

David Johnson & Elder Freeman

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David Johnson was one of the San Quentin Six, a group of inmates at San Quentin prison accused of an escape attempt in 1971 that led to a riot on the cell block. Their 16-month trial was called "The Longest Trial" by *Time* magazine. David was convicted on one count of assault.

Elder Freeman, whose real name is Ronald Freeman, was a Catholic priest in the African Orthodox Church. He was also one of the founding members of the L.A. Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. He was in the leadership of the Southern California chapter of the party, and one of the leaders in the underground part of the Black Panther Party, which came to be known as the Black Liberation Party.

Frank first learned of David and Elder through a political prisoners conference that he had sent his crew to videotape to broadcast on LUVeR.

Elder Freeman passed away October 8, 2014.

Frank: Revolution has to be cheap.

Linda: The revolution has to be cheap!

David: Yeah, yeah, we don't have a lot of funds. We're all poor. (laughter, Frank sounds) We used to have a saying, back in the day: "Revolution is hazardous to your health and you don't get paid."

Frank: They got the money, we got the people.

David: The people. That's true. But we need more hearts and minds.

Frank: How do we get them?

David: Gotta start here. Starts with education. People have to understand there's another side to the story.

Frank: To what?

Linda: Another side to the story to what?

David: The story that they put out there.

Elder: You know, to get people to get involved and change, sometimes what causes it is the conditions, so that means that the system is setting it up for itself, for its own destruction, by what they're doing. By them opposing what's right. For them not treating people humane and not being ... well ... have no regards for the land, the water, the air ... human beings' medical care, feeding people. When they know they got the technology to resolve a lot of the problems that's going on in the world, and they take and they use this and they capitalize on it and they only use certain resources, as long as it's beneficial to a certain segment of

people, the people that's in power. So, it's like, even when you're studying Marx and all the different struggles, and even before Marx, when people's conditions, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, the conditions got to where the people felt it was beyond ... the burden was too great for them to bear anymore, they rebelled against it. And that's what's happening like now. Even with the thing in Quebec. It's like, we've got to have safeguards on the world as far as ... for life to even go on! With the things that they're planning, they planning for everything to come to an end. So somebody got to say something! And it's a cause for the young people, the young people! We was young once. (Frank sounds)

David: The burden is on them.

Elder: They have to get involved, they have to take the front, and we have to support them in everything that they do that's right. If they're doing the right thing, if it calls for civil disobedience then you got every right to rebel against that and be disobedient to that law or rule.

David: It's in the constitution! If you want to go by that!

Elder: Right. You got societies where people ... what was good a long time ago, they find out that they have to change it because it didn't fit, it was old, like spitting on the sidewalk when the sidewalks were made out of wood. You had to change the law. So when times change, things have to change. So situations and dealing with like the drug problem that they got in the United States, the way they're dealing with it, they can't ... they don't want to for some reason recognize that they is wrong. That approach they took was incorrect and they have to re-change and revitalize it.

Frank: They are making money, so they don't want the change.

David: It's true. You know, you used to say one of the things of paramount importance, particularly as a revolutionary, is to safeguard the environment. Because if we don't safeguard the environment ... you see, the environment can exist without us, but we can't exist without the environment. (Frank sounds) And if we don't defend the environment as revolutionaries, then there's going to be no political landscape for us to wage political battles that we have to wage in order to honor human rights, human dignity. I got a thing about laws. And, I was taught this: all laws are not moral laws or just. At one time it was legal to have slaves. That's morally wrong. No human being has a right to subjugate another human being. And that's part of what we struggle about today. We don't have the right to determine our own destiny. We don't have the right to determine what happens to our community. And every community should have that right. And that's what we struggle for. The right to determine our own destinies.

Frank: In fact, they are taking our rights away fast.

David: That's true. That's true. And people have to understand that. Because a lot of our rights are being legislated away.

Elder: With the prison system, the way ... the whole operation, what they're doing to them with the prisons ... how they are building more prisons, they then turn it into ... it's big business. Instead of putting money in the communities where the majority of the prisoners are coming



Frank Moore and David Johnson (video capture)

from, and setting up programs in those communities. The Department of Corrections, when you first come in there, when they give you orientation, the first thing they tell you is that we do not rehabilitate. So their whole thing about being rehabilitated, they say, find you a program and don't cause us much ... as little trouble as you can, the less time you do. Other than that, they're just warehousing, that's all they do. Rehabilitation is a myth!

David: And that follows what comrade George Jackson said, about prisons being the chief repressive institutions in this society. Rather than address issues, this society would rather build more prisons. Prisons serve to repress revolution, particularly in this society.

Frank: They take would-be revolutionaries out of society.

David: That's true, that's true. And that's one of the battles that we're engaged in because the prison system in this country ... there are people in there who become conscious of why they got in prison. And like one of my mentors, comrade George Jackson said, that now that we're in these institutions, one of the things that is of chief importance is transforming the criminal mentality to a revolutionary mentality. So, that when we leave these institutions, we can go back into our communities and be an asset rather than a predator. And that's dangerous (Frank sounds) in terms of how the system looks at it. Because the more chaos and confusion that they can create, the more confused the people will be. And I look at myself as being a revolutionary. And I've faced death. Because, like I say, George says, once you say you commit yourself to revolution you become a criminal. Because in this society being a revolutionary is criminal. (Frank sounds) So that's why they said, we don't have any political prisoners in

this society, because it's criminal. And that's accepted throughout the world. This is one of the countries that has an abundance of political prisoners, but by the standards that they have set, they can go to the United Nations and say, we have no political prisoners. Because a revolutionary in their eyes is considered a criminal. As opposed to a humanitarian, someone who's interested in the well-being of all people in this society.

Frank: And it is not just the prison but the institutions for crips and the schools, etc.

Linda: Well, like with the institutions for crips, Frank has said, a lot of the people in institutions for crips are a lot less disabled than Frank is. (Frank sounds) And yet ... like, Frank made a movie about a guy, who he plays, that gets the girl, and when he showed it at the Cerebral Palsy Center, these are kind of like inmates. These are adults that aren't allowed to go out on dates. Everybody stood up and started cheering! (Frank sounds) And they had a little revolution on their hand. They were saying, they won't let me date, I don't care if I get hurt! They say, oh you're going to get hurt. I don't care! (Frank sounds) And the teacher got real excited and said, Frank we want you back. And then we get a phone call saying it's been canceled. The head of the center said they don't want Frank back, they don't want him showing any of his movies. You know, they have this whole set-up. Nobody wants to lose their job and get all these people out having a life!

David: Right, right. See 'cause he's interested in changing the human condition. And they want to keep the human condition ... I mean, most of these institutions drug them. Even in prisons! Rather than deal with people's feelings. They'd rather give them drugs and numb them. They don't want you to feel. We live in a drug culture. You turn on the TV, pain is an indicator that there's something wrong. They don't want you to experience pain. They want us to mask pain, they want us to cover it up.

Frank: Pain is fuel.

David: For change!

Frank: Yes. (Frank sounds) (laughter)

David: But, see, they don't want us to deal with that. Like I said, we live in a ... every pain that you have, if you turn on the television, you can find an ad where they're going to tell you, you got a pain here, take this pill. You can't sleep, take this pill! Rather than really what is the source or the cause? Let's eliminate that. And if you don't feel your pain, you can't alleviate the pain.

Frank: Change the society that ...

David: Exactly.

Frank: ... caused the pain.

