

BREAK THE

CHAINS



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If from this moment on we judge the oppressor, not by the eloquence of his speech—but by his actions—it will be made unquestionably clear that the murmidonic pig, klan pig oppressor only respects a force he cannot counteract.

Ruchell Magee

Ruchell Magee Committee for Black Prisoners
 c/o Harriet Tubman Book Center
 6561 S. Normandie, Los Angeles, Calif.
 758-6701

Speech of Yvonne Divans of the Ruchell Magee Committee for Black Prisoners at South Part 9/19/71 L.A.

Greetings brothers and sisters in the first level prison, I say first level prison because I think we should all realize before we start to discuss Attica and San Quentin or Soledad that we indeed are captives inside of the larger prisons. The boundaries of that prison are capitalism and racism. We should be aware that not only do we have to tear down San Quentin but also the walls of this capitalist system. I am here today to discuss Ruchell Magee and other black political prisoners. You may ask who is Ruchell Magee; Although he does not enjoy the notoriety of Angela Davis, Huey Newton, or Bobby Seale, Ruchell Magee is a political prisoner. The brother is now serving a term in San Quentin for kidnap and robbery. He actively participated in the San Rafael Courthouse shootout, for that he is facing a death sentence. We should realize that brothers like Ruchell have been passed over in favor of so-called celebrities or heroes. I think that it is about time that we stop pushing so-called popular images; these glamorous people. Once we have dealt with the heroes, the moment Angela Davis has been freed what then? Do you stop struggling? Do you forget about the hundreds of brothers and sisters in the prisons? I hope not. Because you can qualify as a political prisoner. What is a political prisoner? The common conception is that a political prisoner is someone who poses a threat to the political system. This may be true, but the ordinary black man on the street can qualify as a political prisoner. The definition of a political prisoner is anyone who poses a threat OR IS A VICTIM OF THIS POLITICAL SYSTEM.

The brother who rips off your purse is a political prisoner because that person has been forced by the nature of the system which is designed to keep him down to take your possession. What about the brother who rips off another brother? A man asked me the other day, what about that brother who held a gun to my head should he be free? Is he a political prisoner? YES HE IS. Because his mind has been so tortured and warped by this system and he is so frustrated by this system that he realizes that he cannot move against it; he realizes its awesome power and so he moves against a helpless brother, somebody he knows he can overpower. What we are going to have to do is to build a people's movement to stop

this repression in the first level prison and the second level prison such as San Quentin and Soledad. Today the prisoners inside the second level prison are Ruchell Magee, Fleeta Drumgo, John Cluchette, my brother Kenneth Divans, and countless others. Tomorrow it could be you: Moze Johnson, Jeremiah Jackson, Sapphire Stevens, etc. We must stop this. We cannot rely on the liberal reformist politicians, black or white, who owe their allegiance to the democratic or republican party. We have to build a grass-roots people's movement and it can't be done overnight. You can start today. We need help on the Ruchell Magee Committee for Black Prisoners; write, send money, bring your bodies. Our address is: P. O. Box 62200, or call 758-6701 and find out what you can do. Our ultimate goal is to tear down the walls of these prisons brick by brick and to use them to build hospitals and schools.

WHO IS A POLITICAL PRISONER?

by C.M.

It is clear that the historic events that are happening inside and outside of prisons require that we re-evaluate and put in it's proper perspective the term "Political Prisoners". This term has been loosely used by the racist news media and other reactionary elements to glorify and isolate certain individuals in order to stagnate the revolutionary consciousness of the masses. Historically the denotation line is drawn whenever the oppressed (black, and other Third World people) strike out against the oppressor (reagan, ford, rockefeller court system, etc.) be it individually or collectively. In both instants they are confronting the political system. Individually or collectively they are the same people who were hounded, brutalized and arrested by agents of the Political system. While simultaneously other agents of the Political system work to create conditions of poverty, despair, misery, starvation, etc. The force of the two conditions drive the oppressed to the state of open rebellion. We have in each generation historical examples, Watts, Harlem, Detroit, Folsom, Soledad, San Quentin, Attica, etc. These rebellious acts are defined by the oppressor as anti-social and criminal. But for the oppressed it is a means of survival in a capitalist dog devour dog society. The imperious beings crazed by their absolute power and the fear of losing it, no longer remember's clearly that they were once men. They take themselves for a horse whip or a gun. They have come to believe that the domestication of the "oppressed people" will come about by the conditioning of their reflexs. We have only developed into what we are by the radical and deep-seated refusal of that which other has made of us.

