involves a long training period and may involve having inherited the calling. (20-p.55)

NOTE: A balalawo might be expected to receive many visitors, who are coming to seek his advice.

Other priests are in charge of the many shrines. They are responsible for the sacrifices, communicating with the gods, and arranging the many festivals that are characteristic of Yorubaland. (2-p.56)

#### SEE Recommendation #4

In addition to priests, there are mediums or eleguns who are believed to be spiritually possessed. During religious festivals, experiences of possession frequently occur. (2-p.56)

All Yoruba have knowledge of medicine, but the oloogun is the specialist who can identify causes and prescribe cures. He is the repository of medical knowledge. He usually works in cooperation with the babalawo. (2-p.56) Osanyin possesses the hidden powers of the mind. His priests are skilled at treating emotional and mental disorders using the therapeutic powers of various leaves or plants. (3-p.197)

NOTE: A collection of leaves indoors (or unusual plants

growing inside or outdoors) may denote a household practicing Yoruba medicine.

In Yoruban culture, all things are imbued with life force. People are both who they are and what they may be or might have been. The dead are not dead. They will return from the after-world to live through the flesh of their descendants. (7)

NOTE: This reluctance to see death as final can be noted when dealing with Yoruban suspects in "armed and dangerous" situations.

When people of importance die, they are buried twice. The corpse is buried first. Then months or even years can pass before the second Ako burial which involves a life-sized effigy. (6)

NOTE: Law enforcement officials might expect a second burial or presence of a life-sized effigy when dealing with Yoruba suspects.

Masked dancers or egungun perform at festivals and other important occasions. They wear long, colorful robes and are thought to be the representatives of the ancestors. These masks are handed down from generation to generation and are regarded as possessing great power. One woman, the iya agan is allowed contact with the masked dancers. It is her job to supervise the dressing of the egungun. (2-p.56-7)

NOTE: The presence of long, colorful robes or masks may indicate a Yoruban household.

A common Yoruba religious practice is divination or ifa. "Each person has chosen his or her identity before birth, and that

identity includes a life plan that is that person's fate." (2-p.67-8) Each person is regarded as the reincarnation of an ancestor and consults with a babalawo (diviner) to discover his or her destiny.

The babalawo (father of secret things) has a special relationship to the god Orunmila. He uses sixteen palm nuts (or a divining chain), a divining board, and divining powder. He places the sixteen nuts in his left hand and then attempts to take as many of them with his right hand as possible. He does this eight times and notes a score each time. There are 256 possible combinations in his scoring system and each score has a set of traditional stories associated with it. The babalawo will know at least four parables (Odu) for each score. The babalawo's expertise is measured by the amount of wisdom contained in these parables. (2-p.67)

NOTE: The presence of palm nuts or a flat surface with powder on it may denote a Yoruban household.

The balalawo informs the consulter what action the parable recommends. A sacrifice of some kind is usually indicated. (2-p.67)

The principal occupation of the Yoruba is farming, although they are essentially an urban society. The Yoruban may have a dwelling in his farming area, but he still maintains a home in the city. His city dwelling is considered the most important.

One of the most important annual events is harvesting of crops. "A good crop means plenty, and a poor crop means famine."

*The Yoruba and Their Religious Tradition*



*A Babalawo performing Ifa divination.*

*Photograph by William R. Bascom. Used with the permission of the  
Louie Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley.*



(2-p.69) The most important crop is yams.

NOTE: The cultivation or presence of yams may indicate a Yoruban dwelling.

Eje is the annual New Yam festival, at which offerings of a white kola nut and a white pigeon are made. (2-p.69)

A woman who is pregnant must first pay a visit to the babalawo in her city. He will divine the destiny of the unborn child and prescribe medicines to ensure a good birth. Very soon after the child is born, he is taken to the babalawo, who performs a ritual to determine the child's destiny.

NOTE: Law enforcement officials might watch for these kinds of visits if a baby is born into a Yoruban suspect's family.

Boys are named on the ninth day, girls on the seventh, and twins on the eighth day. (2-p.72) The Yoruba have the highest incident of twinning in the world and consider it good fortune. However, if one or both of the twins should die, a carver makes one or more surrogate images that the mother treats as if alive. (8)

The child's first name is a religious name and the last name is a family name. A newborn son's place of residence is with his grandfather who, as family head (olori ebi), is the most direct link with the family ancestors. Here he will learn both the religious traditions and the intricacies of farming from his grandfather. (2-p.72)

Yoruba life is centered around family events--birth, marriage, and death--respect for ancestors, and worship of many gods.

