

Liberation or Gangsterism: Freedom or Slavery? *Russell Maroon Shoatz*

Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission—fulfill it or betray it.

The Wretched of the Earth, Frantz Fanon¹

INTRODUCTION

Within two generations the youth of this country have come full circle. Starting off in 1955, youth were being driven by two major motivations. One was to acquire enough education or apprenticeships, make use of their unskilled labor or street smarts to land “good” jobs or establish hustles, and make as much money and obtain as many material trappings as possible. The other was to use the education, apprenticeships, unskilled labor, street smarts, jobs, hustles and material trappings provided by them to win a measure of respect and dignity from their peers and society in general. Simultaneously, they were learning to respect themselves as individuals of self-worth—beyond simply eating, sleeping, laboring and having sex.

THE FIRST WAVE: 1955 TO CIRCA 1980

The Civil Rights Movement in the South successfully motivated Black, Puerto Rican, Euro-Amerikan, Native Amerikan, Chicano Mexicano Indigenous and Asian youth to use their time, energies, creativity and imaginations to discover their true self-worth and earn the respect of the entire world, while struggling towards even broader goals that were not measured by one’s material possessions. And over time each segment cheered on, supported, worked in solidarity with and/or discovered their own common interests and closely linked missions, connected to broader people’s goals.

Thus, Black youth elevated the Civil Rights Movement to the Black Power and Black Liberation Movements. Puerto Rican youth energized their elders’ on-going struggle to win independence for their home islands. Euro-Amerikan youth attacked the lies, hypocrisy and oppression that their parents were training them to uphold in the schools, society and overseas. Native Amerikan youth were returning to their suppressed ancestral ways and fighting to regain control over some of their land. Asian youth were struggling to overcome a system and culture that had always used and abused them.

Indeed, all of them came to clearly see that neither education, jobs, money, hustles nor material trappings could, by themselves, win them the victories they needed, or the new type of dignity and respect they deserved. Moreover, from 1955 until about 1975, these youths joined, formulated, led and supported struggles world-wide against racial oppression and bigotry, colonialism, and oppression of women and youth. In the

process, they were winning themselves the respect, admiration and gratitude of the world's oppressed, as well as that of their peers. Furthermore, in addition to becoming people that societies must take seriously, they were positive contributors who had much to give and were willing to sacrifice to achieve goals. They were youth who were capable of imagining a better world and fighting to realize it, while still remaining youthful and having a good time while doing it. All in all, it earned them a much deserved place in history.

FROM THE MOUNTAIN TO THE SEWER

Yet here we are 30 years later and the youth nowadays are ridiculed and have been stripped of that hard earned freedom, self-respect and dignity. They are being told—over and over—that the only way to regain them is again to acquire education, skills, good jobs, or the right hustle(s). This means, once again, to acquire as much money and material things as one can in order again to win respect and dignity from one's peers and society—and thereby begin to start loving one's self, and seeing one's self as more than simply a eating, sleeping, working and sexual animal.

How the hell did we get back to 1955!?

First off, let me make clear that even with all of the glorious strides the youth made within the First Wave, they were not the only ones fighting for radical and in many cases revolutionary changes. In fact, more than anything, they were usually only the tip of the spear. They were the shock troops of a global struggle, motivated by youthful energy and impatience, with no time or temperament for elaborate theories, rushing forward into the fray, ill prepared for the tricks that would eventually overwhelm them.

So, to understand what happened, we must examine some of the main “tricks” used to slow down, misdirect, control and defeat them. And without a point, a spear loses all of its advantages.

STRATEGIC TRICKS USED AGAINST THEM

Understanding these tricks, their various guises and refinements is the key to everything. You will never really understand what happened to get us to this point, or be able to really move forward, until you master recognition of these tricks and devise ways to defeat them.

They were and remain:

- Co-optation
- Glamorization of Gangsterism
- Separation from the Most Advanced (political revolutionary) Elements
- Indoctrination In Reliance on Passive Approaches
- Raw Fear

Co-optation was used extensively to trick just about all of the First Wave youth into believing that they had won the war. Strategically, for every named segment of youth—university students to lower class communities—billions of dollars and resources were made available. This was supposedly for these youth to determine what should be done to carry out far-reaching changes, while all along being expertly monitored and subtly coaxed further and further away from their most radical and advanced elements. This was done mainly through control of the largess, which ultimately was part of the ruling classes' foundations and government and corporate strategies for defeating the youth with sugar-coated bullets.

In time, consequently, substantial segments of these previously rebellious youth found themselves fully absorbed and neutralized by either directly joining or accepting the foundations, sub-groups, corporations, university facilities, “approved” community groups’ poisonous assistance—or by becoming full-fledged junior partners after winning control of thousands of previously out of reach political offices and appointments.

And for all intents and purposes, that same trick is still being used today.

Glamorization of gangsterism, however, was then and continues to be the most harmful trick played against the lower class segments. The males, in particular, were then and continue to be the most susceptible to this gambit, especially when used opposite prolonged exposure to raw fear!

Let me illustrate by way of two historic groups that presently enjoy nothing less than “icon” status amongst just about everyone aware of them. Yet, these two groups’ “documented histories” clearly show how that trick was played, and continues to be played, throughout this country. The following is a brief, but clear, history of how the original Black Panther Party was bludgeoned and intimidated to the point where its key leader(s) “consciously” steered the group into accepting the “Glamorization of Gangsterism”. Because it became less of a threat to the ruling classes’ interests, it won them a temporary respite from the “Raw Fear” those circles were leveling against them. In the process, the organization was totally destroyed. The Nation of Islam “connected” Black Mafia had a different background, but against whom the same two tricks were played. It also left in their wake a sordid tale of Black young men who were—again—turned from seeking to be Liberators, into ruthless oppressors of their own communities. They never once engaged their real enemies and oppressors: the ruling classes.

Hands down, the original Black Panther Party (BPP) won more attention, acclaim, respect, support and sympathy than any other youth group of its time. At the same time, nevertheless, they provoked more fear and worry in ruling class circles than any other domestic group since President Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower presided over the neutralizing of the working class and the U.S. wing of the Communist Party. They were even more feared than the much larger Civil Rights Movement. According to the head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, the Panthers were the “greatest threat to the internal security of the country”². That threat came from their (BPP) ability to inspire other youth—both in the U.S. and globally—to act in similar grassroots political revolutionary ways.

Thus, there were separate BPP “style” formations amongst the Native Americans—American Indian Movement); Puerto Ricans—the Young Lords; the Chicano Mexicano Indigenous—the Brown Berets; Asians—the I Wor Kuen; Euro-American—Young Patriot Party and White Panther Party; even the elderly—Gray Panthers. Also, there were literally hundreds of other similar, lesser known groups! In addition, internationally, the BPP had an arm in Algeria that had the only official “Embassy” established amongst all of the other Afrikan, Asian and South Amerikan revolutionary groups seeking refuge in that—then—revolutionary country. Astonishingly, they even spawned separate Black Panther Parties in India, the Bahamas and Nova Scotia, Australia and Occupied Palestine/the State of Israel!