David: We're working on it! We're working on it. (laughter)

Elder: Yeah, well, that's the whole thing we have to point out, like with the prison systems and the things that society ... like the prison systems, showing that, if you want to curtail that, you have to deal with what the root of the problem is supposed to be. And that's supposed to be in the community, then you need to go to the community to start working to solve that

problem. But that's not what they're concerned ... they're not concerned about changing or making the living condition better for everybody and giving everybody ... putting everybody on an equal footing and making it a better society in the world for everybody. That's not what they're concerned about. (Frank sounds) They're concerned about keeping the status quo. Being able to, for some reason, for some reason, to exploit, and for some reason to suck as much as they can out of everybody else from the world. And accumulate all this for ... more than they can spend, more than their families can spend, more than whole generations can spend. They want just to have control. You know that thing about power, absolute power corrupts, these are a bunch of corrupt people and they don't need to be in the positions of power. And that's dealing with education, with the schools, with housing, with employment, with the water, with the air, with the electricity. All these houses need to have solar energy panels on top of them, but they've made it ...

Linda: When we tried ... well, we thought, let's do that, let's start using solar power. (Frank sounds) So we made a bunch of phone calls, got all of this stuff to read and then we called the company and they said it would cost \$55,000 ... (Frank sounds)

Elder: They got it priced out ...

Linda: You have to be rich! We were willing to borrow money, but \$55,000!?

David: One of the things is, you're changing the world view. Did you ever read a book by Stanley Elkin called *Entropy*, where he talks about the patterns of energy consumption? And recycling. For a long time, big cars were the thing. And when you had Volkswagens coming into this country, a lot of the major auto workers didn't realize, or didn't pay attention to the trend at that time. So, because they were used to building big cars that consumed mass amounts of fuel, and produce all kinds of waste by-products. OK, you have to condition people to change. For solar energy to really take hold, then our energy consumption patterns of consuming fossil fuels has to change. There are some changes, and you can see it in the market with a lot of these hybrid cars. But, in order for us to be successful, the whole of society has to shift their way of thinking about the patterns of energy consumption that exist. And major energy companies are not interested in that because they're trafficking and dealing with fossil fuels.

Frank: They have the monopoly.

David: Exactly. And we're trying to break that monopoly through our actions, by educating people. Even when we get out there in the streets to protest, we're letting them know that we are tired of what they're doing.

Frank: The business school teaches that 80% of the people don't ...

Linda: Yeah, 80% of the people don't ...

Frank: ... matter.

Linda: 80% of your customers don't matter, so, it's only 20% of the customers where you're going to make your money.

David: So we're just expendable.

Linda: So, they just focus on that 20%, and forget about the rest of them.

Frank: Hence the prison!

Linda: Hence the prison system, that's the 80%.

David: Yeah, another thing about that is ... you know people don't realize that it is in the best interest of society that those institutions be more humane. Because those people have to come back out into society. If you set up an institution that creates monsters, which these prison systems do, that's not in the best interest of society.

Frank: I am much cheaper ...

Linda: Oh, than if you were institutionalized. The amount of money it costs for Frank to live is a lot less than if he was in an institution.

David: Right, yeah.

Linda: Yet, they would rather have him in an institution. (Frank sounds)

David: Right, right. Right. Right.

Elder: Well, you know, another thing about the whole medical system that they got even for what's going on in the streets, but also what's going on inside the prison, which is ... I don't see it really no different in the reflection on a lot of the medical institutions that they have all around the country, as far as people when you start getting AIDS, how the medical care that elderly people would receive, why I'm saying that in prison is because a lot of our friends are becoming the elderly in the prisons, and they're getting terrible medical care ... no medical care, missing medicine, no treatment. Some people they need to be on dialysis machines. They're not going to get that. They're going to die! Yeah, they're not going to put nobody on no dialysis machine. They're not going to take you out and get you no cancer therapy. You're not going to get no radiation treatments. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Sugar diabetes, you get your medicine today, you might have an attack at one o'clock at night, you're ain't getting nothing.

Frank: And why are sick people in prison in the first place?

Linda: If they're sick, what can they do?!

Elder: Nothing!

Linda: Why don't they just let them out?

David: No, that would be too humane! One of the things ...

Elder: That would make too much sense! (laughter)

David: One of the things that we deal with is, in the '60s, in the '70s, a lot of people who stood up and identified themselves as revolutionaries and took a stand against the institutions in this country, some were framed up by COINTELPRO and other intelligence agencies in this country, and sent to prison! We have a lot of soldiers in prison who are doing twenty-five to life, who are sick, because as the result of government frame-ups. We went to New York for a conference, Critical Resistance conference ... was it last month? In March, the first part of



Elder Freeman (video capture)

March. And one of the things that we did is that is we went to visit this brother who's a part of the BLA, Bashir Hamid, who's in an institution in New York, Auburn institution.

Frank: What is the BLA?

David: Black Liberation Army. Which was an underground ... well, why don't you explain? (laughter)

Elder: The Black Liberation Army was ... the underground ... part of it was the underground part of the Black Panther Party, and various individuals throughout the black community all across the country. It wasn't all just Panthers, but ... a Panther couldn't belong to any other organization other than the Black Liberation Army, which was the military wing of the Black Panther Party. Which everybody in it wasn't in the Black Panther Party. So, we have people that was dedicated to the struggle of changing the conditions of the black community by whatever means was necessary for them to do that. Some people went as far as to even go as to take like a ... I don't know if most people know about it, but it's like a Mau Mau oath, when the Mau Maus in Kenya ... they had an oath when if things didn't go like they were supposed to, and then the people that committed themselves, then do like they committed themselves to do ... that this oath should kill them. In other words, whatever you're doing to liberate your people, you know, you're dedicating your life and everything else to the struggle of your people. So the Black Liberation Army was composed of people, young people, basically black people that was dedicated to ...

David: Overthrowing the government! (Frank sounds)

Elder: Liberating the conditions of their community. In other words, to change the politics of the community. To change the whole dynamics of how the police operated, the landlords, the businesses, everything. Like David said earlier, our right to self-determination, was one of the key ... is the number one point on the Black Panther Ten-Point Program. That's the first one! We want the power to determine the destiny of our own black community. And a lot of people were dedicated to that liberation.

David: Also, in response to a lot of brutality and violence that was inflicted upon the black community by various police agencies. I mean, the Black Liberation Army grew out of the systematic assassination and violence of various police agencies, and one of the things that comes through is the government shifts its responsibility in its role in trying to undermine any type of organization or institution that advocates a change in the status quo is considered a threat. And a lot of ... you look back at the history of this country and a lot of the officers of the Black Panther Party were subject to massive police assaults ... for no reason! They would fabricate reasons to justify armed assaults on the Black Panthers!

Frank: In the '60s we thought our phones were tapped. People said ... (Frank sounds)

Linda: ... they were being paranoid!

David: Yeah, well, they admit that they did that!

Frank: Yes.

David: They engaged in a lot of criminal activities. None of them have ever been brought to answer to those charges.