Festivals and rituals accompany these events.

NOTE: Yoruba family events bring together family members and their tribal leaders--they may bring suspects out of hiding to mark these important occasions.

"The Yoruba, 18 million strong now, are a people to be reckoned with." (6)

**VI HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MINIMANUAL OF THE URBAN GUERRILLA**

**(Carlos Marighella)**

## Quotes from the Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla

### Definition of the Urban Guerrilla:

"The urban guerrilla is a man who fights the military dictatorship with arms, using unconventional methods." (p.3)

"The urban guerrilla follows a political goal and only attacks the government, the big capitalists, and the foreign imperialists, particularly North Americans." (3)

"The principal task of the urban guerrilla is to distract, to wear out, to demoralize the militarists...and to destroy the wealth and property of the North Americans." (p.3)

"...goal is to create...a totally new and revolutionary social and political structure, with the armed people in power." (p.3)

### Personal qualities of the Urban Guerrilla

"He must be a good tactician and a good shot." (p.3)

"...fighting for a just cause..." (p.5)

"...from a moral point of view, the urban guerrilla has an undeniable superiority..." (p.5)

"...faces the problem of a variety of arms (captured from the enemy) and a shortage of ammunition..." (p.5)

"...(urban guerrilla) must possess initiative, courage, bravery, mobility, flexibility, versatility, command of any situation and be imaginative and creative..." (p.5)

"To be a good walker, to be able to stand up against fatigue, hunger, rain, heat. To know how to hide. Not to act impulsively. To remain calm and cool in the worst conditions and situations. Never to leave a track or trail. Not to get discouraged." (p.5)

"...be careful not to appear strange or separate from ordinary city life..." (p.6)

"The urban guerrilla must have great capacity for observation, must be well informed about everything principally about the enemy's movements." (p.6)

### Technical Preparation of the Urban Guerrilla

"Useful forms of physical preparation: hiking, camping, swimming, skin diving, training as a frogman, fighting, harpooning, and the hunting of birds, small and big game" (p.9)

"It is very important to learn how to drive, pilot a plane, handle a motor boat and a sailboat, understand mechanics, radio, telephone, electricity, and have some knowledge of electronic techniques." (p.9)

"It is also important to have a knowledge of topographical information, to calculate distances, make maps." (p.9)

"...a knowledge of chemistry, stampmaking, calligraphy, copying of letters (for falsifying documents)..." (p.9)

"...understand medicine, pharmacology, drugs, elementary surgery and emergency first aid..." (p.9)

"...know how to handle all types of arms, ammunition and explosives (dynamite)..." (p.9)

"...know how to make and repair arms, prepare Molotov cocktails, grenades, mines, homemade destructive devices, how to blow up bridges..." (p.9)

"The highest level of preparation for the urban guerrilla is the center for technical training. But only the guerrilla who has already passed the preliminary examination can go on to this school --that is to say, one who has passed the proof of fire in revolutionary action in actual combat against the enemy." (p.9)

"...use of light arms, usually captured from the enemy, purchased or made on the spot..." (p.10)

"The urban guerrilla's reason for existence, the basic condition in which he acts and survives, is to shoot." (p.11)

NOTE: As shooting and guns are the focal point for the urban guerrilla's existence, he probably would be attracted to gun shows, catalogues offering guns for sale, want ads for used guns, gun magazines, shooting ranges, amusement parks, video games.

"...make use of the surprise factor and shoot first..." (p.11)

"Shooting must be learned until it becomes a reflex action on the part of the urban guerrilla." (p.13)

### The Firing Group

"In order to function, the urban guerrillas must be organized in small groups. A group of no more than four or five is called the firing group." (p.13)

"The best shot and the one who best knows how to manage the machine gun is the person in charge of operations." (p.13)

"This means that, except for the priority of objections set by the strategic command, any firing group can decide to assault a bank (etc.) without the need to consult the general command." (p.13)

"No firing group can remain inactive...its obligation is to act." (p.13)

"The general command counts on the firing groups to carry out objectives of a strategic nature" (p. 13)

### Logistics

"Every good urban guerrilla must be a good driver. As to the vehicle, the urban guerrilla must expropriate what he needs." (p.15)

"...money, arms, ammunition, explosives must be expropriated..." (p.15)

"And the urban guerrilla must rob banks and armories and seize explosives and ammunition wherever he finds them." (p.15)