On the other hand, the Nation of Islam (NOI) had been active since 1930. Yet, they also experienced a huge upsurge in membership in the same period, mainly due to the charismatic personality of Malcolm X and his aggressive recruitment techniques. His influence carried on after his assassination, fueled by the overall rebellious spirit of the youth looking for some group who would lead them to fight against the system.

There is a mountain of documents that clearly show that the highest powers in this country classified both groups as Class A Threats. These powers wanted to either neutralize or destroy these groups, even musing that if that could be achieved, similar methods could be used to defeat youth in the rest of the country.

So, how did they do it? Against the BPP they used a combination of co-optation, glamorization of gangsterism, separation from the most advanced elements, indoctrination in reliance on passive approaches, and raw fear—every trick in the book.

The ruling class's governmental, intelligence, legal and academic sources, alarmed by the growth and boldness of the BPP and related groups, as well as their ability to win a level of global support, devised a strategy to split the BPP and co-opt its more compliant elements. At the same time, they moved to totally annihilate its more radical and revolutionary remainders. Plus, they knew that they had the upper hand, due to the youth and inexperience of the BPP. They had their own deep well of resources and experience in using counter-insurgency techniques against:

- Marcus Garvey's UNIA (United Negro Improvement Association),
- The Palmer Raids against Euro-Americans of an Anarchist and/or left Socialist bent,
- The crushing of the I.W.W. (International Workers of the World) and neutralizing of the other Socialists,
- Their underground work that led to the defeat of Germany and Italy,
- Their subsequent destruction of any real Communist power in Western Europe,
- Their total domination and subjugation of the Caribbean (except Cuba), Central and South America—except for the fledging guerrilla movements, and,
- Everything they had learned in their wars to replace the European colonial powers in Africa and Asia.

Still, the BPP had highly a motivated cadre, imbued with a fearlessness little known amongst domestic groups. The ruling class and their henchmen were stretched thin, especially since the Vietnamese, Laotians and Kampuchians were kicking their ass in South East Asia, and also the freedom fighters in Guinea-Bissau and Angola had the United States' European allies—whom the U.S. supplied with the latest military hardware—on the run. So, although inexperienced, it still was a mixed bag. They still had a fighting chance. The co-optation depended on them neutralizing the BPP co-founder, and by then an icon, Huey P. Newton. Afterwards, they used him—along with other methods—to split the BPP and lead his wing along reformist lines. In the process, this forced the still revolutionary wing into an all-out armed fight before they were ready, hoping to either kill, jail, exile or break their will to resist and send them into ineffective hiding-out. Plus, even with their (BPP) extraordinary stature globally, no country seemed to want to risk U.S. wrath by “openly” allowing the BPP to train guerrilla units—something they could have circumvented in time.

So, surprisingly, Huey was allowed to leave jail with a still-to-be-tried-murder-of-a-policeman charge pending. The government and courts had him on a short leash, and with it hopes to control his actions, although probably not through any direct agreements. Sadly, the still politically naive BPP cadre and the other youth who looked up to Newton could imagine “nothing” but that “they”—the people—had forced his release. Veterans from those times still insist on clinging to such tripe!

Yet it seems Newton thought otherwise, and since he was not prepared to go underground and join his fledging Black Liberation Army (BLA), he almost immediately began following a reformist script. This was completely at odds with his earlier theories and writings, as well as with basic principles that were being practised to good effect by oppressed people throughout the world. Even further, he used his almost complete control of the BPP Central Committee to expel many, many veteran and combat tested BPP cadre in an imitation of the Stalinist and Euro-gangster posture for which he would later become famous. This included an all-out shooting war to repress any BPP members who would not accept his independently derived reformist policies.

At the same time, on a parallel track, U.S. and local police and intelligence agencies were using their, now, infamous COINTELPRO operations to provoke the split between Huey's dominated wing and other less compliant

BPP members. This finally reached a head in 1971, after Huey's shooting war and purge forced scores of the most loyal, fearless and dedicated above ground BPP cadre to go underground and join those other BPP members who were already functioning there as the offensive armed wing. Panther Wolves, Afro-American Liberation Army and Black Liberation Army were all names by which they were known, but the latter is the only one that would stick. Yet, the Black Liberation Army (BLA) had already become a confederation of clandestine guerrilla units, of mostly Black Revolutionary Nationalists from any number of formations who were willing to accept the BPP's leadership, and who also accepted Huey Newton as their Minister of Defense. But, obviously Newton didn't see it that way.

Even more telling, it was later learned that Newton's expensive penthouse apartment—where he and other Central Committee members handled any number of sensitive BPP issues, was under on-going surveillance by intelligence agents who had another apartment down the hall. Thus, Newton and his faction were encapsulated, leaving them unable to follow anything but government sanctioned scripts, unless he/they went underground. This only occurred when Newton fled to Cuba after his gangster antics threatened the revoking of his release on the pending legal matters the government held over his head.

Add to that, the glamorization of gangsterism was something that various ruling class elements had begun to champion and direct towards the Black lower classes in particular. This was especially the case after they saw how much attention the Black Arts Movement was able to generate. Indeed, they recognized it could be used to misdirect youthful militancy while still being hugely profitably. They had, in fact, already misdirected Euro-American and other youth with the James Bond (Sean Connery, 1962-67; 1971) "I Spy" (1965-68), "Secret Agent Man" (1964-66) and other replacements for the "Old West/Cowboy and Indians" racist crap, so why not a "Black" counterpart? Thus was born the enormously successful counter-insurgency genre collectively know as the Blacksploitation movies: "Shaft" (1971), "Superfly" (1972), "Black Caesar" (1973), "Foxy Brown" (1974), and the like, accompanied by the wannabe crossovers like "Starsky and Hutch" (1975), with the notorious Black snitch "Huggie Bear". Psychological warfare!

Follow the psychology: you can be "Black," cool, rebellious, dangerous, and rich; have respect, women, cars, fine clothes, jewelry, and an expensive

home; and even stay high, as long as you don't fight the system—or the cops! But, if you don't go along with that script, then get ready to go back to the early days—with its shoot-outs with the cops, going to the graveyard, prison, on the run and exile! But you can still be cool, even as a “Huggie Bear” style snitch, or, interestingly, even like his buddy, the post-modern day/futuristic rat Cipher of “The Matrix”, who tried to betray ZION in return for a fake life as a rich, steak-eating, movie star. And most importantly, no more fighting with the Agents! Get it?

