

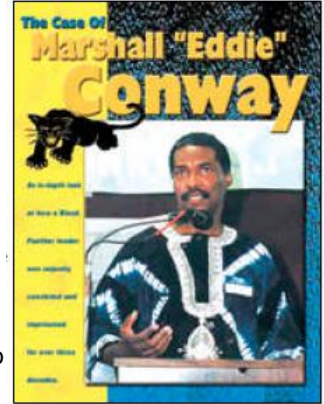
An interview with Baltimore Black Panther Nana Njinga Conway, the wife of political prisoner Eddie Conway

by ***POCC Minister of Information JR***

Nana Njinga Conway was one of the veterans of the Black Panther Party that I met on the POCC National Tour in October 2005, in Baltimore, Maryland. We recorded a Block Report, where she told me about the history of the Baltimore chapter of the Black Panther Party and the history of her comrade and husband, political prisoner Marshall Eddie Conway.

We have to remember our warriors who fought for us when we weren't fighting for us; people like Imam Jamil Al-Amin, Mumia Abu Jamal, Ruchell Cinque Magee, Veronza Bowers, Mutulu Shakur, Seth Hayes, Aaron Patterson, Leonard Peltier, the Move 9, the Angola 3, just to name a few. It is our responsibility no matter who we are to fight to better the conditions of Black people around the world and learn about our struggle. The Black Panthers are a part of the movement, and we need to learn about them, if at no other time, this year, because it marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party in Oakland.

We shouldn't expect for the colonial school system to teach us our history. It is our responsibility to check it out and research it ourselves. Check Nana Njinga Conway ...



JR: Can you tell us a little bit about Marshall Eddie Conway and how he became involved with the Baltimore chapter of the Black Panther Party?

Conway: First off, I want to say, "All Power to the People!" I'm grateful for the opportunity to talk about Marshall Eddie Conway's case. As the young brotha said, I'm a veteran member of the Black Panther Party. I hail from the Baltimore chapter. Eddie Conway was instrumental in introducing me to the Black Panther Party.

Eddie has been incarcerated unjustly for 35 years. He was targeted by Cointelpro (the Counter Intelligence Program of the FBI) because of his involvement with interrupting their operation in Baltimore.

JR: You were telling me before the interview, about the special significance of Baltimore to the Counter Intelligence, national or even international, Program. Can you speak to what was happening in Baltimore with the Counter Intelligence Program?

Conway: Baltimore was a uniquely started chapter (of the Black Panther Party). The chapter wasn't started by grassroots lumpen people. The NSA, with the CIA and the local Baltimore Police Department, actually came together in an undercover operation, and they founded the chapter in Baltimore.

It was because of their infiltrating in the Baltimore area and being able to access New York and central headquarters in California through the Baltimore chapter that once Eddie had been introduced by some friends into the Black Panther Party and taken a leadership position as the lieutenant of security that he recognized the improprieties in how the chapter was operating in view of how the chapters were operating from other parts of the East Coast and the West Coast.

He saw that it was inappropriate handling of the troops, inappropriate assignments, and it sparked his interest in finding out what and why these things were happening. And when he did find out what was happening, he uncovered their plan to use the Baltimore chapter as the vehicle for being able to get access to the other chapters.

They had bugged the office; he found the bugs. They were sending young people out on missions that were suicide missions, that were

counterproductive to the development of the party, and he took his concerns to New York. And New York, after hearing it at their central meetings, sent him out to California to talk to the Central Committee.

And at that time they found validation in what he was saying and sent Don Cox from California, with Eddie and a few other troops from California, to Baltimore to clean up the Baltimore chapter, purge everybody out of it, and start a viable chapter. That was why the Counter Intelligence Program targeted Eddie, because he blew their undercover operation.

JR: Can you tell us the specifics on the case of Marshall Eddie Conway? How are they trying to justify the trumped up charges? And where is the case at today?

Conway: We'll go back to how they manifested these false charges: In 1970, two police officers were attacked by what according to police reports were three Black men who "they" identified as members of the Black Panther Party.

When they arrested two members of the Black Panther Party, one of them was a man named Jack Johnson. Jack Johnson was beaten and coerced into signing a statement that they wrote, and in that statement, it stated that he, Jack Johnson, and Jack Powell was the other Panther that got arrested, were involved in the police shooting, and that Eddie Conway was also involved.

They beat Jack, and they beat him so bad that when we finally got access to Jack, he had so much bodily damage that we had to go to court to get him taken to the hospital, to have him seen at the hospital. And he stayed in the hospital for a couple of days.

During that time, the lawyer who had access to him, Jack told him that he had been beaten to sign a confession that wasn't true. But by that time they had gone to Eddie's job and picked him up and arrested him, and they were holding him without charging him.

So once Jack was under his own legal counsel, he recanted the statement, saying that he was coerced into signing the statement. So they had no grounds to hold Eddie, but they continued to hold him.