Elder: You know we talk about it now, before, a lot of times, people said, we didn't talk about ... we done made up our minds, the ones from the East Coast and even us on the West Coast ... we done made up our minds, that we didn't recognize this vacuum that had existed for awhile within the struggle and we're not ... all of us are not dead yet. We're dying, and so we're saying this is going to be our last ditch effort! We're going to step back up. We're not scared of whatever the system going to do. Whatever they going to do, just bring it on. 'Cause the way we look at it, according to how Mao said, whatever they do to us, we got to turn that around and make it work for our benefit and not for them. So if they attack us, we got to make whatever attack that they do to us, work for the total liberation of all the people. 'Cause I want to point out something else about that, about the black liberation ... it wasn't, just because we was fighting within the black community, we saw the significance of our struggle that we was waging in relationship to the broader picture of the world. And we look at it, if we can get some justice in the black community inside the United States, that can have an effect on how all the rest of the people are going to be treated around the world. So we looked at our struggle in a world perspective. But we also had conditions that we had to deal with on a daily basis. Our black youth was being gunned down in the street. And it just was a point to where we had decided that we wasn't going to go on no more like this. If we going to just be dying down in the streets, there's going to have to be some consequences. And that's when ... you can say like what happened with the liberation, the Black Liberation Movement in the United States, it was like in its infancy, it was like in the mother's womb, like maybe you

would say three months pregnant. It wasn't ready to be born! It had a lot more developing to do before it comes out. But the system recognizing how dangerous this birth would be, did everything that they did to cause it to be a miscarriage. So it was a miscarriage. But it didn't upset the whole ... the Mother Earth and the whole order of things to where's it can't come forth and be born again. There's not ... it's still fertile!

Linda: Yes!

David: See one of the things that takes place that bothers us is a lot of people trying to write the history of the '60s and the '70s. (Frank sounds) And what happens is, they tend to de-emphasize and minimize what our struggle was about. Our struggle was legitimate and genuine!

Frank: They make the '60s wimpy. (Frank sounds)

David: And that's an uphill battle, because see, one of the things ... you de-emphasize the importance and the significance of people's contributions. Just like the war in Vietnam. People protested the war in Vietnam. Years later, even these generals were saying, that was wrong! We knew back then.

Frank: Even McNamara!

David: Oh yeah, yeah. Exactly! (Frank sounds)

Frank: Where was he in the '60s?

David: Making money! Now, he's made his money (Frank sounds) his conscience is bothering him and he can say that!

(Frank laughing)

David: A lot of things are wrong. The Agent Orange. They use the Agent Orange to defoliate and kill all the vegetation in Vietnam. The environment hasn't recovered from that! Neither has the soldiers that they sent over there that they exposed those chemicals to. You know they are off-spraying ... their families are still suffering. Without compensation.

Frank: They are doing the same thing now ...

David: Exactly!

Frank: ... in Columbia.

David: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. They want to use those defoliants over there. They want to destroy the environment.

Frank: People think the Panthers were just about black.

Elder: Yeah, yeah, but that's no longer ... that's like Kathleen (Clever) had her International Panther Festival and it's going to have films that deals with our struggle from the international perspective. She was out here a few weeks ago and she was ... it was at a ... during women's month, and her and an Asian, Hispanic, and Indian women, they was all on the panel and they all talked about how (Frank sounds) the times and the whole situation, how everybody was together on things. How all the different groups of people was working together.

David: See the Panthers was concerned about the conditions in the black community. But at the same time, we also understood and recognized the international nature of this struggle.

Elder: What they was doing to the Panthers, they wasn't just doing to the Panthers! They was doing it to everybody else around the world! (laughing)

David: Yeah.

Elder: Yeah. It wasn't just the black community, it was the Indians, Hispanics, the Whites ...

David: We understood that.

Frank: They are not racists. They fuck everybody.

(laughter)

Elder and David: Yeah.

David: Yeah, they do.

Elder: But I wouldn't say they ain't racists!

David: They are racists!

Elder: I wouldn't throw that scenario in there, because ...

David: Racism is a means of control!

Frank: Yes!

Elder: You have a lot of the right wing, they have a tendency, even though they don't talk about it as publicly as much as they should, but the right wing in this country and around the world, like even they got in Germany, and France and England, the United States ... the right wing is a dangerous ... they are a dangerous group. And they got money.

David: They inflict a lot of hardship and pain on people of color. But if you're poor white, you're going to feel that pain too. (Frank sounds) But, racism is a tool. Because as long as they can keep division among people, then the longer they're able to maintain control.

Frank: I call it fragmentation.

Elder and David: Right, right. Yeah. Right.

David: As long as they keep us divided. And that became very clear in the '60s with COINTELPRO how they were able to create divisions among a lot of organizations that were pushing for change. And the tricks that they used then, we have to learn from. Because it is inevitable, if we are going to be successful in changing this society ...

Frank: Like what?

Elder: Oh, I can give you a good one! The Black Panther Party, we was having a breakfast at ... like we had the breakfast program in different cities all over the country ... we had a breakfast program in San Diego. We was having it at this Catholic church. Now, one of the rules that we did was, we didn't go into no facility. And many facility that we was using, we left it cleaner than it was before we came in. So, it wasn't we was having any problem with

the facility (Frank sounds), or our care of the facility 'cause it was in better shape when the people came in for the church, it was cleaner than when they left it! So, it wasn't any problem with that. So what the FBI did was, they sent a letter to the diocese, to the archbishops of the Catholic church, saying that this priest was conspiring and was allowing criminal elements from the community to be in this church. What happened was, one night the police had the place kind of surrounded, so we just stayed in there. The priest say, don't leave. So, the next you know, then they send a letter to the congregation and this was all FBI, the whole thing was to get us out of that breakfast program. This is the kind of thing that they did. And they did it ... now the purpose of that was to alienate us from the community, and so they was ... to divide the community.

Frank: Isn't it amazing that free breakfast is more dangerous than guns. (Frank sounds)

David: Yes! 'Cause, see, one of the things that the government did, the party started the free breakfast programs and it's one of the programs that the government stole! The government started doing ... if you notice, even, there's some semblance of it left today where they used to give people, families vouchers so the kids could come and get meals. But if it hadn't been for the efforts of the party and people who were concerned about ... and we're talking about feeding children! If it hadn't been for that effort, the government wouldn't have ... and you can look at it as part ... as an attempt to neutralize the party! Oh, well, we'll adopt one of their programs, right, and put it into play, and put the emphasis on us! But had not the party did that, the government would have never instituted any program that fed hungry children going to school!

Frank: So that they then were in control.

David: Exactly!

Elder: Well, you know, that part, one advised about the breakfast program, and he was in some of the other programs that we started, was ... is that some of the things we was doing was pointing out the contradiction! Like at that time we were saying, and it was true, that hungry kids, kids going to school, and they going to school hungry, and it had been proven that kids that had a breakfast, and had something to eat, and the difference between the kids that didn't have anything to eat, their learning skills and ability was higher. So we are saying, as far as the government we are pointing out this contradiction about how inadequate the government was with dealing with the children of this country, how inadequate they were in dealing with that. So, we started a breakfast program. And we did a sickle cell anemia with the free clinic and everything. And the government started instituting ... we called ... we made, I guess, by our efforts, with the free sickle cell anemia testing, the government ended up spending and putting millions and millions of dollars into sickle cell anemia program which has benefited millions of people. You know, so, all of our actions, we can't say it was in vain, but they were designed to point out the contradiction. And show the inadequacies of the system in that what they wasn't doing, what they should be doing! And building more prisons is not what they should be doing!

Frank: But the media focuses on guns! (Frank sounds)

David: Yeah.



David Johnson (video capture)

Elder: Yeah, well (laughing) Malcolm, see Malcolm, I mean, when everything that's around you ... no matter what you want to say, we are a products of our environment. If guns are ... if every time we get confronted with things, these guns! For us, our psychic number one thing that we see is we have to arm ourselves in order to get any kind of respect, to get any kind of dignity, we have to arm ourselves. That got, in the black community, we could say, it got out of control. And that could be to a number of factors. Is that the system with them introducing a lot of cheap drugs into the community and introducing a lot of guns into the community, nobody was there to direct or give any kind of direction. We had a leaderless community. And the drugs was the leader. And the guns was for anybody who wants to take charge, you just had to fire a gun!