To bolster the government's assault—and to saddle the oppressed with a Trojan Horse that would strategically handicap them for decades to come—they began to flood our neighborhoods with heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and “meth”. Yes, all of those drugs had earlier been introduced to these areas by organized criminals—under local police and political protection. Now the intelligence agencies were using them in the same manner that alcohol had long ago been introduced to the Native Americans—and with the same intentions—and that the later “foreign” trafficking in opium by the ruling classes of Europe and this country had been done—to counter their propensities to rebel against outside control while profiting from their misery.

So, Newton began to indulge in drugs as a way to try to relieve the stress of all that he was facing. He became a drug addict, plain and simple. That, however, didn't upset the newly constructed gangster/cool that Hollywood, the ruling class and the government were pushing. Although many BPP cadre and other outsiders were very nervous about it, Newton's control was by then too firmly fixed for anyone to challenge it, except the BLA, who by then were in a full blown urban guerrilla war with the government.

At the same time, the reformist wing of the BPP did manage to make some noteworthy strides under its only female head, Elaine Brown. Newton's drug addiction/ gangster lifestyle provoked exile caused him (on his own, and without any consultation with the body) to “appoint” Elaine to head the Party in his absence. An exceptionally gifted woman, she relied on an inner circle of female BPP cadre, backed by male enforcers, to introduce some clear and consistent projects that helped the BPP become a real power locally. It was a reformist paradigm, though, that could not hope to achieve any of the radical/revolutionary changes called for earlier. In fact, in Newton's earlier writings, he had put the cadre on notice that there would be a point in time when the aboveground would have to be supported by

an underground, in order to keep moving forward. Yet, it was Newton who completely rejected that paradigm upon being released from jail, although he still organized and controlled a heavily armed extortion arm called “The Squad,” which consisted of BPP cadre who terrorized Oakland’s underworld with a belt-operated machine gun, mounted on a truck bed, accompanied by cadre who were ready for war! In classic Euro-gangster fashion, Newton had turned to preying on segments of the community that he had earlier vowed to liberate. But, of course, the police and government were safe from his forces. With no connection to a true underground—the BLA—there was no rational way to ratchet up the pressure on the police, government and the still fully operational system of ruling class control and oppression. They had been reduced to completely sanctioned methods.

Consequently, we can see all of the government’s props bearing fruit. Newton’s faction of the BPP had limited itself to both legal and underworld sanctioned methods: “Co-optation” and “Indoctrination in Reliance on Passive Approaches”—passive towards the status quo. They fell for the trick of severing all relations with their armed underground—the BLA—who would lead the BPP if they got to the next level of struggle—open armed resistance to the oppressors. In terms of “Separation From The Most Advanced Elements”, through Newton’s control, his faction was immersed in the “Glamorization of Gangsterism”. Finally, Newton, his faction and activists from all of the other Amerikan radical and revolutionary groups succumbed to the terror and “Raw Fear” that was being leveled at them, at least all but those who waged armed struggle, were killed, jailed, exiled, forced into hiding, or forced to continue continuing their activism under the radar.

EPILOGUE ON HUEY P. NEWTON AND HIS BPP FACTION

Elaine Brown guided their faction to support Newton and his family in exile, while orchestrating the building up of enough political muscle in Oakland to assure Newton’s return on favorable terms. Thus, he did return and eventually the charges were dropped. Nevertheless, Newton continued to use his iconic stature and renewed direct control of his faction to again play the cool-political-gangster role, and like any drug addict who refuses to reform, he kept sliding downhill, even turning on old comrades and his main champion, Elaine Brown, who had to flee in fear.

Sadly, for all practical purposes, that was the end of the original Black Panther Party.

Check-mate!

Later, as is well known, Newton's continued drug addiction caused him his life—a sorry ending for a once great man.

THE “ORIGINAL” BLACK MAFIA

When you grow up in situations like me and Cliff ... there is a lot of respect for brothers like (drug lord) Alpo and Nicky Barnes, those major hustler-player cats. Cause they made it. They made it against society's laws. They were the Kings of their own domain.³

Albeit a touchy matter to many, it's an irrefutable fact that the original Black Mafia (BM) was first established in Philadelphia, PA in the late 1960s, and has seen its cancerous ideas duplicated, imitated and lionized by Black youth ever since.

Moreover, although it's unclear how much the national Nation of Islam (NOI) leadership knew or learned about the BM, there's no question of the eventual absorption of the BM by the local NOI under Minister Jeremiah X Pugh. In fact, although the BM was originally just local “stick-up kids” culled from neighborhood gangs, their being swallowed by the NOI would eventually turn them into a truly powerful and terrifying criminal enterprise, completely divorced from everything that the NOI had stood for since its founding in 1930.

Sadly, most of the high level tricks used by the government and intelligence agencies were also used against the BM; namely, Co-optation, the Glamorization of Gangsterism, Separation from the Most Advanced Elements and Raw Fear.

Thus, it must be understood that although the NOI and BPP had different ideologies and styles, to most Black youth, both still held the promise of helping them to obtain what they most desired—self-respect, dignity and freedom.

Interestingly, the puritanical NOI's dealings with the founders of the BM were similar to the Catholic Church's historical relationship with the Italian Mafia. Meaning, the BM members who attended NOI religious services did so strictly on that basis, while still coming to the attention of the local NOI

leadership as unusually good financial contributors. And within the lower class Black community being served, everybody knew that that meant that they were hustlers, stick-up kids, or both. So, in the same way that the Italian Mafia would contribute huge sums to the Catholic church, the BM would eventually make large contributions to Philadelphia's Temple No. 12. The national NOI, however, had been under close scrutiny and surveillance by intelligence agencies for decades. In fact, there were in excess of one million pages of files in the archives of the FBI alone on the NOI's founder, The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, by the time of his death!⁴ Therefore, anyone who still believes that the assassination of Malcolm X did not have a hidden US government hand behind it has no clear idea of the threat that the NOI presented to this country at that time.

Consequently, the BM's financial contributors would come to the attention of the intelligence agencies through their monitoring. Overshadowing all of that, nevertheless, was the bloody assaults that the FBI and local police were leveling against other Black radical and revolutionary groups, like the local and national BPP Chapters and Branches, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), and scores of other smaller formations.

Indeed, FBI agents first tried to recruit Minister Pugh as a snitch against the local BPP, by telling him that the BPP was out to get him and supplant the local NOI as competition for the black youth's loyalties. Pugh, to his credit, didn't take the bait and also avoided getting his Temple No. 12 involved in a war with the BPP. However, he had to suspect that his taking of the blood money from the BM had also come to the attention of the FBI, and thus he was vulnerable. Yet, miraculously around the same time, Pugh's name was removed from the FBI's Security Index, which contained all of the country's top level threats. After Pugh being on this list for years, and right after they filed a report of his refusal to be a snitch, why would they relax the pressure? Co-optation! How did they think it would unfold? By giving Pugh and his Temple, and their BM followers, enough rope to hang themselves, or to become addicted to a game that was ultimately controlled by their professed enemies—the US government and its underlings. This would turn the table on Pugh and force him to be less radical, more compliant and no longer a threat on the same level as the BPP, RAM and company.