And we continued to try to get him released because they had no case. Then the police officer who came to the assistance of the two police officers down was taken into a room and given two stacked decks of pictures. In the two stacked decks of pictures, one stack had maybe eight pictures in it, and the other might have had 12. I'm not certain on the numbers, but it was very low numbers in both stacks,

The only picture that was duplicated in both stacks was Eddie's. And that is the way in which they tell someone, "This is the person we're looking for." So they used a stacked deck and didn't have to, because they had his body there and could've put him in a lineup.

Then it would've been only the lineup, but they didn't do that. They had this police officer to testify and say that he saw the person that was fleeing from him and shooting at him from a distance in a dark alley " and said that that was Eddie. What they also did was go into the Maryland House of Corrections and where they had a paid jail house informant.

That jail house informant had some more time to do in Jessup. I don't know how much time, but after he got through doing this time in Jessup, he would be extradited to Michigan for some forgery charges, because he had some other charges to face.

What they did was cut a deal with him. They took him from Jessup and put him in city jail, which is unheard of. If you're gonna extradite somebody, they take them directly to the other place, they don't risk the flight of a prisoner by moving him from one jail to the other, just to the jail that they are taking him to.

But what they did was take him down and put him in Eddie's cell for a day, and in that day that he was in the cell with him, he went to Michigan. And then probably on their instructions, he wrote back to the Baltimore police station and said that "I was in jail and in the cell with Eddie Conway, and within the hours that I was in there with him, he confessed to me and told me that he killed the police officer."

And then he told them that he could prove it, because also Eddie had told him that he had taken the officer's watch. And so they used that to go into court with. Jack told his lawyer that when they put him on the stand to testify that Eddie was a part of it, he refused to testify against Eddie.

What they did do was try to cut a deal with Jack and said that if you would go on and testify against him and keep this statement like we got it " even though we're sure you have something to do with it " we'll give you complete immunity and drop you off of the case. But Jack couldn't do it in good conscience, because he knew it was a lie, and he wouldn't do that.

So when it went to court, they used those particulars to railroad Eddie to jail. First off the lawyer that they gave Eddie, a public defender, came to visit him on two occasions " for less than an hour on both occasions and drunk on both occasions. So when Eddie went into court, he told the judge that this was inadequate counsel for him and that he wanted his own counsel.

So he sought out William Kunstler. William Kunstler came into the courtroom and told the judge that he was working on H. Rap

Brown's case and that he really could not give his full attention to the case. He asked for more time to get a lawyer from California to be on Eddie's case. The judge denied him the time.

So then Eddie asked for Arthur Turco, which was a Panther lawyer that had been working on other Panther cases, who happened to have gotten arrested at the same time as this case, on another charge, and he was in jail. The judge said that he's in jail and that he wouldn't let Turco represent Eddie.

So then we asked for some time for another lawyer, and they wouldn't give us any time for another lawyer. Eddie asked if he could represent himself. The judge told him that he could represent himself, but the lawyer that was the attorney that they had given him would have to sit at the bench to advise him. So that was the agreement.

But instead of the lawyer sitting at the bench and advising him, the lawyer actually kept Eddie shut down and went ahead to proceed to represent him on the case. At which time Eddie fired him, in the courtroom, on the first day or two of the hearing.

The judge wouldn't allow for Eddie to fire the lawyer. So Eddie fired the judge and fired the jury and said that he was being railroaded, that this was not a jury of his peers, there weren't any Blacks that represented him and that this judge was not honoring his commitment to Eddie representing himself by letting this other lawyer represent him.

So Eddie said that he fired the judge and fired his counsel, and the judge told him to either sit down and be quiet or leave the courtroom. So Eddie said that he wouldn't participate in the railroad and that he wouldn't stay in the courtroom and that he wanted to be removed from the courtroom.

So from that time on, he was removed from the courtroom. So they held the trial without him, without counsel, a jury of his peers, and a judge who had no respect for his own word in letting him represent himself. And after several days " I think that it was about eight or nine days " they went ahead and went to the jury, came back and convicted him of one life sentence and 15 and 15 for assault, so it was life plus 30. They went back into court and dropped one 15-year charge off, so then it was life plus 15.

And currently right now, he's been in jail long past the time for life. In the state of Maryland, if you are given a life sentence that is a parole-able life sentence " and his sentence is a parole-able life sentence " he would've been going before the Parole Board and been eligible for parole by 18-21 years. Now it's been 35 years, 35 years unjustly incarcerated for a crime that he did not commit.

JR: How do people get in touch with Marshall Eddie Conway, and how do people get in touch with you, if they want to get more information on the case?

Conway: They could get in touch with the Marshall Eddie Conway Support Committee through an email address, nananyamekye@aol.com. You could also go to freeeddieconway.com or you could write him directly at Marshall Eddie Conway, 116469, P.O. Box 534, Jessup, MD 21224. Power to the People!

Email JR at blockreportradio@yahoo.com.