David: One of the things, you talk about guns, when the Panthers marched on Sacramento, they marched onto Sacramento, they were armed! They were armed, and had guns because, what they was trying to show was, at that time they were trying to pass a legislation which took away your right to bear arms. Now, there's nothing ... and I'm an advocate of armed self-defense because in a lot of instances when they had them armed assaults on various Black Panther headquarters, if people hadn't been armed, a lot of lives might have been lost. Because they would have been the only ones with guns assaulting various Panther offices! And they were engaged in assassinations! They assassinated people! Malcolm X got assassinated. Martin Luther King got assassinated.

Elder: Fred Hampton.

David: They were engaged in political assassinations!

Elder: They killed all them people down there down in western Oakland!

David: Waco.

Elder: Waco, Indians.

David: Any kind of dissent in this country, whether you agree with their politics or not, any kind of dissent against this government. Historically ... if you examine history, any kind of dissent in this country, the government has met with armed assaults! It is the government who institutes armed actions against people! Kent State! You can't forget Kent State! And then there's a black institution, a black college when they went in and killed up a lot of people! People don't remember. You remember Kent State.

Elder: And the Indians on their own land!

David: Yeah!

Frank: And no one was punished in any of those cases! (Frank screams)

David: Right! Leonard Peltier, a Native American who stood up to defend the rights of his people, he's in prison now! He is the victim of government-sanctioned repression. And that's the way the government deals with ... we are the advocates of peace! If a peaceful transition can occur in this society where everybody's interest is served, then we're all for it. But the government is not going to allow a peaceful transformation to take place. I mean why do you need a National Guard armed with automatic assault rifles? A National Guard is supposed to be for national things! Who are they going to use those assault rifles against? People! Us!

Frank: In Europe, the cops are not armed.

David: Yeah, I know, there's a lot of countries like that. But we're the only country where we have SWAT teams where, of course, there again those SWAT teams were designed to use against people! If this wasn't such a violent society we wouldn't need a SWAT team!

Frank: And SWAT teams are only a recent invention.

David: Yeah, true, true, that's true. (Frank screams) It's a product of the '60s. Geared toward repressing dissent.

Elder: So, we go back to when I mentioned Malcolm. Malcolm X is like, Malcolm was saying, he say, by any means necessary. But he also say, if the Ku Klux Klan, and the White Citizen's Counsel and the Minute Men, and everybody else turn in their gun, I'll turn in my gun! I'll go for it, if everybody else go for it! But until then (laughing) ...

David: Don't talk to me about peace!

Elder: Until then, until then ... and they got tanks now!

Frank: I knew about the government was behind the drugs, but I did not know they were behind the guns.

Elder and David: Yeah, yeah.

Elder: Yeah, they got some reports out of the whole thing about in L.A. where they left a train car, a railroad car parked down by the black community ... (Frank sounds) They left it ... this was years ago, they left it and it was full of guns. And they let them steal the guns. (Frank sounds) That was deliberate.

David: Then it had defective ammunition! The government was the problem in a lot of ...

Elder: You know the government is involved with a lot of ... with the Ku Klux Klan. They have this thing now where one out of every three of them is a FBI agent! (laughing)

Frank: How did you get into the Panthers?

Elder: It was basically looking at ... after I was in Los Angeles after they had the '65 rebellion in L.A. and I wanted to see some things change, as far as with the community, but I didn't exactly know how to go or where to place ... and the NAACP, the Urban League, none of them had that kind of track. It just didn't seem like they were addressing the issues seriously enough for me, but the Panther party ...

Frank: Liberals!

Elder: Right. The Panther party, when they came out, that was something more I could identify with. That these were some young men and they was my age. I was 21, 22, 23. They was my age, and they were sincere about wanting to see about some changing of the conditions in the community. What made me get involved was a lot to deal with the police brutality and the poverty that I seen with young adults starting off with their families and people living in the projects, and how hard of a life that they was having and knowing that if the system was rearranged, all of their needs, this here could be addressed. And I seen the police as a major factor in holding us at bay! And so it just came by them being the first line of defense, it seemed it was the first ones that had to be dealt with. And we had a whole program to deal with that too! Community control of the police! Where it would be the people in the community ... and we wanted the police to live within the community that they patrolled! So we wanted the police to be one with the community, not an occupying army! Just coming in and putting in eight hours and then going back out to the suburbs and coming down there and policing for eight hours, that's like ... remind me very similar to the old movies you see with the Indians and the forts that they had ... they put the fort there and then the soldiers come in (laughing) and then they just control that and then they let those soldiers go out and they bring some more soldiers in. I mean this was how the police, and they was treating us bad! And they still do some of the same things. Although I'm older and got this grey hair, but I see them still doing the same things that when I was 18 and 19, 17, 16, 15 ... when I was a young man, I see them doing the same thing that they're doing to our young people today.

David: Because the police brutality is a relatively new phenomena.

Elder: They harass, they direct everything at them, then they say, yeah, these kids are the cause of it, but there's nothing in the community for them. They don't have no job programs, no training programs. And the ones that they do are far and in between. There needs to be more. That's what I'm saying, they need to put programs down in the community and train people, instead of building all of these prisons! And then put IBM ... they going to close Silicon Valley down and they going to open it up in the California State Department of Correction

and they going to have all them people inside them prisons ...

David: Slave labor!

Elder: Making them computer chips. I mean, it's in the making! It's on paper! They are formulating the plan as we speaking! This is going to be reality. (Frank sounds) And they want to put our kids in there!

Frank: The dot com-ers don't get that.

David: They will! (laughter) They're starting to feel it now!

Frank: I have a friend who thinks of himself as a liberal.

David: Liberals are dangerous.

Frank: He believes the media. He ...

Linda: Yeah, he has given us money to support LUVeR and yet he doesn't want to hear, he doesn't want to listen to it, he doesn't want to know anything about the content of it, and when he does, it upsets him and he thinks it's all a bunch of bullshit!

David: He doesn't want to deal with reality. There's a great segment of this society that's in denial about the horrendous conditions that exist here. Homelessness ... it's a crime!

Elder: It's all across the country.

David: It's criminal to be homeless! They've criminalized people who are suffering!

Frank: It is a crime to feed the homeless.

David: Yes, it is! You know, they ... (Frank screaming) It should be a crime to be homeless in this country! Not homelessness is a crime! But the government should be looked at as criminals for allowing that to exist in this country!

Elder: Yeah, and everybody should have a place to stay.

David: Not the people who are homeless as criminal, but the government should be looked at as criminals for allowing these conditions to exist!

Elder: Basic human rights, food, clothing and shelter and everything you study and everything in society, this is basically what our whole struggle has been about. We've been struggling with the environment. When you say man was here in his primitive stage, he's been struggling to create an environment where he could feed, clothe and shelter himself! We've been constantly in a development to do that. We done build all these buildings, and build all this ... this has all been in dealing with feeding, clothing and housing ourself. But at the same time, we done became such a society that we can allow a certain segment of us to still go hungry and still be without the basic necessities of life! That's criminal! That's criminal! And any government or any people that fails to address that, they're criminal! But they're turning around and charge the people with being criminal for not being sufficient, productive within society when they know in society they only creates so many jobs, they got so many people living here, somebody ain't going to work! (laughing)

Frank: Try closing the institutions and giving people attendants.