For the BM members, the glamorization of gangsterism fit right in. After all, why would a group of Black stick-up kids and gang members call themselves The Black Mafia? This was in the era of Black is beautiful,

when millions of Blacks began wearing Afros/Bushes and African clothing and adopting African names—completely at odds with aping Italians! Why not name themselves the Zulus, Watusis or the Mau Mau—as even younger street gangs were doing? No—Hollywood’s projection of gangsterism was getting through.

Consequently, within a couple of years, the BM would uniformly be recognized as expensively dressed, big hat wearing, Cadillac driving imitations of the Italian Mafia. And sadly, they turned countless numbers of street gang members, former RAM cadre and militants from dozens of other Philly groups, who were fighting oppression, into pawns who were used to further destroy their own communities.

Another way to separate them from the more advanced elements operated under cover of Pugh and other insiders who continued to preach Black Nationalist doctrines amongst the youth in the street gangs and within the prisons, never missing an opportunity to hold out the illusion that they could gain pride and respect. Also, the youth believed they were joining a rebel group that was only awaiting the right time to throw their lot in with the masses of Blacks who were waging non-violent or bloody battles from coast to coast, and on the Afrikan continent.

Yet, by tricking them into diverting their energies into gangsterism, Pugh and company were effectively separating them from the more advanced elements. Albeit many, if not most, bought into the rationale that their extortion and drug dealing proceeds were a tax that would be used to build The Nation. A few years later that would be dubbed drinking the kool-aid, after Jim Jones and his CIA handlers tricked and forced hundreds of others Blacks to “drink” their death.⁵ And undoubtedly, Huey had also tricked his people with a similar game, although decades later that was all shown to be completely false! Yes, that money “did” build and/or buy some expensive homes, cars, clothing, women and drugs—as well as a few schools and businesses—but to fight oppression? Please!

Then, the raw fear being leveled on the entire society had the most devastating effect on them (BM) also. Otherwise, how can one explain or account for hundreds—if not thousands—of BM street soldiers being fearless enough to cow Philadelphia’s long established and ruthless Italian Mafia and its other mobs, and most of its warring street gangs and independents? Or that the same BM that fielded headhunters who terrorized the city by decapitations would in turn produce such a lackluster showing whenever it came to confronting anyone in uniform?

I'll tell you how: their leadership had completely disarmed their fighting spirits by always telling them not to resist the police until they gave the order—which never came. Comically, after the police and FBI had succeeded in suppressing, jailing, exiling and co-opting most of the BPP, BLA, RAM and others, they then discovered the BM and in turn attacked them with a vengeance, while none of the BM put up anything resembling real resistance, except to go on the lam. Minister Jeremiah also made a 180 degree turn by even turning snitch, after getting caught in a drug sting.

Thus, their legacy is one of a ruthless group of Black thugs, who have spawned similarly ruthless crews—notably Philadelphia's Junior Black Mafia (JBM) and the latest clone, Atlanta's Black Mafia Family.

Their most harmful effect comes from their deeds and mystique that has returned a huge segment of Black youth to believing that the only way to gain any respect and dignity is through being the best and most heartless hustler around: full circle from 1955.

Finally, I used the BPP/BLA and NOI/BM because they present the most well “documented” examples. Although both are surrounded by so much mythology, a true raw analysis is almost never attempted, except by government and intelligence sources. The latter use their findings to refine, update and revise older tricks in order to continue checking and controlling this country's rebellious youth, while simultaneously persisting in oppressing the communities they occupy—in line with the ruling class's agenda.

Concurrently, amongst the middle and upper class idealistic youth (from all segments of the First Wave), they allowed themselves willy-nilly to be co-opted (fully) as the new managers of the system they had vowed to radically change, with few exceptions. They, moreover, championed and made a doctrine out of the necessity of always using and relying on passive and legal methods, epitomized by their new saint, Martin Luther King, Junior.

THE SECOND WAVE: 1980 TO CIRCA 2005

Thus, by 1980, for all practical purposes, the youth from the First Wave had been defeated. Following this they collectively descended into a debilitating, agonizing, escapist long period characterized by partying. This is not to discount the fringe elements who had been so adversely affected until they

had their hands full trying to rebuild their sanity, families, go back to school, or survive in prison or exile, while everybody else seemed to be dancing on the ceiling. This was similar to shell-shocked vets of WWI and WWII and the post-traumatic stress syndrome sufferers of the Viet Nam war.

The most misunderstood victims, however, were that generation's children: the Second Wave, from 1980 to 2005. Albeit, those are the years when they either reached puberty or became young adults and who, paradoxically, were left in the dark about most of what had occurred. Instead, they were left to the tender mercies of the reformed but still rotten-to-the-core and ruling class dominated schools, social institutions and propaganda machinery.

So, amongst all lower and working class segments of the youth, Coolio's "Gangster's Paradise" fit the bill. They were raised by the state, in the uncaring schools, juvenile detention centers, and group homes; in front of the TV sets, movies, video arcades; or in the streets. Within the greatly expanded middle classes—most notably amongst the people of color—the youth were back to the gospel of relying on getting a good education and a good job as their highest calling. This was intermixed with an originally more conscientious element who tackled politics and academia as a continuation of the First Wave's struggle. The upper class youth, however, were doomed to follow in the footsteps of their ruling class parents, since the radical and revolutionary changes that had been sought had failed to alter the country much.

Like a recurring nightmare, the Second Wave youth also fell victim to co-optation, glamorization of gangsterism, separation from the most advanced elements, relying on passive methods, and the raw fear of an upgraded police state. Left to their own devices, the lower class youth began a search for respect and dignity by devising their own institutions and culture, which came to be dominated by the gangs and Hip Hop. These, on their own, could be used for either good or bad. But lacking any knowledge of the First Wave experiences, they were tricked like their parents.

THE GANG AND HIP HOP CULTURE

Gangs are working and lower class phenomena that date from the beginnings of this country, having also been in evidence overseas. In fact, many of those who first joined the First Wave were themselves gang members, most

notably Alprentice Bunchy Carter, head of the notorious Slausons (the forerunners of today's Crips) and the martyred founder of the Los Angeles Panthers. As little as it's understood, moreover, they are in fact the lower class counterparts to the middle and upper classes youth clubs, associations, Boy Scouts/Girl Guides, fraternities and sororities. The key difference is the level of positive adult input in the middle and upper class groups.

Hip Hop is just the latest manifestation of artistic genius bursting forth from these lower class youth seeking respect and dignity.

