

United States: Exonerations reveal FBI's leading role in Malcolm X assassination

Wednesday 24 November 2021, by [MIAH Malik](#) (Date first published: 23 November 2021).

“I do not need this court, these prosecutors, or a piece of paper to tell me I am innocent,” said Muhammad Aziz, who spent two decades in prison for the 1965 murder of revolutionary Black rights leader Malcolm X.

Contents

- [FBI role revealed](#)
- [Get to the truth](#)

Incredibly, a federal judge in Manhattan, New York, exonerated Aziz and fellow accused, Khalil Islam, for Malcolm's assassination, on November 18. The ruling came after a decades-long campaign by families and supporters to reopen the case and get to the truth.

According to a New York Times report [[1](#)]: “A motion filed by the Manhattan district attorney asking a judge to toss out the convictions of Muhammad A. Aziz and Khalil Islam in the murder of Malcolm X concludes that crucial evidence was withheld during the men's trial.

“The 43-page motion, which was granted at a hearing on Thursday, described in detail the investigation conducted by the district attorney, Cyrus R Vance jnr, and the men's lawyers.

“It concludes that if evidence withheld by the Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI] and the New York Police Department [NYPD] had been given to the defense, the trial would likely have gone differently.”

FBI role revealed

In the hearing, Vance revealed documents confirming that the NYPD and FBI knew who had assassinated Malcolm X the day after it happened, February 21, 1965. The killer, as described by eyewitnesses, used a sawn-off shot gun, and was not the two men charged and convicted.

As revealed in a 2020 Netflix series, *Who killed Malcolm X?*, FBI and police informants were present at Malcolm's killing. Then-FBI Director J Edgar Hoover was personally involved in the cover up. Hoover organised the surveillance and harassment of Malcolm, as he did other Black leaders.

A third man, Mujahid Abdul Halim — also known as Talmadge Hayer and Thomas Hagan — was also convicted of Malcolm's murder in March 1966 and sentenced to life in prison.

Hagan said he was one of three men who shot Malcolm X, but he testified that neither Aziz nor Islam were involved. The two men always said they were innocent and offered alibis. No physical evidence

linked them to the crime.

Media aids cover up

Yet, the media and haters of Malcolm X pointed the finger of blame at the leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI), Elijah Muhammad, whom Malcolm had challenged more than a year earlier.

There is no doubt the NOI had been infiltrated by the FBI and police. The FBI hated and despised Black leaders, seeing them as a threat and unpatriotic. It continues to this day. Black liberation militants are still targeted by the police and federal authorities.

According to the NYT and other media sources, the evidence presented in the new hearing included an interview with a new witness, "JM", conducted only days after the re-investigation began, and which backed up Aziz's alibi.

"JM recalled receiving a phone call from Aziz at around 3:00 p.m. on February 21st [1965], informing him that Aziz had just heard Malcolm X had been shot" the NYT reported.

"JM then hung up and went to get the mosque's "captain" and together, the two men called Mr Aziz back at his home.

"JM reached Aziz at home and told him the captain wanted to speak to him." This simple sentence backed up Aziz's story that he was at home at 3pm, when Malcolm X was shot.



Malcolm X poster

Get to the truth

Vance said the Malcolm X case is not being opened, because most witnesses and others are dead. This is absurd. Malcolm X's assassination is still relevant historically, but also to current attacks on the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement by the police, former president Donald Trump, the Republican Party, and white supremacist militias and groups.

This is especially the case given that teenage white vigilante Kyle Rittenhouse, who shot and killed two white allies of the BLM movement in Kenosha, Wisconsin, last year, was acquitted on the bogus grounds of "self-defence" on November 19. This decision gives a green light to white vigilantism.

Though Aziz and Islam's trial was found to be unfair, prosecutors stopped short of declaring the men innocent. "Given the information currently available, the People [prosecution] make no determination on the question of the defendants' actual innocence," the motion said.

When Vance was asked if he personally believed that the two men were innocent, he said: "Innocence is actually a term you won't find in the penal law.

“I will say this: The vacation of these convictions and the dismissal of the indictment means that they stand like any other person who has not been charged with a crime. They stand as presumed innocent.”

Ilyasah Shabazz was almost 3 years old when she witnessed her father, Malcolm X, being gunned down. Her mother Betty Shabazz kept Malcom’s legacy and inspiration alive after his death. She demanded that those responsible be held accountable.

“Full justice will not be served until all parties involved in the orchestrated killing of our father are identified and brought to justice.

“It is our hope that finally the full truth can be learned.”

Malik Miah
San Francisco

P.S.

• Green Left Weekly. Issue 1327, November 23, 2021:
<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/united-states-exonerations-reveal-fbis-leading-role-malcolm-x-assassination>

Footnotes

[1] <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/18/nyregion/malcolm-x-convictions>