Linda: That would be a way.

Frank: That is jobs!

Linda: All the people that were the attendants would be working and making money,

Frank: We need more teachers, nurses, doctors! That is jobs!

Elder: Right, yeah. That's ... about the institutions ... I think what has to happen with the institutions, I wouldn't say closing them all down, I would say they would have to be reorganized and restructured. One of the things that I see that's wrong with a lot of the ... with hospitals and medical facilities is they have a lot of bureaucracy, they're a lot of top heavy! They need to have more dealing with the services, as far as servicing people. And in America, they are too bureaucratic! There's too much at the top, and not that much services being provided. There needs to be more services being provided to the people. And it should be free! And it shouldn't be something that people would have to pay for. Like they do in Cuba! You know, certain things, people should be ... it should be free! Medical care, housing, then you would have some way to provide, to sustain yourself, to be able to make a living, to be able to care for yourself. That should be something everybody should be able to ... there should be no problem! People shouldn't have to ... you know when they're out for a job, you got two thousand people standing around a building for thirty jobs! You know, I mean, there's that many people that are unemployed!? It should be to where's, yeah, there shouldn't be no problem about people being able to find work!

Frank: Buses should be free.

Elder: Right, right, right.

David: You pay taxes! See, the whole problem is the emphasis is on making money. In this country, the emphasis is on making money, it's not geared towards dealing with humanity. And that's a big problem.

Frank: On making as much money as possible.

David: Yeah, yeah. And the whole thing with the distribution of ... it isn't like ... this is one of the most productive countries in the world! Nobody should be hungry in this society. We have the highest technology. So nobody should suffer from a medical illness unless the diseases are untreatable. And in a lot of instances they don't want to spend the money to develop the medicines to treat those diseases. Now if it makes money, just like recently, South Africa has a big problem with AIDS. (Frank sounds) They just recently said, OK, well, we're not going to charge South Africa, we're going to allow them to try to find cheap ...

Frank: That smells ...

Linda: There's something that smells. When we were reading about that, it seemed like there was something going on behind the scenes.

David: Well, there's always that! But the point is that for a long time they fought, resisted ... because South Africa wanted to develop their own, find alternatives to these different



Linda Mac and Frank Moore (video capture)

medicines. Because, you know, AIDS is in epidemic proportions over there! And these chemical companies are blocking them from trying to find a way to get the medications to treat the problems! Maybe they found, like you say, there's something behind it! I mean we don't know what goes on in these boardrooms of the board of directors of these chemical plants! They could be making deals, OK we're going to let you do this and we're going to make so much money, and don't go in this area ... we don't know! Because they're never above-board in their dealings with us or in revealing to the public their intentions. A lot of the institutions in this society have noble considerations, but if the people who run those institutions have ulterior motives, then those institutions are not going to serve those noble purposes. 'Cause a hospital, if the intentions of the people who control the hospital is to turn them into a chamber of horrors, then that's what will happen. The people that run these institutions, it's what their motivations are.

Frank: What they want is to make everything private. (Frank sounds)

Linda: Right, to turn all the public utilities into private, privately owned companies.

David: Well, you see that ain't working. They talking about PG&E going bankrupt. (laughing) We're going to suffer for that one, you know. Poor people aren't going to be able to pay their utility bills!

Frank: Hospitals, mail, water.

Linda: Oh, the hospitals, mail, water ... they're talking about making all of those private. (Frank sounds) So, that they make it so that it is not affordable to even have water.

Frank: It is called serfdom.

Elder: That's just like we saying, you talk about the human rights, food and shelter. I mean, everybody got a right to air, water. (Frank sounds)

Linda: You didn't think you had to mention them! (laughter)

Elder: Yeah! Who's got the right to impose on the air that everybody ... impose on the water? I mean, the water, it was here! That's why life ... without it we're going to all die!

David: They're essential to our survival.

Elder: That's like sacred. That's like something you don't ... you don't mess with the water and the air! But they're doing it! And they know what they're doing.

Frank: Yes!

Elder: 'Cause they have the technology! They know what they doing! So you have to look at it as far as these people are evil! (Frank sounds) For no matter how much money they making ... I'm saying they making more than any of them can spend, so ... for them to have that kind of greed, and to realize what they doing is going to have irreversible effects on the planet! While we still got a chance. We still got a chance! Some things we can reverse a lot of the processes. But if we don't hurry up, and do something about it, some of this stuff is going to be irreversible! Because we see how it's killing certain species, animals and plants. And they're disappearing. And we know that when those little frogs and little animals start disappearing, that we aren't far along up on the chain before everything is going to be gone!

David: Yeah, nobody should have the right to pollute our water, pollute our air. I mean, that's a gift to us from a higher person, a higher being! (Frank sounds) Our environment was created for us by who, whether it evolved or however, it was created by a higher being! However you look at it! That environment was created for us, for our existence, and for someone to come in and pollute it, contaminate it, they don't have that right!

Elder: Intentionally!

David: They don't have that right. And we shouldn't allow it to continue. Just like they have no right to control our destiny!

Frank: Are you hopeful?

David: Oh, yeah! I'm very optimistic that, (Frank sounds) because, you know, I'm very optimistic, you have to be! (Frank sounds) Because hope, without hope, what do you have? (Frank sounds)

Elder: They say right shall overcome. That right will overtake wrong! The right, the true!

Frank: Our fuel ... hope.

David: Yes! Without hope you have nothing. (Frank sounds) You have to be optimistic that ... that's what makes a revolutionary. Being hopeful and optimistic that we can create a new

society, a new woman, a new man. And really understand the gifts that we have as human beings. And appreciate each other (Frank sounds) no matter what our cultural or ethnic differences. Diversity is the key to our continued existence!

Frank: Yes! Yes!

David: Both in culture and environmentally! Diversity enriches us as a people!

Frank: It was what evolution is all about!

David: Agree!

Frank: They don't get that.

David: They don't! (Frank sounds) It is on us to push it across.

Frank: Read "Mutation is Evolution".

Linda: Frank wants me to read one of his poems. It is called, "Mutation is Evolution". (Frank sounds)

David: Mutate or die!

Linda: Yes. (Frank sounds)

Frank: Would you read it?

Linda: Frank is asking if you would read it. OK, I'll find it!

(sounds of locating the poem!)

David: I'll read some and Elder ...

Elder: No, no, no. My reading is bad. Don't get me started, we'd be all night! (laughter)

David: (reads Frank's poem, "Mutation is Evolution")

Mutation is Evolution

Frank Moore

Friday, April 23, 1999

You foolish idiot!

You want to make

Everything,

Everyone

Normal!

You want to cure

Prevent

All crips,
Freaks,
Crazies,
Oddballs,
Slow ones,
Misfits,
Bums,
Artists,
Poets,
And all other impractical
 Different looking
 Strange mutations

You fool!

How to condemn the human species
To extinction!

Look...
The game of evolution is
Change by experimentation.

We freaks are the experimenters

The name of the game
 Is flexibly adapting
 Coping
 Leaping
 Risking into the unknown newness
 Of uncontrolled future

We crips,
 We misfits have always been the adapters,
 The leapers

Hell,
 I'm not wasting my time
 Talking to you about magic and such
Just about evolution

Well,
 If you don't need us crips,
 Us misfits
 If you don't need us no more...
 Our advice is
Don't breathe deep
 In your air-tight coffin
 Of normalcy
 And move very slowly
 Very carefully
 In your thin-skinned world
 Of ever increasing fragility

Oh yeah...
 Good luck!