"Orthodox" hip hoppers speak of a holy trinity of hip hop fathers: Herc, Afrika Bambaata, and Grandmaster Flash. But like moisture in the air before it rains, the conditions were ripe for hip hop before the holy trinity began spinning. Hip hop's pre-fathers or grandfathers are James Brown, Huey Newton, Muhammad Ali, Richard Pryor, Malcolm X, Bob Marley, Bruce Lee, certain celebrity drug dealers and pimps whose names won't be mentioned here.⁶

Alas, Hip Hop culture is a daily co-optation in ways so obvious it needs no explanation. But woe be to us if we don't come to grips with how the Second Wave's gangs have been co-opted. It is an on-going tragedy, moreover, that if not turned around will ultimately make the shortcomings of the First Wave pale in comparison!

Ronald Reagan and crack were hip hop's 80's anti-fathers: both helped foster the intense poverty and the teenage drug-dealing millionaires as well as the urge to rebel against the system that appeared to be moving in for the kill, to finally crush Black America.⁷

Certainly, the gangs have comprised a sub-culture that historically has been a thorn in the side of the ruling class. It had to be either controlled and used or eradicated. Usually that was accomplished by co-optation and attrition, with older elements moving on, or being jailed long enough to destroy the group. The First Wave, as noted, was able to—somewhat—outflank the ruling class by absorbing some key elements which led to their prestige among the rank and file and encouraged its acceptance of radical and revolutionary ideas, which was pimped by BM style groups.

It's fascinatingly simple to understand how the Second Wave was tricked and continues to be bamboozled into destroying itself. Just about all of the pillars upholding this giant confidence game are familiar to everyone through movies, TV, street culture and/or our own experiences with friends, family, associates, cops, courts, jails, prisons, death and through our own unfulfilled yearnings for respect and dignity.

GANGSTA, WANKSTAS AND WANNABES

All of the above—more than anything—crave respect and dignity! Forget all of the unformed ideas about the homies wanting the families, fathers and love that they never had. That plays a part, but if you think that the homies only need some more hugs, then you've drank the kool-aid! Actually, even if you did have a good father and a loving family/extended family, when everything in society is geared towards lessening your self-worth because of your youth, race, taste in dress or music, speech, lack of material trappings, etc., then you will still hunger for some respect—which will lead to you knowing dignity within yourself. Even suburban, middle and upper class youth confront this, to a lesser degree. No! All of the beefin', flossin', frontin', set-trippin', violence and bodies piling up around them come from the pursuit of respect and dignity.

This is how 50 Cent put it:

Niggas out there sellin' drugs is after what I got from rappin'....
When you walk into a club and the bouncers stop doin' whatever the fuck they doing to let you in and say everybody else wait. He special. That's the same shit they do when you start killin' niggas in you hood. This is what we been after the whole time. Just the wrong route.⁸

Admittedly, at times that simple—but raw—truth is so intertwined with so many other things that it's hard to grasp. Namely, nowadays, the drug game and other git-money games, and most sets do provide a sort of alternative family. They also provide a strong cohesion that is mistakenly called love. Hence, to cut through the distractions, I'll illustrate my point as follows.

When the Second Wave was left hanging by the defeated and demoralized First Wave, they unknowingly reverted to methods of seeking dignity and respect that the First Wave had elevated themselves above during their

struggle for radical and revolutionary change. This was a period when gang wars/gang banging was an anathema! The revolutionary psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968) notes that the colonized and oppressed are quick to grab their knives against a neighbor or stranger, thereby in a subconscious way ducking their fear of directing their pent up rage at those responsible for their suffering—their colonial oppressors.

So, the primary activity of the notable early sets like the Bloods, Crips and Gangster Disciples was banging, or gang warring over “turf” (neighborhoods, schools, etc.), as well as over real or imagined slights. But the real underlying motivation was their desire to build their reputations and earn stripes, meaning gain prestige in the eyes of fellow bangers. This translated into respect amongst their peers. It also caused these youth to bond with each other like soldiers do in combat; a bonding like a family, even more so. Not surprisingly, many outsiders decreed that that bonding was love. This also caused some youth to parrot that thought. To exchange love, though, you have to first love yourself, and the gang banger by definition has no love for his or her self. They, in fact, are desperately seeking respect, without which anyone’s ideal of love being present is fooling themselves. Example: If you “respect” your body, you can also “love” your body, and you would not dare destroy it with drugs or alcohol. But if you don’t respect your body and you go on to destroy it in that fashion, then it follows that you have no love for it either.

So the bangin’ raged on for years, piling up as many deaths and injuries as the US suffered during the Viet Nam War—each elevating either the attacker’s or victim’s stature in the eyes of their peers. As usual, during those early years, the overseers of the oppressive system bemoaned the carnage, while locking up untold numbers of bangers for a few years, but overall they did absolutely nothing to try to arrest the problem.

Now, here’s where it gets really interesting. Drugs, as noted, had been flooding into these communities since the 1960s. Back then, however, it was mainly heroin, with marijuana and meth playing relatively minor roles. Remember, the movies “Serpico” (1973) and “The French Connection” (1971) exposing that? But the early gangs, to their credit, never got deeply involved in drugs. They saw dope fiends as weak, and although they would blow some sherm or chronic, it was just a pastime activity for them. They were serious about bangin’!

The bangers were all co-opted, wedded as they were to their form of fratricidal gangsterism and totally separated from the remnants from the

First Wave—about whom they knew next to nothing. And the “good kids” were being indoctrinated in passive, legal get-a-good-education approaches. All the while, both groups were scared to death of the police! Despite the bangers’ hate and contempt, any two cops could lay a dozen of them out on all fours—at will.

Hence, Tupac’s later iconic stature amongst them, since he could walk his talk:

... the fact that while everyone else talks about it, Tupac is the only known rapper who has actually shot a police officer; the walking away from being shot five times with no permanent damage and walking away from the hospital the next day and the rolling into court for a brief but dramatic wheelchair-bound courtroom appearance—it’s been dangerously compelling and ecstatically brilliant.⁹

But something was on the horizon that was about to cause a seismic shift in this already sorry state of affairs. It was to alter things in ways that most still cannot or will not believe.

Apparently, since this madness was contained in the lower class communities, the ruling class’s henchmen had no desire to do anything but keep their Gestapo-like police heavily armed and fully supported, since technology had made what they dubbed the underclass obsolete anyway. (See the movie, “Colors” (1988), with Sean Penn and Robert Duval.)