In a analysis of the amerika class society we can draw the conclusion that there are three different classes of "Political Prisoners" in the oppressed class.

A. An Act of Selfish Motivation: the individual who commits a crime for selfish reasons, is the individual who is the victim of the capitalist concept of private profit, which manifest itself in the form of individualism, private property, elitism, etc., in other terms, "every man for himself". This individual very seldom questions the values and concept of the capitalist society until he is imprisoned (George Jackson, Eldridge

Cleaver, Fleeta Drumgo and so on). Then he begins to see that there were forces working to create individualism, elitism in him.

B. Petty Thievery Acts: these acts are usually committed by the under-employed, part-time workers, etc. to supplement their income in a society that has an abundance of wealth. Some of these people are partially aware of the evils capitalism manifest, but upon arrival in court they are sold through the state by the cops and the courts, who make up and develop the criminal justice system, they don't have the money to hire a lawyer to look for loopholes in the law like aliotto, reagan, nixon, rockefeller and others. Simultaneously, they suffer the dual brutalization of exploitation, oppression and inadequate legal representation. In other words, justice for the rich, and fuck the poor.

C. Political Activist: this class is aware of the evils of racism and capitalism. How it manifest itself, why it manifest itself and above all, they openly advocates how to combat the evils of capitalism.

Although we used the term different classes of "Political Prisoner's", it is important to Remember that they all are victims of the Political system which manifest itself in the form of capitalism, racism, exploitation, oppression, etc. The growing resistance and understanding of "Political Prisoners" by the masses represent a higher stage of understanding and consciousness on the part of the masses. All power to the people!!!!

"RUCHELL DENIES CHARGE.

In reference to the charges (July 16, 1971) in the various news media (throughout the United States) defaming my character, and holding me up to public ridicule—"I DENY THE CHARGES," by government agents (especially District Attorney Garry Thomas, and Coroner Eugene Fontaine of Marin County) who have accused me of murdering Judge Harold Haley, August 7, 1970.

RUCHELL DID NOT KILL THOSE PEOPLE

The San Quentin Prison guard and the Marin County officials murdered James McClain, Jonathan Jackson, William Christmas, as well as Harold Haley and injured others. The state agents not only murdered and injured their victims, but thereafter utilized their status as state officials, to attribute their murder to Ruchell to cover up their indiscriminated acts was sufficient to state a cause of action under the civil rights act based on misuse of power.

"SAVED JURORS LIVES"

It was Jonathan Jackson who saved those 3 women jurors from being (cut-down) murdered inside that van, by the state agents because of the way Jonathan made a screeching stop, the impact (force) putting us on the floor of the van while he, Jonathan was shot to death with both hands holding the steering wheel. Jonathan died stopping the van to avoid running into a police car, and telling everybody to get down, (LAY down)! And at which time the pigs were shooting up the van, District Attorney Garry Thomas was on the floor (face down), with his hands (arms) over his head, TREMBLING AND SCREAMING LIKE A . . . PIG.

I say old man Haley cut down by the pigs, while waving his hands and hollering to the pigs . . . "don't shoot, don't shoot . . ."

INDISCRIMINATED MURDER

The District Attorney Thomas has depicted himself a "hero," while lying about about he shot three people in the van and saved the lives of those three women jurors. The District

Attorney Garry Thomas has willfully lied about Jonathan putting his hand out of the van window (door) with a gun. The *questions are*: What about the state agents who did the shooting, (1) Was it the lives of the judge, jurors, and District Attorney that they sought to save, or (2) Was it an escape that they had to stop without any regard for the safety of lives of innocent people . . . ?

Was not it the State Court that recently denied one Mrs. Marie Graham the right to sue government officials (the jurors so-called rescuers) for damages, based upon a prison rule which provides that state agents are immune to civil suit acts where there are injuries of innocent people during an escape by prisoners?

Obviously, the government officials who fiercely pump wild bullets into the crowded van truck violated state law, as well as Federal law and Judge Haley's orders not to shoot.

The fact is that the murderers remain silent on their reasons for not shooting when they had such a much better view of shooting in the parking lot without killing Judge Haley and injuring others. But in the parking lot, the pigs ran—and those who were too yellow to run, gave up their guns upon orders of Brother Jonathan who fired his rifle in the lot, and yelled "*Bring them guns here Pigs, and give me no lip-service.*"

CONSPIRACY

Garry Thomas in conspiracy with prison officials and other white racists lied on James McClain and was carrying out Kangaroo Court Proceedings on false charges. (I have evidence—not to be disclosed yet.)