### Technique

"It is a technique of surprise and rapid retreat." (p.16)

"The paradox is that the urban guerrilla, although weaker, is nevertheless the attacker." (p.16)

### Urban Guerrilla Advantages:

- "(1) ...take the enemy by surprise
- (2) ...know the terrain better than the enemy
- (3) ...greater mobility and speed than the police
- (4) ...information service (intelligence) must be better than the enemy's
- (5)...be in command of the situation and demonstrate a decisiveness so great that everyone on our side is inspired and never thinks of hesitating, while on the other side the enemy is stunned and incapable of responding." (p.16)

"Our experience is that the ideal urban guerrilla is one who operates in his own city and knows thoroughly its streets, its neighborhoods, its transit problems, and other peculiarities." (p.18)

### Information

"The enemy (police) is observed by the people, but he does not know who among the people transmits information to the urban guerrilla." (p.20)

"The creation of an intelligence service with an organized structure is a basic need for us." (p.20)

"The urban guerrilla must not evade the duty--once he knows who the spy or informer is--of wiping him out physically." (p.20)

"For the complete success of the battle against spies and informers, it is essential to organize a counterespionage or counterintelligence service." (p.20)

"Careful reading of the press, news transmissions will give urban guerrillas a decisive advantage." (p.21)

"Decision means to put into practice the plan that has been devised with determination, with audacity, and with absolute firmness." (p.21)

"The worst enemy of the urban guerrilla and the major danger we run is infiltration into our organization by a spy or an informer. The spy trapped within the organization will be punished with death." (p.37)

"The enemy wants to annihilate us and fights relentlessly to find us and destroy us, so that our great weapon consists of hiding from him and attacking him by surprise." (p.37)

#### Seven Sins of the Urban Guerrilla

- "(1) inexperience
  - (2) to boast about the actions he has completed and broadcast them to the four winds
  - (3) vanity
  - (4) to exaggerate his strength and to undertake projects for which he lacks forces
  - (5) precipitous action - loses patience - impetuously throws himself into action, suffering untold reverses
  - (6) to attack the enemy when he is most angry
  - (7) to fail to plan things and to act out of improvisation"
- (p.38-9)

"One of the permanent concerns of the urban guerrilla is his identification with popular causes to win public support." (p.39)

"The urban guerrilla must have a political motivation and technical revolutionary training." (p.39)

## FAMILY HISTORY--THE BLACK LIBERATION ARMY

May 21, 1971 Killed Patrolmen Joseph Piagentini (white) and Waverly Jones (black); Colonial Park Houses, Harlem; BLA issued communique claiming credit for the shootings.

August, 1971 Ingleside, CA; police desk sergeant shot; BLA issued communique claiming credit; Anthony Bottom, Albert Washington, Herman Bell convicted for both attacks (May & August)

January 28, 1972 Killed Patrolmen Gregory Foster (black) and Rocco Laurie (white); Shrimp Boat Restaurant, Lower East Side, NYC; Assata Shakur sought for questioning; George Jackson Squad of the BLA claimed credit and promised a "spring offensive"

May 2, 1973 Shoot-out on the New Jersey Turnpike (Assata's car pulled over for faulty tail light); State Trooper Werner Foerster was killed; State Trooper James Harper was injured; one revolutionary, James Costan (aka Zayd Malik Shakur, Assata's brother-in-law) was killed; Assata Shakur arrested, charged with murder of Foerster and injuring Harper.

January 26, 1974 Assata Shakur's first trial for Foerster's murder; trial severed from that of codefendant Clark Edward Squire (aka Sundiata Acoli) when she became pregnant.

September 11, 1974 Assata's daughter, Kakuya, born.

March 25, 1977 (or April 16) Assata Shakur convicted of murdering State Trooper Foerster; sentenced to life plus 26-33 years.

September 11, 1979 Armored car robbery; \$105,000 stolen in Paramus, NJ; several revolutionary groups including the BLA took part; proceeds used to free Assata Shakur.

November 2, 1979 Assata Shakur's prison break from the Clinton Correctional Institution for Woman in NJ; several groups took part including the BLA, Weather Underground, M19, and Republic of New Afrika (RNA).

1981-84 Assata granted political asylum in Cuba.