PEEP THE GAME

The South Amerikan cocaine trade replaced the French Connection and CIA controlled US distribution of South East Asian/Golden Triangle grown and processed heroin as the drug of choice in the early 1980s. Remember “Miami Vice” (1984)? Well, as usual, this country’s government, intelligence agencies and large banks immediately began a struggle to control this new cocaine trade. Control—not get rid of, like the hype of their lying propaganda projects (i.e., the War on Drugs)! Thus, they were contending mainly with South Amerikan governments, militaries and large land owners who controlled the raising, processing and shipping of the cocaine, although for a few years the latter also had to do battle with a few independent local drug

lords, most notably the notorious Pablo Escobar, Ochoa family dominated Medellin Cartel.

Within this country, nevertheless, the youth gangs had next to nothing to do with the early cocaine trade, which was then primarily servicing a middle and upper class—white clientele. It had a few old school big time hustlers along with some Spanish speaking wholesalers, who also had their own crews, to handle matters. Although after the fact, the Hip Hop cult movie favorites “Scarface” (1983) and “New Jack City” (1991) are good descriptions of that period. Both movies purposely left out the dominant role that the US government and intelligence agencies played in controlling things.

Alright, I know you’re down with all of that—and love it! So let’s move on.

In the middle 1980s, the US began backing a secret war designed to overthrow the revolutionary Sandinista government that had fought a long and bloody civil war to rid Nicaragua of its US sponsored dictator (Samoza). But after being exposed to the world, the US congress forbid the then President Ronald Reagan from continuing his secret war. Like a lot of US presidents, however, he just ignored congress and had the CIA raise millions, recruit mercenaries, buy or steal military equipment and continue the war.

Consequently, that’s how and why crack and the mayhem it’s caused came upon us. Here, however, you won’t see Hollywood and TV giving that up the raw. With few exceptions, like Black director Bill Duke’s “Deep Cover” (1992) starring Laurence Fishburn or “Above the Law” (1988) with Steven Segal, you have to search hard to see it portrayed so clearly. Later I’ll explain why.

Most people have heard that crack was dumped into South Central Los Angeles in the mid-1980s along with an arsenal of military style assault rifles that would make a First Wave BPP member ashamed of how poorly equipped she or he was. Needless to say, the huge profits from the crack sales, coupled with everyone being strapped, magnified the body count! And, since crack was also so easy to manufacture locally and so dirt cheap, just about anybody in the hood could get into the business. Gone were the old days of a few big-time hustlers, except on the wholesale level.

But, make no mistake about it, the wholesale cocaine sold for the production of crack was fully controlled and distributed by selected CIA controlled operatives.

So, to all of you around the way dawgs who have been bragging about how big you were/are, an organization chart would look something like this:

- At the top would be the President, Ronald Reagan
- CIA Director George Bush, Sr.
- National Security Advisor
- Secretary of State
- Major banking executives
- Colonel Oliver North
- General Secord
- Arms dealers
- Mercenary pilots
- South and Central American government and military leaders, including Escobar and the Medellin Cartel originally
- U.S. Navy and Coast Guard officers, Customs and Border Patrol officers
- Justice Department attorneys
- State and local police and county sheriffs and deputies—and their successors in office—

And, at the bottom of the barrel: you dawg!

Now, I know you already knew in your hearts that there were some big dawgs over you, but I bet you never imagined the game came straight out of the White House, or that you were straight up pawns on the board. If that sounds too wild, then tell me why it's harder to find any government, CIA, military, or bankers—like George Bush, Sr. and his crew—in prison, than it is to win the lottery? Yeah, they double-crossed Noriega, Escobar and the Medellin Cartel and made Oliver North do some community service, but that's all. The real crime lords—the government, military, CIA and banking dons all got away. Albeit, after Congresswoman Maxine Waters made a stink about it, the CIA was forced to do two investigations, and posted on their official website their findings and admission of being drug dealers.

Naw dawg, yall were all played! Face it.

That's what happened to you OGs (Original Gangsters) from the 1980s. But like Morpheus said in "The Matrix", let me "show you how deep the rabbit hole goes".

The US Government gradually was forced to crack down on the cocaine coming through Florida, but by then the South American Cartels and their government and military allies had found new routes through Mexico. At first, the Mexican underworld were just middlemen. However, quickly recognizing a golden opportunity, they essentially seized control of most of the cocaine trade between South America and the United States, forcing the South Americans into becoming junior partners, responsible for the cheaper growing and processing, after which the Mexicans would purchase mountains of cocaine for the shipment overland and smuggling into the US and its wholesale markets. This produced oil and automotive industry scale profits.

One would wonder how and why the South Americans—powerful players—would go for a deal like that? As ever, the answer can be found in the Machiavellian and serpentine maneuverings of the United States government and their lesser Mexican counterparts. You see, in the 1980s, the Mexican government was overseeing an economy that was so bad, that for all practical purposes, they were going belly up—bankrupt. Indeed, the US and their underlings within the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) were forced to periodically give Mexico millions of dollars in loans, in return for further unfair trading concessions, in order to save them. The United States was then and remains today extremely vulnerable to Mexico. Common sense and past experience told them that the worse things became in Mexico and the more destitute their already dirt poor majority became, the more Mexican people would be forced to find a way to get into the US in order to find means to feed themselves and their families. And the US could not keep prevailing upon the IMF and WB to lend Mexico money, especially since they saw another way to temporarily plug up the hole in their control of matters in the international financial world.

Thus, another unholy alliance was formed. This one was between the US government, CIA, State Department, banks and the other usual suspects on one side; and their Mexican counter-parts, including their first fledging cartels, on the other, with the South Americans now in a junior partnership role. I, however, don't want to give the impression that it was arranged diplomatically, all neat and tidy. Far from that!

No, it evolved through visionaries amongst the usual suspects, putting their ideas before other select insiders and working to craft an unwritten

consensus. It was the same way that they, along with Cuban exiles in Florida, had used the earlier cocaine trade to fuel the growth around Miami. Only this time it would be Mexico—a much more pressing and unstable situation.

It was recognized by all parties that Mexico's underworld would eventually land in the driver's seat, due to their ability to take high risks, their proximity to the US border, and most importantly, their strong desire to avoid confronting the US and Mexican governments, as Pablo Escobar had done. Thus, they were more than willing to guarantee that most of their drug profits would be pumped back into the moribund Mexican economy through large building projects, upgrading of the tourist industry, and support for farming and other clearly national ventures. And, on the messy side, their gunmen were becoming experts at making reluctant parties fall into line by offering them a stark choice between gold and lead.

Nevertheless, avoid thinking that the Mexican and South American underworld ever became anything but hired hands of the big dawgs in the United States government and their partners in the banking industry, who always remained in a position to destroy their smuggling and money laundering operations through a much tighter control of the US borders, or by making it extremely difficult to launder the mountains of small denomination bills with which they had to deal. In fact, then President George Bush, Sr. ordered the invasion of Panama—which was/is a major offshore bank laundering hub—after their hired hand, General Manuel Noriega, had become unruly in 1989.