SLAVE CASE

This is a flagrant racist slave case which involves Governor Reagan, as well as many state and Federal judges, who are acting in a direct conspiracy to deny me the rights to file legal documents, and the right to see news reporters who I wish to see—in that they may repeat the performance of my 1963 and 1965 Kangaroo Trial, where I was yoked with court appointed hatchetmen, tied, gaged, beaten and convicted by use of known perjured testimony.

The Klan Judges who propaganized all documents, frivolous—and made those gag law decisions denying me freedom of press and access to the court is evidence showing where they make a mockery of the law, tempting to capitalize off the 414 years of stereotype thinking that “white is right” a Black man has no rights which a white man is bound to respect.

The Governor of California, and the Judges have the power to investigate the flagrant racist slave case but, because both have played a part in hampering a just disposition of the cause, it would be foolish for me to expect them to investigate themselves.

The truth (facts) surrounding this case must and will be exposed—I have evidence which will destroy Pigs false Propaganda.

BY:

SIGNED
Ruchell Magee

“The slave revolts were the beginning of the revolutionary struggle for the uplift of the laboring masses in the modern world. They have been minimized in extent because of the propaganda in favor of slavery and the feeling that the knowledge of slave revolt would hurt the system.”

W. E. B. DuBois

August 7, 1971, marked the first anniversary of the Marin County “Slave Rebellion” in which four Black men made an historic bid for freedom — Jonathon Jackson, James McClain, William Christmas, and Ruchell Magee.

The only Black who survived the bloody massacre which resulted in the deaths of three brothers and a judge was Ruchell Magee, who is alive today only because his wounds proved not to be fatal. However, Ruchell’s life is just as endangered today as it was on August 7, 1971, for the state officials are determined to claim it under the familiar guise of “justice.”

The District Attorney’s office has admitted that during the August 7 incident, the first shots were fired from outside the escaping van by San Quentin Guards. Moreover, one can easily determine from the body count, who were the murderous aggressors and who were the victims. The prosecution of Ruchell Magee on charges of murder and conspiracy is another case in point of racist America transferring its guilt on to its victims. (Witness the cases of Cowboys vs. Indians and the United States vs. the Vietnamese people.)

August 7th should have proven to the American people once and for all that this government totally disregards the value of human life. For even a fool should have seen that the persons held hostage were intended by their captors to insure LIFE, not death. And it is absolutely ludicrous for the state to charge Ruchell Magee and Angela Davis with its own crimes.

According to Franz Fanon, writer, psychiatrist, and prophet of the Black Revolution: “. . . our historic mission is to sanction all revolts, all desperate actions, all those abortive attempts drowned in rivers of blood.” (Wretched of the Earth)

But August 7th was more than just an escape attempt. It was an effort to reach the people and dramatically awaken them to the plight of all prisoners, particularly Blacks. The

real "conspiracy" was to take over the nearest radio station and inform the public about the murder of Fred Billingslea (a Black San Quentin inmate who was teargassed to death in his cell) and the torturous prison conditions in general.

The obvious mistake made by the brothers in their courageous attempt to break their chains and expose the barbaric penal system was to underestimate the viciously racist and inhuman nature of their oppressors, men who would rather sacrifice the lives of their own people before seeing Black men go free.

It is depressing to note that while support for Angela Davis is massive and international in scope, Ruchell Magee is all but forgotten, especially since his case has been severed and he stands alone.

Why is it that most people can readily identify with Angela, but cannot identify themselves with Ruchell? Why have the courts granted Angela her legal rights to file documents and represent herself in court while denying Ruchell those same rights? Why is it that appropriate respect and courteous treatment are accorded Angela by court officials, while Ruchell is chained, gagged shackled, and periodically brutalized?

To answer these questions, we must understand the divide-and-conquer techniques employed by the system through its administrators and through the mass media to perpetuate divisions and disunity among the people it exploits.

Observe the stark contrast between the "images" of Angela and Ruchell as portrayed by the established press: Angela has been pictured as the beautiful, well-bred, "exceptional" Black woman, highly educated and cultured. Much attention is drawn to her educational background and her professional credentials, while little mention is made of her political activities in protest of the capitalist system or in defense of political prisoners like the Soledad Brothers.

On the other hand, Ruchell is projected as a poor, illiterate, ill-mannered, semi-moronic criminal, a danger to society, a murderer. No mention is made of the fact that Ruchell has spent the past eight years studying law, earning the reputation of "jailhouse lawyer" in prison for his legal expertise and assistance to fellow inmates.

