

FBI frame-up overturned

Three of Newburgh 4 freed

By Otis Grotewohl

In a partial victory, three members of the “Newburgh 4,” Black Muslims from Newburgh, New York, who were wrongfully framed by the FBI in a 2009 “bombing plot,” were finally released from prison. This came after a recent ruling by a federal judge. Three of the Newburgh 4 are African American, and one is a Haitian immigrant.

Onta Williams, David Williams and Laguerre Payen were happy to be released after being unjustly incarcerated for 12 years, based on an obvious FBI frame-up and entrapment scheme.

The situation stems from a 2009 arrest and a 2011 conviction that claimed four individuals — all of whom are of the Islamic faith — were plotting to use stinger missiles to shoot down military airplanes flying out of an Air National Guard base in Newburgh, New York, and blow up two synagogues in Riverdale. (New York Times, July 27)

Evidence now suggests that the FBI, along with an informant named Shahed Hussain, was responsible for the whole fiasco. Hussain is a Pakistani businessperson who had been working with the FBI prior to the sting operation. Records show that he was paid a generous salary of \$100,000 by the FBI to “seek out Muslim radicals” at local mosques. (The Guardian, Dec. 12, 2011)

Hussain’s provocative rhetoric and flashy appearance

raised suspicion among the Islamic clergy at Masjid al-Ikhlās, the Islamic Learning Center in Newburgh infiltrated by Hussain, where he met the four individuals who became FBI scapegoats.

Masjid Imam Salahuddin Muhammad was leery of Hussain’s reactionary and forceful demeanor from the time he first stepped foot into the Newburgh community mosque. “This guy said ‘women should not be heard, not be seen.’ I thought that was strange,” Muhammad told The Guardian. Hussain presented himself in a cartoonish manner, reinforcing negative stereotypes, and that raised suspicion among several members of the Mosque.

Findings of facts

U.S. District Judge Colleen McMahon’s 28-page decision concludes that “all four men were caught up in a scheme in 2009 to attack the synagogues, community center and launch stinger missiles at military aircraft, driven by overzealous FBI agents and an ‘unsavory’ confidential informant.” (Reuters, July 28)

Judge McMahon is the same judge who originally ruled to place the Newburgh 4 behind bars in 2011. Allegedly, she did so reluctantly, and her arbitrary “catch and release” style rulings in the case are an example of why the working class and oppressed cannot rely on bourgeois courts to seek any type of sincere justice.

Despite evidence of his innocence, James Cromitie, the individual considered by FBI informant Hussain to be the “ringleader,” remains unfairly incarcerated. Testimony and court exhibits visibly demonstrate that none of the Newburgh 4 would have been associated with the situation had it not been for the FBI’s instigation and provocation.

Conclusion of the case, from a Marxist view

The FBI has a history of infiltrating and attempting to disrupt political and religious organizations, notably those led by oppressed peoples. In this situation, the FBI took advantage of four working, poor and nationally oppressed individuals who were falsely promised an escape from poverty. None of the Newburgh 4 had any interest in carrying out violent actions, but the idea of breaking free of constant hardship sounded appealing, understandably so.

The FBI plot was also an effort on their part to divide the Muslim and Jewish communities. The arrest came at a time when U.S. politicians, military leaders and the corporate media were constantly pushing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry. The release of Onta Williams, David Williams and Laguerre Payen is only a partial victory, however, because James Cromitie remains behind bars and his future is uncertain. Communists and anti-racist activists need to demand freedom for all the Newburgh 4 and for a complete abolition of the FBI! □

Justice for Jalen Randle!

By Gloria Rubac
 Houston

The parents of Jalen Randle held a press conference July 26 to demand action from Houston’s mayor, the police chief and the Harris County District Attorney regarding the murder of their son by a Houston cop, April 27, 2022.

The killer cop is Shane Privette, who is on paid leave from the Houston Police Department. Paid leave since April of 2022. Paid leave for shooting Jalen Randle in the back.

A video of his last moments alive was recorded on body camera footage released a day before the second anniversary of George Floyd’s murder in May 2020. Randle’s parents remain determined in their demand for an indictment and conviction.

Randle’s father, Warren Randle, addressed the media outside of the Harris County Courthouse, saying: “There’s a dark side to Houston. The politicians and the people in power sweep everything under the rug. They sweep the deaths in the county jail under the rug. They sweep the murders of unarmed Black men under the rug.

“I’m a father of an unarmed Black man and I can’t sweep everything under the rug because I think of my son. I spent Sunday evening with my son, but I have to go to the graveyard to speak with him. I now keep a picnic table in my car because I never know what time of day I will need to go out there to sit and talk with him.

This cop has been on paid leave since he murdered my son.”

Addressing the Houston police chief, Randle’s mother, Tiffany Rachal, passionately said: “I urge you to take action now and ensure that justice is served for Jalen Randle and our family. As a leader, you have the power to make a positive impact on our city and its citizens. Please uphold your duty to protect and serve the people of Houston without bias.”

Rachal, who was holding the hand of her young granddaughter, Jaylaa Randle, said: “Officer, you get to go home to your wife, to your family, and to your mother, to your father, but this little girl right here does not have a father anymore. She will not have her father at her Pre-K graduation.”

As Jalen Randle’s younger brother was introduced, the crowd was told to be patient as he had never before spoken publicly about his brother’s murder. Blake Rachal took the mic but couldn’t get a word out before he broke down in tears and walked away from the press conference, too moved to say one word.