Plus, these hired hands would ensure that the chosen corrupt politicians would always garner more votes in Mexico's elections, by bringing in plane loads of money made available by the South American gangsters and government/military partners as their overhead. But more important for the United States, a major part of the proceeds would be pumped into the Mexican economy in order to forestall the looming bankruptcy.

Consequently, by the middle 1990s the Mexican underworld had established the super-powerful Gulf, Juarez, Guadalajara, Sinola and Tijuana Cartels. Moreover, they had consolidated their power by controlling who was elected to key political posts in Mexico, and bribing key local, state and regional police heads, as well as strategic generals in Mexico's armed forces. Check out the movies "Traffic" (2000), the Anthony Banderas/Selma Hayek "Bandolero" (1995) and "Once Upon A Time In Mexico" (2003).

Again, after the fact, you'll see Hollywood making money by spilling the beans. But you should not let the stunt work lull you into thinking there's no substance to the plots!

Remember that Mexico's Cartels would not be able to function without the collaboration and protection from the highest levels within the US establishment. Just as the CIA had openly admitted it was a drug merchant during an earlier period, you can believe nothing had changed, except the partners!

The hilarious part is that none of the wannabe real gangstas in the US know that in reality they're low level CIA flunkies, or they can't wait until they get out of prison to become undercover government agents ... slingin' crack.

Alas, most think it's crazy to believe that the government of the US would allow its cities and small towns to be flooded with cocaine from South America. Even the wannabe gangstas don't really believe that. They prefer to think that such ideas are good for conspiracy junkies and cling to the illusion that they are more than just pawns on the chess board.

Furthermore, if one does not get beyond the idea that this whole thing was just a plot to destroy the Black and Brown peoples—a favorite, though shortsighted theory—there's no way to see just how deep the drug game really is. I repeat: the main objective was to pump billions of dollars into the Mexican economy in order to avoid a complete meltdown and the subsequent fleeing to the US of millions more Mexicans—a crisis that would have dwarfed the numbers of Mexicans who are just beginning to make their presence known!

Actually, the big dawgs in the US probably didn't know just how they were gonna control the fallout that would inevitably accompany their cocaine/crack tax. They routinely tax alcohol, gambling (from the lotteries to the casinos) and even prostitution in certain areas, don't they? So yeah, it was a clandestine operation to use cocaine to rescue Mexico and stave off an economically induced invasion of the US by its destitute populous. The Mexican people, especially its Indigenous populations, had been made poverty-stricken by five hundred years of colonialism, slavery, peonage, neo-colonialism and the theft of one third of their country by the United States in the 19th century.

Sadly, though, our First Wave's degeneration into the glamorization of gangsterism, the Second Wave's hunger for respect and recognition that was

fueling the senseless gang carnage, and the Hip Hop generation's ability to provide the youth with vicarious fantasies to indulge their senses with the hypnotic allure of the temporary power that the drug game could bring them led the youth in United States back to emulating the First Wave's "Superfly" and "Scarface" days. Others also see that:

My theory is that nine times out of ten, if there's a depression, more a social depression than anything, it brings out the best art in Black people. The best example is Reagan and Bush gave us the best years of hip hop. . . . 'Hip hop is created thanks to the conditions that crack set: easy money but a lot of work, the violence involved, the stories it produced—crack helped birth hip hop. Now, I'm part conspiracy theorist because you can't develop something that dangerous and it not be planned. I don't think crack happened by accident.' Crack offered a lot of money to the inner-city youth who didn't have to go to college. Which enabled them to become businessmen. It also turned us into marksmen. It also turned us comatose.¹⁰

With the depth moves of a conjurer, the big dawgs in the US seized upon all of this and began to nudge these elements around on the international chess board within their giant con game. Moreover, these big dawgs in the United States had very little choice where to start their triage in order to gain some relief from their manufactured domestic crisis. I'll tell you why.

Cocaine in its powder and crack forms is so addictive, and the (addictive) ambience of the cultures that use them regularly—the rich and famous, the Hollywood Set, corporate executives, lawyers, doctors, weekenders, entertainers, athletes, college kids, suburbanites, hoodrats, hustlers, pipers, etc.—bring a guaranteed demand!

In most ways, it could be argued, it was the same as alcohol and tobacco (in the Prohibition days), which have never been suppressed in the US for long.

It follows, then, despite all of their propaganda about "Just Say No" and the bogus War on Drugs, the big dawgs never had any intention of even trying to eradicate the use of cocaine. At the same time, however, on the lower end of the US distribution and consumption rungs of the ladder, the Black and Brown communities were becoming major headaches, ones that if left unchecked could eventually evolve into a real strategic threat! Yes, crack had

turned their lower class neighborhoods into lucrative mainstays of the big dawgs' alternative taxing scheme. The urgency, however, was graphically driven home in comparison with the non-Black/Brown communities' consumption of more, mostly powder, cocaine. The trade in the Black and Brown hoods and barrios was accompanied by an exponentially unforeseen rate of ever more sophisticated drug related violence, especially since the gangs got seriously involved.

Now, as I've pointed out, the gangs were mainly just pursuing respect prior to getting involved with hustling drugs. And the carnage connected to that was not a real concern to the big dawgs. But this is different from the earlier dumping of heroin in those communities, which was accompanied by the comparatively isolated violence of the Black Mafia style groups. That violence, though terrifying, was also more selective. The more widespread availability of crack and assault weapons led the big dawgs to understand that if they did not aggressively deal with the ultra-violent inner city drug gangs, these gangs would eventually move to consolidate their gains by forming south Amerikan and Mexican style Cartels. Afterwards, they, like their Mexican forerunners, could gradually take over inner city politics, threatening to become less predictable once they realized that money and power would not in and of themselves provide the kind of respect and dignity they sought. To understand why not, just observe the rich and famous hip hop artists who continue to wild-out because they still lack the respect and dignity that comes with struggling for something other than money or power—in short, some type of (political or higher) cause.

Anyway, the Hip Hop generational favorite TV drama, "The Wire" (2002) lays out the entire phenomenon pretty much as it had earlier played itself out in Baltimore and other urban areas. In fact, the TV fictional series derives its realness from an earlier long-running expose featured in a Baltimore newspaper—another after the fact but still useful piece of work to study. Indeed, that show depicting earlier years of the Black gangs getting deep into the crack trade clearly illustrates my points about evolving into proto-cartels and alternately being triaged before maturing into real strategic threats, leaving the crack trade intact.