In view of these contrasting "images," one can readily understand a gullible public becoming outraged at the injustice being perpetrated against Angela, while responding

to Ruchell with reproach, apathy, or confused ambivalence at best.

In truth, Ruchell Magee represents the average Black man who has been the victim of one racist assault after another upon his person, his manhood, his legal and human rights. Ruchell is a symbol of revolt against a decadent society that systematically incarcerates poor, oppressed, non-white peoples in the "slave camps" of America.

Charged and convicted of attempting to rape a white woman at the age of 16 in a small town in Louisiana, known for its white citizens councils and KKKers, Ruchell Magee began what was to become his "career"—life behind bars.

After serving time in Louisiana, Ruchell moved to California. In Los Angeles, on March 22, 1963, Ruchell was out on the town with his cousin, Stewart, when he encountered one Ben Brown from whom he bought \$10 worth of marijuana. Brown agreed to drive Ruchell, his cousin, and a young woman to 68th and Central Sts. En route, Brown and Ruchell got into a heated argument which turned into a brief struggle upon arriving at their destination. Brown ran from the car straight to the police with a distorted version of what had transpired, and when he returned with his "protectors," Magee and Stewart were arrested and falsely charged with kidnap and robbery. (Brown claimed they had kidnapped him in his own car and robbed him of the \$10.) When Magee denied the charges to the arresting officers, he was beaten so unmercifully he spent the next five days in the Los Angeles County Hospital.

What followed can only be described as a "railroad"—replete with suppression of facts, perjured testimony, tortured confessions, and double-dealing, court-appointed public defenders. Denied the right to defend himself, Ruchell once again found himself at the mercy of the judicial system. Consequently, he was sentenced to life in prison under California's indeterminate sentence law which has served to imprison more people for longer prison terms than any other state in the nation.

Magee has been fighting this absurd, fraudulent conviction for eight years now. He did manage to obtain a reversal of the original conviction of 1963, but at the second trial he was again saddled with a court-appointed public defender to misrepresent him and when he tried to defend himself he was beaten and dragged from the courtroom in full view of the judge and everyone present. In short, it was

just another "kangaroo" trial with Ruchell getting the short end of the stick.

To the consternation of the authorities, Ruchell is now adept at defending himself. In the present case, he has succeeded in removing six judges, halted proceedings with his removal petitions and exposed the bias against him with each denial of his constitutionally-guaranteed rights to file legal documents and conduct his own legal defense.

When the straight press tried to picture Larry West, a Black prisoner who assisted Magee in legal research, as the "brains behind Magee," West just laughed and said, "I have a pretty fair knowledge of the law, but I don't know as much as Magee. The racist judicial prison system put Magee in prison for a crime he didn't commit," West continued, "He constantly filed writs for seven years, abiding by the rules, asking the court for help. He got none. So when you talk about August 7th, that's not escape. It's a slave rebellion . . ." While the courts continue to deny Ruchell justice, due process, and equal protection of the laws, they can no longer do so with impunity; they are now forced to blatantly violate their own laws in order to deprive Ruchell of his legal and constitutional rights.

And Ruchell continues to employ every legal tactic available to expose their bias and prejudice against him, and all those like him.

In his determined fight against the judicial system, Ruchell Magee deserves the unmitigated support of all Black people with freedom on their minds.

Manifesto of the Ruchell Magee Committee for Black Prisoners

We Want the rights of legal representation of prisoners at all Parole hearings safeguarded by law.

We Want the present parole board abolished. The board should not be appointed by the governor; but rather elected by the people.

We Want adequate housing and medical facilities for prisoners.

We Want an end to the segregation of prisoners in "adjustment" centers.

We Want an end to political repression of the prisoners solely for their beliefs.

We Want an end to the exploitation by the State of prisoner's labor. Most prisoners never make more than six or eight cents an hour. Prisoners who refuse to work at this rate, or who strike, are punished and segregated. This is class legislation; it serves to create class hostilities in the prison.

We Want an end to the indeterminate sentence. This is nothing but a repressive measure by which a prisoner can in effect be confined for life if he does not conform to the brutal dictates of racist prison officials.

We Want prisoners to have the right to join or form labor unions or prison support unions.

We Want all prisoners to have a free choice to political asylum in revolutionary countries such as: People's Korea, China, Cuba, Vietnam, the Congo, etc.

We Want the immediate release of all political prisoners.

We Want an end to the terror and massacres of prisoners.

Finally, we want to see a humane and just society created, free of oppression and exploitation where both prisons and prisoners are no longer necessary.