Police murders: A national epidemic

Many community activists were introduced and addressed the media, including a union organizer, a representative of the Houston Tenants Union, an activist with Pure Justice, and others. Members of several families whose loved ones had also been murdered by Houston cops spoke as well.

A grand jury this past spring did not render a decision about this murder. The



Jalen Randle’s family at Houston press conference, July 26, 2023.

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

DA said the case would be presented again to another grand jury in the fall.

Police killings are not just a Houston issue. Every year over 1,000 people are killed by cops in the U.S. In 2022, the year Randle was killed, there were almost 100 cop killings every single month. The Washington Post has tracked 8,643 fatal police shootings since 2015. (tinyurl.com/ycyst65d)

Black people were 26% of those killed by police in 2022 despite being only 13% of the general population. Ninety-five percent of the police departments in major U.S. cities kill Black people at a higher rate

than white people. This year, there have only been 11 days where the police did not kill anyone. (mappingpoliceviolence.us)

As the press conference ended, there was a call and response that rang out into the courthouse and through surrounding streets: “Say his name!” “Jalen Randle!”

The only true justice for Jalen Randle and the thousands of victims of killer cops will come when the police are abolished, and a society is created that meets the needs of all its people and treats every person with the dignity they are entitled to. Our class needs both bread and roses. The struggle continues. □

Creeping McCarthyism

Eighteen primarily Republican-led states have passed laws or enacted policies restricting what educators can say about race, history, and racism since 2021. Every day brings another report involving book banning, or new legislation censoring access to knowledge and history.

Across the U.S., books containing racially inclusive and LGBTQ2S+ references are being pulled from school library shelves. High school teachers are told to remove Pride flags and other support for trans youth from their classroom or be fired. For presenting anti-racist lessons or making classroom remarks, college professors are chastised, many also face dismissal.

In February 2023, the state of Florida threw out a promising Advanced Placement curriculum in African American History pilot, claiming it lacked “educational value.” The “Stop WOKE” legislation in Florida, Texas, and several other states represents an effort to purge U.S. history of any references to violence against Black, Brown, Indigenous and Asian people by white supremacists.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis’ “anti-woke” campaign would revise how history is taught, including omitting or minimizing the contributions of historic Civil Rights leaders like Rosa Parks. DeSantis is under fire for suggesting enslavement benefited the people held captive in the U.S. by “teaching them new skills.”

For activists, woke is slang for awareness. Calls to “stay woke” echoed throughout the history of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, reverberating through the recent Black Lives Matter movement. This is not an issue of some white students allegedly claiming discomfort over learning about the brutally racist history of their ancestors — it’s about trying to totally erase that history with textbooks that glorify white supremacy.

Once again, the right wing is rallying around a made-up menace — in a modern-day parallel to the McCarthy period of the 1950s.

‘The Red Scare’

Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy was a minor political figure until February 1950 when he falsely claimed to possess a list of 205 card-carrying communists employed in the U.S. Department of State. For the next four years, this paranoia about the threat of communists — the “Red Scare” — reached a fever pitch.

McCarthy pushed the narrative that communists could be lurking anywhere, using their jobs as teachers, labor organizers, artists, actors, journalists, etc., to advance world communist domination. Hundreds of people were imprisoned and tens of thousands lost their jobs. McCarthyism came to mean

making public accusations of disloyalty or subversion without evidence and employing questionable methods of investigation and accusation in order to suppress opposition.

The red-baiting movement associated with McCarthy actually began in the 1930s in response to massive strikes by workers in auto and other industries. It was a concerted effort to weaken labor unions, purging leaders affiliated with communist or socialist parties.

In 1946, over 4.6 million workers struck their employers — more than in any other year in U.S. history. In 1947, Congress overrode President Harry S. Truman’s veto of the Taft-Hartley Act, which required every union official above the rank of steward to sign an oath that they were not communists..

Parallels to anti-communist red-baiting during the McCarthy period and the anti-woke crusade of today cannot be ignored. But rather than cause alarm, they should be seen as a call to organize.

The answer: multinational working-class unity

The far right of the ruling class was especially alarmed by the outpouring of millions of people globally in 2020 in the Black Lives Matter movement following the police murder of George Floyd, when young white workers took to the streets in militant protests side-by-side with their Black and Brown comrades.

While street actions have temporarily declined, their energy helped fuel the growing movement of young workers — multinational and multigender — to organize unions in workplaces from Starbucks to Amazon and beyond. Just the threat of a strike by 340,000 UPS workers forced the company to meet many of their demands.

From California to New York, fights to win reparations for the descendants of enslaved people in the U.S. are gaining momentum.

Capitalism is a dying system, propped up through massive spending for war at the expense of all social programs. Youth of every nationality, gender and gender identity feel increasingly alienated and fear for their futures because of the very clear damage capitalism has brought to the environment.

What stands in the way of a truly broad anti-capitalist movement are the same tools capitalism has historically used to divide the global working class: racism, homophobia, xenophobia, sexism, transphobia, ableism, and ageism.

Fueled by growing labor organizing led by workers who are often people of color and gender non-binary, the working class is becoming more united. The threat of multinational working-class unity is what the ruling class fears most today — just as they feared communism 70 years ago. □

Join us in the fight for socialism!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and

fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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Rally against ‘Moms for Liberty’ convention, Philadelphia, July 2. WWW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

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