

# New Evidence That U.S. Government Killed Malcolm X

Friday 4 August 2023, by [SHEPPARD Barry](#) (Date first published: 3 August 2023).

**This article is written in collaboration with Roland Sheppard, who was an eyewitness in the auditorium, the Audubon Ballroom, where Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965, and has closely followed the case and written and spoken about it since.**

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After breaking with the Nation of Islam (NOI) early in 1964, Malcolm made his Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, and adopted the name of el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz, indicating he had made the pilgrimage. Shabazz became the name of his family. He remained known to the public as Malcolm X.

In February of this year, the Shabazz family filed a \$100 million wrongful death lawsuit against a number of institutions, including the FBI, the CIA and the New York Police Department.

On July 25, a news conference was held that included a formally publicly unknown eye witness to the assassination, Mustafa Hassan, as well as Malcolm's daughter Ilyasah Shabazz and civil right attorney Ben Crump, concerning the lawsuit. Hassan provided new information about the police role in the assassination

At the time of the assassination, Hassan was a young member of the Organization of African American Unity (OAAU), one of the organizations Malcolm established after he broke with the Nation of Islam a year before. He was part of Malcolm's security detail.

At the news conference Hassan referred to parts of his affidavit in the wrongful death lawsuit. He described what he saw, including new evidence that the police were involved.

He said, "There was a loud explosion that immediately caused further disruption, capturing everyone's attention, a series of gunshots then rang out from another direction, and I immediately started to make my way from the back of the Audubon, where I had been posted, and toward the stage, where Malcolm X was located. However the scene became chaotic as people frantically ran around seeking exits and protect themselves.

"I saw a man running down the aisle, toward the exit where I had been posted, with a gun in his hand. I made the decision to attempt to stop this person, because he had a gun in his hand and was heading directly toward me.

"I managed to knock this person down, and I continued toward the stage, where Malcolm X was lying on his back surrounded by his followers. I now know that the identity of the man with the gun is Talmadge X Hayer, also known as Thomas Hagan.

"When I arrived at the stage, I saw that Malcom X was in grave condition, seemingly close to death, and as a result I turned attention back to the man I had seen running away, knowing that he had a part of responsibility for what I had just witnessed.

"I would later see the same man outside as he was being beaten by Mal-colm's followers, while a group of policemen who suddenly showed up on the scene [one cop] asked if he was 'with us,' while at the same time hold-ing back Malcom's followers from beating him."

At the press conference, Amy Goodman of Democracy Now questioned Hassan. She asked, "Did you ever approach the police or the FBI, the au-thorities, to share what you have seen?"

"No, no and no. No." Hassan replied. When asked why, Hassan said "Be-cause —" and Benjamin Crump interrupted him, and said, " They had just killed Malcolm."

Ilyasah Shabazz then said, "Terrorism, trauma."

"Because in my belief, they were the perpetrators. And they knew more than I did, as a consequence of being the perpetrators of the event. Why would I go to them?"

He added, "The reason they failed to call me would have been that my testimony would have changed the outcome of the trial. It would have pointed the finger of guilt at the establishment."

Two days after the press conference, Amy Goodman on Democracy Now said, "Three men were convicted of killing Malcolm X, One was Talmadge Hayer, the man Mutafa saw shoot Malcolm. Two other men, Khalil Islam and Muhammad Aziz, were arrested and imprisoned for decades, after being falsely accused. In 2021, the two of them were exonerated. By then Khalil Islam had already died, and Muhammad Aziz was 83 years old."

Then she interviewed Benjamin Crump, the lawyer who is representing the Shabazz family. Crump, among other notable cases, has represented many of the families of Blacks murdered by the police.

Amy Goodman said, "Ben, welcome back to Democracy Now. Talk about the significance of this testimony for the first time being heard, this eye-witness account of Mustafa Hassan, and where this fits into the lawsuit you'll be filing.

Crump replied, "Mustafa Hassan's testimony, for the first time in 58 years, is astonishing, especially the level of detail he chronicled, that is corrobo-rated by the photographs, as well as stock video, that when the convicted murderer, Talmadge X, was being manhandled by Malcolm's supporters, who had just witnessed him kill or shoot at Malcolm X, the police ran up, and they were asking 'Is he with us?'

"And then, as Mr. Mustafa Hassan believes, they were trying to get him away, where he could escape from the Black supporters of Malcolm who were trying to make sure he was captured. And so Mustafa — you see it in the photographs — grabs onto his collar very tightly. And the police seem, as the photographs suggest, to be trying to separate him from the person who they had just saw shoot Malcolm....