(all laughing)

David: Yeah, yeah, good luck! (Frank sounds)

Elder: That's saying a lot! That's saying a lot! What that just brings to mind is how imperfect of a society we live in and then they try to portray it as being some perfect kind of thing, which is the farthest thing from reality. (Frank sounds) It doesn't exist! Because they talk about what's

supposed to be, I'm coming to find when they talk about the normal family, and they talk about this dysfunctional family. I'm finding out that 90% of the families are dysfunctional families! (laughing) There's only a small percentage of what they consider normal! (laughing) The rest of us is dysfunctional! (all laughing)

David: The norm is supposed to be the nuclear family and as time goes on, it's revealed that what they call the norm is the most dysfunctional! (Frank sounds)

Frank: The nuclear family is a recent invention.

David: Yeah, that's what I'm saying!

Frank: And it don't work! (laughter)

David: That's what I'm saying. What they call the norm, in this society they finding out is the most dysfunctional!

Elder: Right, right. Everybody else is become crazy, that's what's normal! (laughing)

Linda: Right.

David: It's all relative.

Elder: Well, you know, extended families, you know, people ...

David: The global village.

Elder: Going outside of just the nucleus of their family is how it functions (Frank sounds). That's really what is normal! That's the normal function of how society should function.

Frank: Yes!

Elder: And this unitarian, individual is an American ...

Frank: That is human.

Elder: Right, right.

David: We live in groups. But we've created ... it's like ... I read a book years ago by this right-winger. It's called, *Time, The Unprofitable Vice For Americans In Troubled Times*, and one of the things that this guy said was the more civilized we become, the more destructive we are. And then he looked at our waste. The more civilized we become, the more toxic ... and, you look at it! Our waste products are highly toxic now. In other societies, agrarian societies, most of your waste can be composted and put back into the ground and recycled! Now, we got these dumps and once we dispose of this waste, you can't even live there! Because all the chemicals and the toxins that we're putting into our environment!

Frank: And they never put that in the rich neighborhoods.

David: No, they don't! (Frank sounds)

Elder: That's like up here, Richmond. People out there still getting sick and they're still claiming that they're not making nobody sick, but, you know, the people are sick!

David: Ain't far from here!

Elder: Right.

David: The wind can blow all of that over here!

Frank: On luvr.org we have a piece on the chemical ...

Mikee: The one about the real energy crisis? It has all the quotes and the history and looking back in the different points in history and examples of all of the things that have been knowingly done.

Linda: (to Frank) Is that the one you're talking about? Yes.

Frank: And it outlines their different raps.

Linda: The chemical companies' different raps? (Frank sounds) No.

Frank: First, it is absolutely safe.

David: Yeah.

Frank: Then ... (Frank sounds)

Linda: They admit a little bit more each step of the way, over the years, as they have to, as things are revealed. And it goes through a history of that starting back in the '40s.

Elder: Right, right.

Frank: Well, it is minor. (Frank sounds)

Linda: The negative effects are minor. (Frank sounds)

David: Hence, your poem, mutate!

Frank: It don't hurt people! Then, well, it is dangerous, but it is there. It is too late! (Frank sounds)

David: Yeah!

Elder: There are some things that we can reverse. We can just close and parse. We got the technology, we done created all of that. There has to be some kind of way we can use the technology. I know one thing about those toxic things is that they generate this gas. Now how much they can be able to recycle or use that to some kind ... for some use to where's it won't be more harmful than it already is. And they say it's going to take ... I don't know how long it's going to take for that stuff to decompose itself. They got this radiation stuff, they don't know whether ... they dropping it in the ocean. Yeah, that's strange. They putting the radiation in these containers that can only last for 100 or 200 years. (Frank sounds) But the radiation inside the container lasts for 5,000 years, so the radiation gonna outlast the container! So therefore, when it comes out in the ocean, what is it going to do to all of the stuff 200 to 300 years down the road?! They got to take all that stuff back out the water.

David: We don't live that long, so we're just dumping it on the next generation!

Frank: But they don't care about 10 years from now.

Elder: Right. But that's the whole thing about while we've been developing ourselves from our



David Johnson and Elder Freeman (video capture)

lower level, dealing with from gathering food. And we've been trying to create a society that was going to address our needs. What they doing, is they making it so ... I mean from one generation to the next ... so, we're setting things so our children don't have to go through as hard as we did. We plant the crops, we learn how to feed them. Put food up for the winter. We teach this to our children, so they can make it, so it won't be as hard on them. So they can teach their children, so they won't have a hard a life as we had! Now here we are, that's not what's going on! They're not preparing for the future generations! They have no concern for what our children going to have to go through and live in this society! That's criminal!

David: The stress levels of our children is, like I said, as we move through this, with all this technology ... this technology has done nothing but increase the stress levels on our children! Our suicide rates are high! Not too long ago they had ... what did they called us in the '60s? The flower children, at least we had a definition! Flower children! Now, what is it? Generation X! What is Generation X? At least we could say, oh, OK, they were flower children, they were interested in flowers. What is Generation X into? You can't even tell by its designation! X!

Frank: That is old-fashioned. Generation X is. You must have blinked.

Linda: Oh, what is it now? (laughter)

David: Oh, we missed it huh?!

Linda: (laughing) You must have blinked! Now there's some other thing, but we don't know what it is! (laughter)

David: Each generation has to have a sense of purpose! And they're destroying that!

Frank: I think it is the WTO Generation. I think the kids are getting wiser again.

David: I hope so!

Elder: You probably can tell better about these youngsters with their music, 'cause in their music there's a couple things going on. A lot of us, I guess you could say the black parents, don't like a lot of the music that they hear coming from their own kids. (Frank sounds) But, there's the thing that I say about that is, this is a reflection of their discontent! Of how they're seeing things going down! David, he's more in touch with them. He knows a lot of these young people that's into this rap music, personally. And you know how they be feeling about a lot of ... how they see society, the way it's going.

David: It's like us, and we tell a lot of these youngsters that we talk to today, yet, when we stepped up to the plate and decided that this society needed to be changed, we were their age, you know, we were like in our teens, early teens, when we were looking for a better way of life! When we started protesting the draft and being sent to fight a war that we weren't in agreement with. We took stands then. It's incumbent upon them, I can't re-emphasize this enough, it is incumbent on the youth of today to stand up for their rights! They have our support. Because they are the ones that are most affected by what is going on today. I mean, you know, we're older. We don't have that many more years to live. (Frank sounds) Considering the average life span, what, 70? And then being that we're people of color, it's less than that! It's 70 if you got some kind of money where you can get the medical attention that can prolong your life. But like we say, we got a lot of soldiers from the '60s who made commitments then, gave their life for the struggle to change the society, who are languishing in these prisons! And we don't have much time left. So, they have to deal with the reality that exists today. And they have to set upon the task of creating a future that's going to be bright and filled with hope.

Elder: The young people that was in Quebec. They was young.

David: Yeah, yeah. It's incumbent upon them to step to the plate.

Frank: Are they? (Frank sounds)

David: I see a tide rising.

Frank: How?

Elder: We were at the Critical Resistance.

David: Yeah. We were at a conference where young people were dealing with the questions of education, schools and not jails!

Elder: The prison industrial complex.

Frank: Real school! (Frank screaming)

David: Yeah, I think that's what they're concerned with. They're concerned with getting real knowledge, real education, instead of being programmed to become another cog in the machine. But there again, it is incumbent upon them to raise their voices about what

curriculums are being taught in these institutions. We fought for black studies. We fought for a lot of classes that deal with like humanistic psychology, where you deal with the whole human being as opposed to just looking at clinical psychology. I mean, shifts in our ways of looking at things.