October 20, 1981	Brinks armored car robbery; Nanuet Mall, Nyack (Rockland County) NY; one Brinks guard and two Nyack police officers murdered; another guard and police officer shot; money is left behind; money sought to finance revolutionary activities.
Spring, 1985	Kakuya joins her mother, Assata Shakur, in Cuba.
October 11, 1987	<u>Newsday</u> interview with Assata in Cuba: says she believes "armed struggle" is needed to fight oppression; grants interview and publicly reveals her whereabouts to promote her new book, an autobiography.
December, 1987	<u>Assata--An Autobiography</u> is published; Mutulu Shakur (60 years) and Marilyn Buck (40-50 years) sentenced for involvement in Brinks Nyack robbery.
Present	The BLA is believed to be still active.

## **VII RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

(1) Determine the status of Assata Shakur's daughter, Kakuya (DOB 9/11/74)--Did Assata educate her in revolutionary ideology? Did she groom her to take over as the soul of the BLA? Investigate the children of other revolutionaries: Nzinga (DOB 6/81), daughter of Mutulu and Makini Shakur; Harriet (DOB approx. 1980), daughter of Judith Clark; Determine dates of important events in the lives of these children such as christenings (learn the names of godparents), birthdays, graduations, weddings, etc.

(2) Research the Yoruba culture--Include the pioneering essay on Yoruban art, written in the 1940's by William Fagg (2-p.235); Yoruba influences are shown in suspect's behavior such as: Cecilio Rodrigo Ferguson (aka Chui Ferguson), a very religious man, who kept his spirits up while hiding out in the woods after the Nyack robbery by concentrating on the trees and offering a prayer of thanks that included the phrase, "Praise the ancestors for the trees." (2-p.235)

(3) Explore the international connection--contact intelligence sources (and cultural sources such as universities) in Brazil, Trinidad, Haiti, Cuba--anywhere Yoruba outposts exist, as well as Nigeria for information on Yoruba ideologies and customs; investigate international links between revolutionary groups; check with Zed Press, London, publisher of Assata's book; Leonard Boudin (father of Kathy Boudin) was appointed registered legal agent for the Castro government in Cuba

(4) Determine when and how Yoruba festivals and rituals are

celebrated.

(5) Evaluate automated (computerized) organizational association software used to keep track of the many revolutionary groups and the associations between different groups/group members. The bad guys are evidently using computer assistance; the RNA (Republic of New Afrika) upset a group of black POW's when it reneged on its promise to buy a personal computer for the black POWs so they could analyze FBI COINTELPRO documents released to them under the Freedom of Information Act. (2-p.194)

(6) Monitor important family events (births-marriages-deaths) in the lives of radical group members. Determine how widely dispersed group members let each other know about family happenings. Subscribe to underground newspapers and newsletters; check computer bulletin boards. On November 2, 1987, 100 blacks met in Harlem to celebrate the eighth anniversary of the liberation of JoAnne Chesimard. Is this an annual event? Where is it held, and who attends?

(7) Evaluate the strategic advantage of initiating a discussion with BLA leaders.

(8) Review the works of Henry John Drewal, Professor, University of Wisconsin, Department of Art History/Afro-American Studies, (608-263-9362). He wrote the highly acclaimed exhibition catalogue for the 1990 Smithsonian exhibit, Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought.

"It is in its superb catalogue that the Yoruba exhibit towers over most African displays. Written by scholars Henry John

Drewal...the volume is vastly more than a description of choice objects. Full of splendid photographs, it is also a compendium of Yoruba history, archaeology, thought and metaphysics." (6)

Before writing the catalogue, he worked as an apprentice to a Yoruban master artist to get the feel of the materials and gain insight. National Museum of African Art, Museum Shop, (202) 786-2147, has one hard-back copy at \$55 (Public Affairs Office, 202-357-4870).

(9) Investigate whether Assata Shakur speaks Spanish. If so, who taught her and does she still have a relationship with this person? Her mother speaks some Spanish: "When we got home my mother explained that she had been speaking Spanish." (4-p.28) Where and when did she learn?

(10) Contact a large university with an African linguist on its staff. Ask them to analyze, from a linguistic point of view, the various names of BLA suspects; This may reveal the suspect's role and status within the radical group. Secure copies of the court documents for legal name changes.

(11) The Big Dance (2-p.135) mentions that after the shoot-out on the New Jersey Turnpike on May 2, 1973, Zayd Malik Shakur, Assata's brother-in-law was killed. Investigate the identity of Assata's sister, Beverly, and Beverly's family and associates. Determine whether Assata had any other siblings.