"This is what we are arguing, is completely new information and fraudu-lent concealment is a [legal] theory that will allow us to [get beyond] the statute of limitations and for Malcolm's family to have a chance at getting some measure of justice after all these years, because we know that the government concealed the fact that they had multiple informants in the Audubon Ballroom when Malcom was assassinated.

"Those New York Police Department undercover officers, like Eugene Roberts and Ray Woods, were all kept isolated from one another. And the police knew, when they arrived on the scene that they had undercover informants there, and they didn't know what their assignments were, and they didn't know who they were, but were told that some of the Black people are undercover informants. And that's why they were saying 'Is he with us?'"

Democracy Now's Juan Gonzales asked, "why has it taken over 58 years for this to come forward? Could you tell us a little bit more who Mustafa Hassan is and why he was never questioned?"

Crump replied, "He was a young man who believed in the principles of Malcolm X. He was a member of the OAAU, and he was a person who believed that Black people had the right to self-determination, and that the American government cannot continue to oppress us and deny us liberty.

"And so, after they killed Malcom, like so many people in America, especially Black Americans who believed in the principles that Malcolm X was trying to articulate to the world, he left America, and for not just his personal safety but his family's safety. And, as he has stated, he was worried about where America was going as a society.

"He left for months, came back, and saw they were having this trial. The prosecutors never approached him. He was readily identifiable on all the photographs, all the video.... Is was clear that had they wanted him to testify about everything he saw firsthand, he could have. But they never did that. We think that is more telling than anything."

Amy Goodman asked about the two men who were exonerated, "one dead one still alive, who have settled for millions of dollars. Will you be able to use the information based their settlement in pursuing this \$100 million settlement for the Shabazz family?"

He replied, "We will be able to use a lot of the discovery that the great lawyers of the Innocence Project, Barry Schenk and others, used to help exonerate those individuals and help them get their compensation, because of the concealment affected their liberty, but it also affected Betty Shabazz's ability to bring a wrongful death lawsuit for the assassination, the conspiracy to assassinate her husband, the minister Malcolm X."

In response to the rise of the anti-segregation movement in the South beginning in the 1950s, and the Black movement in the North that followed, the FBI targeted all Black organizations involved in the struggle, including their leaders such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, and many others, as part of its COINTEL program against the whole radicalization of the "Sixties."

The FBI collaborated with local police under this program.

An example was the imprisonment and murder of many in the Black Panther Party.

All of this is well documented, which should help the Shabazz family's lawsuit.

### **Roland Sheppard's Eyewitness Testimony**

In his pamphlet *Why the U.S. Government Assassinated Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.* Roland says, "The afternoon of February 21, 1965, I went to the Audubon Ballroom to hear Malcolm X speak. When I arrived, I was surprised to see no cops. Malcolm X's meetings in Harlem were usually crawling with cops."

This was suspicious. There were no cops there to stop any attack on Malcolm. There were some undercover cops present, who also made no attempt to intervene.

Roland continued, "I began to sell my socialist newspaper, *The Militant*, and as Malcolm X approached the ballroom, I offered him the latest issue. He 'replied, not today, Roland. I am alone and in a hurry'."

*The Militant* was the paper of the Socialist Workers Party, which had established close relations with Malcolm. He spoke at three public meetings organized by the SWP, and publicly praised the paper.

"When I entered the hall, I did not see any cops. I normally sat in the front-left side of the hall, along with the rest of the press, but that day, Gene Roberts said that I had to sit in the front-right side of the hall. Roberts was later exposed as a police-agent member of the Black Panther Party.

"I glanced over to where I normally sat, and saw a large Black man in a navy-blue trench coat [near the front of the stage]. Then the meeting started. All was quiet as the crowd listened to Benjamin X introduce Mal-c olm. I saw two men, and one was shouting, 'Get your hand out of my pocket!'

"As Malcolm X tried to calm things down, the two men — one later identified as Talmadge Hayer — started running down the aisle shouting and firing a pistol at Malcom X. Then they ran out the exit doors by the stage, to the right of Malcolm X.

"Then I heard gunshots coming from everywhere, and I instinctively hit the floor. When I looked up, I saw Malcom X standing on the stage glaring down at one of his assassins. From the corner of my eye, I saw a bright flash, and I watched Malcolm X fall back about ten feet. *[forensic evidence later revealed that it was a shotgun blast in front of Malcolm that killed him.]*

"In that instant, Malcolm X died before my eyes. This vision of Malcolm X being assassinated, has haunted me ever since. It was the saddest say of my life.

"As I left the hall, Malcolm's bodyguards told me that they had caught two of the assassins, one who was shot — Talmadge Hayer — and one who the police took away."