That's why "The Prison Industrial Complex" was formed! It was formed as a tool to neutralize the Second Wave before they woke up to the fact that, despite their money and power, they were being used and played like suckers—a rub that the more astute big dawgs feared that money would not

soothe. Thus, all of your draconian gun-related and mandatory sentencing laws were first formulated on the federal level where most of the big dawgs exercise their power and then forced upon most of the states. This was to ensure that the Second Wave would never be able to consolidate any real power. Since they were proving themselves to be ruthless gangstas, in imitation of their Hollywood idols, and had potential power derived from their share of the undercover tax being extracted from their communities, the strategy was to triage them every time they got too big (which averaged from one to three years in a run). Then, everything they had acquired was taken. The Hip Hop martyred icon, The Notorious B.I.G., put it all together in his classic song, rightly entitled “Respect”:

Put the drugs on the shelf / Nah, I couldn't see it / Scarface, King
of New York / I wanna be it ... Until I got incarcerated / kinda scary
... Not able to move behind the steel gate / Time to contemplate
/ Damn, where did I fail? / All the money I stacked was all the
money for bail.¹¹

Let's get another thing straight! Take the angle that continues to have shortsighted individuals chasing ghosts about why powder cocaine and crack are treated so differently. Within the big dawgs' calculations, there was no reason to harshly punish the powder cocaine dealers and users in the same manner as they were doing with the crack crowd. And, racism was not the driving motive. It was the armed threat within these proto-cartels! The big dawgs witnessed a clear example of what was to come by way of the Jamaican Posses that cropped up in the Black communities at this time. These young men from the Jamaican and Caribbean Diaspora were also a consequence of the degeneration of its lower class's attempts to throw off the economic and social effects of its former slavery and colonial oppression. With the Jamaican socialist president Michael Manley and inspired by the revolutionary music of Bob Nester Marley the Jamaican Posses were to become the Black Mafia on steroids! Moreover, their quasi-religious/nationalism, their ability to operate nationally and in the Caribbean, their heavily armed soldiers (10,000 or so were nothing compared to the hundreds of thousands in the wings in the Black and Brown communities!) underlined the potential of this threat.

The cry from the big dawgs' mouthpieces in congress was about the gunplay, not so much the drugs. What was not expressed, however, was the big dawgs' anxieties about stopping these gunslingers before they got over their mental block about using their weapons against the police or the system. Stop them while they're hung up on imitating their Hollywood and Euro-Mafia icons, who made a mantra out of instructing their gunmen not to use their weapons against the police. Indeed, with a few exceptions, the Second Wave allowed themselves to be disarmed and carted off to prison like pussycats!

Add to that the unforeseen windfall of thousands of new jobs for the rural communities (hence, the Prison Industrial Complex and its neo-slavery) that were being destroyed economically by Capitalism's globalization drive, and conservative segments of the US that the big dawgs needed to appease in order to continue enjoying their fanatical support.

Therefore, we must struggle against the shortsighted ideas about racism alone being the driving motive that fueled the construction of the Prison Industrial Complex. Instead, if you do a follow up and add your own research, you'll be able to document the who, when, where and how the big dawgs set everything in motion as well as how they continue to use us as pawns in their giant international con game.

CONCLUSION

Ask yourself the following questions:

- How can we salvage anything from knowing how the First and Second Waves allowed their search for respect and dignity to degenerate into gangsterism?
- In what ways can we help the Next Wave avoid our mistakes?
- What can we do to contribute to documenting who the real big dawgs behind the drug trade are?
- Why have they never been held accountable?
- How can we overcome our brainwashing?
- How can we truly gain respect and dignity?
- In what ways can we atone for our wrongs and redeem ourselves, families and communities?

- What are some ways to fight for restitution and reparations for all of those harmed by the government imposed undercover drug tax?
- How can we overturn the “13th Amendment” of the US Constitution and finally abolish legal slavery in the US?

Once you answer these questions and begin to move to materialize your conclusions, then you will have made the choice between Liberation and Gangsterism; Freedom and Slavery.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Fanon, Franz, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, Inc., New York, 1968).
- ² Internal FBI memorandum, May 15, 1969.
- ³ Evans, Cliff in “Rolling Stone” in *Never Drank the Kool-aid: The Life of a Hunted Man*, Toure, Picador, February, 2006. Toure is a critic and pop-culture analyst.
- ⁴ Pipes, Daniel, “How Elijah Muhammed Won”, June 2000, www.danielpipes.org.
- ⁵ James “Jim” Jones (May 13, 1931—November 18, 1978) was the American founder of the “Peoples’ Temple” group, which became synonymous with group suicide after the November 18, 1978 mass suicide by poison in their isolated agricultural community called “Jonestown”, located in the country of Guyana. Jones was found dead from a gunshot wound to the head amongst the 914 corpses.
- ⁶ Toure, *op. cit.*
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ 50 Cent in “Rolling Stone” (2003) in Toure, *op. cit.*
- ⁹ Tupac in “The Village Voice” in Toure, December 13, 1994, p. 75, 85.
- ¹⁰ Thompson, Ahmir aka Quest Love, *The Believer*. Interview with Ahmir Thompson. www.believermag.com/issues/200308/?read=interview_thompson
- ¹¹ Smalls, Biggie, “The New York Times” (1994), Toure, *op. cit.*

Russell Maroon Shoatz is a Black (New Afrikan) POW. Maroon is imprisoned for his activities on behalf of Black Liberation. In 1967, Maroon was a founding member of Philadelphia’s Black Unity Council (BUC). The BUC eventually merged with the Black Panther Party, and Maroon became a member of the Philadelphia’s BPP chapter. In 1970, Maroon and five other comrades were accused of attacking a Philadelphia Police station, resulting in the death and wounding of several police officers. This attack was carried out in response to the unjustified deaths in the Black community committed by these officers.

After being accused of this attack, he joined the BLA and participated in the revolutionary underground movement. He was eventually arrested in January 1972. Maroon is serving multiple life sentences. Most of his time in prison has been spent in control units in which he is locked in his cell for 22 to 24 hours a day.

FOLLOW-UP ON RUSSELL SHOATZ

Russell Shoatz was visited by the New York Police Department on October 10, 2005. The following letter documents what happened:

This is a special alert going out to you from the family of Russell Maroon Shoatz. This information is from his daughter, Sister Theresa Shoatz.

Brother Shoatz was interviewed on Tuesday, October 6th, 2005 by 2 New York City detectives. This was in regards to a murder of 2 police officers occurring in 1972. He did NOT discuss anything with them at all. The only information he gave to them was his name and his inmate number. The interview went on for 2 hours and Russell said nothing. The detectives even tried to conclude that he was the mastermind behind the entire scenario.

Russell is encouraging everyone to refrain from speaking to anyone who discusses this matter. Should something go down, Brother Russell wants to ensure that he has full support of the people and the masses at-large. He says he has no idea of any retribution occurring in the future nor does he know of any future "events" that will come out of this.

Most of you already know what's been going on in California. Well, it has made its way to the east coast. This is just a heads up and an FYI for everyone.

<http://www.mxgm.org/politicald.htm>