(12) Ask the relatives of officers who were killed if they know anything. They may have obtained some information on their

own. Did they ever receive a note from a revolutionary group trying to explain why their relative was killed? Patrolman Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones (shot outside Colonial Park Houses, Harlem), Patrolmen Gregory Foster and Rocco Laurie (shot outside Shrimp Boat Restaurant, Lower East Side, NYC), State Trooper Werner Foerster (shoot 5/2/73 on the NJ Turnpike), two Nyack police officers killed, 10/20/81 outside Nanuet Mall branch of Nanuet National Bank.

(13) Research vacation areas. The Big Dance that mentions Tyrone Q. Rison (aka Osedrick Laluepe) was vacationing in the Poconos. (2-p.158) Is there a favorite radical hang-out up there? Also, Mutulu Shakur spotted the location for the Nanuet Brinks truck robbery site "... on his way to the summer house of a friend." (2-p.191) Which well known vacation spot is near this location?

(14) Investigate whether orange juice has any significance for revolutionary groups. Drugs? Health food diet? Sondra Margo Mitchell (Margo) allowed Mutulu Shakur to use her apartment as a staging area for a robbery while she attended a funeral. When she returned a few days later, she found "empty orange juice" containers all over the apartment." (1-p.203 The videotape Underground mentions "...walking by a counter where you can buy fresh- squeezed orange juice."

(15) Seek the services (seminar or videotape) of a specialist in personality development, especially delinquent behaviors which result in criminal acts. A specialist in the psychological

structuring of personality may be able to answer the questions: "In the growth of his personality, where did goal orientations change and go against the larger patterns of culture? Why does he perceive the world through hostility-tinted glasses?" (12)

(16) Where is Louis Chesimard (Assata's ex-husband)? They were married 4/2/69--marriage annulled a year later--in a Roman Catholic ceremony. What were the grounds for annulment? Why did Assata retain her married name? Was there a legal name change to Assata Shakur?

(17) John Castellucci, author of The Big Dance, stuffed his book with facts about the Weather Underground Organization and other revolutionary groups. He seems to be excellent at retrieving facts from public sources. Investigate whether he is knowledgeable and willing to give law enforcement officials a briefing on current revolutionary group activities.

(18) Assata probably wouldn't try to visit the U.S., but she might leave Cuba to visit some other country where she could see her American friends. "When the Israeli police arrested a Dutch terrorist, Ludwina Janssen, she confessed that she had been trained by Cuban instructors at camps in South Yemen." (23-p.36)

(19) Determine the BLA source of information about the police. Where do they get information about law enforcement capabilities, personnel, and strategic plans?

(20) Examine Sun Tsu's Art of War. Invite a speaker from a military college to give a briefing on strategic tactics using the principles of Sun Tsu.

(21) Employ a multidisciplinary approach, gathering assistance and information from many law enforcement agencies to work along with the Maryland State Police. This would give law enforcement personnel the best possible chance to successfully attack BLA goals and objectives.

(22) What does the BLA want? It would be helpful to know exactly the goals of the BLA to help guide the setting of law enforcement policy. A clear, concise listing gathered from the group itself would be most valuable. Public sources have stated that they want:

\* Freedom--from police harassment

"The police patrol our communities just like the guards here (prison). I don't have the faintest idea how it feels to be free." (4-p.60)

"I want to apologize to you, my Black brothers and sisters, for being on the New Jersey Turnpike. I should have known better. The Turnpike is a checkpoint where Black people are stopped, searched, harassed and assaulted." (4-p.52)

\* Control over their own lives (equal to that of other members in society)

"We aren't free politically, economically, or socially. We have very little power over what happens in our lives." (4-p.52)

Research has been done on the sense of helplessness and lack of control and how it



changes the behavior of humans and animals.

A survey of this research could be illuminating.

- \* Respect
- \* Dignity
- \* Justice

Once the BLA goals are known, intelligent law enforcement policy can be set, which will be proactive instead of reactive. Rather than treating each new BLA crime with righteous indignation and harsh law enforcement, we can adjust the law enforcement response to recognize BLA ideologies and effectively prevent them from realizing their goals.

The purpose of intelligence is to give advanced warning of what lies ahead--to "know your enemy." Intelligence information can assist law enforcement officials to understand, monitor, and control BLA activities through analysis of BLA history and lifestyles. Knowledge is power. Intelligence analysis is an important tool we can use to prevent the BLA from achieving their revolutionary goals and help us to achieve our goal:

A safe and crime-free society for all Americans.

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