Frank: Black studies for everyone. (Frank sounds)

David: I think we all need to be sensitive to, like I said, our diversity. Various cultures of the world. The world is filled with a lot of cultures. On some levels we appreciate them. On other levels we don't. Music, art, inventions. All people on this planet have contributed to culture. And culture is a way of making sense of your reality. (Frank sounds) Religion, spiritual stuff, politics, technology.

Elder: Social behavior.

David: Social behavior. Culture is very important to us. We don't appreciate it. Like I said, our cultural diversity.

Elder: You know, that's just like in some schools they teach now when you had that whole thing, where you have Black History month, then you have Hispanic holidays, you have the Chinese new year. Those, I guess you could say, kind of like when I was growing up it wasn't too much of all of that being taught. It was more basic European history, European culture. Now they're showing that in this society that we live in, you have to teach them the ethnic diversity of this society in order for everybody really to get along. You got to understand, it would be wrong for me to go, because some people they eat burritos and tacos all the time, for me to say because they're not eating collard greens and chitlins, that something's wrong with them! (laughter) Or vice versa, for them to set up a certain kind of attitude because of me just because of our cultural differences.

David: Ethnic differences have always existed throughout history, but I think that the advent of racism we see the devalueization of people's culture.

Frank: When we travel, we miss the diversity of this area.

Linda: We went up to Portland and Seattle and it seemed like everybody was white! (Frank sounds) And it was scary. (Frank sounds) And we come back here, and it's like, everybody is here.

David: Yeah.

Frank: Like eating white bread. (Frank screams)

Elder: (laughing) Oh, man!

David: Leached all the nutrients out of the grain!

Linda: That's right. (Frank sounds) (laughter)

Linda: We think we went the whole week without seeing anybody but a white person when we were in Seattle! (laughter, Frank sounds)

David: I've been up to Oregon, but I usually try to go ... when I've gone up there, it's been to

look at the diversity of the natural environment. I spend more time not so much in the urban areas, but in the natural environment.

Frank: Like, integration is not for the black people. It is how I want to live. (Frank sounds)

Elder: Yeah. I think everybody should have that right to ... if you want to live with the diversity like Oakland, like Berkeley and San Francisco, you should have the right to live there. And if you choose to where you want to live in an environment like you're saying, you went to Seattle and you didn't see anybody ... you should have that right to want to live in that too. But it shouldn't be to where because you choose to ... if black people chose to live down south, and white folks chose to live up north, and other ones decided they wanted to live in between or in either one, it shouldn't be to where you shouldn't have that right to do that!

David: See, here's the deal. Without the institution of racism, integration wouldn't even be something to consider.

Elder: Right.

David: Because ... and if you look at it, integration is only a phenomena that takes place here in this country. Because if you go to other parts of the world, you can travel in those environments, without problems, if you honor and respect the people of those areas. But because we have so many problems, we had so many problems. Even now, they tell you as Americans traveling, don't go to this part of the world, because what happened, then it went over to that world, that part of the world ... messed it up. So those people have an attitude to anybody going over there! And you haven't done anything to those people! They say, oh, you better not travel over here! Don't travel over here! It's getting to the point where you ain't going to be ... if we allow them to go to other parts of the world and ravish it like they do, we, as citizens of this society, won't be able to go nowhere because everybody going to be mad at us! They're going to think we're the ones responsible for all the hardships that's being inflicted on them. And they don't understand that we're victims like them!

Elder: We're victims too! (laughing)

Frank: Fragmentation.

Linda: That's fragmentation? (Frank sounds) Breaking ... all the different countries looking at each like that.

David: Artificial boundaries.

Frank: They talk about free trade, how about free movement? (Frank sounds)

David: Free movement, yeah. Trade has always been ... people have always traded. And there is nothing wrong ... they say fair exchange is no robbery. But exploitation, when this capitalist, imperialist system introduced exploitation into the equation, it means somebody gonna get fucked! (laughing) And more than likely, it ain't them! (Frank sounds)

Frank: The corporations can move all over the world.

David: It's called globalization.

Frank: But, people need passports.

David: Yeah.

Elder: Right, right. (Frank screams) Like it's the whole thing, you got to be able to go ... we've got to have ID here, if we want to go anywhere, but to be able to move freely around the world, yeah, that's a whole other, that's another one there. (laughing)

David: When convicts say, why do I need ID to get ID! (laughter)

Frank: If we could move, travel freely, they could not do the shell games that they do. (Frank sounds)

David: Yeah.

Elder: Well, that's the whole thing. They got everything under control. They're controlling the media, they're controlling all of the major transportation and all of those factories, it's under their control. So as far as people being able to travel freely around the world, to deal with different issues, they got it on a financial level. They're making it just about impossible ... like we want to go to Cuba in November, but it's making it real difficult for us to go down there, and meet with the Cuban people and meet with people on the international level to try to see if we can get some things resolved in the United States. That's not economically or politically or socially working in the United States' best interest, so they gonna do everything to make that as difficult for us to do that. And the main way they're doing that is finance!

David: Let me elaborate on the thing you said about Cuba. See, in November they're talking about having a conference on political prisoners and prisoners of war in Cuba to discuss the issue of political prisoners and who is a political prisoner and who is not. Basically it's ... like I say, we're dealing with a unique phenomena in this country in terms of political prisoners and prisoners of war. And some delineation has to be made on that, and some of the definitions have to be expanded because it has to be more inclusive. This country denies that it has any political prisoners. So, our interest, like I said, we got a lot of comrades who are prisoners of war, political prisoners, who are languishing in these prisons in America, that people don't even know about. Our commitment to them and to struggle is to make the world knowledgeable of these people who made great sacrifices in the interest of trying to build a better society and who became victims of these various police agency COINTELPRO, all of these charges brought against them that they used to justify imprisonment of these people.

Elder: And some of that is to try to bring some closure too, as far as in the United States, these people have been in prison for over twenty years. It's time to bring some closure. Even on the international level, to where's these people, even for whatever, in other countries when they held people for political beliefs around the world, they done let a lot of them go after ten or fifteen years. These people done been in jail for over twenty years, and what got them in prison was their political beliefs and the activities inside the United States, whether instituted or framed up by the police, or the police was the ones that set the plan in motion, like the murdering of Fred Hampton and everything. In order to justify that, they're saying they had warrants, but they also had ... they had these warrants, they had the police inside to create the situation for the warrant to be issued. So, government conspiracies, all of these things, it needs to all come to a closure. It needs to be finished. And as far as how this

government, that has something to do with changing the government in itself. For the people to come to a realization they don't need this prison-industrial complex, they don't need the government to be moving in this military manner that it does. And in order to create jobs and an economy for people inside the United States, there's another way we can go now with all this technology, we don't have to have, we don't have to use these primitive methods. We don't even need this outdated 17th century, 15th century judicial system. This parliamentary procedure process that they're going through with all this crap that you got to go through, four to six years of legal learning. All of this legal language, and all of this terminology on an outdated, outmoded system. We're in the twenty-first century, and we're using a judicial system that's five, six hundred years old! It don't make no sense!

David: You know, we used to have a saying, going back to what you were saying, what do you do, we used to have a saying, heavy is the task of the liberator, but heavier are the chains of containment and yoke of oppression. So the task that we have in educating people in this society, in moving the people to action, is a heavy task. Because we don't have the resources at our disposal as the government.

Elder: What you're all doing here.