As Hassan said, the situation was chaotic, so it is not surprising that a few details were seen differently and from different part of the auditorium. But these two eyewitness testimonies compliment each other.

Roland continued, "A few weeks later, when I was questioned in the Har-lem police station, I was shown photographs of people I recognized as members of the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X's organization. I was also shown a photograph of the large Black man in the trench coat.

"I did not know how to tell the cops that I did not recognize the photos of Malcolm's friends and supporters. To buy some time, I told them that I had to go to the rest room.

"As I approached the men's room, I saw the same large Black man coming out of the mens's room that I had seen in the Audubon Ballroom and in the photos that the cops had shown me, the same man who had sat in the area from where the shotgun blast had originated.

"He walked past me, past the desks of the secretarial pool, and entered what looked like his office inside the police station! (years later, I learned that this man was William Bradley and that he had been the assassin with the shotgun.)

"That was when I realized that the police and other government agencies had killed Malcolm X or

were part of the assassination plot. I became very nervous thinking about what I was going to say to the cops when I got back and how I was going to get out of the police station alive.

“So I said, ‘I cannot recognize anyone. All Black people look the same. The cops nodded in agreement, and I was allowed to leave.’”

## **Well Beyond the Nation of Islam’s Capabilities**

After the split in the Nation of Islam (NOI), the leader of the NOI, Elijah Muhammad, issued statements that implied Malcolm should be eliminat-ed. There were two attempts on Malcolm’s life after.

One attempt in the underwater tunnel that connected the Boston airport with the city, while Malcolm was in a car going into Boston, was thwarted. Decades later, the minister of the Boston NOI mosque apologized for the attempt.

The other was the firebombing of Malcolm’s home at night when he was there with his family. They escaped.

Malcom’s security guard knew of this threat and collaborated with the po-lice who regularly were out in force at Malcolm’s meetings. After the as-sassination, the police claimed they were not there the day he was shot because Malcolm asked them not to be. This claim was preposterous, and Betty Shabazz said Malcolm made no such request.

It is obvious that the police deliberately were not (openly) there because they were in on the conspiracy to carry out the assassination, which would have been impossible if there were the usual police presence.

Moreover, as Betty Shabazz pointed out, Malcom’s security well knew that Kahlil Islam and Muhammad Aziz were in the NOI, and they would never have been allowed to enter the Ballroom.

In his last year of life, Malcolm travelled widely abroad. Because of many incidents wherever he went, he became aware that he was being target-ed. He said publicly that as someone who knew the NOI intimately, he knew that this was beyond their capabilities, and that much more powerful U.S. forces operating internationally were targeting him.

He viewed the struggle of African Americans as an economic and social struggle for human rights and not only for civil rights, however important these were. On March 29, 1964, he said, “The system of this country cannot produce freedom for an Afro-American. It is impossible for this system, this social system, this system period.”

He identified with the colonial revolution in Africa and throughout the world, including the struggle of the Vietnamese people and the Cuban Revolution. He met with Fidel Castro when in 1964 the Cuban delegation to the United Nations was in New York.

Malcolm was also campaigning to internationalize the U.S. Black struggle. Ahmed Ben Bella, the leader of the Algerian Revolution, invited Malcolm X to a special meeting of the Non-Aligned Nations of the “third world” to begin March 3, 1965. Malcom was assassinated in February and Ben Bel-la’s government was overthrown in a right wing coup in June.

Malcolm had been able to get Ethiopia and Liberia to include human rights violations of African Americans with their petition on South African violations to the International Criminal Court. He

planned to bring the issue before the United Nations, and there is evidence that King was going to support that.

A *Washington Post* staff writer, Karl Evanzz, spent 15 years researching over 300,000 pages of declassified FBI and CIA documents about the assassination, and published a book about it in 1992, *The Judas Factor*.

One part of the book is about a former friend, the “Judas”, who betrayed Malcolm. The other part is about the FBI and CIA concern about Malcolm’s success in linking the the struggle of African Americans with the national liberation struggles in Africa and throughout the Third World.

He documents how the CIA and the FBI, and the New York Police Department’s Bureau of Special Services using agents provocateurs and infiltrators set the stage for Malcolm’s assassination.

There were ample reasons for the U.S. government to kill Malcolm X. FBI director J. Edgar Hoover had said that the emergence of a Black leader like Malcolm X or Martin Luther King who could galvanize the Black popu-lation had to be stopped. Both were stopped.

In the decades that followed, many new Black leaders stepped forward, many young, as the fight for Black liberation continued, too many to men-tion here. The latest were the leaders across the country who mobilized the massive Black Lives Matter demonstrations in 2020.

The struggle continues.

**Barry Sheppard**

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