David: Yeah. Another thing is, in Vietnam, the people of Vietnam, the will of the people in Vietnam, demonstrates that the will of the people is greater and stronger than any forms of technology or military might that you have. (Frank sounds) Revolutions throughout the world demonstrate that the will of the people will always prevail, but moving people to exert themselves and exert their will is another task.

Frank: That is what LUVeR is here for.

David: I hear that. That's why we're here!

Elder: Right, right, right. You have to have these lines of communication, education, because the people have to be motivated to realize that they can do something about their situation. I think a lot of people may have a different attitude towards the electoral process, voting in this country, after this last presidential election. And realizing ...

David: The next one will be different, that's for sure! (Frank sounds)

Elder: ... that there's maybe ... people didn't realize because you say everybody's vote counts. So, that election right kind of showed that voting does make, can make a difference in things. So, I don't know ...

David: Either positive or negative, 'cause some people's vote, they show, you're vote don't count!

Elder: ... how it's going to go in the future, as far as changing things on a local level, because I see a lot of things that people can do with their vote on the local and state level more so than they can on a federal level. On a federal level they can have more to do so with electing state representatives and things that represent people on a federal level. But I see if we do a lot of things locally, and people are generated in this area, and I'm hoping that this election will show them that they can do something to make a change.



Elder Freeman (video capture)

David: Well, I look at it like this. As long as rich people control the electoral process, poor people ain't going to get nowhere. Because it's rich people and money that's dictating the flow and direction of the process.

Frank: When we webcast the Political Prisoners Conference on LUVeR, we were blown out by the love and the positivity of the people that had been in prison. That is the exact opposite of the media image. And by showing that love, it is very dangerous to the system.

Elder and David: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

David: Well, you said it, it is the task of the liberating. We're optimistic here that we can win this war.

Elder: Yeah.

David: On all levels. Like I said, we fight for the hearts and minds of our people and for people to get in touch with their humanity and understand the relationship to other people, and their relationship to the environment, it's all one.

Elder: I've been involved in the struggle for over thirty years, and the struggle I've been involved in has been a struggle of love, although there's been a lot of pain and a lot of suffering. But I got involved in this because I've got a love and a concern and I care about people. And that's why I got involved. And if it meant that I had to sacrifice a lot of my own individual things for the sake of the whole, I'm willing to make that sacrifice, and been

making that sacrifice. So, and it's out of love, because the struggle is about love! It's because we care. Because we don't want to see people just gunned down in the street. Because we don't want to see drugs and people's lives are ...

David: Homeless and starving.

Elder: ... and homeless and the whole ... and every dime they get they spending it on drugs and they're not doing nothing for their family and everything is a disgrace. It's out of love and concern and care that you don't want to see that going on.

David: Like Che said, the revolutionary started by great feelings of love.

Elder: And I'm glad you saw that love because everybody think that everybody that's been in prison, or come from prison, is that they're cold-blooded, heartless (Frank sounds) ...

Linda: Bitter, hateful.

Elder: Yeah, we're far from that. We show a lot more humane treatment towards other people maybe because of our being confined and isolated. And that's another bad thing that they're doing now, with those Pelican Bays, the way they're building these new prisons where they're putting you in 24-hour, seven-days-a-week total isolation. Where you don't ever come in contact with another human being. It is inhumane, it's inhuman, because we are social creatures! And when we can't come in contact, in touch with ... and you do this to somebody over a period of years, that person's mentality ... when you let him come out, he's not ... he can't function in this society because he had no preparation to do it! He's going to be an animal! They dehumanize you! They make you to where you become inhuman. And they got these prisons in ... they got one in Pelican Bay, they're building another one in other states. They done built these underground, maximum security prisons which is total isolation. So, therefore, they're taking a part of our society, and these people don't stay in there forever. They let them out. They release them from there. No medical treatment. No adjustment to coming back into society, anything! They give you \$200 and let you go. Now, what do you think that person is coming back to! So, just being human!

Frank: It is like a sci-fi movie.

David: Yeah, only it's real. It ain't a movie.

Elder: Yeah. (laughs)

David: Like I say, we live in a society, it's like what Gil Scott Heron used to say, we live in a lot of civilizations. And the violences we are subjected to, most people look at violence in its physical form, but the media subjects us to a lot of psychological violence and spiritual violence. Which in a lot of instances, the psychological violence can have far greater impact on the society than the physical violence because people are still left here, scarred, broken and ... but the reality is there are a lot of people who have lost hope! One of the challenges that faces people who are concerned with creating the new man and the new woman is to spread the word, there is hope! That we can create a brighter future. And that's one thing ... all it requires is for us to exert our will and be in touch with our humanity because if your objective and goal is to be a good human being, then your politics will be good, your spirituality will be good, and your physical deeds will be good. And that's what we struggle for! And I think

I'm going to close with that!

Linda: Amen!

Frank: By the way, who are you?

Linda: We never told people who you are!

David: My name is David Johnson. And I was one of the San Quentin Six. A lot of my ... what makes me the person I am is I came in contact with a brother in prison who was a great revolutionary and spearheaded the prison movement in California, George Jackson.

Frank: We need to have you back to talk about that.

David: OK.

Linda: And who are you? (laughter)

Elder: OK, usually, it takes a minute for this! My name is Ronald Freeman, but a lot of people they call me Elder Freeman, because I'm a priest, a Catholic priest, in the African Orthodox Church. (Frank giggles) I'm one of the founding members of the L.A. Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. When the party was started back in 1960 ... well, it came to L.A. in the end of '67, so I say the beginning of 1968 is when the L.A. Black Panther Party started in Los Angeles, and I was there from the beginning.

David: Also survived some of those shoot-outs down there when the police were attacking.

Elder: Yeah. Well you know, I'm one of the people, I was in the leadership of the Southern California chapter of the party, so when, Geronimo [ji-Jaga Pratt - Ed.] was somebody that I knew, when he came. So what happened to him, happened to me, it happened to other people. It just so happened that the cases that they had on me, it didn't work. And I beat the cases. I didn't have to end up spending all that time. They got me for awhile! I put in about eight.

David: Eight years.

Elder: So, that's who I am. I'm from the underground part of the Black Panthers, I was part of the political part of the party and I also was one of the leaders in the underground part of the Black Panther Party, which came to be known as the Black Liberation Party.

(Frank sounds)

Linda: So, we got to have them both back, huh?! (laughter)

Frank: LUVeR is a great con ...

Linda: To get together with people like you guys.

Elder: Alright, alright! I'm hoping I'll get good results back, feedback from this. It will be interested in what you all are doing here, because it's good! It's underground love! When I heard underground love (laughter), it's like, alright now, we're going to share some love here! The righteous truth!

Linda: Yeah. Who is next week? There is no Shaman's Den. It is the People's Park thing. Frank

.....

is reading one of his poems at the People's Park Anniversary.

David: We were just up there right before we came down here! We were up at the park and we were talking about the struggle, looking at the trees and all that, what a struggle it was to just to keep the park!

Linda: Yes. So, there's no Shaman's Den next week. And the week after that, Mary Israel is scheduled. She's talking about the work she is doing in Columbia.

Frank: She is in Columbia now.

Linda: Yes, so she'll come back and talk about that. That's May 6.

David: We can come on your station again and get the people to send us some funds so that we can get to Cuba! We're poor!

Frank: Hey, we need money too! (laughter)

Elder: Tell the truth!

David: Being a revolutionary is hazardous to your health and you don't get paid!

Linda: That's right!

Frank: It is cheap, but not free. (laughter)